



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 517, 26 July 2006

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New Pentagon WMD Committee to Meet in August

A new U.S. Defense Department panel formed to help address the international dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction is scheduled to meet for the first time next month, *Inside Missile Defense* reported yesterday (see [GSN](#), June 9).

The "executive committee" consists of personnel at the level of flag officer or senior executive service, and is scheduled to meet once or twice a year, a Pentagon official said earlier this month.

The committee is to be led by the deputy director for the war on terrorism in the J-5 [strategic plans and policy] directorate, the assistant to the defense secretary for nuclear and chemical and biological defense programs, and the deputy defense secretary for combating weapons of mass destruction and negotiations policy.

The main goal of the committee is to establish priorities for the Combating WMD Action Group, a lower-level panel made up of officials from the combatant commands, four military services, Office of the Secretary of Defense and the defense agencies. That group is expected to meet biweekly through teleconference to consider WMD threats.

A Pentagon strategy released in February listed eight anti-WMD priorities: offensive operations; elimination operations; interdiction operations; active defense; passive defense; WMD consequence management; security cooperation and partner activities; and threat reduction cooperation.

U.S. Strategic Command chief Gen. James Cartwright last year formed the Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction. The unit began operations in January and shares space with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency at Fort Belvoir in Virginia (Sebastian Sprenger, *Inside Missile Defense*, July 19).

http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2006_7_20.html#10BE28B9

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San Francisco Chronicle

Japan to deploy missile shields

U.S. interceptors to counter threat from North Korea

Anthony Faiola, Washington Post

Friday, July 21, 2006

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(07-21) 04:00 PDT Tokyo -- Amid heightened concerns over North Korean missiles in the region, the United States and Japan will begin deploying advanced, American-made surface-to-air missile defense systems in Japan next month, officials from both countries announced Thursday.

The Pentagon will start relocation in August of the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 system -- the ballistic missile interceptors known as PAC-3 -- along with 600 specially trained troops from Fort Bliss, Texas, to a U.S. base in southern Japan.

Japanese officials also said they would deploy the same PAC-3 system on their own bases for the first time by March. A Defense Ministry official said the rollout would begin at Iruma Base just west of Tokyo, spreading to three nearby bases by 2007. Japan intends to keep deploying the system at several more military installations throughout the country through 2010.

It marks the latest step by Japan and the United States in their plan to develop a broad land-, sea- and air-based defense network to contain the military might of North Korea. The deployments had been anticipated since Washington and Tokyo agreed in principle to introduce the system in Japan in May. But the rollout was pushed forward because of the threat from North Korea, which on July 4 test-fired seven ballistic missiles into the Sea of Japan.

North Korea's most sophisticated missile -- a Taepodong-2 with an estimated range as far as the U.S. West Coast -- failed moments after lift-off. But six short- and medium-range missiles were tested successfully. All of them are capable of reaching any part of Japan, including U.S. bases.

U.S. military officials said the Pentagon planned to relocate the PAC-3 equipped Air Defense Artillery Battalion from Fort Bliss to the U.S. Kadena Air Base and the nearby Munitions Storage Area on Okinawa island. Japanese officials said the system is scheduled to be at least partially operational by year's end.

The PAC-3 system is designed to intercept incoming ballistic missiles in their final phase and will form a key part of the broader missile defense shield being co-developed by the United States and Japan. The defense shield is set to include the PAC-3 systems on U.S. and Japanese bases.

Additionally, the Japanese are to deploy the Standard Missile 3 interceptor missile that will be based aboard Japanese Aegis-class destroyers. Japan and the United States in June activated a sophisticated X-band radar system on a northern Japanese air base with heightened missile tracking capabilities.

Some experts, however, have questioned the success rate of the PAC-3 system in testing and say it still requires fine-tuning.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2006/07/21/MNGEHK368O1.DTL>

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Los Angeles Times

July 21, 2006

U.S. Pursuing Talks With 4 Nations On N. Korea

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The top U.S. envoy at stalled North Korean disarmament talks said Thursday that the United States wants to meet with China, Japan, Russia and South Korea next week to figure out a way to persuade the regime in Pyongyang to return to the negotiations.

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill told reporters that the goal was to include North Korea at the gathering on the sidelines of the Assn. of Southeast Asian Nations' annual meeting of foreign ministers in Malaysia. But, he said, "the North Koreans don't seem to want to go to six-party meetings right now."

Since November, the North has boycotted the six-nation talks on its nuclear weapons production program. Two weeks ago, Pyongyang test-fired seven missiles.

The five-party talks, Hill said, could include other nations in the region and could focus on additional security arrangements in Northeast Asia.

Hill also told reporters after a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing that he could not confirm reports that Iranian officials had witnessed the July 5 launches. He said he had misspoken when he told lawmakers earlier that he could confirm such reports.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack also said he could not confirm the reports. When asked whether the North Koreans were trying to market weapons, he said, "With respect to weapons, anything that isn't bolted down, they're ready to sell."

During the hearing, Hill testified that the U.S. would have no problem with one-on-one contact with Pyongyang on the sidelines of six-nation negotiations.

But, he said, the Bush administration is not prepared to "torpedo" multinational talks to meet separately with the North, as Pyongyang wants.

North Korea has said it won't return to the multinational talks because of U.S. sanctions over accusations of counterfeiting and money laundering.

Senators pressed Hill on why the North defied international warnings to launch the missiles.

The North Koreans "pride themselves on being opaque," he said. "Often what goes on in North Korea stays in North Korea."

Hill said he believed North Korean leader Kim Jong Il's decision had backfired. Even China was displeased, he said. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor21jul21.1.1270781.story>

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Washington Post

July 24, 2006

Pg. 1

Pakistan Expanding Nuclear Program

Plant Underway Could Generate Plutonium for 40 to 50 Bombs a Year, Analysts Say

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

Pakistan has begun building what independent analysts say is a powerful new reactor for producing plutonium, a move that, if verified, would signal a major expansion of the country's nuclear weapons capabilities and a potential new escalation in the region's arms race.

Satellite photos of Pakistan's Khushab nuclear site show what appears to be a partially completed heavy-water reactor capable of producing enough plutonium for 40 to 50 nuclear weapons a year, a 20-fold increase from Pakistan's current capabilities, according to a technical assessment by Washington-based nuclear experts.

The construction site is adjacent to Pakistan's only plutonium production reactor, a modest, 50-megawatt unit that began operating in 1998. By contrast, the dimensions of the new reactor suggest a capacity of 1,000 megawatts or more, according to the analysis by the Institute for Science and International Security. Pakistan is believed to have 30 to 50 uranium warheads, which tend to be heavier and more difficult than plutonium warheads to mount on missiles.

"South Asia may be heading for a nuclear arms race that could lead to arsenals growing into the hundreds of nuclear weapons, or at minimum, vastly expanded stockpiles of military fissile material," the institute's David Albright and Paul Brannan concluded in the technical assessment, a copy of which was provided to The Washington Post.

The assessment's key judgments were endorsed by two other independent nuclear experts who reviewed the commercially available satellite images, provided by Digital Globe, and supporting data. In Pakistan, officials would not confirm or deny the report, but a senior Pakistani official, speaking on condition of anonymity, acknowledged that a nuclear expansion was underway.

"Pakistan's nuclear program has matured. We're now consolidating the program with further expansions," the official said. The expanded program includes "some civilian nuclear power and some military components," he said. The development raises fresh concerns about a decades-old rivalry between Pakistan and India. Both countries already possess dozens of nuclear warheads and a variety of missiles and other means for delivering them. Pakistan, like India, has never signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. One of its pioneering nuclear scientists, Abdul Qadeer Khan, who confessed two years ago to operating a network that supplied nuclear materials and know-how to Libya, Iran and North Korea.

The evidence of a possible escalation also comes as Congress prepares to debate a controversial nuclear cooperation agreement between the Bush administration and India. The agreement would grant India access to sensitive U.S. nuclear technology in return for placing its civilian nuclear reactors under tighter safeguards.

No such restrictions were placed on India's military nuclear facilities. India currently has an estimated 30 to 35 nuclear warheads based on a sophisticated plutonium design. Pakistan, which uses a simpler, uranium-based

warhead design, has sought for years to modernize its arsenal, and a new heavy-water reactor could allow it to do so, weapons experts say.

"With plutonium bombs, Pakistan can fully join the nuclear club," said a Europe-based diplomat and nuclear expert, speaking on condition that he not be identified by name, after reviewing the satellite evidence. He concurred with the Institute for Science and International Security assessment but offered a somewhat lower estimate -- "up to tenfold" -- for the increase in Pakistan's plutonium production. A third, U.S.-based expert concurred fully with the institute's estimates.

Pakistan launched its nuclear program in the early 1970s and conducted its first successful nuclear test in 1998. The completion of the first, 50-megawatt plutonium production reactor in Pakistan's central Khushab district was seen as a step toward modernizing the country's arsenal. The reactor is capable of producing about 10 kilograms of plutonium a year, enough for about two warheads.

Construction of the larger reactor at Khushab apparently began sometime in 2000. Satellite photos taken in the spring of 2005 showed the frame of a rectangular building enclosing what appeared to be the round metal shell of a large nuclear reactor. A year later, in April 2006, the roof of the structure was still incomplete, allowing an unobstructed view of the reactor's features.

"The fact that the roof is still off strikes me as a sign that Pakistan is neither rushing nor attempting to conceal," said Albright of the institute.

The slow pace of construction could suggest difficulties in obtaining parts, or simply that other key facilities for plutonium bomb-making are not yet in place, the institute report concludes. Pakistan would probably need to expand its capacity for producing heavy water for its new reactor, as well as its ability to reprocess spent nuclear fuel to extract the plutonium, the report says.

After comparing a sequence of satellite photos, the institute analysts estimated that the new reactor was still "a few years" from completion. The diameter of the structure's metal shell suggests a very large reactor "operating in excess of 1,000 megawatts thermal," the report says.

"Such a reactor could produce over 200 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium per year, assuming it operates at full power a modest 220 days per year," it says. "At 4 to 5 kilograms of plutonium per weapon, this stock would allow the production of over 40 to 50 nuclear weapons a year."

There was no immediate reaction to the report from the Bush administration. Albright said he shared his data with government nuclear analysts, who did not dispute his conclusions and appeared to already know about the new reactor.

"If there's an increasing risk of an arms race in South Asia, why hasn't this already been introduced into the debate?" Albright asked. He said the Pakistani development adds urgency to calls for a treaty halting the production of fissile material used in nuclear weapons.

"The United States needs to push more aggressively for a fissile material cut-off treaty, and so far it has not," he said.

Special correspondent Kamran Khan in Karachi, Pakistan, and researcher Alice Crites in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/23/AR2006072300737.html>

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New York Times

July 25, 2006

As The Price Of Oil Soars, So Does Its Power To Shape Politics From Washington To Beijing

By Steven R. Weisman

WASHINGTON, July 24 — As violence spreads in the Middle East, the Bush administration is grappling with an unwanted side effect of its policies: higher oil prices caused by fears of a disruption in global oil supplies.

While the administration seeks to confront Iran, give Israel more time to defeat Hezbollah, and secure stability in Iraq, higher oil prices reduce its maneuvering room overseas and frustrate American consumers at home.

Oil prices reached \$78 a barrel last week before dropping back to \$75. Although there are many reasons for the surge in prices, oil analysts agree that one is a "fear factor" of potential shortages.

Worries that the unabated conflict in Lebanon could draw in Syria, or Iran, which in turn could threaten the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, have compounded those jitters, as has the Bush administration's confrontation with Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons program.

But just as international politics are complicating the oil market, the oil market is complicating diplomacy as it reshapes the global balance of power.

Some analysts think Iran is now debating internally whether to cut off its oil exports if it is threatened, either as a result of the Lebanon conflict or over its nuclear ambitions. Iran has sent contradictory signals, with a key nuclear negotiator, Javad Vaeedi, saying in March that Iran would consider such a move, only to have Iran's oil minister say later the same day it would not.

Any step by Iran to cut off its own oil revenues would be so hard politically for the government in Tehran that many experts say it would not be tempted to go down that road.

But even a temporary shut-off would be a huge psychological blow to the global market, and Iranian leaders may calculate that there would be an advantage in the economic damage to Europe and the United States.

For months, the United States has sought to tighten the noose around Iran by getting the United Nations Security Council to threaten sanctions over its suspected nuclear weapons program. Iran says its nuclear program is civilian in nature.

Russia, China and some European leaders, fearful that Iran could follow through on its threat to turn off the oil spigot in reply, even if temporarily, have resisted.

The difficulty of getting other countries to cooperate aside, even American officials acknowledge that any sanctions would exclude Iran's energy sector.

Given Iran's dependence on oil exports for income that supports a broad range of subsidies for food, fuel and other necessities for its people, excluding energy from any sanctions plan raises real questions about how effective such a step would be.

American officials acknowledge that oil complicates American diplomacy but insist that they will not alter basic policies, especially on Iran, which the West accuses of supporting groups like Hezbollah and Hamas.

"The fact that Iran has oil power has not made one whit of difference in our determination to stop them from acquiring nuclear weapons," said R. Nicholas Burns, under secretary of state for political affairs. "I don't think it has with our allies, either. We are not going to allow Iran's supposed oil power to exert any leverage over us."

But Iran's ability to rebuff the West on these matters has only increased as oil prices have risen from about \$27 a barrel at the start of the Iraq war, to \$65 a barrel in the spring as tensions rose over Iran's nuclear program, to \$75 on Monday as the conflict continued in Lebanon.

Indeed, according to Cambridge Energy Research Associates, each \$5 increase in oil prices translates into \$85 million a week for Iran's bank account, emboldening its leaders and making whatever aid it supplies to Hezbollah easier to finance even as the crisis threatens to spread.

"Oil has been embedded in our diplomacy for decades," said Stuart E. Eizenstat, who was an aide to President Jimmy Carter and undersecretary of state for economics under President Bill Clinton. "It's always given producing countries leverage, but now that leverage is magnified more than ever before."

Oil has also always had ramifications for the United States' domestic politics. Iran's new leverage comes not just from its rising oil revenues but also because the price of gasoline at the pump is a potentially damaging liability for the Bush administration, as it has been for other American presidents.

At least since 1973, the year of the last full-scale war between Israel and its neighbors and the imposition of an OPEC oil embargo, oil has occupied a central space in the American political psyche. Six years after the oil shock came the overthrow of the shah of Iran, the doubling of oil prices and gas lines at home that helped hustle President Carter from office.

Today the Bush administration faces rising criticism from hard-liners that its Iran policy is not stiff enough. But if the diplomatic course is challenging, the military options may be more treacherous and, analysts say, would almost certainly drive the price of oil even higher.

That possibility has not stopped conservatives like William Kristol, the editor of *The Weekly Standard*, who was a major booster of the decision to wage war on Iraq, from calling for an airstrike on Iran's suspected nuclear weapons facilities.

Senator Richard G. Lugar, the Indiana Republican who is the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said in a speech this year, "No one who is honestly assessing the decline of American leverage around the world due to our energy dependence can fail to see that energy is the albatross of U.S. national security."

Indeed, the extraordinary power of oil to transform world politics today extends far beyond Iran, or even the Middle East.

In April, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice complained that the hunt for oil and gas was "distorting international politics in a very major way." Now that comment is turning out to be both prophecy and understatement.

New oil money has given not only Iran but also Russia more resources to resist Western pressure. As he played host to the Group of 8 summit meeting in St. Petersburg last week, President Vladimir V. Putin was able to swat away criticism from President Bush about Russian domestic and foreign policies.

He boasted, in fact, that Russia's oil, natural gas and nuclear energy capacities made it the biggest energy player in the world.

Months before the summit meeting, Russia was hoping to use the final communiqué to endorse its approach on energy, in which the state basically controls the oil sector. The Bush administration joined with Europe to block such an endorsement, American officials say.

But energy remains a major American irritant with Russia and by extension China.

The Bush administration has stepped up its efforts to support pipelines that would carry oil and natural gas to the West, bypassing Russian territory.

Russia, in turn, has pressured Central Asian countries to oppose American energy projects and the use of the area for military bases.

To do that, Russia has joined with China to mobilize a five-year-old group called the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, whose members include several Central Asian countries. The Defense Department is even worried that the group could move from its focus on energy to become a military alliance to rival NATO.

Many American analysts say energy issues are driving Russia and China into each other's arms politically, and that if anything American policies are accelerating the trend.

Meanwhile, the new oil politics are rearranging the international playing board, not simply giving Iran latitude in the Middle East but allowing Venezuela, for another example, to try to blunt Washington's influence in Latin America.

"We are seeing a radical change in how countries like Russia, Iran and Venezuela on the supply side, and China and India on the demand side, bring the world marketplace to bear on foreign policy," said Carlos Pascual, a former top aide to Ms. Rice and now foreign policy studies director at the Brookings Institution.

"I don't think any of us have done a terribly good job of thinking through how far behind the eight ball we are on these issues," he said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/25/world/middleeast/25oil.html>

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Washington Post

July 25, 2006

Pg. 11

U.S. Says It Knew Of Pakistani Reactor Plan

Congress Learned of Nation's Nuclear Expansion From Independent Analysts

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Bush administration acknowledged yesterday that it had long known about Pakistan's plans to build a large plutonium-production reactor, but it said the White House was working to dissuade Pakistan from using the plant to expand its nuclear arsenal.

"We discourage military use of the facility," White House spokesman Tony Snow said of a powerful heavy-water reactor under construction at Pakistan's Khushab nuclear site in Punjab state.

The reactor, which reportedly will be capable of producing enough plutonium for as many as 50 bombs each year, was brought to light on Sunday by independent analysts who spotted the partially completed plant in commercial-satellite photos. Snow said the administration had "known of these plans for some time."

The acknowledgment came as arms-control experts and some in Congress expressed alarm about a possible escalation of South Asia's arms race. Some also sharply criticized the administration for failing to disclose the existence of a facility that could influence an upcoming congressional debate over U.S. nuclear policy toward India and Pakistan.

"If either India or Pakistan starts increasing its nuclear arsenal, the other side will respond in kind," said Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), co-chairman of a House bipartisan task force on nonproliferation. "The Bush administration's proposed nuclear deal with India is making that much more likely."

That proposal would allow the United States to share civilian nuclear technology with India.

Construction of the reactor in Pakistan began as early as 2000, and the plant is still several years from completion, according to an analysis by the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington-based nonprofit group that produces technical assessments of nuclear weapons facilities. Based on a study of satellite photos, the group estimated the new reactor to have an operating capacity of 1,000 megawatts thermal and an annual yield of at least 200 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium.

A small reactor already operating at the Khushab site is capable of producing about 10 kilograms of plutonium a year, according to the analysis.

The Pakistani Foreign Ministry, reacting to a Washington Post article about the new plant, neither disputed the report nor offered specifics about the reactor. Pakistani officials acknowledged the nation's long-term ambition to

expand its nuclear power infrastructure and modernize its nuclear arsenal. Pakistan is thought to possess up to 50 nuclear bombs, all based on designs that use highly enriched uranium and generally are more cumbersome than plutonium devices.

"This ought to be no revelation to anyone, because Pakistan is a nuclear-weapons state," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Tasnim Aslam said at a news conference in Islamabad, according to the Associated Press. Aslam said Pakistan's leaders "do not want an arms race in this region," but she noted that Pakistan was not the first nation in South Asia to test nuclear weapons. Rival India first tested a nuclear device in 1974 and currently has about 30 plutonium-based warheads.

Weapons experts worried yesterday that Pakistan's expanded nuclear capabilities would lead countries in the region -- other than India -- to follow suit.

"There are makings of a vigorous competition in fissile material production in South Asia -- between India and Pakistan in the first instance but also China as well," said Robert Einhorn, formerly the State Department's chief nonproliferation official and now a senior adviser to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "It would be one thing if we were talking just about well-secured nuclear bombs. A larger concern is the greater amounts of fissile material, which create more opportunities for terrorists to get their hands on it."

Henry D. Sokolski, the Defense Department's top nonproliferation official during the George H.W. Bush administration, said he was most surprised by the way news of the reactor in Pakistan became known.

"What is baffling is that this information -- which was surely information that our own intelligence agencies had -- was kept from Congress," said Sokolski, now director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. "We lack imagination if we think that this is no big deal."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/07/24/AR2006072400995.html>

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New York Times

July 25, 2006

Libya Neared Nuclear Bomb, Qaddafi Says

By Reuters

TRIPOLI, Libya, July 24 — The Libyan leader, Muammar el-Qaddafi, whose country abandoned its program of unconventional weapons in 2003, said Sunday that at one stage Libya came close to building a nuclear bomb, the Libyan news agency reported Monday.

It was the first time any Libyan official has confirmed that Libya had been trying to build nuclear weapons.

"It is true that Libya came close to building a nuclear bomb, the news agency quoted Mr. Qaddafi as saying in a speech to Libyan engineers.

"This is no longer a secret," he added, according to the report, "as everything was laid bare by the" International Atomic Energy Agency.

"The programs and equipment" to build a nuclear bomb "are known," he said.

Mr. Qaddafi, who was speaking mainly about the need for economic self-reliance, referred to the country's efforts to obtain a bomb as one of several examples of Libyans being successful in challenging endeavors. He gave no further details.

His main point was that he wanted to limit the role of foreigners in the economy to ensure that as much of the country's wealth as possible stayed at home.

In December 2003, Libya said that it was abandoning its program of unconventional weapons and that it would allow international weapons inspectors into the country. The move was the most startling of several by Libya that helped it to repair relations with the West after decades of estrangement.

The United States government said in May that it would restore formal ties with Libya and take it off the list of countries deemed state sponsors of terrorism.

Mr. Qaddafi, elaborating on a longstanding explanation for his abandonment of confrontation with the West, said the time for spending large amounts of money on supporting political movements overseas was over.

He said he had stopped supplying revolutionary movements with help "because we spent a great deal of money on the military side, not only in terms of construction."

He said Libya had taken part in a battle for Arab nationalism. "There were hopes and aspirations to have a strong nationalist entity of which we would be a part," he said. "Unfortunately this has failed, and that era ended, and a new era began."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/25/world/africa/25libya.html?ref=world>

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Concentrating On Missile Defense

By Frank J. Gaffney Jr.

The British wit Samuel Johnson once declared, "The prospect of hanging concentrates the mind wonderfully." The televised images of various missiles being launched from places as far removed as North Korea and Lebanon should have a similar effect on American minds, both those of citizens and those of elected officials who represent them. Unfortunately, the problem is not confined to the worrying implications of North Korea's spasm of seven ballistic missile test launches (six successful, one a dud) on July Fourth. Neither should it be obscured by the relatively unsophisticated, but still lethal, missile volleys Hezbollah has rained down on population centers in Israel, and their repercussions, that have temporarily driven the North Korean danger from our front pages.

Consider the following other, mind-concentrating data points:

*Cash-strapped North Korea has made no secret of its readiness to sell military hardware to willing buyers. This has given rise to active missile technology-sharing and/or joint development projects with nations like Pakistan, Iran and Yemen with longstanding ties to terrorism.

*News reports suggest Pakistan -- a nation one heartbeat away from having a full-fledged Islamofascist regime -- is ramping up its capacity to build as many as 40 to 50 nuclear weapons a year. If Pakistani ballistic missiles of ever-increasing-range are armed with such weapons and put in the service of the Islamists, democratic India will not be the only country at risk.

*Iran also aspires to place the nuclear weapons it is building and their missile delivery systems in the service of global jihad. Not only does the Iranian regime threaten to "wipe Israel off the map" and bring about a "world without America." It has also tested ballistic missiles in a way that suggest it is acquiring the means to effect such outcomes. Among Iran's missile developments, two are particularly worrying: First, the regime has test-launched a short-range Scud missile off of a ship. The ability to use a mobile, seagoing platform means the regime and its friends need not seek long-range missiles to attack distant targets. Such an attack has one other attraction: By bringing a Scud-type missile -- of which there are thousands around the world, including the dozen or so North Korea delivered to Osama bin Laden's ancestral homeland, Yemen, a few years back -- near the enemy's shoreline, strategic warning can be kept to an absolute minimum.

Second, Iran has tested its medium-range Shahab-3 ballistic missile in a manner that appears designed to detonate a nuclear weapon in space. This could allow Tehran to execute the sort of missile-delivered strike that has been judged by a congressionally mandated, blue-ribbon commission to be capable of causing "catastrophic" damage to the United States -- an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack. By wiping out electrical systems and electronic devices, possibly coast-to-coast, America could be reduced to a pre-industrial society in the blink of an eye.

*Then, there is China's ballistic missile arsenal. Despite determined U.S. efforts to portray the communist regime in Beijing as a reliable partner in American diplomacy and trade, it is inexorably building ever-larger numbers of missiles. Increasingly, these are capable not only of intimidating Taiwan but also of attacking the United States -- something Chinese generals twice have publicly threatened to do. PRC technology has also been an enabler of many other nations' ballistic missile programs, both directly and through proxies like Pakistan and North Korea.

*Last but not least, there is Russia. Vladimir Putin has personally helped market new Russian spiraling and maneuvering missile re-entry vehicle technology as breakthroughs that will allow attackers defeat American missile defenses. He has also presided personally over simulated massive nuclear-armed ballistic and cruise missile strikes on the United States.

George W. Bush deserves great credit for ending the insane policy he inherited of leaving the United States absolutely vulnerable to ballistic missile attack. He withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty that codified that vulnerability and he began deploying limited missile defenses, mostly ground-based ones in Alaska and California.

Clearly, while these steps were necessary, they are not sufficient in a world in which the missile threat is metastasizing. Leading members of Congress like Republican Sens. Jon Kyl of Arizona and Richard Shelby and Jeff Sessions, both of Alabama, and Reps. Duncan Hunter of California and Curt Weldon of Pennsylvania have long recognized this reality. Now, it is time for their colleagues and the public to join forces behind a concerted effort to deploy defenses capable of defeating the emerging threat.

Fortunately, a newly released report by the Independent Working Group on Missile Defense, the Space Relationship and the Twenty-First Century lays out a roadmap for such defenses. It calls for substantially expanding the Navy's sea-based defenses to provide, among other things, protection of the U.S. East Coast and interior from attacks launched from and beyond the Atlantic.

The working group also makes clear the imperative of developing and deploying missile defenses where they can do the most good at least cost: in space. And it describes ways in which the necessary technical, public and political support can be obtained and sustained.

The starting point for such support should be at hand -- the wonderful concentration of minds engendered by the prospect in our time of a mass, missile-delivered "hanging."

Frank J. Gaffney Jr. is president of the Center for Security Policy and a columnist for The Washington Times.

<http://www.washtimes.com/commentary/20060724-083921-5669r.htm>

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Reuters.com

July 25, 2006

Missile Defense Plan Seen Ready By Fall

By Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters

WASHINGTON- The U.S. military hopes to complete work this fall on a plan mapping out how regional commanders will be able to use the fledgling U.S. missile defense system, a top general said on Tuesday.

Lt. Gen. Larry Dodgen, commander of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, told industry executives and congressional aides he expected the so-called "concept of operations" to be done by October or November.

He said it marked the first time the military had tried to draft such a plan for a specific capability across the military's regional commands.

Dodgen hailed a recent successful test of a missile-shield component built by Lockheed Martin Corp. to shoot down a ballistic missile in the last minute or so of its flight.

The so-called Terminal High Altitude Area Defense weapon system, or THAAD, "exceeded its objectives" in the long-planned test at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, Lockheed said in a statement earlier this month.

Dodgen agreed, saying the THAAD missiles would "pay for themselves many times over."

He also mentioned plans to deploy missile interceptors in Japan, and said officials were still weighing where to place interceptors in Europe.

The United States last month activated its ground-based interceptor missile-defense system ahead of a test-launch of North Korean missiles on July 5.

North Korea defied international warnings and fired seven missiles into waters east of the Korean peninsula. Dodgen said the missiles were not in the air long enough to learn much about them, but the U.S. military was still studying its data.

The United States has built up a complex of interceptor missiles, advanced radar stations and data relays designed to detect and shoot down an enemy missile, but tests of the system have had mixed results. It is based on the concept of using one missile to shoot down another before it can reach its target.

The United States has installed nine interceptors in silos at Fort Greely in Alaska and two at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California. In addition, U.S. Navy vessels with long-range tracking and surveillance capability ply the Sea of Japan.

Dodgen said further improvements would include placement of additional interceptor missiles, more sensors and further development of the system's capabilities, including better defenses against cruise missiles.

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