



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) Outreach Journal

Issue No. 1152, 13 February 2015

Welcome to the CUWS Outreach Journal! As part of the CUWS' mission to develop Air Force, DoD, and other USG leaders to advance the state of knowledge, policy, and practices within strategic defense issues involving nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, we offer the government and civilian community a source of contemporary discussions on unconventional weapons. These discussions include news articles, papers, and other information sources that address issues pertinent to the U.S. national security community. It is our hope that this information resource will help enhance the overall awareness of these important national security issues and lead to the further discussion of options for dealing with the potential use of unconventional weapons. **All of our past journals are now available at http://cpc.au.af.mil/au_outreach.aspx.**

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FEATURE ITEM: *Pentagon Point Man for Nuke Fixes Fact-Checks Progress* Associated Press

http://www.nytimes.com/aponline/2015/02/11/us/ap-us-nuclear-missteps.html?_r=2&gwh

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. — The Pentagon's point man for fixing what ails the nation's nuclear forces came to this remote air base to get a feel for nuclear missile duty in an inhospitable climate.

Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work got the feel the moment he arrived Tuesday: a slap-in-the-face kind of cold, energized by an icy wind. He joked before arriving that veterans told him February was the perfect time for his first visit because, "If you don't go to Minot in the winter, you're a wimp."

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Air Force Technology

NNSA and USAF complete B61-12 LEP instrumented flight tests

February 11, 2015

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has completed eight vibration fly around / instrumented measurement vehicle (VFA/IMV) tests of the B61-12 life extension programme (LEP) at Eglin Air Force Base and Edwards Air Force Base in the US.

The tests were undertaken in collaboration with the US Air Force (USAF). They successfully collected and verified flight environment data for the B61-12 LEP.

It is claimed that the flight test will be a key building block between on-going system ground testing and the first development flight test drop scheduled in 2015. The tests' assets consisted of hardware designed by Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory.

The hardware was integrated to the tail-kit assembly instrumented measurement vehicle (IMV) section. This was designed by Boeing St Charles, under contract with the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center.

NNSA defence programmes deputy administrator Dr Don Cook said: "These tests are a major achievement for the B61-12 LEP to evaluate flight environments.

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"This achievement within the B61-12 life extension programme is an important milestone that demonstrates the nation's commitment to maintain the B61 and provides assurance to our allies."

The B61-12 LEP is a joint USAF and NNSA programme. It seeks to preserve the B61 nuclear bomb, a critical element of the US nuclear triad, and demonstrates continued support for extended deterrence and assurance commitments.

The programme is expected to reuse or remanufacture current components as much as possible. It includes refurbishment of both nuclear and non-nuclear components to address ageing, while ensuring extended service life and improve safety, reliability, and security of the bomb.

LEP is managed by the Nuclear Weapons Council, a joint department of defence and department of energy / NNSA organisation. It entered development engineering in February 2012, and will incorporate an air force tail-kit assembly in to the B61-12, enabling it to replace the existing B61-3, -4, -7, and -10 bombs.

<http://www.airforce-technology.com/news/newsnnsa-and-usaf-complete-b61-12-lep-instrumented-flight-tests-4509235>

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Sputnik News – Russian Information Agency

US Defense Department stated that the US Navy has issued a \$302 million contract to Charles Stark Draper Laboratory Inc. to repair and maintain Trident D5 nuclear missiles.

February 10, 2015

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) — The US Navy has issued a \$302 million contract to Charles Stark Draper Laboratory Inc. to repair and maintain Trident D5 nuclear missiles, according to a US Defense Department statement.

"Charles Stark Draper Laboratory Inc... is being awarded a maximum amount \$302,443,626 firm-fixed-price, fixed-price-incentive and cost-plus-incentive-fee contract for the ongoing acquisition of Trident (D5) MK 6 Guidance System Repair Program with failure verification, test, repair and recertification of inertial measurement units, electronic assemblies and electronic modules," the statement, issued on Monday, said.

The Trident D5 is a submarine-launched intercontinental ballistic missile with a range greater than 4573 miles, according to the Navy.

The US ballistic missile submarine fleet consists of 14 Trident submarines that currently carry approximately 1,000 warheads, according to the Congressional Research Service.

The Navy has programs to keep the Trident missiles in operating condition capable of being deployed throughout the life of the submarines. A new submarine is expected to replace the existing fleet by 2031, according to the Congressional Research Service.

The Trident D5 contract is expected to be completed by March 31, 2019, the Pentagon statement said.

<http://sputniknews.com/military/20150210/1018027123.html>

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Defense One

The Wrong Move: Adding Nuclear Weapons to the Russia-Ukraine Conflict

By Lt Gen Robert Gard Jr. and Greg Terryn
February 9, 2015

You may have missed it, but last month two key members of Congress asked the military to move additional U.S. nuclear weapons and dual-capable aircraft into Eastern Europe.

Reps. Mike Rogers, R-Ala., chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, and Mike Turner, R-Ohio, chairman of the Tactical Air and Land Forces Subcommittee, sent a joint letter to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and Secretary of State John Kerry advocating the addition of new sites in Eastern Europe for the deployment of additional U.S. nuclear weapons and dual-capable aircraft.

In their letter, the two chairmen extend a Russian statement claiming its sovereign “right” to deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea to an “intention” to do so. They also assert Russian “moves to deploy nuclear-capable Iskander short-range ballistic missiles as well as nuclear-capable Backfire bombers in the illegally occupied territory [Crimea].”

There is no evidence that Russia has taken or is preparing to take any of these actions; but the letter alleges that they pose a new military threat to U.S. allies and our forces in Europe, and that the U.S. must respond “to change President [Vladimir] Putin’s calculus.”

Fortunately, nuclear weapons have played no overt role in Russia’s annexation of Crimea or its ongoing aggression in eastern Ukraine. And while the U.S. and its European allies must react, introducing a nuclear confrontation into the already dangerous situation is more likely to cause Putin to respond in kind than to change his calculus. Declared U.S. policy is to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security, not to employ them in hopes of intimidating a hostile head of state.

Russia’s possible deployment of nuclear weapons in Crimea would provide it little, if any, additional military capability. In fact, Russian dual-capable weapons in that area are not a new development; Russia’s naval fleet in the Black Sea has had a nuclear capability since well before the conclusion of the Cold War. Additionally, if Russia were to locate Backfire bombers in Crimea, which would require extensive upgrading of the Gvardiesky airbase, it would provide no additional reach to Western Europe or vicinity. Why overreact to a militarily ineffective provocation even if it should occur?

For whatever deterrent value they may provide, the U.S. already has some 200 B-61 nuclear bombs based in Europe, along with dual-capable aircraft to deliver them. Deploying additional tactical nuclear weapons to Europe would escalate tensions between NATO and Russia while providing no additional security to our allies or to U.S. forces deployed there. As noted by then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James Cartwright, our tactical nuclear weapons deployed in Europe have no uniquely military function that cannot be provided by our other nuclear weapons.

Deploying additional U.S. tactical nuclear weapons to Europe would make them more vulnerable to a Russian preemptive attack, even with conventional weapons, in the event of an escalating crisis. Also, it is well-known that Russia possesses a far larger stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons than the U.S. has in its inventory. Russia could be tempted to employ its tactical nuclear weapons superiority to take out the U.S. weapons deployed in Europe in the mistaken belief that it could confine the conflict to Western Europe.

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In addition, the role of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons deployed in allied NATO countries has been a topic of contention for years. Some East European allies welcome the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe for symbolic assurance of their security, while some Western European allies oppose their presence as unnecessarily provocative and dangerous. Following a determination that our nuclear sites in Europe were not secure, the United Kingdom actually insisted on the removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from its territory. While Russian aggression has quieted calls for removal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe, the addition of more nuclear weapons to NATO countries would cause a serious split in the alliance.

Moreover, preparing additional sites in Europe to accommodate tactical nuclear weapons would require a significant financial commitment at a time of budget austerity with far higher priorities for scarce resources allocated to defense. Given the concern over budget caps and sequestration, syphoning defense dollars from conventional priorities to provide funds for this unnecessary and expensive proposal gives new meaning to the definition of “counterproductive.”

Deploying additional U.S. tactical nuclear weapons and more dual-capable aircraft in Europe provides no advantage: It would be an expensive initiative that would add nothing to our security, divert funds from higher priority defense expenditures, likely provoke Russia to deploy nuclear weapons in Crimea, increase the possibility of nuclear war, and be divisive amongst our NATO allies.

<http://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2015/02/wrong-move-adding-nuclear-weapons-russia-ukraine-conflict/104940/>

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The Diplomat

The Real Danger in Nuclear Modernization

The true risks in modernizing the U.S. nuclear arsenal are misunderstood.

By Adam Mount
9 February 2015

Russia and China are modernizing their nuclear arsenals and the U.S. is not. The line is so dramatic and so alarming that commentators have found it useful in justifying all sorts of expansions of U.S. nuclear policy, including more extensive modernization plans, new nuclear weapons, and assertive revisions of nuclear strategy. If these steps are not taken, the most powerful country in the world could find itself subject to coercion, its allies bullied, falling behind its adversaries.

This thinking is mistaken on three counts. First, the United States *is* modernizing its nuclear forces. Second, the U.S. nuclear triad is markedly superior to the Chinese and Russian arsenals. Most importantly, the real danger to strategic stability may not be the U.S. falling behind the modernization of other countries but in racing aggressively ahead.

The United States has not taken an “acquisition holiday” in its nuclear arsenal, as Maj. Gen. Garret Harenca recently asserted. This thought relies on a misreading of the natural nuclear modernization cycles of the major nuclear powers: While many of Russia’s ageing systems are reaching the ends of their service lives in this decade, many of the systems that make up the U.S. arsenal are not due to retire until the 2020s.

Rather than “sit back and simply maintain our existing aging nuclear forces,” as Congressman Michael Turner charged, the United States is gearing up a comprehensive modernization program that in many ways exceeds the requirements of time and deterrence. In some areas (including the nation’s strategic bombers and its tactical bombs) the plans would replace existing systems before the older ones need to be retired.

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In others (like intercontinental ballistic missiles) the services are considering significant upgrades to existing systems. Moreover, the U.S. arsenal has been undergoing continual modernization as necessary, including major upgrades to strategic bombers and recent life extensions of the warheads atop ballistic missiles launched from both land and sea.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal is a robust, redundant triad. It consists of highly capable platforms at each leg of the triad and relatively few nonstrategic systems. The upcoming modernization plans will build on extensive experience in designing, constructing, and operating sophisticated stealth platforms.

In contrast to the United States, Russian strategic forces are now in the middle of their modernization cycle. Though the Kremlin is modernizing aging systems in each leg of their triad, the Russian arsenal will remain markedly less capable than its American counterpart for the foreseeable future.

Even given extensive modernization, a number of question marks remain. One is the trend toward placing more warheads on each launcher. Intended to counteract the U.S. national missile defense system, the result is a level of vulnerability the United States would never accept in its arsenal because each launcher now presents a more inviting target. Furthermore, Russia is retaining many tactical systems that are strategically useless, including torpedoes, depth charges, and short-range ground-launched missiles that could never reach the United States. Lastly, Russia's ability to fund its modernization program is dubious, given that oil now stands at half the price required to balance the Russian budget. In this environment, and with other military priorities pressing, it will be a major sacrifice for Putin to push ahead with building the nation's first stealth bomber.

At sea, Russia is building eight new Borei submarines to make up for weaknesses in the current fleet. For example, Hans Kristensen has found that in 2012 the U.S. submarine fleet conducted 28 lengthy deterrent patrols to points near to its adversaries' coasts, while Russia sailed on only five patrols in areas near its own coastal regions, barely enough to keep one submarine at sea at any given time. Yet by the time Russia has rolled out its fleet of eight Boreis, the United States expects to be launching the first of its 12 next-generation submarines. While Russia has flirted with abandoning continuous-at-sea deterrence, the United States plans to replicate a very strict requirement for its own larger fleet of submarines.

China

Since becoming a nuclear power, China has consistently demonstrated restraint in its nuclear force structure and American intelligence estimates have consistently overestimated Chinese capabilities. It is only in the last ten years that China has gained a plausible second-strike capability against the continental United States and only in the last two years that it has developed a triad of nuclear delivery systems by commissioning its first functional missile submarines. Far from a threat to U.S. nuclear supremacy, China's gradual modernization is only now approaching a modern nuclear arsenal.

Overall, the capabilities of Chinese nuclear forces are hardly alarming: the U.S. Office of Naval Intelligence says the new Jin-class ballistic missile submarines are easier to detect than 1970s-era Soviet submarines; the newest DF-31A ICBMs may not have the range to strike Washington; and China's new air-launched cruise missile is to be carried by Xian H-6 bombers, which were derived from 1950s-era Soviet Badgers that Russia retired from service in 1993.

There is little evidence that Russia and China are looking to exceed the American advantage in these areas, or that they could if they wanted to. Instead, many of the modernization programs in these countries are the predictable result of previous American decisions. The new Russian Sarmat heavy ICBM, the shift toward multiple warheads, and the Chinese submarine programs are expected reactions to U.S. deployment of ballistic missile defense systems. Meanwhile, the trend in both countries toward mobile missiles is a response to American conventional superiority and military doctrines that seek to defeat sophisticated defenses and gain access to defended targets.

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U.S. strategists put these policies in place with full knowledge that they would provoke reactions of this sort. It would be foolish to now attribute sinister motives to expected responses.

Given the stability and sophistication of the U.S. arsenal and the vulnerabilities in Russian and Chinese systems, current plans for aggressive nuclear modernization may cause more problems than they solve.

It is vitally in the American interest that nuclear weapons are never again used in war. The likeliest path to nuclear use in the coming decades is not that an enemy suddenly launches a surprise attack on the continental United States with superior delivery systems. The greater concern is that a crisis could lead Russia or China to feel that they had been backed into a corner by U.S. conventional superiority and that utilizing a nuclear weapon could, in Moscow's words, "de-escalate" the crisis. Nuclear forces that could provoke this scenario are destabilizing and could inadvertently lead to nuclear use. The most important steps the United States can take to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again are those that support a condition of mutual nuclear deterrence and not those that seek to overcome it.

The United States is in the enviable position of moving second in this round of modernization. The U.S. should use its position of technological and diplomatic strength to ensure strategic stability at the nuclear level, rather than destabilizing the world in a vain search for a useless supremacy.

There has always been an element in American strategic circles that is unwilling to accept the mutual vulnerability that underwrites nuclear deterrence. There will be calls to refuse mutual deterrence with China and to attempt to transcend the condition with Russia as punishment for bad behavior. The United States should resist this urge and instead build nuclear forces that are modest, affordable, and stabilizing. The real danger in U.S. nuclear modernization may not be too little, but too much.

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/02/the-real-danger-in-nuclear-modernization/>

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Al Arabiya News

Iran warns West that pragmatist Rowhani at risk from talks failure

By Parisa Hafezi and Louis Charbonneau
February 7, 2015

Iran's foreign minister has warned the United States that failure to agree a nuclear deal would likely herald the political demise of pragmatist President Hassan Rowhani, Iranian officials said, raising the stakes as the decade-old stand-off nears its end-game.

Mohammad Javad Zarif pressed the concern with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at several meetings in recent weeks, according to three senior Iranian officials, who said Iran had also raised the issue with other Western powers. Zarif's warning has not been previously reported.

Western officials acknowledged that the move may be just a negotiating tactic to persuade them to give more ground, but said they shared the view that Rowhani's political clout would be heavily damaged by the failure of talks.

The warning that a breakdown in talks would empower Iran's conservative hardliners comes as the 12-year-old stand-off reaches a crucial phase, with a March deadline to reach a political agreement ahead of a final deal by June 30.

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The agreement aims to end sanctions in exchange for curbs on Tehran's nuclear program, though hard-to-bridge differences remain, particularly on the timing of the relief on economic sanctions and the duration of the deal.

Both U.S. President Barack Obama and Rowhani, who Iranian officials say has staked his career on the deal, are facing stiff domestic opposition to an agreement, narrowing the scope for compromise.

A senior U.S. official denied that any such warnings had been received from the Iranians. "We'll leave assessment of Iranian politics to the Iranians but this rumor is untrue," the official told Reuters on condition of anonymity. But the Iranian officials insisted that Zarif had raised the concern with Kerry. The two have met repeatedly in recent weeks in an attempt to break the impasse, most recently on Friday when they talked for over an hour on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

"As Rowhani is on the frontline, naturally he will be more harmed," said one of the officials, who has direct knowledge of Zarif's discussions with Kerry.

Other Western officials said the Iranian delegation had raised the same concern in talks recently. If the talks fail, Rowhani would likely be sidelined and his influence dramatically reduced, giving hardliners like Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps an upper hand, Iranian officials and Western analysts say.

A comprehensive nuclear deal is seen as crucial to reducing the risk of a wider Middle East war, at a time when Iran is deeply involved in conflicts in Syria and Iraq. After nearly a year of talks, negotiators failed for the second time in November to meet a self-imposed deadline for an agreement.

Iran rejects allegations it is developing the capability to produce atomic weapons. But it has refused to halt uranium enrichment and other sensitive atomic work, leading to U.S., European Union and U.N. sanctions that have hobbled its economy.

The key sticking point in the talks at the moment is Iran's demand that Western powers agree to the quick end of oil and banking sanctions, Western and Iranian officials say.

One of the Iranian officials, who also had direct access to the talks, said the Americans were talking in terms of years for the sanctions relief while Iran wanted curbs on oil and banking to be lifted within six months.

Power struggle

Rowhani was elected in 2013 on promises of ending the crippling Western sanctions, improving the economy and reducing the country's diplomatic isolation.

But he faces a worsening power struggle with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has said Iran should immunize itself against sanctions, suggesting that he is prepared to live with them. Khamenei has the final word on any deal.

Rowhani has warned that the Islamic Republic needs to end its isolation to help its economy, which has also been hit hard by plunging oil prices.

Just as Iranian negotiators say privately that their room for compromise is narrowing, so too is that of the United States and European delegations, Western officials say.

Both Israel and Saudi Arabia are suspicious of the U.S. decision to engage with Iran on the nuclear issue. Israel has threatened to use military force against Iranian nuclear sites if diplomacy fails to contain the threat it feels Tehran poses.



The United States, officials familiar with the talks say, has already compromised on the issue of how many centrifuges Iran would be allowed to operate.

Obama could temporarily suspend many of the harshest unilateral U.S. sanctions against Iran but permanent removal would have to be approved by the Republican-controlled Congress, where there is little appetite for sanctions relief.

The Senate is finalizing a bill for tougher sanctions if there is no final nuclear deal by June 30. Obama has vowed to veto any new Iran sanctions bill.

Another Western official said Rowhani appeared to have underestimated the resolve of Washington and Europe to demand limitations on Iranian nuclear activities for a decade or more in exchange for sanctions relief.

"Rowhani thought that by speaking nicely and not calling for Israel's destruction, Western powers would rush to sign a deal, any deal, with Iran," the official said. "He miscalculated. The Western powers may also want an agreement but they're also constrained by Congress, Israel and Saudi."

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/analysis/2015/02/07/Iran-warns-West-that-pragmatist-Rowhani-at-risk-from-talks-failure.html>

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Business Insider

Russia conducted nuclear submarine exercises beneath the North Pole

By Jeremy Bender

February 09, 2015

Russian nuclear units carried out Arctic exercises in international waters beneath the North Pole over the weekend, Damien Sharkov reports for Newsweek.

The exercise featured the presence of several Borei-class ballistic missile submarines. These subs are among the most technologically advanced and capable of Russia's current ballistic missile submarine fleet, and they function as a nuclear deterrent.

The timing of the exercise is thought to be a response to NATO's decisions on Feb. 5 to reinforce its eastern military position along the Russian border.

However, Russia has said that the exercise was instead simply part of the country's shift towards reinforcing its position within the Arctic.

"In particular we focused on hazard and threat detection, but also on missile launching and navigation manoeuvres, ice reconnaissance, submerging and emerging from ice, using torpedoes to undermine ice and many other issues," Vadim Serga, captain of Russia's North Fleet, said in a translation provided by Newsweek.

The increasing integration of nuclear forces into Russian military drills have led Britain's defense minister on Feb. 6 to voice concern over how Moscow has "lowered the threshold" for the use of nuclear weapons. Russia's military doctrine allows for the use of nuclear weapons in response to a conventional attack that threatens the state's existence.



British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon told Reuters that "[t]here is three-fold concern, first that they (the Russians) may have lowered the threshold for use of nuclear. Secondly, they seem to be integrating nuclear with conventional forces in a rather threatening way and ... at a time of fiscal pressure they are keeping up their expenditure on modernizing their nuclear forces."

On Dec. 26 of last year, Putin signed off on a new military doctrine for Russia that emphasized three strategic locations — the Crimean peninsula, Kaliningrad, and the Arctic. This doctrine, which sees NATO as Moscow's main existential threat, calls for further militarization and modernization of troops based in these three regions.

Russia's claims to the Arctic are increasingly contentious as countries within the Arctic Council all have rival claims to the Arctic sea bed. The US estimates that upwards of 15% of the earth's remaining oil, 30% of its natural gas, and 20% of its liquefied natural gas are stored in the sea floor beneath the Arctic.

Russia's submarine exercises beneath the Arctic come on the heels of a construction blitz across the region. Moscow is constructing ten Arctic search-and-rescue stations, 16 deepwater ports, 13 airfields, and ten air-defense radar stations across its Arctic coast.

In November 2014, Russia announced plans to construct a military reconnaissance drone base only 420 miles away from the Alaska mainland. Moscow has also begun the construction of an Arctic military base of operations 30 miles away from the Finnish border.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/russian-nuclear-submarine-exercises-under-north-pole-2015-2#ixzz3RMEt3GGB>

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The National Interest

The U.S. Just Tested a Stealthy Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile

By Zachary Keck

February 11, 2015

The U.S. recently tested a new long-range anti-ship missile that is designed to counter the growing anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities of states like China and Iran.

On Monday, the U.S. announced that the Navy, Air Force and DARPA conducted a successful test of their Long Range Anti-Ship Missile (LRASM) earlier this month at the Sea Test Range in Point Mugu, California. According to the press release, during the test: "a B-1B bomber released the LRASM prototype, which navigated a series of pre-planned waypoints to verify aerodynamic performance. In the final portion of the flight, the missile detected, tracked and avoided an object that was deliberately placed in the flight pattern to demonstrate LRASM's obstacle-avoidance algorithms."

In the press release, Capt. Jaime Engdahl, the Navy program manager in the LRASM Deployment Office (LDO), said that the missile will "deliver game-changing capability to our warfighters in theater as quickly as possible."

The LRASM, which is manufactured by Lockheed Martin, has a reported range of 500 nautical miles and carries a 1,000-lb. penetrator and blast-fragmentation warhead. It is primarily designed to provide the U.S. Navy and Air Force with a precision-guided long-range stand-off capability that can survive in aggressive electronic warfare environments. To achieve this, it uses on-board sensors and a semi-autonomous guidance system to reduce its dependence on intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms, network links and GPS navigation. It also employs "innovative terminal survivability approaches and precision lethality" to avoid advanced enemy countermeasures while still reaching its intended target.

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The missile's development underscores the degree to which the U.S. military is planning on fighting in contested electronic warfare environments in the future, as well as how far America's current anti-ship capabilities have eroded. The program was begun under DARPA in 2009 and leverages existing technology of the Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile Extended Range (JASSM-ER) program. Its development is being fast tracked under the Pentagon Better Buying Power 3.0 program with the expectation that it will serve as a stopgap solution to compensate for the Navy's aging RGM's Harpoon anti-ship missiles (The U.S. Navy also recently tested a sea-based Tomahawk land attack missile against a moving maritime target. The TLAM, however, requires in-flight communication updates to adjust its flight path. It does boast nearly twice the range of the LRASM).

The LRASM is expected to become operational in 2018 when it is integrated on to the Air Force's B-1 Lancer. Shortly thereafter, it will be integrated on to the Navy's F/A-18 Super Hornet. Last year, DARPA began the competition for its successor, the Offensive Anti-Surface Warfare (OASuW)/Increment 2 anti-ship missile, which is expected to reach initial operational capability around 2024.

The LRASM had previously been tested twice in 2013 when it still a DARPA demonstration program. Following those successful tests, the U.S. Air Force and Navy joined DARPA in spearheading the program under the LRASM Deployment Office (LDO). This month was the first time the LRASM had been tested since that office was established. This also appears to be the first time its obstacle-avoidance capabilities were tested.

<http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/the-us-just-tested-stealthy-long-range-anti-ship-missile-12227>

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Times Free Press

TVA says tritium releases rise within Watts Bar Nuclear Plant

By Dave Flessner
February 7, 2015

TVA's production of a key nuclear weapons component at its Watts Bar Nuclear Plant is expected to boost tritium levels within the plant above its prescribed limits this year even before the utility decides whether to more than double its production of the radioactive material.

TVA insists that the elevated levels of the radiated water within the plant presents no problems, but critics continue to object to TVA's growing production of the military material within a civilian nuclear plant.

In a letter sent to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and released this week, TVA says it expects its production of a bomb material for the military will boost tritium levels within the reactor core above the authorized annual levels sometime later this year. But J.W. Shea, vice president of nuclear licensing for TVA, said the release will not exceed any allowable levels for releases outside of the plant or pose any threat to TVA employees.

"There continues to be no significant radiological environmental effect associated with the Tritium Production Program," Shea said in a letter to the NRC. "TVA has not, nor do they believe they will, exceed any regulatory limits for tritium release into the environment."

But the notice of higher tritium releases within the plant's containment system comes as TVA considers plans to more than double its production of tritium for the military. TVA is completing an environmental review of the impacts of producing more tritium for the military at Watts Bar.



TVA extracts tritium from the reactor core of the Watts Bar Unit 1 reactor by installing TPBARs into the fuel rods of the plant during each fuel cycle. The National Nuclear Security Administration, an arm of the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for maintaining America's nuclear weapons stockpile, proposed this week in its fiscal 2016 budget that TVA boost the number of TPBARs in each fuel cycle to help replenish tritium supplies needed for nuclear warheads.

Tritium has a half life of 12.5 years, meaning that the substance has to be replaced on a regular basis to maintain the power of America's nuclear arsenal.

David Lochbaum, director of the Nuclear Safety Project for the Union of Concerned Scientists in Chattanooga, said monitors should detect any tritium releases outside of the plant. But Lochbaum and others criticize the military use of civilian nuclear plants and the additional security and transport threats raised by such activity.

"It's like taking a gun aimed at our enemies and putting it against our own heads," Lochbaum said. "As TVA's letter points out, they are taking steps to prevent the trigger from being pulled."

But Lochbaum and other nuclear critics remain wary of DOE's plans to expand tritium production at Watts Bar. "While this cockamamie program caused more tritium to be released and increased TVA's headaches, those limits continue to be monitored and should protect workers and the public," he said. "Of course, smart people wouldn't put loaded guns to their heads and hope they don't go off. But since this program is one of DOE's, I guess this smart people analogy doesn't apply."

Tom Clements, director of the Savannah River Site Watch, said the TVA notice of extra tritium leaking from the TPBARs is disturbing and should give pause to plans for even more tritium production at Watts Bar.

"The record of avoidable tritium releases into the environment due to the militarization of the Watts Bar reactor is inexcusable given the poor rod design and potential public health and environmental impact of radioactive tritium," Clements said. "The NRC must not bend over and allow TVA and DOE to simply increase the tritium leakage level, particularly as DOE's focus should be on a reduction in the need of tritium due to weapons dismantlement legally mandated by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty."

The NRC will have to modify TVA's license at Watts Bar to allow for the proposed increase in tritium production. But the notice of the additional tritium releases within the reactor core from the TPBARs is not a licensing violation, NRC spokesman Joey Ledford said.

"The NRC staff continues to review the letter, but it is not part of any licensing or regulatory action," Ledford said Friday.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/business/aroundregion/story/2015/feb/07/tvsays-tritium-releases-rise-withnuclear-plan/287022/>

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Stars and Stripes

North Korea missile launch may signal technical upgrade

By Yoo Kyong Chang and Erik Slavin
February 01, 2015



North Korea's launch of five missiles may be more than just a typical response ahead of annual U.S.-South Korea military exercises, analysts and officials said Monday.

The missiles, which flew about 125 miles Sunday before splashing down off North Korea's eastern coast, seemed to demonstrate improved capabilities, said Yang Uk, senior researcher with the Korea Defense and Security Forum. The surface-to-surface missiles appear to be a quasi-ballistic copy of a Russian model than can change path while flying, he said.

"That its missiles ranges are getting longer probably implies that the North might have USFK's Camp Pyeongtaek and Osan Air Base in its inland shooting range," Yang said. "I think we're going to need to be more careful about it."

South Korea's Defense Ministry did not issue a formal statement regarding the missile launches. Instead, officials texted comments to individual reporters.

"The Ministry of National Defense is trying to understand North Korea's intention or motive now," one message said. "Our military is ... keeping a close eye on the status of the North Korean military, while we beef up U.S.-South Korean combined surveillance readiness."

A ministry spokesman told Stars and Stripes that a final assessment of the missiles could take several months and won't be made public.

North Korean rhetoric, followed by demonstrations of military power, aren't unusual before a major bilateral military exercise involving the U.S. and South Korea, which soon will hold Key Resolve and Foal Eagle.

Last month, South Korean President Park Geun-hye announced she would like to hold talks without preconditions with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un. North Korea responded that the bilateral exercises had to be canceled as a precondition, which Seoul ruled out.

The missile launch also precedes the anniversary of the founding of North Korea's armed forces, Yang noted. "Inside the North, the country probably wanted to show to its people that their country is powerful to such an extent as to fire those missiles," Yang said.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/north-korea-missile-launch-may-signal-technical-upgrade-1.328536>

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The National Interest

Avoiding the Unthinkable: Preventing a US-China Nuclear War

By Jay Carafano

February 9, 2015

Washington can't be complacent about its relationship with an antagonistic nuclear power. We've known that for more than thirty years, since the Pentagon sponsored a highly classified war game called Proud Prophet.

Conducted in 1983, the game was designed to test the strategy Washington had honed for more than a decade. The United States had always relied on deterrence to prevent war between the superpowers. But, if deterrence failed, the West needed a Plan B—and they had one. If NATO and the Warsaw Pact actually started to trade shots, the alliance strategy would be to manage the conflict: demonstrate resolve, hold its ground and de-escalate the confrontation. It sounded plausible—in theory.

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Proud Prophet put Plan B to the test. It used a put-up or shut-up scenario, pitting Moscow against Washington in a mock shooting war. The results were terrifying. Tit-for-tat ended in an all-out nuclear exchange obliterating mankind.

Now, Beijing is not Moscow. And that's what makes the lesson of Proud Prophet so scary when contemplating modern-day, nuclear-armed China. Managing escalation with the Soviet Union was easy compared to managing potential escalation with China. One reason for that is because the competition between the United States and U.S.S.R. was relatively symmetrical. In many ways, the hard-power strengths of the two powers mirrored each other.

Additionally, East and West lived in separate camps. There was scant economic interaction between the two sides. We mostly talked among ourselves. They (mostly) talked to themselves. Yet, in Proud Prophet's relatively simple two-player competition, once escalation started, it quickly spun out of control.

The U.S.-Chinese relationship is the polar opposite. The economies and public spheres overlap in a complex, foot-tripping web. Both sides have looked at mastering asymmetrical advantages to constrain and manage the other. If they ever started actually shooting at each other, managing that messy relationship would become nearly impossible. Just like Proud Prophet, it would lead to a horror show.

An easy answer to the conundrum would be to adopt the same policy as the great powers did during the Cold War. After all, Proud Prophet never became a reality show. In fact, Proud Prophet confirmed what both sides already suspected: there was no good Plan B once the shooting started. As the global confrontation dragged on, both superpowers accepted as conventional wisdom that a direct military conflict—much less any exchange of nuclear weapons—was unacceptable.

Still, the fact that the Cold War stayed cold is small assurance for those responsible for managing the fate of humanity thirty years later. If any leader had made a strategic misjudgment, it would not have been pretty. Historians still debate, for example, how seriously Moscow took another U.S. exercise: Able Archer. That 1983 NATO exercise took the alliance to the brink of nuclear exchange. According to some accounts, the Kremlin pretended to freak out hoping to send a message to President Reagan that he shouldn't act too much like the cowboy he played in the movies. Others still hold that the Kremlin briefly feared the U.S. president was about to "go cowboy" and launch a preemptive nuclear attack.

Relying on deterrence alone, hoping everyone gets the memo that firing nuclear weapons is a no-no, is no way to run a planet. Conversely, we know that President Obama's road to nuclear zero is going nowhere. There is no getting rid of nuclear weapons anytime soon. A credible, modernized nuclear arsenal paired with missile defenses will remain an essential part of protecting and defending the United States for many years to come. Still, in the end, all nuclear weapons are really good for is reminding others that fighting nuclear wars is a bad idea. When the Reagan White House realized that, if deterrence failed, Plan B was no good either, the administration opted for a "cost-imposing strategy." It moved from managed competition to outracing the Soviet Union—counting on the wheels coming off when the Soviets tried to keep up with the full-court pressure of U.S. military upgrades, hardline diplomacy and a resurgent American economy.

The Soviet Union collapsed, and the world lived another day. That was then. But there is no reason to think that strategy can stave off Armageddon a second time. Washington needs to wake up. To avoid a scenario where the United States faces the prospect of a managed military conflict with China, Washington will have come up with a game changer now.

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The Chinese are going to be no help here. It's clear the Chinese want to see the day when the United States is no longer an Asia-Pacific power, and they are working to nudge the United States aside—sometimes not so gently. Meanwhile, Washington has no plans to stop being an Asia-Pacific power.

In the short term, the United States needs to come up with a regional strategy that makes China more cautious about thinking it can call the shots. Here the United States has some common cause with India, Australia and Japan. Working together, these powers could send China a message that would force Beijing to pause and consider.

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/avoiding-the-unthinkable-preventing-us-china-nuclear-war-12209>

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International Business Times

North Korea test-fires 'ultra-precision' intelligent rocket

By Jayalakshim K
February 7, 2015

Stepping up its missile development programme, North Korea has test-fired a new "ultra-precision" intelligent rocket which reportedly meets the approval of its leader.

The exercise was carried out by its East Sea fleet, Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

"The ultra-precision anti-ship rocket blasted off from a rocket boat. The intelligent rocket precisely sought, tracked and hit the 'enemy' ship after taking a safe flight," KCNA said, without giving a location or date.

The rocket would soon be deployed across North Korea's navy, it said.

The North's leader, Kim Jong-un, has called for the production of "more tactical guided weapons of high precision and intelligence".

The country has gone ahead with the development of new ballistic missiles and rockets despite heavy sanctions imposed by the international community.

The North's missile programme has been watched with increasing wariness by the US though its mastery of an effective inter-continental ballistic missile is doubted.

Satellite images have shown North Korea developing a marine-based missile system capable of striking back if hit by a nuclear weapon.

A submarine with one or two vertical launch tubes to fire either ballistic or cruise missiles has also been detected, raising fears of a scaled up nuclear threat.

Pyongyang has raised the rhetoric since the UN passed a resolution condemning its human rights record while Washington has blamed it for a cyber-attack on Sony Pictures lampooning its leader.

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Yonhap New Agency- Soul South Korea

S. Korea, U.S. conduct deterrence drill against N. Korea

Oh Seok-min

February 13, 2015

SEOUL, Feb. 13 (Yonhap) -- South Korea and the United States on Friday wrapped up a joint exercise on shaping deterrence strategies to counter threats from North Korea, the defense ministry here said.

The two nations held the annual discussion-based tabletop exercise (TTX) at Seoul's state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses (KIDA) for three days starting Wednesday, the ministry said, adding they "discussed how to politically and militarily respond to North Korea's nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles."

The TTX, organized by the Extended Deterrence Policy Committee (EDPC), which is the allies' cooperation mechanism on enhancing extended deterrence, is the fourth of its kind since the inaugural drill in 2011. The term "extended deterrence" refers to a pledge by a nuclear power to protect an ally with no atomic weapons. "During this year's TTX, Seoul and Washington assessed threats by North Korea's nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, put forth ways to counter them, and discussed whether they are appropriate and effective enough," the ministry said in a release.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2015/02/13/0401000000AEN20150213006100315.html>

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Yonhap New Agency- Soul South Korea

Obama reaffirms commitment to nuclear-free Korean Peninsula in new National Security Strategy report

Chang Jae-soon

February 06, 2015

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6 (Yonhap) -- U.S. President Barack Obama unveiled a new national security strategy blueprint on Friday, reaffirming his commitment to end North Korea's nuclear program and make the world free of nuclear weapons.

"No threat poses as grave a danger to our security and well-being as the potential use of nuclear weapons and materials by irresponsible states or terrorists. We therefore seek the peace and security of a world

without nuclear weapons," Obama said.

"Our commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is rooted in the profound risks posed by North Korean weapons development and proliferation," he said in the National Security Strategy report sent to Congress.

The U.S. administration is required to periodically update the report to outline the country's national security concerns, priorities, goals and strategies. Friday's report is the first since the last one published in 2010.

In the report, Obama also reaffirmed his "pivot to Asia" policy.



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"Over the next 5 years, nearly half of all growth outside the United States is expected to come from Asia. That said, the security dynamics of the region, including contested maritime territorial claims and a provocative North Korea, risk escalation and conflict," Obama said.

"American leadership will remain essential to shaping the region's long-term trajectory to enhance stability and security, facilitate trade and commerce through an open and transparent system, and ensure respect for universal rights and freedoms," he said.

In order to realize the vision, Obama said the U.S. is modernizing its alliances with South Korea, Japan, Australia and the Philippines and enhancing the interactions among them to ensure they are fully capable of responding to regional and global challenges.

Obama also renewed security commitment to South Korea and other Asian allies.

The U.S. welcomes the rise of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous China, Obama said, adding that he hopes to develop a constructive relationship and work together with China on climate change, public health, economic growth, and the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

At the same time, Obama said the U.S. will manage competition with China "from a position of strength" while insisting that China uphold international rules and norms on issues ranging from maritime security to trade and human rights.

"We will closely monitor China's military modernization and expanding presence in Asia," Obama said. "On cyber-security, we will take necessary actions to protect our businesses and defend our networks against cyber-theft of trade secrets for commercial gain whether by private actors or the Chinese government."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2015/02/07/26/0301000000AEN20150207000200315F.html>

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The Washington Free Beacon

Russia Threatens Nukes in Crimea

Europe may see new nuclear arms race

By Jack Caravelli

Monday, February 9, 2015

In December 2014 Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told Russia's Interfax news agency that because Crimea had been absorbed into Russia and was no longer part of Ukraine, Russia "has the right to manage its nuclear arsenal...in accordance with its interests and international legal obligations."

Even the threat of an introduction by Russia of nuclear weapons into Crimea can be interpreted as a warning to European states that Russia is willing to escalate its effort to control the 'near-abroad.' Introducing the weapons also would cement Crimea's status as "Russian territory."

Lavrov's remarks also are further confirmation that Russia has no intention of respecting the 1994 Budapest Memorandum. At that time, Russia, the United States, United Kingdom and Ukraine agreed Ukraine would become a nonnuclear weapons state under the Nonproliferation Treaty by giving up its nuclear weapons—at the time it had the world's third largest stockpile with 1900 strategic warheads and 2500 tactical nuclear warheads—in exchange for recognition by all signatories that they would respect Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Ash Carter, speaking before the Senate Armed Services Committee last week as it was considering his nomination for Secretary of Defense, stated he believed the Obama administration needed to do more to support Ukraine's

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security requirements, including providing lethal assistance. He did not mention interest on the Obama administration's part in parrying any possible Russian introduction of nuclear weapons into Ukraine with the return of US nuclear weapons to Europe.

As Carter's nomination was moving through the Senate, on January 22, two Republican subcommittee chairmen from the House Armed Services Committee, Mike Rogers and Mike Turner, sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Chick Hagel and Secretary of State John Kerry offering their assessment of the current situation in Ukraine and measures the United States should take in response.

Rogers and Turner conclude that the United States needs to view Putin as an adversary, noting Russia's continuing efforts to increase military tensions in Ukraine and Lavrov's assertions regarding Russia's "right" to introduce nuclear weapons into Crimea. Their unequivocal language states, "We write to express deep concerns about Russia's repeatedly stated position that it has the right—and the intention—to deploy its nuclear weapons in the Ukrainian territory of Crimea." Rogers and Turner describe this possibility as a "dangerous escalation in Russia's recent aggression."

For the congressmen, the time has come for the Obama administration to "move immediately to update US defense policy." Their letter poses questions for Hagel and Kerry focused on options for the United States to introduce more "dual use" weapons such as F-16 fighters and forward deployed nuclear weapons into Europe, focusing in particular on basing such weapons on the territory of newer NATO members such as Poland. On the Senate side, Senator John McCain, new chairman of the Senate Armed Forces Committee, is expected to take on this issue in coming months as well.

In late 1987 Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev signed the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) in Washington which entered into force the following June. That ended a series of events that were turning Europe into a nuclear staging area, beginning with the 1977 deployment of Soviet SS-20 missiles that could hit targets throughout Europe, which in turn led to plans for the deployment of American nuclear weapons in response.

As with Ukraine's sovereignty, the INF Treaty's accomplishments may be another victim of Russia's aggression.

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/russia-threatens-nukes-in-crimea/>

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Sputnik News – Russian Information Agency

Russian Military to Fire Iskander Missiles During Pacific Ocean Drills

February 10, 2015

MOSCOW, (Sputnik) – The Russian Pacific Ocean Fleet along with military forces from the country's northeast has kicked off impromptu training exercises with some of its units on the Kamchatka Peninsula with approximately 2,500 servicemen, the Eastern Military Region's press service said Tuesday.

"During the check by the headquarters of the combinations and unions, as well as by the service members of Coast Guard subunits, anti-air defense, naval aviation, security marine ships, and submarine forces, they will work out issues of joint activity during the defense of the coastline within a interspecific grouping and a number of local military drill tasks," the press service said. The Russian military will fire Iskander-M (SS-26 Stone) theater missile systems as part of Eastern Military District exercises, the district's press service said in a statement.

The military said it was conducting field training exercises to brush up on important combat technical skills, specifically missile launches.

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"Servicemen of the Eastern Military District's missile formation have begun practical training using Iskander-M complexes," the statement said.

The Iskander-M is a short-range missile system. The missiles have a range of 400 kilometers (250 miles) and can carry conventional and nuclear warheads.

<http://sputniknews.com/russia/20150210/1018044670.html>

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Moscow Times

Russian Nuclear Missile Detection Capability Limited by Satellite Launch Delays

February 11, 2015

Russia's ability to detect intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launches will be impaired until at least July, when the first satellite of its new early warning system can be launched, the Kommersant newspaper reported on Wednesday citing Defense Ministry and space industry sources.

The new "Tundra" satellites were supposed to begin launching in 2013 to replace a defunct Soviet-era system. But technical delays have left Russia without any fresh eyes in the sky — leaving Moscow nearly blind to a possible nuclear first strike at a time when international tensions are peaking due to the crisis in Ukraine.

Kommersant said the decision to further postpone the launch was made by the Aerospace Defense Forces, the arm of the military that will operate the satellites, and the system's builder, Kometa space systems.

Russia's ability to detect ICBM launches has withered significantly over the past year. Moscow had three OKO-1 satellites remaining from the Soviet Union. One of these malfunctioned last year, and the other two only provided coverage for a few hours a day before they were taken offline in January when they reached the end of their operational lifetime, according to Kommersant.

But an unidentified Defense Ministry source quoted by Kommersant said Russia is not entirely blind to missile launches in the interim period between the old and new systems, since ground-based radar also plays a role in detecting incoming nuclear missiles.

Satellites simply increase the speed of detection, the source said: "The space-based units [of the early warning system] allow you to pinpoint the launch of an enemy missiles about a minute earlier than the radar stations."

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/business/article/russian-nuclear-missile-detection-capability-limited-by-satellite-launch-delays/515748.html>

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Asharq Al-Awsat

Iran's Khamenei says could accept fair nuclear compromise

Sunday, February 08, 2015



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Dubai and Munich, Reuters—Iran’s supreme leader said on Sunday he could accept a compromise in nuclear talks and gave his strongest defense yet of President Hassan Rouhani’s decision to negotiate with the West, a policy opposed by powerful hardliners at home.

As his foreign minister met his counterparts in the talks at a conference in Munich, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said he “firmly” backed a fair nuclear deal.

“I would go along with any agreement that could be made. Of course, if it is not a bad deal. No agreement is better than an agreement which runs contrary to our nation’s interests,” Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told Iranian air force personnel, according to official news agencies.

In a speech that still underlined his suspicions about Western nations that he characterized as “bullies,” Khamenei backed Rouhani’s negotiations with them and said any workable deal would mean both sides easing their demands.

“As the president said, negotiations mean reaching a common point. Therefore, the other party . . . should not expect its illogical expectations to be materialized. This means that one side would not end up getting all it wants.”

“I am for reaching a good settlement and the Iranian nation too will certainly not oppose any deal to uphold its dignity and integrity,” Khamenei said, an apparent warning to hardliners that they might have to accept a deal with powers including the United States, commonly known in Iran as “the Great Satan.”

Negotiators have set a June 30 final deadline for a nuclear deal, and Western officials have said they aim to agree on the substance of such an accord by March.

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who will address the US Congress on Iran on March 3—to the annoyance of the Obama administration—said he would strive to thwart would be a “bad and dangerous agreement”.

“World powers and Iran are charging ahead to an agreement that would allow Iran to arm itself with nuclear weaponry, something that would imperil the existence of the State of Israel,” Netanyahu told his weekly cabinet meeting.

The nuclear talks with the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and France are aimed at clinching a deal that would ease Western concerns that Tehran could pursue a covert nuclear weapons program, in return for the lifting of sanctions that have ravaged the Iranian economy.

Major sticking points are the pace at which sanctions would be removed, the size of Iran’s nuclear fuel-producing capacity—a key consideration in preventing any output of bomb material—and the length of any agreement.

“Our [nuclear] negotiators are trying to take the weapon of sanctions away from the enemy. If they can, so much the better. If they fail, everyone should know there are many ways at our disposal to dull this weapon,” Khamenei said.

Any deal “must be concluded in one stage and consist of clear and detailed specifications, and not subject to [various] interpretations,” he said.

“Given our past experience in dealing with the [West], a final draft must not leave any room for the other side to repeatedly extract concessions.”

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Separately, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif denied on Sunday a Reuters report quoting unidentified senior Iranian officials saying he had told the United States during the talks that Rouhani's political clout would be heavily damaged if negotiations failed.

"I believe the entire Iranian population understands that this government, that Dr Rouhani, his administration and the government in its entirety supported our efforts in the negotiations," Zarif told a security conference in Munich where he met counterparties in the negotiations, in what he called a "very serious discussion".

"Everybody has taken every necessary measure to make sure we succeed. All Iranians know this. If we fail, and I hope we won't, they [Iranians] will not consider us responsible for that failure. They will consider attempts [to ask] too much from Iran as a reason for failure."

US Senator John McCain, a hawkish Republican, warned in Munich that while Iran was negotiating now, its underlying goal was "to drive Western influence out of the Middle East."

<http://www.aawsat.net/2015/02/article55341268/irans-khamenei-says-accept-fair-nuclear-compromise>

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Al Bawaba

Obama: No reason to extend nuclear talks again

Monday, February 02, 2015

US President Barack Obama warns there is no reason to extend nuclear negotiations with Iran if an agreement on fundamental principles is not reached soon.

"I don't see a further extension being useful if they have not agreed to the basic formulation and the bottom line that the world requires to have confidence that they're not pursuing a nuclear weapon," Obama said at a joint press conference in the White House on Monday with visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

He added that the time has come for Tehran to make a decision on whether to accept a nuclear agreement. "They need to make a decision."

Obama said technical issues were no longer an obstacle in reaching a comprehensive deal with Iran. "The issues now are -- does Iran have the political will and the desire to get a deal done?" he said.

On Sunday, US Secretary of State John Kerry said it would be "impossible" to extend talks with Iran if the negotiating sides do not "the outlines of the agreement" in upcoming weeks.

Iran and the P5+1 states - the US, France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany - are in talks to narrow their differences and pave the way for a final, long-term accord aimed at putting an end to the 12-year-old dispute over Tehran's nuclear energy program.

The scale of Iran's uranium enrichment and the timetable for the lifting of anti-Iran sanctions are seen as major sticking points in the talks.

The illegal sanctions on Iran have been imposed based on the unfounded accusation that Tehran is pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear program.



Iran rejects the allegation, arguing that as a committed signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it has the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

In addition, the IAEA has conducted numerous inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities but has never found any evidence showing that Iran's civilian nuclear program has been diverted to nuclear weapons production.

In an interview with Press TV on Sunday, an American scholar of international relations said there will be no nuclear deal "unless the US is willing to recognize equality with Iran as a negotiating partner."

"I don't think the secretary of state can set a time limit and a framework and expect Iran to sign it," Professor James Petras said.

He added that the US "has to negotiate in good faith, recognizing certain boundaries that Iran has set regarding its nuclear program, regarding its conditions under which it's facing threats from Israel, and other nuclear powers."

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/obama-no-reason-extend-nuclear-talks-again-654720>

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Stars and Stripes

Obama: Time has come for Iran to decide on nuclear deal

Nedra Pickler

The Associated Press

February 10, 2015

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama said Monday that the time has come for Iran to decide whether to accept a nuclear deal, and he acknowledged "very real differences" with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over the negotiations.

In a campaign speech, Netanyahu criticized the international negotiations with Iran and portrayed his scheduled address to the U.S. Congress next month as an attempt to describe Israel's objections.

"A bad deal with Iran is forming in Munich that will endanger Israel's existence," Netanyahu said, referring to talks over the weekend in Germany between Secretary of State John Kerry and his Iranian counterpart. "Therefore I am determined to go to Washington and present Israel's position before the members of Congress and the American people."

Obama said the world powers negotiating with Iran are unified in their offer, while acknowledging the forceful opposition from Netanyahu.

"I don't want to be coy — the prime minister and I have a very real difference around Iran's sanctions," Obama said at a White House news conference with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, another party to the talks.

The president defended his decision not to meet with Netanyahu while he's in town at the invitation of Republican House Speaker John Boehner. Obama cited the precedence for U.S. presidents not to meet with foreign leaders who are facing an upcoming election, to avoid the perception of trying to influence the outcome.

"As much as I love Angela, if she was two weeks away from an election, she probably would not have received an invitation to the White House, and I suspect she wouldn't have asked for one," Obama said to a smile from Merkel, although she did not weigh in with her own perspective.



Democratic lawmakers fear Netanyahu will use the speech to lawmakers to try to embarrass Obama and further his own re-election prospects. The list of House Democrats who have said they will skip the speech grew Monday to six, and liberal Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont became the first senator to announce he won't attend.

"The president of the United States heads up our foreign policy and the idea that the president wasn't even consulted — that is wrong," Sanders said in a statement. "I am not going. I may watch it on TV, but I'm not going." Israel has long claimed a nuclear-armed Iran would pose a grave threat to world peace and security. Israel views a nuclear-armed Iran a threat to its very existence, noting calls by Iranian leaders for destruction of the Jewish state. Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, but critics in the West dismiss such explanations.

Obama warned Tehran that he sees no reason to further extend negotiations for a basic agreement next month. "We're at a point where they need to make a decision," Obama said. He said the only question remaining is, "Does Iran have the political will and desire to get a deal done?"

Iranian officials on Sunday signaled a willingness to come to an agreement. "This is the opportunity to do it, and we need to seize this opportunity," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif told a gathering of the world's top diplomats and defense officials. He said an extension would be in no one's interests.

Obama argued the extended negotiations with Iran have been time "well spent."

"The program has not only been frozen, but with respect to, for example, 20 percent enriched uranium, they've reversed it, and so we're in a better position than we were before the interim program was set up," Obama said.

Boehner's office objected to that assessment. "President Obama tried to clean up his debunked claims on Iran's nuclear program today but he still couldn't help but repeat a false claim. Now more than ever, it's critical that the American people hear the truth about the threat posed by Iran's nuclear program," said Boehner spokesman Cory Fritz.

Ian Deitch in Jerusalem and Andrew Taylor in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.stripes.com/news/middle-east/obama-time-has-come-for-iran-to-decide-on-nuclear-deal-1.328681>

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New York Daily News

John Kerry rules out another extension for Iran nuclear talks

By Adam Edelman

8 February 2015

Secretary of State John Kerry ruled out further extending nuclear negotiations with Iran if the two sides can't agree on fundamental principles of a deal, calling any kind of additional flexibility "impossible."

"The only chance I can see of an extension at this point in time would be that you really have the outlines of the agreement," he told NBC's "Meet the Press" in an interview airing Sunday. "But if we're not able to make the fundamental decisions that have to be made over the course of the next weeks, literally, I think it would be impossible to extend."



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"Either you make the decisions to prove your program is a peaceful one, or if you're unable to do that, it may tell a story that none of us wants to hear," he added.

His newly forceful position comes amid renewed concerns over the prospects of a U.S.-Iran deal. Talks between the two historically adversarial nations have previously been extended twice — most recently in November after no deal was reached by the deadline imposed by both parties after a year of talks.

Under the parameters of the latest extension, both sides had agreed that they would finalize main points of any future accord by the end of March and to reach a comprehensive deal by June 30.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif appeared to echo Kerry's sentiment Sunday, saying himself that the window for progress was closing.

"I do not believe another extension is in the interest of anybody," Zarif said following a 90-minute meeting with Kerry on the sidelines of an international security conference in Munich. "We're reaching the point where it is quite possible to make an agreement ... and I do not believe anything will be different a year down the road."

"This is the opportunity to do it and we need to seize this opportunity," Zarif said.

Ahead of the looming March deadline, tensions over a possible agreement have increased. A growing number of lawmakers has begun to push for legislation threatening Iran with new economic sanctions if the U.S.-led nuclear talks — which many hoped would get Tehran's to set limits on enriched uranium that could theoretically be used in nuclear weapons — broke down.

President Obama has argued that new sanctions could upend the negotiations and has vowed to veto any measure that lands on his desk.

Iran insists that its nuclear program is solely for energy production and medical research purposes. It has so far agreed to some restrictions in exchange for billions of dollars in relief from U.S. economic sanctions.

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/kerry-rules-extension-iran-nuclear-talks-article-1.2107417>

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FARS News Agency- Tehran Iran

Iran Blasts US President's Wrong Analysis on N. Talks

February 11, 2015

TEHRAN (FNA)- The Iranian foreign ministry lambasted US President Barack Obama for his recent claim that Tehran has participated in the nuclear talks with powers due to pressures and sanctions.

Iran entered the nuclear talks with a constructive intention to put an end to the “fabricated” crisis, Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham said on Tuesday, refusing claims that Tehran was forced to sit to the negotiations table through pressures and sanctions.

“Iran entered the nuclear talks given the peaceful nature of its nuclear activities and with an approach which is based on having constructive interaction,” Afkham stressed.

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“Winning the US public opinion as well as fighting political rivals inside the US seem to be the true reason behind the reappearance of this wrong analysis that Iran’s presence in the nuclear talks has been the product of the oppressive and illegal sanctions,” she added.

Afkham stressed it is “crystal clear that pressuring Iran has failed to produce effects and has instead resulted in our country’s remarkable progress in all fields, including its peaceful nuclear program, and we believe this has brought the US to the table of the nuclear negotiations”.

Referring to the US president’s remarks on internal affairs of Iran as well as the relationship between the Iranian nation and its government, the spokeswoman recommended President Obama “to avoid making such baseless and unrealistic comments and review the huge presence of the Iranian people on all national occasions and elections in the post-Revolution era”.

On Sunday, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei complained that the behavior of the Americans and their European allies in the negotiations is illogical as they expect all their excessive demands to be met, "but this is not the way of negotiation".

Ayatollah Khamenei approved of the Iranian officials' standing up to the other side's excessive demands, and said, "The Islamic ruling system acts on a logical basis in the nuclear talks, but the other side has no logic and is pursuing irrationality by relying on bullying."

The Supreme Leader reiterated that the Iranian nation will not tolerate bullying, excessive demands and illogical behavior.

The 10th round of negotiations between Iran and the six world powers was held in Vienna from November 18 to 24, where the seven nations decided to extend the talks until July after they failed to strike an agreement. The seven nations continued their talks in February.

Both Iran and the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) negotiators have underlined that cutting a final deal before the July 10 deadline is possible.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13931122000625>

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FARS News Agency-Tehran Iran

Iranian Ralliers Stress Strong Support for Leader's Policy in N. Talks

February 11, 2015

TEHRAN (FNA)- Millions of Iranian people in a final statement issued at the end of the February 11 rallies - marking the 36th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution - in Tehran and other cities across the country underlined their unconditional support for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's policy and redlines in the nuclear talks with powers.

"We support our country's negotiating team in the nuclear talks with the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) and believe that recognition of the Iranian nation's inalienable right to maintain the enrichment capacity and have an ensured development of its enrichment infrastructure to meet the country's needs as well as the all-inclusive annulment of all imposed sanctions simultaneous with the declaration of the

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comprehensive agreement is the only way to reach a nuclear deal," the final statement issued by the Iranian ralliers said.

"We urge the negotiators to seriously and precisely respect the redlines specified by the Supreme Leader" in his Sunday remarks on the necessity of respect for the Iranian nation's progress and having a single-phased final agreement without any further interpretations, it added..

The final statement also condemned the cruel sanctions against the Iranian nation, and stressed the necessity for strengthening the country's capacities and self-reliance and institutionalizing the "resistance economy" and jihadi management as the only ways to resist against the foreign pressures.

They also protested against the sacrilegious moves made against Islam mostly by the western states, including the cartoons of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) published by the French Weekly Charlie Hebdo.

The Iranian people blamed the puppet regimes of the region and their collaboration with the Zionist regime and the arrogant powers for the blood of those innocent people killed in Iraq, Syria, Gaza and Bahrain, and appreciated the decisive and advisory role played by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in assisting the regional states to confront the terrorist groups, including the ISIL.

The statement also underlined the Iranian revolutionary people's support for the popular revolutions in the region, and condemned the crimes committed by the US hirelings in Bahrain and other Islamic countries against their people.

The Iranian people also warned the arrogant powers that they would give a crushing response to any threat and aggression by the help of the country's military achievements and capabilities, specially its powerful missiles. Millions of Iranians in Tehran and other cities across the country took to the streets on Wednesday to show their unconditional support for the Islamic Republic through staging massive rallies on February 11th, marking the 36th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

Huge masses of people from all walks of life took to the streets and squares all over the country since morning to express their support for the cause and ideals of the Islamic Revolution.

More than 1,850 Iranian and foreign journalists and reporters covered the Bahman 22 (February 11) rallies this year.

In Tehran, demonstrators congregated at the Azadi Square, Tehran's main square and the site of major national rallies over the past three decades.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13931122000861>

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Tasnim News Agency – Tehran, Iran

Logic Brought Iran to Negotiation Table, Not Sanctions: Rouhani

February 11, 2015

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani rejected the Western claim that sanctions forced Iran to come to the negotiation table with world powers, stressing that Tehran's logical policy and its support for regional peace were reasons behind Iran's support for talks.



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"They are lying in their claim that Iran has come to the negotiation table because of (anti-Iran) sanctions," President Rouhani stated, addressing a huge gathering of Iranian people at Tehran's Azadi (Liberty) Square on Wednesday, marking the 36th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

"Iran has not come to the negotiating table under the pressure of sanctions, but for the sake of logic," he said, adding, "Iran has come to the negotiating table for the establishment of peace and stability in the region and the world."

His comments came after US President Barack Obama said on Monday that Washington will not approve another extension of Iran nuclear talks if negotiations remain at an impasse this spring, signaling a decision to mount pressure on Iran.

Hardline US senators also argue that sanctions have brought Iran to the negotiating table, calling for continuation of the threat to push Tehran to compromise.

Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany) are in talks to hammer out a final agreement to end more than a decade of impasse over Tehran's nuclear energy program.

Following an interim nuclear deal signed in Geneva in November 2013, two deadlines for a final, comprehensive deal have been missed, and now a third one is looming on July 1.

Elsewhere in his address, Rouhani reiterated that Tehran is after a "win-win" agreement, meaning that "Iran will have transparency in peaceful nuclear activities within the framework of the international regulations, and the other side should end its wrong, inhuman and illegal sanctions."

"An end to the sanctions will benefit both Iran and the other side," the president added.

<http://www.tasnimnews.com/English/Home/Single/652127>

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Tasnim News Agency – Tehran, Iran

Iran's FM Says Already Sought Single-Step Nuclear Deal

February 11, 2015

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said what he had been considering during the nuclear talks with world powers was in line with the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's view on the two-stage nuclear agreement.

Speaking to reporters in Tehran on Wednesday, Zarif said he was delighted to know that Ayatollah Khamenei had the same view about a long-awaited nuclear deal between Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, the US, Britain, France and Germany).

He made the comments amid huge rallies in commemoration of the 36th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution victory.

Earlier on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei made it clear that any nuclear deal between Iran and world powers should be implementable, stressing that "no deal will be better than a bad one," including a two-stage agreement.

The Leader expressed outright opposition to the idea of a two-stage nuclear deal, which entails consensus on the generalities at first and requires agreement on details at a later time.

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“Such a deal is not acceptable, because our experience of the opposite side’s behavior shows that mere agreement on the generalities will become a tool for making successive excuses over details.”

“If there is to be any deal, it must have a single stage and include generalities and details together,” the Leader explained.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zarif reiterated that a final nuclear deal requires “political will” to be shown by the other negotiating sides.

With the necessary determination, a deal could be clinched right now, otherwise, even 10 years of talks will be fruitless, the top Iranian diplomat explained.

<http://www.tasnimnews.com/English/Home/Single/652127>

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Want China Times – Taipei, Taiwan

Signs China may ally with India and Russia after Beijing summit

Staff Reporter

February 08, 2015

Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov and Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi met in Beijing on Jan. 2 for the 13th Russia-India-China (RIC) summit to discuss how, as three countries with major influence on global affairs and with emerging domestic markets, they can work together to ensure global and regional peace and stability as well as pushing forward global economic growth.

From his 2012 presidential campaign onwards, Putin has tied his ambitions for Russia's economy to the Russian Far East's trade with China and the Asia-Pacific region. Relations between China and Delhi, which have at times been subject to tensions over ongoing territorial disputes, have also matured to enable mutual respect, despite the Indian press's continuing reports on movements of both countries' armies in northern Tibet and Indian-controlled Ladakh.

In 2009, the foreign ministers of the three countries met in Bangalore to discuss economic matters, then in Wuhan in 2010, representatives from the three countries met to discuss cooperation on think tanks, industry, agriculture, disaster prevention and relief and public health. In 2012, the three were sufficiently emboldened to call for the promotion of regional peace, security and stability, for the benefit of each of their nation's peoples. From Nov. 10, 2013, the three countries took similar or identical stances on several issues. Several Russian analysts suggested that the RIC foreign minister talks might become a platform for the three countries and this became a reality in 2015.

The three countries took a long time in even reaching a basic level of agreement: from 2002 until 2009, no substantial written statement was issued; at the 2009 meeting in Bangalore, the three nations only reached consensus on supply of energy resources and on a peaceful resolution to the situation in Afghanistan. In 2010, however, the three expressed agreement or similar views on several international and regional issues and agreed to develop their solid foundation in ties. It wasn't until 2012, when Beijing and Moscow confirmed that India was capable of developing advanced nuclear technology, that talks between the three took off, which has led up to the current talks in 2015, where prejudices may be put aside and action may be forthcoming.

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Western analysts have tended to read from the summit signs of an RIC alliance. After Xi Jinping assumed the Chinese presidency in 2013, he accompanied Premier Li Keqiang on a visit to India and Pakistan and he also took a trip to four Central Asian countries, which has led to speculation that Russia, India and China are forming an alliance, in contravention of China's policy of nonalignment.

Around November 2013, with increasing activity between former Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh and Putin, the triangle became increasingly evenly dispersed and the countries involved could no longer play each other off against one another.

The triangle between Russia, China and India has long been referenced by bureaucrats in Moscow bureaucrats like former Russian prime minister Yevgeny Primakov. Although former deputy speaker of the Duma Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, with his reputation as a showman, wrote in his book *The Last March South* in typical bombastic form

that he yearned for a time "when Russian soldiers can wash their boots in the warm waters of the Indian Ocean and switch to year-round summer uniforms," implying the Russian annexation of Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey and the occupation of the Persian Gulf and the Mediterranean, since the appearance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, rhetoric among bureaucrats in Russia has been toned down and Russia has appeared more willing to take India under its wing, which might give Russia a leadership role which would skew three-party ties.

Beijing seems to have anticipated this move by Moscow, however, and from when the communique was issued on the meeting between the three foreign ministers, Beijing has only talked of "constructive interaction" and "constructive participation" from New Delhi, only removing the word "constructive" in 2013. From Beijing's perspective, the accession of India and Pakistan to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, had little to do with pressure from Moscow and New Delhi has since stated that it was Beijing that led the move.

Many observers in New Delhi believe the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will allow India to turn itself to resolving regional issues in Asia, particularly in Afghanistan. It was back in 2002 when the three countries first started to discuss this thorny issue. In the first communique in 2009, there was a mention of "building a democratic, diverse and prosperous Afghanistan. In the four communiqués that followed the references to the country became more and more pronounced. In 2010, the three nations decided to cooperate on the Afghanistan problem and to tackle drug trafficking in the Golden Crescent, a hotspot of the opium trade spread throughout Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. Afghanistan also dominated the 2015 foreign minister summit.

A written statement issued by the Chinese foreign ministry suggests that the three countries wish to realize the transition of security from the International Security Assistance Force to Afghan National Security Forces, implying that they want the NATO-led organization to make a quick exit from the country. The three countries also stated their support for the integration of Afghanistan in the region through expanding trade with the country and improving its internet connectivity. This is clearly in line with Beijing's proposal for a Silk Road Economic Belt and a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and implies that all three countries are ready to implement the Beijing Declaration, which would accelerate sustainable security and development in Afghanistan and the region.

Clearly, there is still a minefield to maneuver through in terms of diplomatic relations, but it seems that after 13 years of hard work, cooperation between the three countries is starting to bear fruit and China will no longer be alone in its attempt to bridge Eurasia, with its "One Road, One Belt" plan.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?cid=1101&MainCatID=&id=20150208000138>



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Hindustan Times- New Delhi India

Indo-US nuclear pact is mix of IAEA, 123 agreements

Pramit Pal Chaudhuri
February 09, 2015

India made no special concession to the US regarding the monitoring of nuclear material in its safeguarded nuclear reactors. And Washington did not order an executive authority climbdown regarding its own legal obligations.

“This was a question of finding a convergence of both respective systems that they could work with and would also meet our requirements,” says an Indian member of the bilateral contact group that worked out the administrative agreement regarding fissile material monitoring.

The agreement combined two separate understandings on the monitoring of nuclear materials in India’s reactors.

One is the existing Indian agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The other, US specific, derives from the legal obligation India and the US undertook when it made the historic 123 agreement in 2008. Under the latter, the two exchanged a list of facilities that used certain types of uranium and plutonium.

No new obligations were made by India in the administrative agreement finalised when US President Barack Obama came for Republic Day.

India has long agreed to IAEA safeguards and reporting to the IAEA on the state of its safeguarded nuclear materials — irrespective of which country this came from, including India. Reporting under the agreement will be discussed as part of the annual consultations with the US that are already required under the 123 agreement.

Referring to stories about two US inspectors being present in each IAEA team that visited Indian reactors, the source said being an international agency, the IAEA’s inspectors were drawn from around the world, not just Americans. The team’s composition is governed by confidentiality agreements the IAEA had with member countries.

The administrative agreements India has with other countries would reflect a similar template, but probably minus the 123 agreement-derived aspects. Japan, for example, was not a full spectrum nuclear supplier and would not be eligible for a separate administrative agreement that went beyond the IAEA obligations.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/indo-us-nuclear-pact-is-mix-of-iaea-123-agreements/article1-1314968.aspx>

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Want China Times – Taipei, Taiwan
Commentary

N Korea's nuclear facility a ticking time bomb for China: commentary

Staff Reporter
February 10, 2015



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It is a fatal mistake to assume that North Korea's nuclear program is not China's concern, says Zhang Liangui, a professor at the CPC Central Party School's Institute for International Strategic Studies.

In a commentary published over the weekend, Zhang said many Chinese people think North Korea is America's problem and that all Beijing needs to do is to nominally support peace on the Korean peninsula without being actively involved in the denuclearization process, as that would equate to lending Washington a hand.

Zhang believes however that as a neighboring country, China should be very concerned about North Korea's nuclear facilities, which have been deemed a disaster waiting to happen by experts around the world.

American nuclear scientist Siegfried Hecker revealed during a forum in 2012 that he was stunned by the scale and scope of the nuclear facilities he witnessed during two separate visits to the Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research

Center in 2004 and 2010. However, North Korea's technology remains primitive due to its isolation from the rest of the world, rendering its nuclear facilities extremely unsafe, Hecker added.

Heck said he was concerned that it would only be a matter of time before North Korea experiences a major nuclear catastrophe, questioning whether the US should offer its safety expertise in the field notwithstanding that it would help improve North Korea's development of nuclear weapons. Heck even asked Chinese delegates at the forum whether they had any solutions to the conundrum.

In 2012, North Korea came in last place in a report from America's Nuclear Threat Initiative on the safety measures of countries holding nuclear materials. A year later, a Spanish report also listed North Korea's nuclear facility as one of the most unsafe in the world, noting that its pipeline system was severely damaged in 2004.

Last April, China's official Xinhua agency published a report commenting on the safety of North Korea's nuclear program, saying that satellite images showed that summer storms and flooding had caused the reactor's cooling water supply to fail.

South Korean president Park Geun-hye also voiced her concerns over the safety of the North's nuclear facilities, commenting at a nuclear security forum at the Hague last March that a simple fire at Yongbyon could result in a nuclear disaster worse than Chernobyl.

The impact of a nuclear disaster in North Korea would be devastating, Zhang said. The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown in Japan in 2011, caused by an earthquake and the subsequent tsunami, forced around 300,000 to evacuate surrounding areas. Four years later, the destroyed nuclear plant continues to release radioactive pollutants into the sea, with reports that deformed sea life has become common in the region. Going further back, the Chernobyl disaster of 1986 means the town of Pripyat in what is now Ukraine remains uninhabitable even 30 years later.

Given that Yongbyon is in an earthquake zone and sits just 75 kilometers from the Chinese border town of Changbai, many residents in the northeastern part of the country are very concerned about the consequences of a nuclear meltdown, Zhang said. Following North Korea's third nuclear test in 2013, the Chinese government announced that it was setting up several dozen radiation monitoring stations in the northeastern part of the country. There are now more than 150 automatic monitoring stations collecting radiation data in China.

There is also no doubt that North Korea's nuclear program is growing, Zhang said. Based on data released by Germany's Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources, North Korea's third nuclear test released energy equivalent to 40,000 tons of TNT, making it three times more powerful than the atomic bomb that struck

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Hiroshima in 1945. The institute also estimated that the third test measured 5.2 on the earthquake magnitude scale compared to 4.2 and 4.8 from North Korea's first and second nuclear tests, respectively.

Also of major concern is that further nuclear testing by North Korea could cause the volcanic Changbai Mountain Range along the China-North Korea border to erupt. The dormant volcano has erupted 10 times in the past thousand years, with the most recent being in 1903. South Korean experts believe the volcano would erupt again from a nuclear test measuring 6.0 on the Richter scale, and that 60% of the destructive energy from the eruption would spill into China.

Another possibility of serious nuclear pollution would come from a US strike on North Korea's nuclear facilities. A secret 1994 report from the Clinton administration once evaluated the impact of such a strike, estimating that the damage caused by radioactive substances could spread as far as 400 km-1400 km, extending into both South Korea and Japan. The death rate would be 80%-100% within a 10km-50km radius from Yongbyon, and the survival rate would only be around 20% for people within a 30km-80km radius from the site, the report found.

Even after five years, areas within a 700km radius from the facility would still be affected by radiation pollution, the report added.

Zhang notes that the evaluation was conducted 20 years ago, when Yongbyon only had two nuclear reactors in operation. Since then, North Korea has significantly expanded the facilities and is also believed to be storing nuclear bombs there, he added.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20150210000093&cid=1101>

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Defense News
Commentary

Commentary: Humanitarian Nuclear Strategy?

By Matthew Costlow
February 10, 2015

At the end of 2014, Europe was treated to contrasting visions of the future of nuclear weapons. On the one hand, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov duplicitously cited international law to justify possibly placing nuclear weapons in the newly conquered Crimea.

Eight hundred miles to the east, nuclear disarmament advocates finished one of their annual events in Austria, the "Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons."

The who's who of nuclear abolitionists bemoaned the lack of cuts to nuclear arsenals, but reserved some of their harshest scolds not for Russia, but for the United States and the Obama administration, which they view as not sufficiently enthusiastic in pursuit of Obama's vision of "a world without nuclear weapons."

These calls for unilateral US nuclear disarmament rarely escape the disarmament camp's echo chamber. And considering the effects of a nuclear weapon's detonation, what other conclusion could a conference considering the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons come to?

Yet it is precisely their belief that having fewer nuclear weapons greatly benefits humanity that deserves some scrutiny.



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Five of the leading disarmament organizations submitted a joint statement at the Vienna conference that asserted the US and Russian nuclear stockpiles are too large and "far exceed any plausible deterrence requirements." They did not specify exactly how many nuclear weapons the US and Russia need to maintain a stable deterrent relationship, but claim they know the current amount is too much.

But how do they justify their claim? Their answer is enough to make any proper humanitarian blush with embarrassment: Nuclear weapons can kill a lot of civilians. That's right, the joint statement cites a pair of studies done in 2001 and 2002 that examine just how many civilians might die in a simulated nuclear war between the US and Russia if one of the countries uses a countervalue, or "city-busting" strategy. The reports' conclusions are a study in the macabre.

The Physicians for Social Responsibility report examined the effects of two simulated Russian nuclear attacks against the US. In the first scenario, Russia attacks primarily nuclear forces in the United States with 2,000 nuclear warheads, killing approximately 50 million.

In the second scenario, Russia attacks only densely populated areas with 500 nuclear warheads. This attack could kill 130 million, 80 million more, although only one-fourth as many weapons were used.

These conclusions would seem to indicate that a good humanitarian should support the strategy that kills the fewest civilians, yet the authors in the ironically named Physicians for Social Responsibility report believe their findings validate the need for lower nuclear force levels, since any strategy that "can produce upwards of 100 million fatalities" satisfies "any conceivable need for a nuclear deterrent."

The other report the five organizations cite is a Natural Resources Defense Council report that also examined counterforce and countervalue scenarios, this time with a simulated US attack on Russian targets. The authors assert that if the US attacked Russia's nuclear forces with 1,300 nuclear warheads it would kill approximately 10 million civilians. But if the US only targeted Russian cities with 150-192 nuclear warheads, approximately 45 million civilian fatalities would result.

The authors thus conclude the United States can get more deterrence bang while saving a buck if it embraced a strategy primarily targeting high-density civilian population centers.

Thankfully, the Obama administration as well as previous administrations have consistently rejected these calls. The Obama administration recently released its unclassified "Report on Nuclear Employment Strategy," which says in part: "The new guidance makes clear that all plans must be consistent with the fundamental principles of the Law of Armed Conflict. Accordingly, plans will, for example, apply the principles of distinction and proportionality and seek to minimize collateral damage to civilian populations and civilian objects. The United States will not intentionally target civilian populations or civilian objects."

President Richard Nixon and the master of realpolitik, Henry Kissinger, were "appalled" by the civilian casualties that would result in a nuclear war and sought counterforce options to reduce possible civilian deaths. Kissinger mused, "to have the only option of killing 80 million people is the height of immorality."

While nuclear disarmers have some noble goals like finding ways to lessen the possibility of a nuclear war, their strategy — reducing US nuclear weapons to levels that would demand targeting civilian population centers — may not work and is clearly immoral. As nations like Russia modernize their nuclear arsenals while making threats to US allies, it becomes all the more important to continue basing US nuclear strategy on the goals of deterrence and assurance, not on the threat of killing millions with the fewest weapons.

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