



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) Outreach Journal

Issue No. 1164, 08 May 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: "The Need for Nuclear Alerts". Authors: Dr. Mel Deaile and Mr. Al Mauroni, Center for Unconventional Warfare Studies; published by War on the Rocks; May 6, 2015.

<http://warontherocks.com/2015/05/the-need-for-nuclear-alerts/?singlepage=1>

The U.S. general who commanded America's nuclear forces and a few other notable American national security leaders have forged an alliance of sorts with a number of European, Russian, and Asian military officers and national security experts over a most explosive issue. The Global Zero Commission on Nuclear Risk Reduction, chaired by retired Gen. James Cartwright, is calling for the end of U.S. and Russian nuclear "hair-trigger" attack readiness as well as a series of agreements among the "nuclear club" that would end alert status for nuclear forces. Their report concludes that nuclear forces on alert make a nuclear exchange — accidental or deliberate — more likely because of escalating tensions between the United States and Russia. The effort to reduce the readiness level of nuclear forces is, in reality, a stepping stone for the Global Zero movement to continue its push for total nuclear disarmament. This effort, led by Gen. Cartwright, unfortunately misses the strategic importance of maintaining an alerted nuclear force and uses hyperbole and misinformation to advance a flawed argument.

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Great Falls Tribune – Great Falls, MT

Hearings Scheduled for Two Malmstrom Officers

By Jenn Rowell

May 4, 2015

Article 32 hearings for two officers accused of illegal drug use have been scheduled at Malmstrom Air Force Base.

The hearings are part of the Uniformed Military Code of Justice and are similar to civilian grand jury hearings. Their purpose is to determine whether sufficient evidence exists that a crime has been committed to warrant a court martial.

These charges are the result of an investigation that began in late 2013 and led to the discovery of cheating among missile crew officers at Malmstrom.

First Lt. Michael Alonso, assigned to the 12th Missile Squadron, was charged April 17 with alleged violations of Article 112a of the UCMJ for illegal possession, use and distribution of ecstasy, and Article 81 for conspiracy related to the drug offenses.

His hearing has been scheduled for May 7.

According to charging documents, Alonso was involved in illegal drug use on or about Nov. 1, 2013, and on or about Jan. 31, 2014. The charges include travel to California and conspiring with another airman, whose name is

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redacted, to acquire ecstasy and return to Montana with the drugs. He is also accused of possessing, using and distributing ecstasy on various occasions between February 2012 and January 2014.

First Lt. Lantz Balthazar, also assigned to the 12th MS, was charged April 17 with alleged violations of Article 112a for illegal possession, use and distribution of ecstasy and illegal use, distribution and possession of cocaine, Article 81 for conspiracy related to the drug offenses and Article 92 for illegal use of Pentadone, commonly called bath salts.

His hearing has been scheduled for May 19.

Balthazar is also accused of traveling to California on or about Nov. 1, 2013, and on or about Jan. 9, 2014, to acquire ecstasy and return to Montana with the drugs.

He's also accused of using Pentadone on various occasions between January 2011 and January 2014. Balthazar is also accused of possessing, using and distributing both ecstasy and cocaine, according to charging documents.

The hearing dates are subject to change.

According to Malmstrom officials, the charge of distribution can vary greatly from widespread sharing of an illegal substance to handing someone else an illegal substance, even if no money is exchanged.

<http://www.greatfallsbtribune.com/story/news/local/2015/05/04/hearings-scheduled-two-malmstrom-officers/26872495/>

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

US Awards \$600 Million for NATO's Ballistic Missile Defense Kill Vehicle

The US Missile Defense Agency awarded a \$600 million contract for 44 anti-ballistic missiles to be placed in Romania as part of the NATO's missile defense shield, US defense contractor Raytheon said in a statement on Monday.

4 May 2015

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) — The SM-3 Block IB is a kill vehicle that destroys ballistic missiles through high-speed impact; it will be deployed ashore in Romania in 2015.

"Under this contract action... Raytheon will deliver an initial quantity of 44 Standard Missile-3 Block IB all-up rounds and provide the work required to produce and deliver the third stage rocket motor reliability growth and design enhancements."

Raytheon noted that the US government intended to buy up to 52 of the missiles in total.

Under NATO's Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system plans, radars and interceptors will also be placed in NATO member states Turkey and Spain.

The United States will install an Aegis Ashore BMD complex in Romania in 2015, and a similar system in Poland by 2018, according to the US Missile Defense Agency.

The Aegis system is the command and control as well as weapons control component of the BMD. The system identifies and tracks targets for destruction using advanced computers and radars.

Russia has repeatedly warned that the BMD in Europe is a threat to its national security. The United States and NATO said the BMD was not aimed at countering Russia's massive nuclear arsenal, but rather limited to intercepting a small number of missiles potentially launched from Iran, North Korea or rogue non-state actors.

<http://sputniknews.com/military/20150504/1021707775.html>

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Air Force Times – Tysons Corner, VA

Breedlove: Now is Not the Time to Change Nuke Treaty

By Brian Everstine, Staff writer

May 2, 2015

The U.S. needs to continue plans to reduce nuclear weapons under the New START Treaty, despite the instability created in Europe by Russia's encroachment in Ukraine, the top U.S. military officer in Europe said Thursday.

"I would say that the security situation in Europe is less stable, but it's not based on the nuclear piece," Air Force Gen. Philip Breedlove, commander of U.S. European Command and NATO supreme allied commander, told a Senate panel. "That's not what worries me. What worries me is Russia as a nation now adopting an approach that says they can and will use military power to change international borders, or take over international states. That's what I truly worry about every day."

Under the treaty, the U.S. and Russia must meet a limit of 700 deployed ballistic missiles and deployed Air Force heavy bombers; a limit of 1,550 nuclear warheads on deployed missiles and bombers; and a limit of 800 launchers. Recent data shows the U.S. has been reducing its stock faster. As of September, the U.S. has 794 deployed ICBMs, submarine-launched missiles and heavy bombers, down from 809 in 2013. Meanwhile, Russia's inventory climbed to 528 from 473. The U.S. has 1,642 warheads, down from 1,688 while Russia's stock climbed to 1,642 from 1,400. The U.S. has 912 deployed and nondeployed missile launchers, down from 1,015. Russia has 911, up from 894.

Some in the Senate are pressing the administration to re-evaluate its position on the treaty. Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, said it is "ill-considered" that the U.S. keep reducing its stock to comply with Russia while the country is on the offensive in Europe.

"I cannot fathom a world in which we would see that it would make any sense at all for us to negotiate further nuclear reductions with Russia, when Russia is in violation of existing treaty obligations, and Russia's behaving the way that it is toward neighbors, like Ukraine," Lee said. "I cannot fathom it, and I don't think the American people can support it."

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/story/military/2015/05/02/new-start-treaty-russia-changes-breedlove/26640395/>

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

NATO to Deploy US Missile Interceptors at Base in Romania by Year-End

Romanian Defense Minister Mircea Dusa said that elements of NATO missile shield in Europe will be deployed at a military base in Deveselu, Romania by the end of 2015.

5 May 2015

CHISINAU (Sputnik) — Elements of NATO missile shield in Europe will be deployed at a military base in Deveselu, Romania by the end of 2015, Romanian Defense Minister Mircea Dusa said Tuesday.

The announcement follows his meeting with US Navy Admiral Mark Ferguson, Commander of the Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) in Naples, Italy, held in Romania earlier in the day.

"We both emphasized the need for the solidarity of the Alliance in terms of security in the region. I pointed out that Romania is an oasis of stability," Dusa was quoted as saying by Romanian media.

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He also specified that NATO's missile-intercepting facility in Deveselu will carry out only defense functions.

In late October, 2013, Romania and the United States signed a bilateral agreement to deploy SM-3 missile interceptors at the Deveselu Air Base in southern Romania.

The move is viewed in Russia as a threat to its national security and nuclear deterrence capabilities, while the United States and NATO claim their ballistic missile defense system is aimed at intercepting a small number of missiles launched from countries like Iran and is not directed against Moscow.

<http://sputniknews.com/military/20150505/1021750464.html>

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

Russia's Strategic Missile Forces to Get New Division with Railway-Based Missile System

The new systems are expected to become operational no earlier than 2018 and will remain in service until at least 2040

May 07, 2015

MOSCOW, May 7. /TASS/. The combat strength of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces at the turn of 2019-2020 will be increased to 13 missile divisions by means of creating a joint formation with the Barguzin rail-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile systems, a source in the Russian General Staff told TASS on Thursday.

At this point, the Strategic Missile Forces comprise 12 missile divisions, which are combined in three missile armies.

"In 2019-2020 it is planned to commission the Barguzin rail-mobile ICBM system that will entail the emergence of a new military formation with this missile system, which will increase the RVSN combat strength up to 13 missile divisions," the source said. He said that making operational the RS-26 light intercontinental ballistic missile and the heavy missile Sarmat would not change the Strategic Missile Forces' combat strength, as they will replace the old missiles Topol and Voevoda.

TASS has got no official confirmation to these reports yet.

According to previous reports, a Barguzin battalion set is planned to comprise five missile regiments, each of which will be armed with six RS-24 Yars-based intercontinental ballistic missiles. The new systems are expected to become operational no earlier than 2018 and will remain in service until at least 2040. Former Chief of the Strategic Missile Forces General Staff Viktor Yesin said previously that the creation of Barguzin was Russia's response to the deployment of the American global missile defence system.

Barguzin's predecessors - Soviet rail-mobile missile systems - were removed from service in 2005. The New START Treaty does not ban the creation of such weapons.

<http://tass.ru/en/russia/793389>

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RT (Russia Today) – Moscow, Russia

US Policies Could Deadlock Nuclear Disarmament – Russian Foreign Ministry

May 07, 2015

Washington's current course in relations with Moscow could prevent any resolution of urgent problems in bilateral relations, including nuclear disarmament, the Russian Foreign Ministry warns.

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"The White House's line on aggravation the relations with Russia threatens to lead the whole complex of sensible issues on the modern bilateral agenda to a dead end," reads the annual review of the foreign policy and diplomatic activities for 2014 that was published on the ministry's website on Thursday.

"The discussion of such pressing issues has become sporadic and non-systematic," the document reads.

Russian diplomats emphasized that the plans of the United State and its allies to deploy the global missile defense system is one of the typical examples of such hostile approach.

"Practical discussion of how Russian worries can be eased was curtailed at the initiative of the US. Now we are forced to develop adequate countermeasures," the ministry wrote.

"In addition, when [President] Barack Obama's administration promoted further cuts in the Russian in US nuclear arsenals, it completely ignored Russian arguments that other states with nuclear potential should be included in this process," the report reads.

The Russian side noted that the United States continued to implement its concept of immediate global strike that uses conventional strategic weapons and continued to avoid making any concrete statements regarding their refusal to deploy weapons in space.

The released plans to beef up US and NATO military presence near Russian borders pose direct risks of a shift of the European balance of forces, the report states.

In late April, President Vladimir Putin stated that Russia had brought its nuclear arsenal to the minimum ordered by the Non-Proliferation Treaty and plans to continue work in this direction.

"We have reduced our nuclear weapons stockpiles to minimal levels, thereby making a considerable contribution to the process of comprehensive and complete disarmament," Putin wrote in his address to the international conference on nuclear non-proliferation.

He also emphasized Russia's commitment to Article VI of the treaty, which states that each party *"undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith,"* and agrees to disarmament *"under strict and effective international control."*

In mid-January the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Security and Disarmament Department, Mikhail Ulyanov, said unfriendliness by the US could cause Moscow to review its approach to the New START agreement on cutting nuclear weapons and their delivery.

"So far we have not taken any particular steps in this direction, but I cannot exclude that in the future Washington will force us into taking them, into making corrections to our policies regarding this direction," he stated in a press interview. *"This would only be natural, considering the unfriendly character of the US actions."*

<http://rt.com/politics/256505-us-russia-nuclear-disarmament/>

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

'Russian Aggression' Dominates US Congress

The United States is getting ever more aggressive towards Russia. Earlier this week, the House of Representatives passed a proposal for legislation that aims to boost military buildup in Eastern Europe and provide \$200 million worth of military aid to Ukraine.

3 May 2015

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for the 2016 fiscal year includes the approval of \$200 million to provide military aid, including lethal weapons, to Ukraine and to deploy the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system in Poland to defend Eastern Europe against alleged Russian aggression.

The NDAA is set to authorize the budget authority of the US Department of Defense. The United States passes an NDAA every year, and it is one of those rare pieces of legislation that always gets bipartisan support.

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The US House of Representatives is expected to consider the NDAA for the 2016 fiscal year during the week of May 11. Earlier this week, the House Armed Services Committee passed its proposal with a bipartisan vote of 60 to 2.

Ukraine remains a high priority on Washington's agenda. The legislation calls the United States to provide military assistance to Ukraine, including the shipment of lethal weapons, valued at \$200 million.

According to Section 1532 of the document, the US government will provide training and send military equipment, including lethal weapons, to the Ukrainian military through September 30, 2016. The purpose of the military assistance is to help the Ukrainian government secure its territory "from foreign aggressors."

The only question that remains to be answered is from what kind of foreign aggression does the United States want to protect Ukrainians?

Other Eastern European nations, such as Poland and Romania, will also receive military assistance. The House plans to modify the Aegis Ashore missile system site in Romania and deploy a brand new one in Poland to ensure the countries have anti-air warfare capabilities to defend themselves from alleged "Russian aggression".

The Middle East is another region where the United States has its eyes set. The House is ready to spend an astonishing \$600 million to train and equip Syrian rebels, fighting against the officially-elected government of Bashar al-Assad.

Despite a number of acute problems on the homefront, the United States is keen to intervene in other countries' affairs. Moreover, Washington is willing to shell out billions of dollars to assist on one hand to Kiev in its fight against anti-government militia, while on the other hand, help Syrian rebels to fight against the officially elected Syrian government.

<http://sputniknews.com/military/20150503/1021678543.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – Seoul, South Korea

N. Korea Reveals New Satellite Control Center

May 3, 2015

SEOUL, May 3 (Yonhap) -- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has visited a newly built satellite control and command center, saying his country will continue developing space technology despite international sanctions.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency reported it Sunday without saying when Kim visited the center.

North Korea is under U.N. sanctions for its launch of rockets that the international community considers to be ballistic missiles.

U.N. resolutions also ban the communist state from conducting nuclear tests, something North Korea has done three times over the past decade. Some analysts believe Pyongyang possesses tens of nuclear weapons.

"Peaceful space development is an option taken by our Party and people and a legitimate right of Songun Korea," Kim said while touring the center of the National Aerospace Development Administration, according to the KCNA. "The status of the DPRK as a satellite producer-launcher remains unchanged though the hostile forces deny it and its space development can never be abandoned, no matter who may oppose."

DPRK stands for North Korea's official name: Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Songun, which literally means military first, is North Korea's official policy that prioritizes strengthening the military while concurrently developing the economy.

Kim lauded his father and late leader Kim Jong-il, saying the senior Kim "ushered in the new history of space development and brought about the greatest event of satellite launch in the Korean nation's history of 5,000 years."

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North Korea will continue its efforts to emerge as "a space power and thus hand down the undying feats of the Generalissimo (Kim Jong-il) to posterity," he said, stressing the need to "provide more cutting-edge facilities for the centre, build a base in which satellite test can be done in the same circumstances with outer space and erect something symbolic of the centre."

Inside the center is a main room where satellite launches can be viewed in real time, an auxiliary display and control room, an optical observation room that meets scientific and technological requirements, and a room for visitors to watch satellite launches, the report said.

An e-library, lounge, conference room, offices, dining room and bedrooms were also built to meet scientists' and technicians' research and living needs, according to the report.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2015/05/03/39/0401000000AEN20150503000300315F.html>

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The London Telegraph – London, U.K.

Kim Jong-Un Vows to Launch More Satellites into Space

North Korea leader has urged country's scientists to work harder to 'further glorify the (North) as a space power'

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

03 May 2015

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un vowed to launch more "satellites" in order to become a space power, state media said Sunday, despite global condemnation on past launches, dubbed disguised ballistic missile tests.

Kim, during a visit to the North's newly-built satellite command centre, urged scientists to work harder to "further glorify the (North) as a space power," state-run KCNA said.

"The status of the (North) as a satellite producer-launcher remains unchanged though the hostile forces deny it and its space development can never be abandoned, no matter who may oppose," Kim was quoted as saying.

The new, 13,770 square-metre command centre will provide a "solid springboard for continued launch of various working satellites," the KCNA said.

More satellites will be launched into outer space at the time and locations set by the ruling Workers' Party, Kim said, adding that such projects are "legitimate rights" of the country.

The impoverished but nuclear-armed North in December 2012 launched a satellite into orbit, describing it as a purely peaceful scientific project.

But the UN condemned the move as a disguised ballistic missile test, banned under the UN resolutions triggered by its nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

Pyongyang, angered by fresh UN sanctions following the launch, conducted its third nuclear test - its most powerful to date - in February 2013.

The 2012 satellite launch was seen as a major step forward for the North's nuclear weapons programme, as long-range missile delivery capability had long been cited as its main weakness.

There is little doubt that the North has an active ballistic missile development programme, but expert opinion is split on just how much progress it has made.

Analysts say development of a working, long-range missile capable of reaching the US would mean the North's regular nuclear strike warnings would be taken more seriously.

But the country is yet to conduct a test showing it has mastered the technology required for an effective intercontinental ballistic missile.

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/11579921/Kim-Jong-un-vows-to-launch-more-satellites-into-space.html>

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The Korea Herald – Seoul, South Korea

S. Korea Could Be Tempted to Go Nuclear: U.S. Scientist

May 4, 2015

A U.S. scientist says South Korea could be tempted to develop its own nuclear weapons to cope with a nuclear-armed North Korea or if Japan decides to go nuclear.

Charles Ferguson, president of the Federation of American Scientists, made the claim in a report, saying external geopolitical and internal domestic political circumstances could lead to "trusted allies, such as South Korea or Japan" developing nuclear weapons.

"If the United States were perceived to not be able to reliably and credibly counter the threats posed by China and North Korea, prudent military planners in Japan and South Korea would want to take steps to have their own nuclear capabilities," Ferguson said.

"Finally, if Japan crosses the threshold to nuclear weapon acquisition, South Korea would feel compelled to follow suit. South Korean leaders would then not want to be vulnerable to both nuclear-armed North Korea and Japan," he said.

The scientist also claimed that South Korea is capable of making 2,500 kilograms, or 416 bombs' worth, of "near-weapons-grade plutonium" from four pressurized heavy water reactors (PHWRs) at its Wolsong power plant.

"Once South Korea has at least a few bombs' worth of plutonium and has confidence in its missile systems, it could go for a quick breakout that would most likely be used to signal North Korea, China, Japan and the United States," Ferguson said in the report.

"One plausible purpose of this signaling of these initial 'diplomatic' bombs would be to prod Washington as well as Beijing to engage seriously on the denuclearization of North Korea," the report said.

South Korea could then leverage its base of a handful of nuclear bombs and implement its potential to make dozens of nuclear warheads annually from near-weapons-grade plutonium produced from its four PHWRs, he said.

"The initial steps could take place conceivably within a five-year period," he said.

Ferguson also claimed that the HANARO research reactor at the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute in the central city of Daejeon could also be used to produce up to 11 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium annually if operated at full power.

The scientist cautioned, however, that his intention is not to argue for South Korea's acquisition of nuclear bombs, adding that the best option for South Korea and Japan at the moment is for the U.S. to continue to demonstrate its resolve to provide conventional and nuclear extended deterrence. (Yonhap)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150504000276>

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The Washington Free Beacon – Washington, D.C.

North Korea Conducts Ejection Test of New Submarine Missile

Third sub-launched missile test by Pyongyang since November

By Bill Gertz

May 5, 2015



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies
CUWS Outreach Journal

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

North Korea recently conducted a third test of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) that is part of Pyongyang's expanding nuclear arsenal, according to American defense officials.

The underwater ejection test of what the Pentagon is calling the KN-11 missile took place April 22 from an underwater test platform near the North Korean coastal city of Sinpo, located on the southeastern coast of the country about 100 miles from the Demilitarized Zone separating it from South Korea.

Development of the new missile, first disclosed by the *Washington Free Beacon*, is being carried out at the North's Sinpo South Shipyard.

The ejection test, which was gauged to have been successful by U.S. intelligence agencies, is the third known test of the new submarine missile, indicating the missile program is a high-priority for the communist regime of Kim Jong Un.

Pentagon spokesman Lt. Col. Jeffrey Pool declined to comment, suggesting details of the test are classified.

Current and former national security officials criticized the Obama administration for not doing more to counter the North Korean nuclear threat to the United States.

"This missile, along with the KN-08, happened on Obama's watch and nothing has been done," said a U.S. intelligence official critical of the Obama administration.

"By utterly ignoring North Korea's growing missile threats, Obama has allowed the threat of rogue state proliferators to fall out of the center of the national political debate," said John Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. "This is a potential tragedy for the country."

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney said North Korea's development of the KN-08 and the emerging SLBM present "threats to the continental United States and have been developed under the Obama administration's leadership."

"Leading from behind is a failed strategy as evidenced by this very dangerous strategic threat to the continental United States of nuclear attack by a very unstable North Korean government," he said.

Allowing Iran to become a nuclear weapons power in 15 years under the Obama's administration's proposed Iran nuclear deal "puts the United States in the most dangerous threat of nuclear attack since the height of the Cold War but from multiple threats—North Korea, China, Russia, and Iran," McInerney said.

Earlier tests of the KN-11 took place Jan. 23 from a sea-based platform—not a submarine—and another ejection test, in which a missile ejects from a launch system but does not go into flight, from a land-based static platform in October.

Details of the missile program remain classified. Adm. Cecil D. Haney, commander of the Strategic Command, was the first official to confirm the SLBM program in Senate testimony March 19.

The submarine that will be used for North Korea's underwater-launch missile is not known. Analysts suspect the submarine will be a refurbished Soviet-era Golf II-class submarine that can fire three missiles from its conning tower, or an indigenous missile-firing submarine copied from Russian or Chinese designs. North Korea obtained several Golf-class submarines as scrap metal in the 1990s.

Intelligence analysts said the three tests are an indication of the high priority being placed on developing an underwater nuclear strike capability by Pyongyang.

Joseph DeTrani, former director of the National Counterproliferation Center, a U.S. intelligence agency, said North Korea continues to upgrade its nuclear and missile capabilities in violation of numerous U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"Reported developments with the ICBM-road mobile KN-08 are of immediate concern, as are reports that North Korea is pursuing the development of a SLBM capability," he said.

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Former Defense Intelligence Agency official Bruce Bechtol, Jr., said North Korea is developing an SLBM as part of a plan to have missiles capable of reaching the United States and to have missiles that will be difficult to locate for U.S. warning systems.

“With an SLBM they get both,” said Bechtol, a North Korea expert. “The submarine can get the platform to launch the missile within range of the continental United States, Alaska, or Hawaii. Thus, once operational, this immediately brings key nodes in the United States within range of what would likely be a nuclear armed missile.”

Bechtol said SLBMs provide a key alternative to North Korea’s other new strategic system, the land-based and mobile KN-08.

“This means that, once these two systems go operational, it potentially gives North Korea a dual threat for attacking the United States with nuclear or chemical weapons—a threat generated from difficult to detect mobile platforms on both land and sea,” he said.

A month after the November test, the United States, South Korea, and Japan signed a formal intelligence-sharing agreement to better inform each state about the SLBM program and other North Korean threats.

The new missile, when deployed, will join a series of strategic nuclear delivery vehicles available to the North Korean military. The Korean People’s Army currently has long-range Taepodong missiles and road-mobile KN-08 ICBMs capable of delivering nuclear bombs. North Korea has about 40 IL-28 bombers based at Uiju, near the Chinese border, and at Changjun in the central part of the country.

Disclosure of the SLBM ejection test comes as China recently disclosed that it estimates Pyongyang has an arsenal of up to 20 nuclear warheads.

Siegfried Hecker, a Stanford University professor and former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory, disclosed the 20-warhead North Korean arsenal after taking part in a meeting with Chinese nuclear specialists in February. Hecker said he is concerned by the figure since it represents a “nuclear arsenal.”

The Chinese also believe Pyongyang has the capability of producing quantities of weapons-grade uranium that would allow to double its arsenal by next year.

The North Korean nuclear warhead arsenal, when combined with its missile forces, poses a direct threat to the United States, senior U.S. military officials said last month.

Adm. William Gortney, commander of the U.S. Northern Command, told reporters April 7 that U.S. intelligence agencies have formally assessed that North Korea is capable of making a nuclear warhead small enough to fit on a missile.

North Korea’s KN-08 is also a major worry because the mobile missile is difficult to track and can be fired with little warning.

“Our assessment is that they have the ability to put a nuclear weapon on a KN-08 and shoot it at the homeland,” Gortney said, adding that the missile has not been flight-tested.

Gortney, who is in charge of defending the United States from missile attacks, added that “we’re very concerned about the mobile nature of the KN-08, that we would lose our ability to get the indication that something might occur, and then, of course, the particular nature of the regime that’s there.”

Little is known about the nature of the KN-11. However, State Department documents disclosed by W_leaks revealed that North Korea obtained a Russian SS-N-6 submarine-launched ballistic missile several years ago that became the basis for Pyongyang’s intermediate-range Musudan missile.

Missile Defense Agency Director Vice Adm. James Syring voiced alarm at the impact of North Korean missile development and sharp budget cuts for American missile defenses.

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Syring told the House Armed Services Strategic Forces Subcommittee March 19 that if budget cuts continue “you’re starting to jeopardize our future capability ... to defend the homeland with the development and testing that I’ve seen going on with North Korea very specifically, and the pace in the progress that they’re making.”

Unless improvements are made in missile defenses, “I’m in serious jeopardy of ... going to the Northern commander and advising him the system is overmatched.”

Meanwhile, North Korea announced April 30 that it plans to enhance its nuclear power infrastructure following the announcement that the United State and South Korea had reached a nuclear energy treaty.

“This is a dangerous criminal move which will escalate tension on the Korean Peninsula and spark off nuclear proliferation and a nuclear arms race in Northeast Asia,” North Korea’s official KCNA news agency said in a statement.

As a result, Pyongyang vowed to “further bolster up its self-defensive nuclear deterrence for defending the dignity of the nation, its sovereignty, and global peace and security,” the statement said.

In a related development, a North Korea expert who studied in Pyongyang said recent reports indicate North Korea is preparing to conduct a satellite launch in the near future.

Alexandre Mansourov, visiting scholar at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, said a close reading of activities by Kim Jong Un and space-related stories in state-controlled media indicate a launch could be carried out in mid-September or early October.

“The upcoming space launch, in violation of the existing U.N. Security Council resolutions, will demonstrate the Kim regime’s unswerving determination to pursue a robust space program despite international approbation and the missile test ban, will test the limits of Beijing’s patience and Moscow’s rapprochement with Pyongyang, and may compel Washington to expedite the deployment of missile defenses in the region, while straining U.S. relations with its allies ROK and Japan,” Mansourov said.

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/north-korea-conducts-ejection-test-of-new-submarine-missile/>

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CNN News – Atlanta, GA

Exclusive: North Korea Would Use Nukes if 'Forced,' Official Says

By Will Ripley and Tim Schwarz, CNN

Thursday, May 7, 2015

Pyongyang, North Korea (CNN) When officials informed us that we'd be granted a sit-down interview with a high-ranking member of North Korea's inner circle with no preconditions, it was a real surprise.

Senior figures in Pyongyang don't do interviews, especially not with the international press.

"I do not like talking to foreign media," Park Yong Chol said frankly as we shook hands ahead of our meeting. He said that we report rumor and fabrication about his country.

Park is the deputy director of the DPRK Institute for Research into National Reunification -- a think tank with links to the highest levels of North Korea's government.

In spite of his misgivings, he sat down to talk with us beneath the ubiquitous portraits of late North Korean leaders Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Our conversation lasted nearly two hours and no topic was off limits.

The only instruction we were given was to break from our traditional CNN interview format of two chairs facing each other, so that we could sit across a large conference table, and so that the two portraits of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il could be seen directly over Park. We agreed to do this, as our government guides explained the symbolism of the Great Leaders appearing overhead was very important to their country.

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We quickly got onto a touchy subject: the recent reports from South Korea's National Intelligence Agency that Kim Jong Un had personally ordered the execution of about 15 officials so far this year.

"Malicious slander!" he replied. "Especially as they try to link the allegations against to the august name of our Supreme Leader Marshall Kim Jong Un."

But he did not deny that executions take place here of those who try to overthrow the government or subvert the system. "It is very normal for any country to go after hostile elements and punish them and execute them."

Rights abuses

And even though a recent United Nations report has alleged large-scale human rights abuses -- murder, starvation and torture of inmates in a network of brutal prison camps -- Park denied that such camps exist. He said although there were correction reform centers for ordinary criminals, political prison camps simply did not exist. "Our society is a society without political strife or factions or political divisions -- as a result we don't have the term 'political prisoner,'" he added.

According to Park, these allegations come from defectors who are enticed or forced into defecting by the U.S. and South Korea. "Some of the so-called defectors are criminals who ran away from their homes. They committed crimes against the state here. Because of that they ran away.

"And now they are in South Korea denouncing our government because they have no other choice."

In his view, there is no single yardstick for human rights applicable to every country.

"If you talk about human rights in my country, I will talk about human rights in the United States," he said. "You have racial riots taking place in the wake of the killing of so many black people by the police. You have prisons full of inmates and new techniques of torture being used.

"The U.S. President and other high-ranking administration officials have acknowledged really severe forms of punishment on inmates in detention. If you talk about human rights in the DPRK, we will talk about human rights in the U.S."

Nuclear option

In spite of all the sanctions, the DPRK sees no option but to pursue its nuclear weapons program. Park maintained that his country does indeed have the missile capability to strike mainland United States and would do so if the U.S. "forced their hand."

It has been a costly strategy, but a necessary one, he admitted. "We invested a lot of money in our nuclear defense to counter the U.S. threat -- huge sums that could have been spent in other sectors to improve our national economy. But this strategic decision was the right one."

The next goal is economic.

"We're a major power politically, ideologically and militarily," he said. "The last remaining objective is to make the DPRK a strong economic power."

But to do that North Korea would have to improve ties with the international community.

With mutual distrust and Pyongyang's refusal to disarm its nuclear arsenal, there seems to be no clear path to moving forward.

<http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/07/asia/north-korea-official-interview/index.html>

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

Russian Tu-160 Heavy Bomber to Be Invisible to Air Defense

Russian KRET concern is developing a new aircraft guidance system, a targeting and navigation complex, a weapons control system and other electronic equipment. A total of 800 firms and organizations are involved in the modernization of the Tu-160 aircraft.

4 May 2015

The Tupolev Tu-160 strategic missile carrier/bomber will be equipped with an advanced radio-electronic warfare system, which is highly effective against anti-aircraft missiles, Russia's Concern Radio-Electronic Technologies (KRET) reported.

KRET is developing a new aircraft guidance system, a targeting and navigation complex, a weapons control system and other electronic equipment. A total of 800 firms and organizations are involved in the modernization of the Tu-160 aircraft.

KRET companies are designing engine control and fuel consumption systems as well as a maintenance service which would help the crew in force majeure situations.

On April 29, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visited the Kazan Aircraft Production Association and ordered to resume production of the Tu-160.

"There is no match to the Tu-160 among supersonic aircraft," Shoigu said.

The Tu-160 is a supersonic variable-sweep wing heavy strategic bomber/missile carrier designed by the Tupolev Design Bureau in the Soviet Union in the late 1970s – early 1980s. The aircraft entered service in 1987.

In the Russian Long-Range Aviation the Tu-160 was nicknamed "the White Swan". Its original construction is stealth-ready and allows the aircraft to stay unspotted during long-range combat missions.

The Tu-160 holds 44 world records in flight altitude and operation range. The most recent was set when it made a continuous flight of 18,000 kilometers in 24 hours and 24 minutes.

The Tu-160 is the largest, heaviest and the most powerful supersonic aircraft in military aviation. During modernization, the aircraft will be equipped with advanced communication and navigation systems, new targeting systems and electronic warfare complexes.

Initially, the Tu-160 was designed to carry 12 Kh-55 cruise missiles with thermonuclear warheads. Currently the Tu-160 is rearmed with the cutting-edge Kh-101 and Kh-555 missiles with an accuracy of five meters.

<http://sputniknews.com/russia/20150504/1021703874.html>

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

Russia to Adjust National Security Strategy Due to Ukrainian crisis, Other Threats

Emerging military threats force Russia to adjust the national security strategy till 2020 and the doctrine of Russia's information security

May 05, 2015

MOSCOW, May 5. /TASS/. Russia's Security Council has taken a decision to adjust the national security strategy till 2020 and the doctrine of Russia's information security, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev said in a feature article to be published in Wednesday's issue of the Krasnaya Zvezda newspaper.

"First of all, it was necessitated by new emerging military threats," he wrote. "Their signs are seen in the developments of the Arab Spring, in Syria and Iraq, in the situation in and around Ukraine."

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He noted that pursuing their own interests leading powers were using "indirect actions," relying on popular protests, radical and extremist organizations, private military companies. "The United States and NATO are growing more and more aggressive in respect of Russia. They are building up their offensive potential in the direct proximity to our borders and are actively deploying a global missile defense system," he wrote.

These reasons necessitated amendments to Russia's military doctrine to outline key tasks of the armed forces, the development of the defense sector and possible steps to prevent armed conflicts. "Russia's military doctrine was amended in late 2014," Patrushev recalled. "Its updated edition pays more attention to domestic issues, information confrontation. It specified some provisions of the current military doctrine. At the same time, it preserved its defensive nature and reiterated Russia's pledge to use for the protection of its national interests military methods only when all other non-force methods are exhausted."

<http://tass.ru/en/russia/793125>

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The Guardian (U.S. Edition) – New York, NY

No Matter the Election Result, Trident Is Here to Stay

- *Replacing nuclear missile fleet a certainty despite cost*
- *Growing concern about consequences for rest of defence budget, and credibility of deterrent*

By Richard Norton-Taylor

Wednesday, 6 May 2015

Amid all the uncertainties of the general election, one thing is predictable. Britain's nuclear weapons system is not only here to stay, it will be upgraded.

Michael Fallon, currently defence secretary, repeatedly declined recently to say whether the Conservatives would support a Labour government's motion to renew Trident.

Vernon Coaker, Labour's shadow defence secretary, accused Fallon of playing party politics with Britain's nuclear weapons.

Both the Labour and Tory leaderships have said they would replace the fleet of four Trident ballistic missile submarines, a project that is likely to cost well over £100bn over its 30-year lifespan.

It is scarcely credible that the Conservatives would decline to back a Commons vote tabled by Labour to renew Trident.

Labour, after all, had to rely on Tory votes to support Trident renewal even in 2007 when it had a Commons majority. (As part of the 2012 coalition deal, a decision on Trident was delayed until 2016 as a result of LibDem opposition.)

A new study tracing the development of Britain's nuclear weapons project rightly points to what the authors call "the beliefs, culture, and identity, issues which have led Britain to develop and retain a nuclear capability for nearly seventy years".

These, say the authors of The British Nuclear Experience (Oxford University Press), "remain firmly in place".

They conclude: "We should be sceptical of those who claim to know the 'truth' and who speak with great certainty, assurance, and apparent authority, about the continuing need for nuclear deterrence...The least we should expect is an open and honest debate about the utility and dangers of nuclear weapons and a willingness to listen seriously to those who hold different beliefs to our own on this vitally important subject".

It is difficult at the best of times to have a calm debate about whether the UK should maintain its nuclear weapons arsenal. It has proved impossible during this general election campaign.



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There are many, even within the UK's military hierarchy, who question the credibility of the country's "nuclear deterrence". There are more and more who believe that any credibility it did have is increasingly threatened by the decline in Britain's conventional forces.

That decline is likely to be hastened as more and more of the UK defence budget is devoted to a new Trident submarine fleet and its nuclear missiles.

John Baylis and Kristan Stoddart, authors of the *The British Nuclear Experience*, quote Vice Admiral Sir Jeremy Blackham, deputy chief of the defence staff.

"Through conventional weakness," warned the admiral, "the nuclear deterrent is compromised, whether it is a rogue state or a major power that is involved. To be credible, the nuclear deterrent must be underpinned by strong conventional deterrence".

British ministers, Labour and Tory, have argued that possession of nuclear weapons have enabled Britain to be a big player in the global nuclear disarmament debate.

There is a clear opportunity for the new UK government to put this to the test. The nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) review conference is taking place in New York under UN auspices and will continue for another 3 weeks.

The NPT review conferences take place every five years and are regarded by the five "officially recognised" nuclear powers - the US, Russia, the UK, France and China - as little more than an irritating talking shop.

General James Cartwright, former commander of US nuclear forces has urged Washington and Moscow to taking US and Russian nuclear missiles off high alert, arguing that a longer fuse could prevent a possible cyber attack from starting a nuclear war and would mean less risk of miscalculation in a crisis.

(At any given time 1,800 nuclear weapons are held on high alert, meaning they could be deployed with just a few minutes' notice.)

The European Leadership Network has called for cuts in nuclear arsenals and confirmation of so-called "negative security assurances" - namely, that a nuclear weapon state would not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon state.

British governments have over the years cut the number of missiles and warheads on the four Trident submarines.

Fallon told MPs earlier this year that the number of warheads on board each submarine had been reduced from 48 to 40, the number of operational missiles on the submarines reduced to "no more than eight", and the total number of British "operationally available" warheads" reduced from "fewer than 160 to no more than 120".

The new government could do better than that.

<http://www.theguardian.com/news/defence-and-security-blog/2015/may/06/no-matter-the-election-result-trident-is-here-to-stay>

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The Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Israel

Gulf States Seek Quid Pro Quo of US Assurances, Weapons, for Support in Iran Deal

By the JPost.com Staff

May 3, 2015

In order to back a nuclear agreement with Iran, leaders of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council are seeking new weapons technologies and major security guarantees from the White House to ensure the Sunni countries a military edge over Shi'ite Iran in the region, the *Wall Street Journal* reported Saturday.

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With a slated meeting with US President Barack Obama on May 13, leading Persian Gulf representatives plan to leverage their sought-after support as grounds for requesting additional fighter jets, drones, missile defense systems, and surveillance equipment. They reportedly expressed interest in the F-35 jet, an advanced US fighter known as the Joint Strike, sold thus far in the Middle East exclusively to Israel and Turkey to maintain military balance in the region.

They also plan to pressure Obama into drafting new defense agreements between the Gulf Nations and the US to ensure intervention in the region should they feel threatened by Iran, the *Wall Street Journal* report said.

The reported requests pose problems for US officials who want to appease the Gulf allies whilst maintaining Israel's military upper-hand in the region. Approving the quid pro quo exchange threatens to further strain US-Israel relations, already tense amid developments made in the nuclear deal negotiations.

Senator Lindsey Graham expressed his concern over this possibility, telling the *Journal*, "I'm very worried that President Obama will promise every military toy they've always wanted and a security agreement short of a treaty, with the understanding they have to be sympathetic to this deal."

"If I get a hint of that, a whiff of that, then I would do everything I could to block every bullet and every plane," he said.

According to congressman Eliot Engel, Obama is addressing concerns posed by the Arab allies and is seriously considering their requests. He told the *Journal*, "I think they have a legitimate concern about Iran," but assured that Israel's military upper-hand would be maintained should the US concede to the requests of the Gulf nations.

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Gulf-states-seek-quid-pro-quo-of-US-assurances-weapons-for-support-in-Iran-deal-400910>

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The Guardian (U.S. Edition) – New York, NY

Kerry 'Guarantees' Israelis that US Can Prevent an Iranian Bomb

In an interview with Israeli television, the US secretary of state seeks to ease concerns: 'There is a lot of hysteria about this deal'

Associated Press in Jerusalem

Sunday, 3 May 2015

US Secretary of State John Kerry sought to pacify Israeli worries over an emerging nuclear deal with Iran in an interview aired Sunday, dismissing some concerns as brought on by "hysteria" over the possible agreement.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been one of the harshest critics of the US-led framework deal with the Islamic Republic, which offers it sanctions relief in exchange for scaling back its contested nuclear program.

Israel considers a nuclear-armed Iran an existential threat, citing hostile Iranian rhetoric toward the Jewish state, Iran's missile capabilities and its support for violent militant groups. Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Speaking to Israel's Channel 10 television, Kerry said the deal wouldn't affect American options to counter any possible effort by Iran to build atomic weapons.

"I say to every Israeli that today we have the ability to stop them if they decided to move quickly to a bomb, and I absolutely guarantee that in the future we will have the ability to know what they are doing so that we can still stop them if they decided to move to a bomb," Kerry said.

Netanyahu believes the potential deal leaves intact too much of Iran's contested nuclear program, including research facilities and advanced centrifuges capable of enriching uranium, a key ingredient in building an atomic bomb.

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"We will have inspectors in there every single day. That is not a 10-year deal; that is forever," Kerry said. "There is a lot of hysteria about this deal."

Netanyahu's criticism has contributed to rising tensions between him and President Barack Obama.

"We think there needs to be a different deal, a better deal, and there are those that tell us this won't endanger Israel," Netanyahu said Sunday during a visit by US Senator Rob Portman, an Ohio Republican. "I must say, as prime minister of Israel, who is responsible for Israel's security – this does endanger Israel."

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/03/john-kerry-israel-obama-pledge-iran-nuclear-weapon>

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Tehran, Times – Tehran, Iran

Iran Insists It Won't Let Inspection of Military Sites

Tehran Times Political Desk

May 4, 2015

TEHRAN – The commander of Iran's Armed Forces chief of staff has cautioned the Iranian nuclear negotiators against letting Western powers impose any limitation on Iran's conventional defense power.

This is a wrong impression by the enemies of the Iranian nation to think that they can entitle themselves to being introduced into Iran's defense sphere, Major General Hassan Firouzabadi wrote in an open letter to Iran's nuclear negotiation team on Sunday.

In this letter, Firouzabadi goes on to mention the guidelines of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in instructing Iran's nuclear team to prevent including the inspection of Iran's military sites as part of a prospective nuclear agreement with world powers.

He raised concern that the U.S. fact sheet on the framework nuclear agreement, which was reached on April 2, might open way for unlimited surprise inspections of Iran's missile system.

When combined with the rule of surprise inspections, the point "all over Iran" stressed in the American, German, and French fact sheets causes worry over Iran's national security, since it would allow the inspection of all military sites, exposing them to intelligence, security, and military threats, the senior military official noted.

Iran and the major powers (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) are busy writing the draft of the final nuclear deal in New York, where the NPT review conference is underway.

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=246500

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Arab News – Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Iran Deal 'Could Spark N-Arms Race'

Arab News

Tuesday, 5 May 2015

RIYADH: Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman warned on Tuesday that a nuclear deal with Iran that does not have clauses to safeguard other nations would spark a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

"Seeking nuclear weapons represents a very serious threat," said King Salman during his address to the consultative summit of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) here.

King Salman urged Gulf leaders to stand up to Iran. He called on the international community, especially the Group 5+1 negotiating with Iran, "to set stricter rules that guarantee the region's security and prevent it from plunging into an arms race."



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He said that any final agreement with Iran must include unambiguous security guarantees. King Salman said that the GCC consultative summit comes amid mounting international concerns over a host of regional conflicts including Iran, Yemen, Syria and Palestine.

Those who attended the gathering included French President Francois Hollande, heads of the Gulf states, several members of the Saudi royal family and high-ranking Saudi officials.

Prominent among them were Crown Prince Mohammed bin Naif, deputy premier and minister of interior; Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, second deputy premier and minister of defense; Adel Al-Toraifi, minister of culture and information; and Adel Al-Jubeir, minister of foreign affairs.

King Salman also announced the establishment of a major humanitarian center in Riyadh to coordinate relief operations, and invited the UN to assist. He called on all factions to lay down their arms and start peace talks in the Saudi capital, in line with UN Security Council Resolution 2216.

In a clear reference to Iran, King Salman said there was a need to confront an external threat that “aims to expand control and impose its hegemony,” threatening regional stability and creating “sectarian sedition.” He said the Saudi-led coalition had launched its operation after an appeal for help by the legitimate government and the refusal of the coup leaders to comply with GCC and international peace initiatives.

He pledged to extend all possible aid to Yemen, and said that he has instructed Saudi government agencies to legalize the status of hundreds of thousands of Yemeni workers who are living and working in the Kingdom, to help them “overcome the current crisis.”

On the question of Palestine, King Salman called on the international community to find a solution to the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is the “core issue” in the Arab and Islamic world. On the Syrian crisis, he lambasted the Syrian regime and said “the current Assad regime should not have a role in the future of Syria.”

A statement released after the summit reiterated that all states have a responsibility to restore stability in Yemen. It also said that France fully supports the Saudi-led coalition’s operations. The statement added that the normalization of relations between the GCC and Iran must be based on the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of the Arab countries and the region.

Speaking on the sidelines of the summit, Hollande, who became the first Western leader to attend such a Gulf gathering, said “the security of the Arab world is tantamount to the world’s security and the dangers of terrorism threaten all countries.” Hollande said his country was working to boost “strategic ties” with Saudi Arabia.

Others who attended the summit were Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Qatar emir; Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, vice president of the UAE, prime minister and ruler of Dubai; Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, emir of Kuwait; and King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa of Bahrain.

The event concluded with a lunch hosted by King Salman in honor of the GCC leaders at Diriyah Palace.

<http://www.arabnews.com/featured/news/742496>

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France, Saudi Arabia: Iran Nuclear Deal Must Be Verifiable, No Threat to Region

By John Irish, Reuters

May 5, 2015

RIYADH: France and Saudi Arabia believe that any future nuclear accord between Iran and six major powers must be robust, verifiable and no threat to Tehran's neighbors, the two countries said ahead of a summit in Riyadh Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia invited French President Francois Hollande, whose country is deemed to have the toughest stance among the six world powers negotiating with Iran, to Riyadh to discuss regional issues with Gulf Arab leaders who fear a rapprochement with Tehran could further inflame the region.

"France and Saudi Arabia confirmed the necessity to reach a robust, lasting, verifiable, undisputed and binding deal with Iran," Hollande and the new Saudi King Salman said in a statement after meeting Monday.

"This agreement must not destabilize the security and stability of the region nor threaten the security and stability of Iran's neighbors," the statement said.

Hollande met Salman for an hour after dinner at his personal palace Monday, and the Saudi Cabinet Tuesday. The two men tackled Iran's role in the conflicts in Yemen and Syria and reiterated that there was no future for President Bashar Assad of Syria after four years of civil war there.

Hollande was to address Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders shortly to reassure them that France would not accept a bad deal with Iran as the powers try to meet a June 30 deadline.

In the negotiations with six world powers, the Islamic Republic wants financial sanctions on it removed in exchange for restraints on its disputed nuclear activity.

"They (GCC) have a real fear that when sanctions are lifted, Iran will be able to finance all its proxies across the region," said a senior French diplomat. Iran backs Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen and Assad in his battle with Sunni Muslim insurgents.

Hollande's visit to Riyadh marked a period in which France has been able to nurture new links with the Gulf region in the face of perceived disengagement on the part of traditional ally the United States.

"They wanted us to come so they could say to the Americans, look, we also have France: it's up to you not to get edged out and to be here with us," said a second French diplomat.

The new Saudi foreign minister, Adel al-Jubeir, told Reuters that France was a historical ally and trading partner that had proved its reliability to the Gulf.

"We have common views with regard to the challenges in the region today with Syria, Yemen, Iraq, terrorism and of course Iran's nuclear program, and there are very large commercial and military ties between our two countries."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry changed his schedule at the last minute this week to travel to Riyadh Wednesday, looking to finalize plans for a summit at Camp David on May 13-14 between Gulf leaders and U.S. President Barack Obama.

U.S. officials say they are seeking the best possible settlement with Iran and have cautioned that France's position privately is not as tough as it is publicly.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/May-05/296892-france-saudi-arabia-iran-nuclear-deal-must-be-verifiable-no-threat-to-region.ashx>

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Wednesday, May 06, 2015

Leader Rejects Continued N. Talks under Threat

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei on Wednesday dismissed the US war rhetoric against Iran as empty, boastful remarks, but meantime, warned that Tehran would not negotiate under threat.

"This is not acceptable that the opposite side continues making threats simultaneous with the talks," the Leader said, addressing a public meeting with teachers here in Tehran on Wednesday.

He further noted the remarks made by two US officials in recent days who had alleged that military threats against Iran are still alive, and said, "Negotiation under the ghost of a threat is meaningless and the Iranian nation does not tolerate negotiation under the shadow of threat."

"First of all, you can't do a damn thing," Ayatollah Khamenei said in response to the two US officials, and added, "Secondly, as I had already stated during the term of the former US president, the era of hit-and-run attacks is gone and the Iranian nation will not let go anyone intending to make an aggression" against it.

Meantime, he said the US needs the nuclear talks, at least, as much as Iran does, and pointed out that Iran is willing to put an end to the sanctions, while the US officials need to leave a legacy behind as "they are deeply in need to make this claim that they have made Iran sit to the negotiating table and imposed certain points on it".

The Supreme Leader underlined that now everyone in Iran knows pretty well that the country's economic problems are not resolved through the removal of the sanctions, "rather resolving economic problems requires our own planning, will and ability, no matter the sanctions are in place or not".

"Of course, if the sanctions are removed, the economic problems could be solved more easily, but their resolution will be possible if the sanctions continue," he added.

The Iranian leader further reminded the country's team of negotiators once again to pay good heed to the redlines, "but never allow the other side to impose its will, exercise force, humiliate or threaten you".

US Secretary of State John Kerry in a charm offensive to rebuild ties with Israel over the Iran policy said recently that military action is still among possible options for Washington.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13940216001072>

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Tasnim News Agency – Tehran, Iran

Final Nuclear Deal to Terminate Entire Anti-Iran Sanctions: Negotiator

May 06, 2015

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – A senior Iranian negotiator reiterated that a comprehensive nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers will have the whole anti-Iran sanctions - imposed either by the US, the EU or the UN Security Council - terminated at the very day of implementation of the agreement.

Speaking from New York to a television talk show, aired by Iran's state TV on Tuesday night, Abbas Araqchi said the text of the long-awaited nuclear deal will stipulate the termination of "all unilateral and multilateral sanctions" imposed on Iran.

He made the comments after conclusion of the latest round of nuclear talks in New York, held on the sidelines of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Iranian negotiators Araqchi and Majid Takht Ravanchi held several long meetings with the EU deputy secretary general for the external action service, Helga Maria Schmid, over the past days.

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The next round of high-profile meetings will resume in Austria's Vienna on May 12.

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

On April 2, the two sides reached a framework nuclear agreement in Lausanne, Switzerland, with both sides committed to push for a final deal until the end of June.

Elsewhere in his interview, Araqchi said the final nuclear agreement will have 20 pages of main text and above 50 pages of appendices.

Commenting on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) treaty, to which Iran is a signatory, Araqchi underlined that Tehran will never accept any inspection regime beyond that treaty.

He said the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the only entity responsible for verifying Iran's commitments and inspecting the country's nuclear sites.

<http://www.tasnimnews.com/english/Home/Single/732034>

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Press TV – Tehran, Iran

Military Option against Iran just a Mockery: IRGC Chief

Thursday, May 7, 2015

The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the West's repeated threatening of Iran with military option is pure mockery.

"The military option which the Westerners are constantly talking about is no more than a mockery, and they do know that if the military option against the Islamic Republic of Iran could yield results, they would use it time and again," Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari said on Thursday.

Jafari was reacting to US Secretary of State John Kerry and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey who said recently that military option is still on the table in dealing with Iran.

The high-profile Iranian commander said the Western powers have resorted to "soft war" against Iran due to the futility of threats of military action.

Jafari added that Iran was facing "serious threats" of military action from 2001 to 2007, adding that the enemies of Iran shifted their approach to destabilizing Iran internally after they failed in their military threats.

He said that the formation of a Shia Crescent through empathy among Muslim countries in the region and resistance against oppression and usurpation are all indicative of the realization of the objectives of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Jafari further noted that the Iranian revolution has set a role model for other people in the world to follow.

ISIL created to counter Iran

Jafari said ISIL Takfiri terrorist group was created, and other terrorist groups were also mobilized by the "enemies of Islam" to counter Iran's Islamic Revolution.

"They (enemies) could not drop their grudge against Islam and the Islamic Revolution and thus, they created ISIL," Jafari said, adding that the policy backfired as ISIL threats led to the mobilization of 100,000 youths in Iraq, who fought for Islam and created a huge asset to defend Islam in the region.

The Iranian commander also stated that the only outcome of the ISIL's crimes in Iraq was more "unity and empathy" between Iran and other countries.



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The northern and western parts of Iraq have been in chaos since ISIL started its campaign of terror in early June 2014. The terrorists are in control of Mosul and they have swept through parts of the country.

Since then, Iraq's army has been joined by Kurdish forces, as well as Shia and Sunni volunteers in operations to drive the ISIL terrorists out of the areas they have seized with the recapture of the northern city of Tikrit being their most significant recent achievement.

<http://www.presstv.ir/Detail/2015/05/07/409890/Iran-IRGC-commander-Jafari-military-option>

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Boston Herald – Boston, MA

Senate OKs Bill Giving Congress Review of Iran Nuclear Deal

Associated Press (AP)

Thursday, May 7, 2015

WASHINGTON — The Senate muscled its way into President Barack Obama's talks to curb Iran's nuclear program, overwhelmingly backing legislation Thursday that would let Congress review and possibly reject any final deal with Tehran.

The vote was 98-1 for the bipartisan bill that would give Congress a say on what could be a historic accord that the United States and five other nations are trying to finalize with Iran. Under the agreement, Iran would roll back its nuclear program in exchange for relief from crippling economy penalties.

The lone "no" vote came from freshman Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., who wants the administration to submit any agreement to the Senate as a treaty. Under the Constitution, that would require approval of two-thirds of the Senate.

The House is expected to vote next week on the measure.

House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said in a statement moments after the vote that the "goal is to stop a bad agreement that could pave the way to a nuclear-armed Iran, set off a regional nuclear arms race, and strengthen and legitimize the government of Iran."

White House spokesman Eric Shultz said Obama would sign the bill in its current form. But the spokesman added that Obama has made it clear that if amendments are added by the House "that would endanger a deal coming together that prevented Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, that we'd oppose it."

Even if Congress rejects his final nuclear deal with Tehran, however, Obama could use his executive pen to offer a hefty portion of sanctions relief on his own. He could take unilateral actions that — when coupled with European and U.N. sanctions relief — would allow a deal to be implemented.

The U.S. and other nations negotiating with Tehran have long suspected that Iran's nuclear program is secretly aimed at atomic weapons capability. Tehran insists the program is entirely devoted to civilian purposes.

The talks resume next week in Vienna, with a target date of June 30 for a final agreement.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said the bill "offers the best chance for our constituents through the Congress they elect to weigh in on the White House negotiations with Iran."

Added Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee: "No bill. No review."

The legislation would bar Obama from waiving congressional sanctions for at least 30 days while lawmakers examine any final deal. The bill would stipulate that if senators disapprove of the deal, Obama would lose his current power to waive certain economic penalties Congress has imposed on Iran.

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The bill would require Congress to pass a resolution of disapproval to reject the deal, an action that Obama almost certainly would veto. Congress then would have to muster votes from two-thirds of each chamber to override the veto.

In the House, about 150 Democrats — enough to sustain a veto — wrote the president to express their strong support for the nuclear negotiations with Iran.

"We urge you to stay the course," the letter said. "We must allow our negotiating team the space and time necessary to build on the progress made in the political framework and turn it into a long-term, verifiable agreement."

The bill took a roller coaster ride to passage.

Obama first threatened to veto it. Then he said he would sign it if the measure was free of amendments the White House believed would make continued negotiations with Tehran virtually impossible.

It survived a blow from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who stood before Congress in March and warned the U.S. that an emerging nuclear agreement would pave Iran's path to atomic weapons.

"It is a very bad deal. We are better off without it," he said in a speech arranged by Republicans. His address aggravated strained relations with Obama and gambled with the long-standing bipartisan congressional support for Israel.

A few days later, Cotton and 46 of his GOP colleagues wrote a letter warning Iranian leaders that any deal with Obama could expire when he leaves office in January 2017.

Senate Democratic leader Harry Reid of Nevada accused the GOP of trying to undermine the commander in chief while empowering the ayatollahs who lead Iran.

In April, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed a compromise bill on a 19-0 vote. Obama withdrew his veto threat.

But Republicans were not done trying to change the bill, drawing up more than 60 amendments.

One, from Cotton, would have made any deal contingent on Iran's halting its support of terrorist activities that threaten Americans. Cotton used an unusual Senate procedural move to get his amendment heard.

McConnell did not want to see the bill end in tatters, so he acted to end the amendment process and have votes on the legislation.

"We should have insisted on amendments to put real teeth in this bill," said Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, who is running for president. "Ultimately, I voted yes on final passage because it may delay, slightly, President Obama's ability to lift the Iran sanctions and it ensures we will have a congressional debate on the merits of the Iran deal."

Another 2016 candidate, Sen. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., said the bill puts Congress in a better position than having no say.

"At a minimum, at least it creates a process whereby the American people through their representatives can debate an issue of extraordinary importance," Rubio said.

http://www.bostonherald.com/news_opinion/national/2015/05/senate_oks_bill_giving_congress_review_of_iran_nuclear_deal

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Syria 'Chlorine Attacks': Dozens Reported Suffocated as Regime 'Drops Chemical Barrel Bombs' on Idlib

By Sarah El Deeb, Associated Press (AP)

Friday, 08 May 2015

Syrian activists and a doctor have reported of new suspected chemical attacks in the northwestern province of Idlib, leaving several dozens of people suffering from asphyxiation.

Mohammed Tennari, a doctor who testified before the UN Security Council last month after treating a number of victims in Idlib from an earlier chemical attack, said there were at least three separate attacks in the province that injured nearly 80 people.

Tennari, who spoke with The Associated Press from near the border with Turkey, shared field reports from doctors in the three villages that were reportedly hit. The reports said government helicopters dropped barrel bombs containing chlorine on the villages of Janoudieh, Kansafrah, and Kafr Batiekh on Thursday.

Tennari is on his way back from the United States where he reported to the council on a suspected chlorine attack in March that killed three children and their grandmother in the same province. He is the coordinator for the Syrian American Medical Society, which has volunteer medical personnel treating victims and reporting on attacks in Syria.

Also, the Syrian Network for Human Rights, another monitoring group which is based outside the country, reported the three different attacks, sharing on Twitter images it said were from field hospitals where victims were taken. The group reported that 69 people were injured in the attacks.

The reports could not be independently verified. There has been an increase in reports of suspected chlorine bombs amid intensified fighting in the province where the rebels have made significant advances against government troops in recent weeks. Rebel fighters seized the provincial capital and weeks later moved in on a strategic town near the border with Turkey. The government has vowed to restore control.

Tennari said a man in his thirties died yesterday from another suspected chlorine attack in a fourth village in Idlib on 2 May. The man's six-month-old baby died in that attack, Tennari said.

Despite condemning such attacks, the United Nations has been unable to follow through with action or assign blame. The rise in attacks comes as the United States is leading an effort to create a way to attribute blame.

Yesterday, the current council president, Lithuanian Ambassador Raimonda Murmokaite, said a "large majority" of members support the US effort and are ready to move quickly in the next few days. But Syria ally Russia worried whether it will be objective, with Ambassador Vitaly Churkin telling the AP, "They've done their attribution of blame already."

The US and some other council members accuse Syria's government of using chlorine against its own citizens, saying that no other party in the conflict has the helicopters to deliver such weapons. Russia has insisted that more evidence is needed to blame anyone.

Even though the Security Council, badly divided on Syria, came together in 2013 to rid Syria of its chemical weapons program, chlorine was not included in that effort. The chemical does not have to be declared because it is also used for regular purposes in industry. Chlorine is a poisonous chemical element used as a bleaching agent and for water purification, but in more concentrated form can cause victims to suffocate.

The reports of new attacks came after the International Committee for the Red Cross director of operations, Dominik Stillhart, warned on Thursday that the humanitarian situation in Syria has deteriorated sharply amid intensified fighting in several parts of the country between government forces and rebel groups, as well as among rival opposition faction.



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"The fighting is escalating in many parts of the country and more and more people are being forced to flee their homes. It is causing untold suffering," said Stillhart.

Stillhart finished a two-day visit to the Syrian capital, Damascus, where he met government officials, appealing for more access to areas affected by the fighting, including the violence-torn, besieged Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk on the outskirts of Damascus.

The camp has been the scene of clashes between local fighters and the Islamic State group since the beginning of April. It was the latest tragedy to engulf the camp's residents, who have already suffered through a devastating two-year government siege, starvation and disease.

About 18,000 people are still in the camp, a built-up area once home to some 160,000 Palestinians and Syrians. The United Nations over the weekend expressed alarm over the continued fighting, along with the use of heavy weapons, and airstrikes.

Fighting has also intensified elsewhere in Syria in recent weeks, as rebel advances have pushed out government forces from contested areas in the country's south and north. Government troops are pushing back.

On Thursday, Syrian government forces and allied fighters from the Lebanese Hezbollah group took control from Islamic militant fighters of more areas near the Syrian border town of Assal al-Ward.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/syria-chlorine-attacks-dozens-reported-suffocated-as-regime-drops-chemical-barrel-bombs-on-idlib-10234798.html>

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The Indian Express – Noida, India

Interceptor Missile Tested 7 Times, DRDO's Rajinikanth Moment Still Far

The system would be able to tackle incoming ballistic missiles of range up to 2,000 km.

Written by Sushant Singh, New Delhi

May 4, 2015

The proposed Ballistic Missile Defence system is supposed to blow enemy n-missiles out of the sky as they fly towards Delhi. But last month's test failed, and many questions remain unanswered.

DRDO's promises and seven tests notwithstanding, the plan to put a nuclear missile defence shield over Delhi remains a work in progress.

The unsuccessful test of an interceptor missile last month swung the spotlight back on the proposed Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. Think of Rajinikanth firing a bullet to destroy the bullet fired by the villain in mid-air. That's what a BMD system does: it provides a city with a protective shield where an incoming enemy ballistic missile is shot down by interceptor missiles.

Besides the interceptors, a BMD consists of radars — satellite-, ground-, and sea-based — to detect and track a missile and its warhead, data communication links to pass on the information, and a command and control system.

DRDO first spoke of a BMD system in December 2007. All building blocks for Phase 1 of a two-layered, fully integrated system were to be in place by 2010. In March 2010, Dr V K Saraswat of DRDO promised initial systems deployment by 2013.

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On May 7, 2012, DRDO declared it had developed a Missile Defence Shield that could be put in place at short notice at two selected locations in the country, presumably Delhi and Mumbai. The system would be able to tackle incoming ballistic missiles of range up to 2,000 km. DRDO also said that long-range tracking radars, real-time data-link and mission control systems needed for the operationalisation of the BMD had been “realised”.

The fact is the BMD system is at the moment not even close to being put into operation. Last month’s unsuccessful test at the Chandipur range was the seventh time the BMD interceptor missile has been tested. It was its second failed test, although the first failure was not of an interceptor, but due to a faulty target missile.

Washington-based emerging and space technologies expert Dr Bharath Gopalaswamy said, “Interceptor technologies are test-intensive and never foolproof. We have to wait until DRDO releases the data for these tests — which I suspect they never will — but for the moment, I would contextualise this as part of a routine test phase.”

A senior DRDO official told The Indian Express that they hoped to conduct another test within a couple of months. “It is part of the development process. This was the first time we launched the interceptor missile from a canister. The target was also a more difficult one than the simulated Prithvi missiles used earlier,” the DRDO official said.

According to Gopalaswamy, this is something to be expected with hit-to-kill technologies. “Dr Saraswat (former DRDO chief) declared missile defence capabilities as operational but the failure in such tests exposes the vulnerabilities in the system,” he said.

MILES TO GO

According to Air Marshal (retd) M Matheswaran, “a development trial by DRDO will not result in an operational system so soon. We can only expect to get a technology demonstrator at the end of the ongoing tests. Even the US took three decades to produce a BMD system. A fully mature BMD system is at least a decade away. The political leadership must be made aware of this reality”.

The BMD system was proposed to India’s political leadership by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam in the mid-1990s, a former cabinet secretary told The Indian Express. It was triggered by Pakistan’s acquisition of M-11 missiles from China. The proposal was to provide cover for Delhi, Mumbai and two other strategically important sites. DRDO is believed to have started work on the programme in 1999.

The armed forces were brought into the loop only a decade later, a senior Indian Air Force officer told The Indian Express. A BMD system cannot be operated in isolation; it has to be networked with existing IAF sensors for better situational awareness to avoid friendly fire, or shooting down of own aircraft or missiles. IAF already has a fully integrated air defence system, and the complexities of deployment will have to be resolved as and when the BMD is put into operation.

“There is no direct involvement of the armed forces in its development even now. The IAF, which is the end user, must be closely involved,” Matheswaran said.

DO WE NEED IT?

Many experts argue that the BMD can take on only a limited number of incoming missiles, and will invite saturation salvos from the enemy. Western non-proliferation activists have said India’s BMD will encourage Pakistan to expand its nuclear arsenal to fire multiple missiles. Bharat Karnad of the Centre for Policy Research said BMD was a “hit-and-miss” system whose reliability has been questioned by various US studies.

Last year, the US General Accountability Office questioned the reliability and efficacy of the Pentagon’s Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) programme, a system similar to India’s BMD. The Pentagon accepted that the GMD system provides “a limited capability against a simple threat”. Senator Tom Coburn’s report last year estimated the GMD system’s success rate at 30 per cent. DRDO has, on the other hand, promised 99.8 per cent reliability for its BMD system.

Unlike the GMD, BMD does not have early warning radars or satellite tracking of an enemy missile. The delayed detection capability reduces the time available for interception of, say, a Pakistani missile to around five minutes.



Also, the BMD system can only intercept missiles launched from 900-1,000 km away; the Chinese Dong Feng-21 ballistic missile with a range of 1,700-2,000 km cannot be intercepted.

The BMD is expensive. Ballpark estimates for defending one Indian city vary from Rs 1 lakh crore to Rs 2.5 lakh crore. At the higher range, it is more than India's annual defence budget. The US continental system is estimated to have cost more than \$ 100 billion so far, the GMD system \$ 41 billion.

"A system that doesn't work, costs a lot, and can't handle multiple attacks will breed a false sense of security and compound our problems. All this talk of deployability of a BMD is premature. What we need at best is a technology demonstrator," Karnad said.

"We have no expert committee like the US JASON to validate projects like the BMD. India has scarce resources. To use them judiciously, a high-level technical committee should validate all strategic projects proposed by DRDO or the armed forces," he said.

Whatever the case, India's 'Rajinikanth' gun can't fire yet. As the Americans like to say, "The real problem with ballistic missile defence is that it is rocket science."

<http://indianexpress.com/article/explained/interceptor-missile-tested-7-times-drdo-rajinikanth-moment-still-far/>

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The National Interest – Washington, D.C.

Russia's Supersonic Tu-160 Bomber Is Back: Should America Worry?

Russia is going to begin production of the Tu-160, a Soviet-era bomber known as the "Blackjack." How should America respond?

By Tom Nichols

May 2, 2015

Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu announced recently that Russia is going to begin production of the Tu-160, a Soviet-era bomber known as the "Blackjack." The Tu-160 is a nuclear platform, basically something like the Soviet version of an American B-1 bomber: a big, heavy, swing-wing bomber meant to deliver nuclear weapons at long distances. The Soviets built about thirty-five of them in the 1980s, of which only fifteen remain in service.

So what does this mean to the strategic balance between the United States and the Russian Federation in 2015? In reality, it means absolutely nothing in military terms. As a political signal, however, Shoigu's announcement is just the latest in a series of provocations. No American response is required and none would matter.

The Blackjack, assuming the Russians even manage to build any more of them, is a perfectly capable nuclear bomber that, in time of war, would fold back its swan-like wings and dart toward its targets at top speed. Once in range, it would launch cruise missiles that would make the last part of their journey low and slow under enemy radar. This is pretty much what all bombers would do in a nuclear war. (The one major advantage of the American B-2 is that it could penetrate farther into enemy airspace with less chance of detection.)

To worry about the extra capability of additional Blackjacks, however, requires believing that nuclear bombers matter at all in 2015. During the Cold War, when a "triad" of land, air and sea weapons were the guarantee against a massive surprise attack, both sides invested in various tripartite combinations of ICBMs, sea-launched weapons and bombers. In a massive first-strike, at least some of these weapons would survive and destroy the aggressor, which is why no one could contemplate doing it. (The Soviets likely did not contemplate it very seriously in any case. There's an interesting declassified CIA report from 1973 you can read [here](#).)

Today, no one seriously worries that the Russians or the Americans will, or can, execute a disabling first strike against the other. A "BOOB," or "Bolt-Out-Of-the-Blue," is neither politically likely, nor militarily feasible. The days when command and control, satellites and even strategic delivery systems themselves were all far more shaky are long gone. The ideological competition between two global systems, in which one would seek to destroy the other as rapidly as possible, is also over.

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Moreover, the sheer number of strategic weapons isn't up to the job. In 1981, the United States and the Soviet Union fielded a total of nearly 50,000 weapons against each other. Strategic targets, including opposing nuclear forces, numbered in the thousands. Today, in accordance with the New START treaty, Russia and America will only deploy 1550 warheads each. (Coincidentally, this week marks the fourth anniversary of New START.) Even if both sides were committed to a first strike, there aren't enough weapons to do it: 1550 means 1550, and it doesn't matter what platform—bomber, ICBM or submarine—is carrying them.

So why are the Russians even bothering to do this?

For starters, not everything is about us. The Russians have a huge nuclear infrastructure, and a military obsessed with symbols of nuclear power. Building more nuclear toys makes everyone happy: Russia's nuclear military-industrial complex gets jobs and money, the military gets its nuclear security blanket, and Russian leaders like Shoigu and President Vladimir Putin get to thump their chests about holding back the nuclear savagery of Barack Obama. Outside of Russia, no one except nuclear wonks like me even know what a Tu-160 is, but Russians know of it and many are likely proud of it.

The part that *is* about us is more disturbing. The Russians, and Putin in particular, have decided to forego any further pretense of accepting the outcome of the Cold War. Some foreign-policy realists lay Putin's aggressiveness at NATO's door, and rightly point out that NATO expansion needlessly handed Russian nationalists a cause. But Putin, it should now be obvious, was never going to accept the Soviet loss. His feints at cooperation were unsustainable, and his Soviet-era nostalgia for the days of the USSR has reasserted itself with a vengeance. If Putin can't get along with a U.S. president as passive and accommodating as Barack Obama, he can't get along with anyone.

That's why the United States has no play to make here, other than to remind the Russians of two things.

First, if we react to Shoigu, we should note only that the United States has a fully capable deterrent that cannot be destroyed, and that we have no interest in Russian bombers, so long as they do not exceed New START's warhead limits. We do not need to create a new nuclear system, or start returning nuclear weapons to Europe. If Russia means war, they know it will end in 2015 the way it would have ended in 1965: with the destruction of most of Russia and North America, and the deaths of millions of innocent people.

More important, we must reaffirm our commitment to NATO, because Europe, not America, is really the intended audience for Russia's nuclear antics. Bringing back the Tu-160 is another of the Kremlin's many attempts to scare the Europeans with the same threat the Russians have been harping on since the 1950s: "If war comes, the Americans will be so afraid of us they will not lift a finger to help you." Each time we ignore these threats, we encourage more of them.

The way to reassure NATO is match Russian moves not with nuclear threats, but with conventional forces, as U.S. ambassador Steven Pifer and others have argued. This is what the Russians fear most, because they know that the Cold War equation is now flipped, with Russia the weaker conventional power. If Shoigu wants to build more of his pretty bombers, that's his business, but no Russian leader should think that an attack on NATO can produce anything but a Russian conventional loss, at which point the Russians will have to think about whether *they* want to face the escalatory burden that once haunted NATO.

Our reaction to Russia's nuclear threats should be no reaction at all, other than to affirm our ability to defend ourselves—and the most populous, wealthy and powerful alliance in human history—as the mature and confident superpower that we are.

Tom Nichols is Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval War College and an adjunct at the Harvard Extension School. His most recent book is No Use: Nuclear Weapons and U.S. National Security (University of Pennsylvania, 2014) The views expressed are solely his own.

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-supersonic-tu-160-bomber-back-should-america-worry-12787?page=show>

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The Diplomat – Tokyo, Japan
OPINION/Flashpoints

Could Cyber Attacks Lead to Nuclear War?

It could, according to a former commander of U.S. nuclear forces.

By Franz-Stefan Gady for *The Diplomat*

May 04, 2015

“De-alerting” nuclear arsenals could help reduce the likelihood of a cyberattack causing an accidental nuclear war between the United States and Russia, retired U.S. Gen. James Cartwright recently stated in an *Associated Press* interview.

Short fuses on U.S. and Russian strategic forces have particularly increased the risk of accidental nuclear war, according to Cartwright, while “the sophistication of the cyberthreat [to nuclear weapons] has increased exponentially.”

“One-half of their [U.S. and Russian] strategic arsenals are continuously maintained on high alert. Hundreds of missiles carrying nearly 1,800 warheads are ready to fly at a moment’s notice,” a policy report compiled by a study group chaired by the retired U.S. general summarized.

“At the brink of conflict, nuclear command and warning networks around the world may be besieged by electronic intruders whose onslaught degrades the coherence and rationality of nuclear decision-making,” the report further points out.

The *War Games*-like scenario could unfold in one of the following three ways:

First, sophisticated attackers from cyberspace could spoof U.S. or Russian early warning networks into reporting that nuclear missiles have been launched, which would demand immediate retaliatory strikes according to both nations’ nuclear warfare doctrines. Second, online hackers could manipulate communication systems into issuing unauthorized launch orders to missile crews. Third and last, attackers could directly hack into missile command and control systems launching the weapon or dismantling it on site (a highly unlikely scenario).

To reduce the likelihood of such an scenario ever occurring, Cartwright proposes that Moscow and Washington should adjust their nuclear war contingency plan timetables from calling for missiles to be launched within 3 to 5 minutes to 24 to 72 hours.

Reducing the lead time to prepare nuclear missiles for launch would not diminish the deterrent value of the weapons, Cartwright, who headed Strategic Command from 2004 to 2007 and was vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff before retiring in 2011, emphasized.

However, the Obama White House has so far rejected the idea, particularly due to the recent deterioration of U.S.-Russia relations. Also, Robert Scher, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities, testified in Congress this month arguing “it did not make any great sense to de-alert forces” because nuclear missiles “needed to be ready and effective and able to prosecute the mission at any point in time.”

Cartwright’s credibility may have also suffered among Washington policy circles ever since he has been under investigation for leaking information about the top secret Stuxnet virus – a sophisticated cyber weapon allegedly jointly developed by Israel and the United States – to the *New York Times*.

Nevertheless, a co-authored paper, seen in draft by *The Diplomat*, argues that “cyber weapons and strategies have brought us to a situation of aggravated nuclear instability that needs to be more explicitly and more openly addressed in the diplomacy of leading powers, both in private and in public.”



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The authors, Greg Austin of the EastWest Institute in New York (and a regular contributor to *The Diplomat*) and Pavel Sharikov of the Russian Academy of Sciences, have concluded that “Russia now sees U.S. plans to disrupt the command and control of its nuclear weapons as the only actual (current) threat at the strategic level of warfare.”

Laura Saalman of the Asia Pacific Research Centre in Hawaii has also warned of the need to look at the impact of U.S. strategies and nuclear force posture on China in a 2014 paper titled “Prompt Global Strike: China and the Spear”.

Franz-Stefan Gady is an Associate Editor with *The Diplomat*.

<http://thediplomat.com/2015/05/could-cyber-attacks-lead-to-nuclear-war/>

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Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists – Chicago, IL

OPINION/Voices of Tomorrow

Drawing a Line between Conventional and Nuclear Weapons in China

By David Cromer Logan

5 May 2015

China possesses one of world’s largest and most sophisticated ballistic missile forces. This force, which includes both conventional and nuclear-armed missiles, is controlled by the Second Artillery Corps of the People’s Liberation Army. Public accounts of China’s missile forces suggest that these conventional and nuclear missiles are operationally and geographically entangled, which poses a threat of inadvertent escalation and instability during a crisis.

Second Artillery bases may operate both conventional and nuclear missiles, and even some missile systems—such as the road-mobile DF-21—accommodate both missile types. In addition to co-locating, China’s ballistic and nuclear missiles may share the same support capabilities and facilities, including the same command and control systems.

Historically, given its lack of an early warning system, absence of more-survivable deployment options such as advanced ballistic missile submarines, and the country’s comparatively reserved nuclear posture exemplified by its declared no-first-use policy, China has relied upon stockpile and operational opacity to ensure the survivability of its relatively small nuclear force. By obscuring information—such as how many weapons it possesses, where those weapons are deployed, and the size of its fissile material stockpiles—China can use quantitative and geographic ambiguity to confound attempts by an adversary to preemptively eliminate China’s nuclear force.

Ambiguity, however, increases the risks of misperception. In order to help alleviate these risks, China should consider a policy of disentanglement that would include a pledge to physically separate its conventional and nuclear missiles, as well as to develop separate supporting capabilities for each type of missile.

The fog of war. In a conflict, it may be difficult for the United States or other adversaries to discriminate between China’s conventional and nuclear forces. An attempt to target conventional missiles may require targeting of bases that also house nuclear missiles, or targeting of centralized support infrastructure such as command and control facilities. Chinese decision makers could misinterpret such targeting as an attempt to preemptively eliminate China’s nuclear force.

The United States may see a strike against centralized facilities as particularly attractive compared with the difficulty of finding, tracking, and destroying multiple deployed mobile missiles. Even if Beijing were to correctly conclude that a US strike was genuinely intended to only target China’s conventional missiles, such strikes might nonetheless represent a threat to China’s nuclear deterrent to the extent that Beijing relies on the same systems and personnel for conventional and nuclear command and control. Either way, such a strike would certainly be perceived as highly provocative and escalatory.

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Military doctrines such as the Pentagon's Air-Sea Battle concept (now called the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons) and China's Anti-Access/Area-Denial capabilities, both of which emphasize the role of China's conventional ballistic missile force, accentuate the risk of escalation. In a conflict, it is possible that China would opt for first use of these missiles, or that the United States would seek to preemptively neutralize these missiles.

These risks could be further exacerbated by the interplay between US Conventional Prompt Global Strike (CPGS) weapons and reports of future Chinese early warning systems coupled with a hair-trigger alert for nuclear weapons. For example, the launch of a CPGS weapon would likely follow, or appear to follow, a ballistic trajectory for at least part of its flight path—which, if detected by a Chinese early warning system, could be misinterpreted as a nuclear-armed ballistic missile.

Finally, both China's anti-satellite weapon and its conventional anti-ship ballistic missile are based on the nuclear-capable DF-21 missile, which could exacerbate the potential for misunderstandings in the fog of war. For example, US forces might misinterpret the readying of a conventional DF-21 as preparation to launch a nuclear strike.

Separate deployments and infrastructure. To address these entanglement risks, China should consider a comprehensive policy of disentanglement, separating deployment and control of its conventional-armed ballistic missile forces from those of its nuclear-armed ones. First, conventional and nuclear forces should be deployed at different bases. Further, the Second Artillery should develop independent support systems, including command and control arrangements and training doctrines.

Aside from its history of opacity about its nuclear force, China's extensive use of road-mobile ballistic missiles presents perhaps the greatest challenge to a verifiable disentanglement policy. Unlike silo-based missiles, mobile ones can be relocated. Verifying the disentanglement of mobile missiles can be accomplished by applying features of the monitoring regimes for mobile missiles used in the START I and New START agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union/Russia to limit those countries' deployed nuclear forces. Drawing on the lessons of those agreements, China could establish single, non-overlapping deployment zones around each base. Mobile missiles dispersed as part of a training exercise or an actual deployment could only move within the deployment zones of their respective bases. To further facilitate verification, China could also deploy mobile missiles with readily distinguishable features, such as visually unique vehicles to transport and launch mobile missiles, and could agree not to use certain concealment measures at some of its missile bases.

Facilitating verification. Two major issues complicate a disentanglement policy: the ability of the United States and other states to confidently verify such a policy, and disentanglement's impact on the survivability of China's nuclear forces. A disentanglement policy must be reasonably verifiable through national technical means, such as satellites, in order to facilitate target discrimination by potential adversaries. China's nuclear force is smaller and less widely distributed than Russia's, so it should be easier to monitor. New START has successfully verified restrictions on Russian mobile missiles, despite eschewing and consolidating many of the intrusive on-site inspection and monitoring activities that previous accords applied to manufacturing, deployment, and movement of mobile missiles.

In order to alleviate concerns that greater transparency would erode survivability, China might opt for a policy of partial geographic transparency by identifying the locations of only those bases deploying conventionally armed ballistic missiles, while still maintaining ambiguity about its nuclear deployments.

Potential adversaries could take comfort that a disentanglement policy would be self-enforcing, because, once proclaimed, it would enhance China's nuclear force survivability against an inadvertent strike. A violation of such a policy would place all China's missiles at risk by forcing adversaries to assume that, because missiles are no longer disentangled, any missile might be a desired conventional target.

Maintaining survivability. The disentanglement of conventional and nuclear ballistic missile forces would entail a degree of transparency that China has heretofore been reluctant to provide, because opacity is an essential feature of China's force survivability. The twin goals of survivability and verification at first seem contradictory. However, they exist in different contexts and with different requirements. Effective peacetime verification



provides confidence that conventional and nuclear missiles are not based together. However, in a crisis, the tools used to verify disentanglement in peacetime would not help pinpoint the exact location of an already dispersed mobile missile within a large deployment zone. For example, Soviet deployment zones established to monitor mobile missiles under START I were 125,000 square miles, providing ample space for mobile missiles to hide during operational dispersals in a crisis.

The difficulty of the US military in tracking Iraqi mobile SCUD missiles during the Gulf War demonstrated the challenges of wartime targeting. Also, past technical analysis has demonstrated that simple countermeasures could hamper tracking of already deployed mobile missiles by, for instance, a space-based radar tracking and surveillance system.

To some degree, separate deployment of conventional and nuclear missiles would reflect the different roles of these weapons. Indeed, early intelligence estimates reported that China first deployed its conventional DF-21 missiles along its borders in order to ensure maximum target coverage. On the other hand, the greater range of China's nuclear-armed intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) allows them to be launched from anywhere within the country's borders and still hit targets necessary for strategic deterrence. Deploying its nuclear missiles away from its borders and coastline would help China ensure the survivability of its limited force, sheltering them behind air defense systems and so-called Anti-Access/Area-Denial capabilities—which could be used to keep US forces, including any possible boost-phase missile defense systems, beyond striking distance of Chinese territory.

Moving toward transparency. Realization of a disentanglement policy would likely face strong political and military obstacles in China, especially given legitimate concerns about force survivability and overall strategic stability. However, trends in China's nuclear forces augur toward a future strategic environment more amenable to transparency, and such a policy could be implemented in conjunction with other measures designed to address Chinese and American concerns about stability.

As China's ongoing nuclear modernization program enhances the survivability of its nuclear force, it may provide Beijing with more confidence in pursuing nuclear transparency without fear of eroding its deterrent credibility. China is transitioning to a force of more reliable solid-fueled mobile missiles while possibly working toward the eventual deployment of a survivable nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) force. While China still has much progress to make on the technical front, these developments may work in concert to lessen Beijing's reliance on geographic and operational ambiguity.

It is also likely that, until China acquires an assured retaliatory capability, Beijing will view the benefits to stability of a disentanglement policy, however real and desirable for both sides, as accruing disproportionately to the United States. To address this potential asymmetry, a disentanglement policy might be considered as part of a suite of agreements designed to increase strategic stability between the two countries and limit the chance of inadvertent escalation in a crisis. Such tradeoffs could include measures to address Chinese concerns regarding US ballistic missile defense systems, Conventional Prompt Global Strike weapons, or revitalized anti-submarine warfare capabilities.

The difficulty in forging and implementing such proposals does not make them unworthy of pursuing. Future progress on arms control agreements, either in pursuit of global disarmament or as a means of enhancing stability, will ultimately need to address Chinese forces. Even if these agreements are far off, and may need to be forged in different political and strategic environments, it is worth considering now what measures merit exploring. A disentanglement policy and its attendant transparency could represent the first step toward more formal and comprehensive future agreements and help lessen the risks of the world's most dangerous weapons.

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<http://thebulletin.org/drawing-line-between-conventional-and-nuclear-weapons-china8304>

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Nuclear Weapons Enable Peace

By Constance Baroudos, M.A

May 6, 2015

When President Barack Obama urged all countries to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their security strategies, no foreign leaders followed. In fact, several countries continue to modernize their nuclear delivery systems: Russia, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, France, Britain and North Korea. Since nuclear weapons are the deadliest arms on earth, many people do not realize they enable peace. Washington cannot get rid of its strategic deterrent as other states continue to pump their nuclear muscle. The U.S. must maintain a strong arsenal to discourage other nations from using their own nuclear weapons.

History has shown that the U.S. nuclear deterrent ensures violence does not increase above a certain threshold. During the Cold War, conflict between the nuclear powers, the U.S. and the Soviet Union, was prevented while smaller battles such as the Korean War occurred in proxy states. Since August 1945 when the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, about seven to 10 million people have died from conflict. Compare this to the two world wars that caused about 70 to 100 million deaths prior to the creation of nuclear weapons.

Pentagon leaders failed to educate the public about the importance of the nuclear triad during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Major General Harencak admitted, “We have not discussed the continued relevance of the triad and the stability that it brings to us and our allies. Because of that, people are not realizing [the] tremendous value it brings. The triad is a complementary system that we’ve had for decades ... It works.” Commander Admiral Cecil Haney, U.S. Strategic Command, has confirmed the deterrence mission requires bombers, submarines and intercontinental ballistic missiles as validated in the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review.

The New START treaty will decrease the number of American nuclear weapons to the lowest level since the 1950s. In 2013, General Kevin Chilton, former head of U.S. Strategic Command, told the House Armed Services Committee that 1,550 warheads is the lowest number he would recommend for the U.S. arsenal. This is because excessively low numbers could lead to a situation in which surprise attacks are more likely, increasing the risk to American security and its allies.

Nuclear weapons in NATO territories serve as visible symbols of U.S. commitment to defend allies and deter potential adversaries. Many new members of NATO have stated that they joined the alliance specifically to gain protection under the nuclear umbrella. Naturally, the alliance’s concerns were inflamed after Russia’s recent actions: invading Ukraine, simulation of nuclear strike exercises on Poland and the Baltic states, and threats of strikes on NATO’s missile defense sites. It is critical the U.S. is equipped with a strong nuclear capability so that allies are assured that Washington will remain faithful to its security commitments. Strategic stability requires a sufficient force size to preserve global peace and prevent allies from the need to appease adversaries or acquire their own nuclear capabilities.

Legislation that proposes cutting the nuclear force, like the Smarter Approach to Nuclear Expenditures bill, reintroduced at the end of March by Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) and Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), shows the lack of understanding amongst some legislators of how the deterrent works. Senator Markey publicly stated, “We are robbing America’s future to pay for unneeded weapons of the past” and “it makes no sense to fund a bloated nuclear arsenal that does nothing to keep our nation safe in the 21st century.”

Senator Markey must have missed Admiral Haney’s statement about how the military has placed “[Nuclear] programs on hold as [they’ve] had to address other things, but as you look at the modernization that is going on in various other countries, it’s very important that we have a safe, secure, effective, and credible strategic deterrent – not just today but in the future.” After all, we are funding weapons that kill on a daily basis – it only makes sense to increase funding to modernize nuclear weapons which might well prevent a third world war.

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Contrary to some media reports, like Senator Dianne Feinstein's opinion editorial last year, nuclear weapons are an affordable deterrent. The nuclear triad accounts for less than 2 percent of the total defense budget and protects economic centers like New York and Los Angeles from blackmail and complete destruction. Senator Feinstein points out that the U.S. nuclear program hasn't had a high level of funding since the 1980s, but fails to mention that the triad has been on a procurement holiday for over 20 years. The budget to modernize nuclear weapons needs to increase because it has been neglected for two decades.

Many Americans are surprised to learn that the U.S. can only defend its homeland from a limited missile attack from Iran or North Korea with the currently deployed Ground-based Midcourse Defense. This is a dangerous issue because the architecture can easily be overcome by an intentional or accidental launch from countries such as Russia or China. Because America's missile defense system has its weaknesses, Washington must guarantee it has a backup plan by possessing a powerful nuclear deterrent to ensure an aggressor contemplating an attack determines that costs and risks outweigh potential benefits and that an advantage could never be gained by a first strike.

President Obama's view of a world without nuclear weapons is not feasible right now. Peace can only be secured through strength. Hence, the U.S. should move forward with its plans to fund and modernize the three legs of the nuclear arsenal to ensure the homeland and allies are safe from current and future missile threats.

Constance Baroudos is a Policy Analyst and Program Director at the Lexington Institute. Her current research interests include ballistic missile-defense and nuclear strategy.

<http://lexingtoninstitute.org/nuclear-weapons-enable-peace/>

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The National Interest – Washington, D.C.
OPINION/Feature

How America and Russia Could Start a Nuclear War

"As during the Cold War, the keys to a strategic nuclear exchange are rigid military planning, political misperception, and natural human frailty."

By Tom Nichols
May 7, 2015

A few weeks ago, I directed Harvard Extension School's "Crisis Game," in which students had to play out a hypothetical Cold War crisis involving nuclear weapons. The realization that a crisis could escalate to nuclear war shocked younger students who had never given much thought to this issue, especially when they found the game sliding from an exercise in negotiation toward nuclear doom. ("I was literally sweating," one of the players later said.)

But is a nuclear war between Russia and America possible today? After all, there is no longer a Cold War, the Soviet Union and its military alliance were dismantled long ago, and both Russia and America have slashed their nuclear inventories. What could cause a nuclear conflict? How would such an exchange start, and how would it progress?

Unfortunately, nuclear war is still possible. Now, as during the Cold War, the keys to a strategic nuclear exchange are rigid military planning, political misperception, and natural human frailty.

Part of the problem is that Russia now openly considers the use of nuclear weapons in any scenario in which they begin to lose to a superior force. In an ironic reversal of the situation during the Cold War, NATO is now the dominant conventional coalition in Europe, while Russia is a weak state with a large but less powerful army. The Russian Federation has no significant ability to project power far from its borders, and likely cannot sustain a major conventional engagement with a capable opponent for any prolonged period.



As a result of this imbalance, the Kremlin has embraced a doctrine of “de-escalation” in which Russia would threaten to use nuclear weapons during a conflict in order to deter an opponent from pursuing further military gains. (While China maintains a public pledge never to be the first to use nuclear arms, Beijing likely has a similar plan should war with the Americans go badly.)

How might this doctrine come into play during a crisis? There is far less at stake between Russia and the West now, and the Russians are not commanding a global empire dedicated to a revolutionary ideology. That does not mean, however, that Russian leaders, including President Vladimir Putin, accept the outcome of the Cold War.

And so imagine, in the wake of Russia’s successes in Ukraine, that the Russian leadership under Vladimir Putin decides to test its belief that NATO, as a political alliance, can be broken with a show of force. To this end, the Kremlin attempts to replicate the 2014 Ukraine operation, only this time in a NATO nation, perhaps in the Baltics or Poland. “Little green men” begin assisting “separatists” in isolating a slice of NATO territory.

This time, however, the target responds forcefully: instead of the hapless and disorganized Ukrainians of 2014, the Russians find themselves facing troops with better training and superior Western weapons, who briskly dispatch the Russian “volunteers” and showcase an array of captured Russian arms.

The Kremlin, now watching its plans unspool, doubles down. Clinging to the assumption that NATO will fracture and abandon the victim to Russian aggression, the men in Moscow send in Russian regulars to help their “brothers” in the struggle. NATO leaders, contrary to these unrealistic Russian expectations, activate Article V of the NATO charter. Now it’s a real war, and after they clear the skies of inferior Russian aircraft, Western jets soon begin pounding Russian soldiers and obliterating Russian equipment in numbers that defy even the most pessimistic assumptions of the Russian General Staff.

Russian losses, viewed instantly and globally across the internet, are heavy. The Russians soon realize they face the prospect of a humiliating defeat. Worse, they may fear a counter-offensive that could spill into Russian territory. The idea of NATO stepping even an inch into Russia fills the generals and their president with dread, especially as the Russian public watches their soldiers being cut to pieces in a foreign country.

The Kremlin, at this point, threatens to use nuclear weapons. The West responds by reiterating its demands that the Russians leave NATO territory, by initiating a renewed offensive against the invading forces, and by increasing U.S., British, and French nuclear readiness.

What happens next is too hard to predict in political terms. If the Russians pull back and borders are restored, the crisis is over. If, on the other hand, they decide to go all in on what was supposed to be a bluff, they might launch a limited number of tactical nuclear strikes against NATO targets, such as a small number of airfields or command posts, in order to “de-escalate” the situation. (If all of this sounds crazy, remember that this is exactly the scenario the Russians exercised in 1999—while the far more pro-American Russian President Boris Yeltsin was still in power—and have repeatedly practiced since.)

As the world reels from the news that nuclear weapons have been detonated in Europe, the Kremlin then issues a warning: everything stops right here, right now, with all forces left in place. Or else.

Before the ink dries on the Russian demand, NATO’s response is quick, calibrated, and forceful. A few symbolic targets are chosen: a Russian naval formation in the Black Sea or in the Baltic are destroyed with submarine-launched nuclear weapons. Russian territory is not breached (Yet.) All Western strategic forces are on full alert, ready to strike the entire Russian nuclear infrastructure, including Moscow. The Russians, likewise, are ready to strike hundreds of North American ICBM sites, along with U.S., British, and French submarine pens and bomber bases.

If the Russians respond with another round of nuclear strikes inside NATO, a combined Anglo-American (or even Anglo-Franco-American) attack on targets inside Russia near the fighting might be the West’s last ditch to convince the Russians to pull away from their failed gambit. Once a nuclear weapon explodes on Russian soil, however, Russian hardliners, civilian and military, will demand a strike on America or Britain, or both, as revenge and as a show of resolve.



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If the crisis goes beyond this initial exchange of nuclear force, with hundreds of thousands of people already dead and injured from nuclear strikes in multiple countries, we can expect all sides to execute their Cold War-era plans, since they're really still the only ones anyone has. Driven by fear and military logic, the United States and Russia will attack each other's strategic nuclear capability as quickly as possible, including command and control centers located in or near major cities like Washington and Moscow.

Carefully crafted nuclear war plans, with all their elegant, complicated options, will fall apart in the midst of chaos. Even taking into account weapons destroyed by surprise, rendered inactive by flawed orders, or neutralized by some kind of technical malfunction, a combined total of several hundred nuclear weapons will fall on each country, including a fair number on Canada, the United Kingdom and France.

In the United States, much of the eastern seaboard will burn. Even a limited strike will require the immediate destruction of Washington along with Navy nuclear installations from Virginia to Florida. In the west, San Diego and Seattle will suffer the most. Omaha, the home of the U.S. Strategic Command, will be gone, along with missile bases and airfields in the mountain states. Fallout will kill many more to the east of all of these targets, and irradiate large swaths of America's agricultural heartland.

In the immediate aftermath, governors will take control of their states as best they can until something like a U.S. government can reconstitute itself. National Guardsmen, along with state and local police forces, will be forced to cope with a terrified and gravely wounded population. Soldiers and cops will find themselves doing everything from protecting food stocks to euthanizing doomed burn victims. Along with the grisly human cost, the damage to the fragile, electronically-based U.S. infrastructure will be massive.

Areas that were untouched in the strikes, from Northern New England to the Deep South, will drown under an influx of refugees. Civil disorder will eventually spiral out of the control of even the most dedicated state military organizations and police forces. Martial law will be common and persistent.

In Russia, the situation will be even worse. The full disintegration of the Russian Empire, begun in 1905 and interrupted only by the Soviet aberration, will finally be complete. A second Russian civil war will erupt, and Eurasia, for decades if not longer, will be a patchwork of crippled ethnic states led by strongmen. Some Russian rump state may emerge from the ashes, but it will likely be forever suffocated by a Europe unwilling to forgive so much devastation.

I am not enough of an expert on Chinese strategy to know if this situation would be replicated in the Pacific. I cannot help but wonder, however, if the weak and insecure Chinese state, faced by a stunning conventional loss, might panic and take the nuclear option, hoping to shock America into a cease-fire. The devastation to America might even be worse in this case: in order to achieve maximum effect, the small Chinese strategic nuclear force is almost certainly targeted against American cities, from the West Coast inward. The United States of America, in some form, will survive. The People's Republic of China, like the Russian Federation, will cease to exist as a political entity.

How any of this might happen is pure speculation. The important point is that it is not, in any sense, impossible.

But while it is not impossible, it is also not inevitable, nor even likely. Still, several factors could nonetheless collide to create a tragedy. These factors mean that the possibility of the kind of miscalculation that could lead to nuclear war is now greater than at any time since the early 1980s.

It's time to take this threat seriously again, not only as a menace to American national security, but to our collective existence as a civilization.

Tom Nichols is Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval War College and an adjunct at the Harvard Extension School. His most recent book is No Use: Nuclear Weapons and U.S. National Security (University of Pennsylvania, 2014). The views expressed are his own.

<http://nationalinterest.org/feature/how-america-russia-could-start-nuclear-war-12826?page=show>

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ABOUT THE USAF CUWS

The USAF Counterproliferation Center was established in 1998 at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Located at Maxwell AFB, this Center capitalizes on the resident expertise of Air University, while extending its reach far beyond - and influences a wide audience of leaders and policy makers. A memorandum of agreement between the Air Staff Director for Nuclear and Counterproliferation (then AF/XON), now AF/A5XP) and Air War College Commandant established the initial manpower and responsibilities of the Center. This included integrating counterproliferation awareness into the curriculum and ongoing research at the Air University; establishing an information repository to promote research on counterproliferation and nonproliferation issues; and directing research on the various topics associated with counterproliferation and nonproliferation .

The Secretary of Defense's Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Management released a report in 2008 that recommended "Air Force personnel connected to the nuclear mission be required to take a professional military education (PME) course on national, defense, and Air Force concepts for deterrence and defense." As a result, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, in coordination with the AF/A10 and Air Force Global Strike Command, established a series of courses at Kirtland AFB to provide continuing education through the careers of those Air Force personnel working in or supporting the nuclear enterprise. This mission was transferred to the Counterproliferation Center in 2012, broadening its mandate to providing education and research to not just countering WMD but also nuclear deterrence.

In February 2014, the Center's name was changed to the Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies to reflect its broad coverage of unconventional weapons issues, both offensive and defensive, across the six joint operating concepts (deterrence operations, cooperative security, major combat operations, irregular warfare, stability operations, and homeland security). The term "unconventional weapons," currently defined as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, also includes the improvised use of chemical, biological, and radiological hazards.

The CUWS's military insignia displays the symbols of nuclear, biological, and chemical hazards. The arrows above the hazards represent the four aspects of counterproliferation - counterforce, active defense, passive defense, and consequence management.

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