



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) Outreach Journal

Issue No. 1119, 13 June 2014

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 resources 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.

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FEATURE ITEM: "Ten-Year Budget Estimates for Modernization Omit Key Efforts, and Assumptions and Limitations Are Not Fully Transparent". GAO-14-373: Published: June 10, 2014; 38 Pages.
<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664004.pdf>

The Departments of Energy's (DOE) and Defense's (DOD) \$263.8 billion, 10-year estimates in their report to Congress for sustaining and modernizing U.S. nuclear weapons capabilities are generally consistent with their funding plans through fiscal year 2018. However, GAO identified shortcomings with respect to the completeness of the budget estimates and the transparency of the assumptions and limitations that underlie the 10-year estimate. Specifically:

- Nuclear stockpile and infrastructure
- Nuclear delivery systems
- Nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3)

The report omits estimates for certain programs, such as the new bomber, and is not fully transparent in describing key assumptions and limitations for estimating nuclear command, control, and communications system funding, which limits its utility for budgetary planning. Key principles that GAO derived from federal budget guidance stress the importance of including all relevant funding estimates in the plan, as well as documenting methodological assumptions and potential limitations. However, DOD did not specifically direct the Air Force to include a range of potential budget estimates in the report for developing a new intercontinental missile or bomber, where a firm estimate was unavailable. DOD also did not direct that key assumptions and limitations be documented in the report for preparing its NC3 estimates. GAO reported in December 2013 that DOE's nuclear stockpile and infrastructure estimates did not include a range of preliminary budget estimates to account for known future expenses. GAO recommended that DOE include a range of potential budget estimates for preliminary projects and programs in future funding plans, and DOE generally agreed with this recommendation. Without a range of potential estimates and fully documented assumptions and limitations, the report is an incomplete tool for congressional oversight.

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[Return to Top](#)

U.S. NUCLEAR WEAPONS

1. [US Steps Up Military Presence in Europe with Stealth Bombers – Report](#)
2. [Congress Told of Possible Gap in Air Force's Nuclear Strike Capability](#)
3. [Federal Auditors Say Obama Administration Underestimates Nuclear Weapons Costs](#)
4. [Air Force Nearly Done Studying Nuclear-Missile Fleet Options](#)
5. [Bonus Pay is Part of Air Force Nuclear Force Reforms](#)

U.S. COUNTER-WMD

Issue No.1119, 13 June 2014

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CUWS Outreach Journal

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1. [U.S. to Reassess Missile Defense Interceptor if Next Test Fails](#)
2. [U.S. and Australia to Cooperate on Asian Missile-Defense Plans](#)

HOMELAND SECURITY/THE AMERICAS

1. [Experts Press for New Forensic Methods to Spot Bioweapon Attacks](#)
2. [Scientists Condemn 'Crazy, Dangerous' Creation of Deadly Airborne Flu Virus](#)
3. [Russian Bombers Fly within 50 Miles of California Coast](#)

ASIA/PACIFIC

1. [Japan Failed to Report 640 kg of Nuclear Fuel to IAEA](#)
2. [Washington and Beijing's Conflict Growing over Missile Defense](#)
3. [PLA's New Test Submarine Revealed at Zhongshan Expo](#)
4. [Beidou System Can Boost PLA's Missile Accuracy: Expert](#)
5. [N. Korea Slams U.S. Plan for Missile Defense on Korean Soil](#)

EUROPE/RUSSIA

1. [Scottish Independence: 'Yes' Vote could Scupper Nuclear Clean-Up](#)
2. [Submarine Vladimir Monomakh Goes on Sea Trials in White Sea](#)
3. [Fire-Ravaged Yekaterinburg Nuclear Sub to Reenter Active Duty by Year's End](#)
4. [Exclusive: UK to Step up Collaboration with US over Nuclear Warheads](#)

MIDDLE EAST

1. [Iran, US Announce Surprise Nuke Talks](#)
2. [Iran: 5,000km-Range Missile Can Hit US Indian Ocean Base](#)
3. [Iran Questions Nuclear Deal Deadline as Talks 'Hit Wall'](#)
4. [Iran Must Budge on Centrifuges: France](#)
5. [Iran to Reduce Arak Plutonium Production: Official](#)
6. [Satellite Photos Show Construction at Parchin Military Base in Iran](#)
7. [Iran to Resume 20% Enrichment if Nuclear Talks Fail: Araqchi](#)
8. [Report: Iran Study Estimates Nuclear Breakout would Take Years, Not Months](#)

INDIA/PAKISTAN

1. [Pakistan Steps up Security at Nuclear Bases after Karachi Airport Attack](#)
2. ["No Reason" to Worry about the Security of Pakistani Nuclear Weapons: US](#)

COMMENTARY

1. [Missile Defense and the North Korean Nuclear Threat](#)
2. [Nuclear Bombers in an A2/AD World](#)
3. [Ten-Year, \\$264 Billion Nuclear Weapons Spending Estimate Leaves Out Some Things](#)
4. [DOD Report Shows Chinese Nuclear Force Adjustments and US Nuclear Secrecy](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

US Steps Up Military Presence in Europe with Stealth Bombers – Report

9 June 2014

MOSCOW, June 9 (RIA Novosti) – The United States has stepped up its military presence in Europe, sending two B-2 stealth bombers to the region, the Army Times reported Monday.

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"This deployment of strategic bombers provides an invaluable opportunity to strengthen and improve interoperability with our allies and partners," Adm. Cecil Haney, head of the US Strategic Command, was quoted as saying.

The commander meanwhile did not specify for how long the bombers would remain in the region, saying only that it would be a short-time deployment.

The B-2 aircraft is set up with stealth technology that allows it to penetrate dense anti-aircraft defenses. Stealth bombers can carry a wide range of both conventional and nuclear weapons.

The B-2 bombers are assigned to the 509th Bomb Wing, located at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. On Sunday, they joined three B-52 Stratofortress strategic bombers that landed at RAF Fairford, a Royal Air Force base in Gloucestershire, England, last week.

The deployed aircraft will take part in joint drills in the operational zone of the US European Command.

<http://en.ria.ru/world/20140609/190438503/US-Steps-Up-Military-Presence-in-Europe-with-Stealth-Bombers-.html>

[Return to Top](#)

Global Security Newswire – Washington, D.C.

Congress Told of Possible Gap in Air Force's Nuclear Strike Capability

By Rachel Oswald, *Global Security Newswire*

June 9, 2014

A new congressional report highlights the potential for a shortfall to emerge in the Air Force's ability to mount long-range nuclear bomber attacks.

A Congressional Research Service report published online on Saturday highlights a number of factors that could result in a gap in the country's ability to conduct long-range nuclear strikes by air, among them foreign nations' development of sophisticated anti-access and area-denial capabilities and reductions in defense spending imposed by the 2011 Budget Control Act.

The Pentagon is planning on building a new long-range stealth bomber, but the first units are not expected to become available until the mid-2020s. In the meantime, the ability of the Air Force's current fleet of nuclear-capable bombers "to get close enough to targets to employ weapons will likely continue to deteriorate" as potential adversaries acquire more advanced air defenses, according to the report by Congress' internal think-tank.

"Already, against today's toughest air defenses, the B-52 and B-1 are largely regulated to standoff roles; only the B-2 is expected to get through," states the report by analyst Michael Miller. "In the years to come, the Air Force anticipates the B-2's ability to penetrate will also decline, even though the Air Force plans to upgrade all three bombers with new systems and weapons."

Not much is publicly known about the envisioned characteristics of the next-generation bomber, including what capabilities it will be given to defeat opponents' anti-access weaponry. The Air Force wants to buy between 80 and 100 new bombers.

Much has been written in recent months and years about the potential for China's growing arsenal of cruise and ballistic missiles to inhibit the ability of the U.S. military to project naval power in the Asia-Pacific.

There are approximately 157 long-range B-52s, B-1s and B-2s in the U.S. arsenal. The Defense Department plans to maintain a bomber fleet of roughly 156 aircraft through at least 2022, the report notes. However, the nearly \$500 billion in congressionally imposed defense cuts that are to be implemented over the next decade, as well as the potential for further military cutbacks, could impact the size of the Air Force's legacy dual-capable fleet, according to Miller.

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The reduced military budget comes as Pentagon spending on its nuclear bombers is projected to double by fiscal 2020 to over \$9 billion annually, thanks to the cost of acquiring the new long-range bomber and installing upgrades to the B-52, B-1 and B-2 at the same time. Current service modernization plans are designed to keep the former two planes "operational" through 2040, and the B-2 deployable through 2058.

The CRS report flags for Congress' oversight attention the question of whether to continue to pay for "sustainment and modernization efforts" for legacy bombers in the face of potential adversaries' growing air defense capabilities, or to alternatively allow the bombers to "become increasingly irrelevant."

"In large part, decisions by Congress will determine just how much longer the B-52, B-1 and B-2 will remain relevant, and ultimately, will likely determine the future of the nation's long-range strike capabilities," the document reads.

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/congressional-report-warns-possible-shortfall-air-force-ability-mount-long-range-nuclear-attacks/>

[Return to Top](#)

The Center for Public Integrity – Washington, D.C.

Federal Auditors Say Obama Administration Underestimates Nuclear Weapons Costs

Analysts again say the Defense and Energy Departments have wrongly omitted billions of dollars from their forecasts

By R. Jeffrey Smith

June 11, 2014

A new audit of the government's estimated spending to maintain its nuclear deterrent in the next decade concludes that the expenses will likely be at least tens of billions of dollars more than the Energy and Defense departments have claimed.

The report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, a watchdog arm of Congress, is the second official rebuke in the past six months of a claim by Obama's senior defense appointees a year ago that the likely expense would be \$263.8 billion.

Last December, the Congressional Budget Office suggested in its own report that administration officials had undercounted likely nuclear-related expenses by around 66 percent. Its calculations pegged the 10-year costs related to preserving the nuclear deterrent at a total of \$570 billion, large enough to make the 30-year government-wide total plausibly exceed \$1 trillion.

The GAO, in a report released on June 10, did not estimate the exact size of the undercount. But it said the Pentagon had wrongly omitted from its formal estimate of nuclear-related work the projected costs of modernizing the U.S. ballistic missile and bomber forces, which the budget office has said may total \$64 billion over the next decade.

Defense officials told GAO analysts that the cost of replacing Minuteman III ballistic missiles was not included in the administration's calculus because the program is "not yet defined," even though it's in the department's plans, the report said. "An Air Force official added that specific estimates for the new bomber were considered too sensitive to include in the report."

GAO found those explanations wanting, and said the Defense Department should have included a range of likely expenses, even if the precise tallies cannot be forecast.

GAO also said the Energy Department, in the administration estimate last year, had included "less funding than will be needed" to fulfill its ambitious plans for modernizing a series of nuclear warheads, including those for ballistic and cruise missiles. It also said the department had projected billions of dollars in savings from efficiency

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improvements that it had not figured out how to achieve. In addition, the report said Energy officials had excluded the costs of refurbishing or replacing several laboratories designed for special work with nuclear materials.

"By not including preliminary estimates or ranges for these projects and programs, DOE underestimated the total anticipated cost and limited the utility" of the 2013 report, the GAO said.

The report also said officials had not been transparent enough about how the administration estimated the costs of modernizing command links to the nuclear force, and that as a result it could not assess the accuracy of that assessment.

The new administrator of DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration, Frank G. Klotz, responded that his agency is now providing a sound range of cost estimates for its deterrent-related work. The assistant secretary of defense for nuclear programs, Andrew Weber, promised to do the same.

<http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/06/11/14935/federal-auditors-say-obama-administration-underestimates-nuclear-weapons-costs>

[Return to Top](#)

Global Security Newswire – Washington, D.C.

Air Force Nearly Done Studying Nuclear-Missile Fleet Options

June 11, 2014

The Air Force expects by the end of June to complete a study of options for maintaining a future ground-based strategic missile capability.

The "analysis of alternatives" for maintaining an intercontinental ballistic missile force will focus on modularity and cost-effectiveness, Brig. Gen. Fred Stoss, who manages weapons requirements for the Air Force's Global Strike Command, said in a recent interview with *Air Force Magazine*.

The nation's stockpile of approximately 450 Minuteman 3 ICBMs, which is managed and operated by Global Strike Command, has been deployed since the 1970s. Under the New START accord with Russia, the Pentagon has outlined a plan to by 2018 remove 54 of the missiles from their silos and place them in reserve.

Stoss emphasized that a future "ground-based strategic deterrent" would not be a follow-on to the Minuteman 3. "GBSD is not just a missile," the one-star general said.

All of the weapon's components are being examined with an eye toward determining which parts need to be updated, which need to be replaced, and which can still be useful past the Minuteman 3's shelf life. "We have to make sure we buy the most economical and enduring option" for each component of the missile, he said. "We must look at this holistically."

Meanwhile, experts are divided on whether reforms recently unveiled by the Air Force to boost morale and performance among its nuclear missileer corps will succeed. Those reforms include requesting that the head of Global Strike Command be elevated from a three-star to a four-star position, and expanding the command by 1,100 people.

The reforms follow a number of scandals in the strategic missile workforce that exposed a pervasive test-cheating culture at a base in Montana, allegations of drug possession by some launch-control officers, and problems securing a "stolen" nuclear weapon during a 2013 training scenario.

Former Air Force missileer Brian Weeden told *Stars and Stripes* he views the suggested reforms as "mostly symbolic."

"There are already plenty of three-stars and four-stars around, and creating a couple of new ones to represent the missileers is not going to have that big of an impact," he said.

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However, Dana Struckman, a former Minuteman 3 squadron head, told the Associated Press he views the reforms as "a step in the right direction. ... I think it will make a difference."

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/air-force-nearly-done-study-alternatives-future-icbm/>

[Return to Top](#)

Great Falls Tribune – Great Falls, MT

Bonus Pay is Part of Air Force Nuclear Force Reforms

By Robert Burns

June 11, 2014

WASHINGTON – The Air Force intends to offer bonus money and other incentives to members of its nuclear missile corps as part of a broader plan to fix what ails the force.

A string of recent training failures, security missteps, leadership lapses, morale problems and stunning breakdowns in discipline prompted Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to demand action to restore public confidence in the nation's nuclear force.

Air Force leaders are planning to offer bonuses, fill gaps in the supervisory ranks, offer a nuclear service medal and put more money into modernizing what in some respects has become a decrepit Minuteman 3 missile force that few airmen want to join.

The potential impact of these and other planned changes is unclear. They do not appear to address comprehensively what some see as the core issue: a flagging sense of purpose in a force that atrophied after the Cold War ended two decades ago as the military's focus turned to countering terrorism and other threats.

Even so, some analysts are encouraged by these initial Air Force moves.

"I think this is a step in the right direction," said Dana Struckman, a retired Air Force officer who commanded a Minuteman 3 missile squadron at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota in 2003-05. "I think it will make a difference."

Driving this effort is Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, who took over as the service's top civilian official in December amid a series of embarrassing lapses by the men and women who operate, support and lead the fleet of 450 intercontinental ballistic missiles based in North Dakota, Montana and Wyoming.

The missiles are armed with nuclear warheads, ready for launch on short notice any day, any hour.

In January, after visiting a Minuteman 3 base, Hagel declared, "We know that something is wrong." He ordered a pair of comprehensive reviews to identify what was amiss and to recommend solutions. Both reviews missed their initial deadlines for completion, and Hagel has said little publicly about it in recent months.

The cascade of bad news began in May 2013 when The Associated Press revealed that a group of ICBM launch officers at Minot Air Force Base had been stripped of their authority following a poor inspection result and other problems. The AP also disclosed that the deputy operations commander at Minot had complained in an internal email of "rot" in his ranks — an assessment that aired a range of morale and other behavioral, training, leadership and security problems that later emerged at the ICBM bases in Wyoming and Montana.

In October the two-star general in charge of ICBMs was fired for drunken behavior while on official business in Russia, and in November the AP revealed an unpublished study that found evidence of "burnout" among missile launch officers and cited elevated rates of personal misconduct within the ICBM force.

For months Air Force officials insisted that the morale issues and other problems amounted to nothing more than commonplace gripes and isolated, correctable goofs. James, however, took a different approach.

In January, just weeks after taking office and days after the discovery of an exam-cheating scandal among nearly 100 launch crew members in the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana, James declared

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CUWS Outreach Journal

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herself “profoundly disappointed” and announced that the ICBM force was in need of closer scrutiny. She visited all three ICBM bases and said afterward the problems were “systemic,” not isolated.

“I tip my hat to her for really taking this on,” Struckman said. “She didn’t shy away.”

Also in January, the Air Force disclosed that three ICBM launch officers were among those implicated in a criminal investigation of drug use or possession — a probe that remains active.

Since then the Air Force has developed and begun publicizing internal changes aimed at fixing what ails the ICBM force, although the two reviews that Hagel ordered in February are not yet complete. It’s unclear how the Air Force’s proposed changes will be squared with whatever recommendations emerge from Hagel’s reviews.

Among the potentially important moves, James has recommended to Hagel that he put a four-star general in charge of the nuclear Air Force, including the ICBM and bomber fleets, thereby elevating its status and clout inside an Air Force more focused on air, space and cyberspace missions. A three-star general currently is running the force. Raising the rank to four stars will require approval by Congress.

Such a move would put the Air Force more in line with the Navy, where a four-star officer, Adm. Terry J. Benedict, oversees its nuclear force.

The Air Force also plans to offer extra pay to attract and keep people in the missile fields. It’s an idea that has been kicked around for years but never implemented, to the consternation of many airmen. Newly trained missile launch officers, known as missileers, will get a yearly bonus throughout their tour, according to Lt. Col. John Sheets, an Air Force spokesman. He said the dollar amount is yet to be decided. Current missileers, as well as security force members and others in the missile fields, will get monthly bonuses, he said.

Bruce Blair, who was an ICBM launch officer in the 1970s and now advocates for elimination of the missiles, said he doubts the changes will have a lasting impact.

“The real solution to this backwater career that attracts practically no volunteers and that leaves the crew members disillusioned and angry is to eliminate it altogether,” Blair said. “The Air Force leadership will never be able to overcome the downsides of an obsolete mission.”

The Air Force says the ICBMs are vital to deterring a nuclear attack.

Flaws in the Air Force’s nuclear management have been apparent for years, according to Michelle Spencer, who led a yearlong study of the nuclear Air Force and concluded in a report published in January 2012 that numerous attempts since 2008 amounted to “movement without direction.” At its core, she wrote, are questions about the Air Force’s ability to develop, sustain and value nuclear expertise.

“Without answers to these fundamental questions,” she wrote, “the Air Force nuclear enterprise remains on the same trajectory as it has been for the last two decades — in ever-increasing decline.”

Spencer’s study, which was requested and funded by the Air Force, also found that senior Air Force leaders were getting “false or distorted information about the reality on the ground” in the nuclear force. That distortion permitted small problems to grow into big ones and reflected cynicism about the nuclear mission, she wrote.

Spencer said James appears to have made inroads against that problem, “but I’m sure they haven’t solved it.”

<http://www.greatfalltribune.com/story/news/local/2014/06/11/bonus-pay-part-air-force-nuclear-force-reforms/10318149/>

[Return to Top](#)

Business Insider – New York, NY

U.S. to Reassess Missile Defense Interceptor if Next Test Fails

By Andrea Shalal, Reuters

June 11, 2014

Issue No.1119, 13 June 2014

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Pentagon would reassess its plans to put Raytheon Co's CE-2 kill vehicle on 14 more ground-based interceptors if a key test of the system designed to protect the United States from North Korean missile attacks fails again later this month, a top Pentagon official said Wednesday.

Missile Defense Agency Director Vice Admiral James Syring said the agency's highest near-term priority was a successful intercept test of the ground-based missile defense system run by Boeing Co, and the latest Raytheon-built kill vehicle, which has failed both intercept tests attempted to date.

Senator Richard Durbin, who heads the Senate Appropriations Committee's defense subcommittee, asked Syring during a hearing on the agency's budget whether the contractors on the program were helping foot the estimated \$1.3 billion cost of redesigning the kill vehicle after repeated test failures.

Syring said the government had already docked Boeing's award and incentive fees, and had structured its latest contract with the company so it could "go back retroactively" and recoup earlier fees in the event of another failure. No details were provided on the extent of the fees lost by Boeing.

Syring underscored the importance of the test, and said it would be closely watched by U.S. allies and foes alike.

He said the agency would carefully investigate and correct any simple test problems. But he said another failure of the newest Raytheon kill vehicle, the Capability Enhancement-II Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV) would be a different matter.

"If it was another kill vehicle problem, which would now make us 0 for 3 on this design, I think you would see us taking a step back and assess taking delivery of the EKV that we're planning to take upon a successful flight test," Syring said.

He said the agency had stopped accepting the Boeing ground-based interceptors, pending a successful intercept flight test. Deliveries would resume if the test went well, he said.

Senator Lisa Murkowski, an Alaska Republican, said the test was planned for June 22, as reported by Reuters last week.

Syring said each intercept flight test of the GMD system cost around \$200 million, and the test this month was structured to be "very operationally realistic."

He said each of the 14 additional interceptors being added to the 30 interceptors already in the ground in Alaska and California by 2017 would cost about \$75 million.

Delivery of those interceptors was put on hold after a test failure last July involving the earlier version of the Raytheon kill vehicle, CE-I, which had succeeded in three earlier tests.

Syring said the agency was also developing acquisition plans for a new long-range radar to help identify threats, and planned to award a contract for the work in fiscal 2015.

He said the agency was also on track to award Raytheon a contract for 52 more Standard-Missile-3s this month.

Reporting by Andrea Shalal; editing by Andre Grenon

<http://www.businessinsider.com/r-us-to-reassess-missile-defense-interceptor-if-next-test-fails-2014-11>

[Return to Top](#)

The Wall Street Journal, New York, NY

U.S. and Australia to Cooperate on Asian Missile-Defense Plans

Washington, Canberra Also Firm Up Details on U.S. Warship and Aircraft Deployments

By Rob Taylor

June 13, 2014

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CANBERRA, Australia—Talks between the U.S. and Australia have given fresh momentum to Washington's plans to create a larger ballistic-missile defense shield for its allies in Asia.

According to a U.S. statement overnight, discussions between President Barack Obama and visiting Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott resulted in a commitment from Canberra for help in pushing forward with expanded missile-defense plans as a counter to North Korea.

The talks also firmed up U.S. intentions to position more warships and aircraft in Australia, as regional concerns mount over instability in the South China Sea. Disputes between China and several of its neighbors have escalated in recent months, and the U.S. has worked to shore up its defense ties with its regional allies.

China has its own ballistic-missile capability, and Beijing has long been skeptical of the growing U.S. missile-defense plans in Asia.

The U.S. has for years been working toward setting up a regional defense shield capable of thwarting potential missile threats from countries such as North Korea. The U.S. and Australia have been critical of missile tests and other actions by North Korea seen as provocative.

Japan and the U.S. have had a joint ballistic-missile defense system in place since 2010. Washington is also studying plans to deploy a missile shield in South Korea—a move that China has warned would unnecessarily raise regional tensions.

Washington's statement on Thursday said the U.S. was now examining ways for Australia to participate in a bigger regional system using the country's coming fleet of missile destroyers equipped with advanced Aegis radar capability.

"We are...working to explore opportunities to expand cooperation on ballistic missile defense, including working together to identify potential Australian contributions to ballistic-missile defense in the Asia-Pacific region," the U.S. statement said.

Australia is building a new fleet of warships that could be equipped to shoot down hostile missiles, as part of an ambitious military buildup that includes investments in new stealth-fighter aircraft, cruise missiles, amphibious carriers and submarines. The revamp will cost close to 90 billion Australian dollars (US\$85 billion) over a decade.

"This might mean the Australian Defence Force could end up mounting advanced missiles on its Aegis-equipped air-warfare destroyers," said security analyst James Brown of Australia's Lowy Institute.

After the talks, Australia's Tony Abbott said his country had agreed to arrangements for an expanded U.S. military presence at whatever level was deemed "appropriate and necessary" by Washington and its allies for safeguarding regional stability.

Washington and Canberra have criticized Beijing recently for what they view as strong-arm tactics in spats with other countries in the region—including Japan—over contested islands in the South and East China Seas. China has also irked Hanoi by deploying an oil-drilling platform in disputed waters close to Vietnam.

In 2011, the U.S. and Australia reached a deal to rotate a 2,500-strong U.S. marine expeditionary brigade through the northern Australian city of Darwin for several months a year as part of Washington's "pivot" to Asia. The long-standing allies have been united in criticizing what U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel recently called "destabilizing, unilateral actions" by China in relation to its neighbors.

"We're not talking about U.S. bases," Mr. Abbott told Australia's Sky Television after the meeting with Mr. Obama in Washington. "We're talking about the United States using our bases on a more regular basis, and having an appropriate legal arrangement for this to go forward."

China rejects the suggestion that it has acted unreasonably toward its neighbors. A senior Chinese general criticized Mr. Hagel's remarks at a regional security conference in Singapore this month as "provocative" and "full of hegemony."

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"Maintaining the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia Pacific region is in the common interest of all the relevant countries," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular news briefing Friday when asked about the talks between Australia and the U.S.

"So we hope that relevant countries developing direct cooperation will play a constructive role in protecting the peace, stability and prosperity of the Asia Pacific region," Ms. Hua said.

Australia and Japan agreed to expand military ties during talks in Tokyo this week. But following Mr. Obama's talks with his Australian counterpart, officials on both sides took care to play down suggestions that there would be any rapid acceleration of an American buildup in Australia beyond current plans.

Mr. Obama said the latest agreement laid a platform for the "additional reach" of U.S. forces in the Asia-Pacific, and he praised Mr. Abbott's conservative government for boosting defense spending when other countries were becoming more cautious.

"Aussies know how to fight, and I like having them in a foxhole if we're in trouble," Mr. Obama said in Washington on Thursday.

Jeremy Page contributed to this article.

<http://online.wsj.com/articles/u-s-and-australia-to-cooperate-on-asian-missile-defense-plans-1402651672>

[Return to Top](#)

National Journal – Washington, D.C.

Experts Press for New Forensic Methods to Spot Bioweapon Attacks

By Diane Barnes

June 10, 2014

A National Research Council expert panel is urging scientists to pursue new, reliable methods for distinguishing biological attacks from other outbreaks.

"In the event of a suspected biological attack, leaders would have questions about the identity and source of the biological threat," says a report released on Friday by the influential federal advisory body. "Forensic science can help answer these questions, and it is essential that the answers be reliable."

"Microbial forensics" is still a young field, though, and any effort to develop reliable analytical techniques may depend on new gene-sequencing technologies to assess vast numbers of microorganisms in advance, according to the authors.

"Until recently there have been few systematic efforts to collect and describe the microbes living in soil, seawater, freshwater lakes and streams, on plants, and even commensally in the guts or other surfaces of humans and other animals," they wrote in the report.

The panel said that such "baseline" knowledge may prove crucial to determining whether viruses or bacteria in a disease outbreak are significantly different from what is normal for their environment. That information, in turn, could aid in assessing "whether the presence of that pathogen is natural or the result of a deliberate or inadvertent release," according to the report.

The authors warned, though, that collecting such "metagenomic" data would require a major global effort.

"Formal international scientific collaborations will need to be created to ensure that technological resources are accessible to all nations, including developing countries that currently lack such resources, and that funding can be leveraged better," the findings state. "This is a high-priority need for the research and funding agendas both inside and outside the United States that requires a coordinated effort on an international scale."

The National Research Council expert panel prepared its findings in consultation with the British Royal Society, the Croatian Academy of Science and Arts and the International Union of Microbiological Societies.

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The London Guardian – London, U.K.

Scientists Condemn 'Crazy, Dangerous' Creation of Deadly Airborne Flu Virus

Researchers say recreation of Spanish flu strain highlights risk of pandemic, but critics say work puts global population at risk

By Ian Sample, science editor

Wednesday, 11 June 2014

Scientists have created a life-threatening virus that closely resembles the 1918 Spanish flu strain that killed an estimated 50m people in an experiment labelled as "crazy" by opponents.

US researchers said the experiments were crucial for understanding the public health risk posed by viruses currently circulating in wild birds, but critics condemned the studies as dangerous and called on funders to stop the work.

Scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison used a technique called reverse genetics to build the virus from fragments of wild bird flu strains. They then mutated the virus to make it airborne to spread more easily from one animal to another.

"The work they are doing is absolutely crazy. The whole thing is exceedingly dangerous," said Lord May, the former president of the Royal Society and one time chief science adviser to the UK government. "Yes, there is a danger, but it's not arising from the viruses out there in the animals, it's arising from the labs of grossly ambitious people."

Influenza viruses circulate freely in wild bird populations. Most remain in chickens, ducks and other birds, but occasionally strains mutate into a form that can infect humans. The H5N1 bird flu strain has killed at least 386 people since 2003, according to WHO figures. The Spanish 1918 flu is thought to have come from birds too.

Writing in the journal *Cell Host and Microbe* Yoshihiro Kawaoka describes how his team analysed various bird flu viruses and found genes from several strains that were very similar to those that made up the 1918 human flu virus. They combined the bird flu genes into a single new virus, making a new pathogen that was only about 3% different from the 1918 human virus.

The freshly made virus – the first of several the team created – was more harmful to mice and ferrets than normal bird flu viruses, but not as dangerous as the 1918 strain. It did not spread between ferrets and none of the animals died. But the scientists went on to mutate the virus, to see what changes could make it spread. Seven mutations later, they had a more dangerous version that spread easily from animal to animal in tiny water droplets, the same way flu spreads in humans.

Kawaoka, who led the research in a high-security lab at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said the work highlighted how flu viruses found in wild bird populations had the potential to adapt to humans and cause a pandemic.

Follow-up experiments showed that the 2009 swine flu vaccine and the anti-viral drug tamiflu should be effective against the virus. "This is important information for those making decisions about surveillance and pandemic preparedness," Kawaoka told the Guardian.

The work is the latest in a series of controversial studies that have split the scientific community. On the one side are researchers who create dangerous viruses in secure labs in the hope of learning how existing strains could mutate to make them a potential threat to humans. On the other are scientists who argue the work does little or nothing to help protect people, but instead puts the global population in more danger.

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Marc Lipsitch, professor of epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health, said: "I am worried that this signals a growing trend to make transmissible novel viruses willy-nilly, without strong public health rationale. This is a risky activity, even in the safest labs. Scientists should not take such risks without strong evidence that the work could save lives, which this paper does not provide," he added.

In an article published last month, Lipsitch argued that experiments like Kawaoka's could unleash a catastrophic pandemic if a virus escaped or was intentionally released from a high-security laboratory.

But Kawaoka defended the work, saying that critics failed to appreciate the impact of his and others' work on dangerous viruses. "There were discussions on the usefulness of stockpiling H5N1 [bird flu] vaccines until our H5N1 papers were published. Similarly, this paper strongly supports stockpiling anti-influenza drugs. If this is not a 'lifesaving benefit', what is?" he said.

Many of the groups that create dangerous viruses to understand their workings are funded by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH). Lord May said he suspected the NIH supported the work because officials there were "incompetent" and believed the justifications that scientists told them. "This is work that shouldn't be done. It's as simple as that," he said.

The experiments show that a 1918-like flu virus could emerge in the wild as bird viruses swap genes and mutate. "Influenza viruses readily swap genes to generate new viruses, so something like this could happen, especially since many of these viruses have circulated in recent years," Kawaoka said. The viruses "have the potential to become adapted to mammals and possibly cause a human pandemic," he added.

The study identifies particular mutations that made the virus spread so easily. But that is not much use for surveillance, said Lipsitch, because there are scores of other mutations that could have the same effect. "The chance that a virus very similar to the one they study will appear in nature is extremely remote," he said. Kawaoka argues that his team is fully aware of this, and that the underlying mechanisms that make the virus so dangerous are more important for preventing future pandemics.

Simon Wain-Hobson, a virologist at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, said he feared that governments and funding bodies would only take the risks seriously once an accident had happened. "It's madness, folly. It shows profound lack of respect for the collective decision-making process we've always shown in fighting infections. If society, the intelligent layperson, understood what was going on, they would say 'What the F are you doing?'"

Carole Heilman, director of microbiology and infectious diseases at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (Niaid) in the US, said: "This study was conducted as part of a research project on understanding the molecular mechanisms of virulence of the 1918 influenza virus. NIH peer review determined that the research was scientifically meritorious. It was also determined that the information gained had the potential to help public health agencies in their assessment of circulating and newly emerging strains. In addition, NIH determined that all the research was being done under appropriate biosafety conditions and with appropriate risk mitigation measures."

<http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/jun/11/crazy-dangerous-creation-deadly-airborne-flu-virus>

[Return to Top](#)

The Washington Free Beacon – Washington, D.C.

Russian Bombers Fly within 50 Miles of California Coast

U.S. F-22, F-15 jets intercept four Bear H bombers near Alaska, Northern California

By Bill Gertz

June 11, 2014

Four Russian strategic bombers triggered U.S. air defense systems while conducting practice bombing runs near Alaska this week, with two of the Tu-95 Bear H aircraft coming within 50 miles of the California coast, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (Norad) confirmed Wednesday.

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“The last time we saw anything similar was two years ago on the Fourth of July,” Navy Capt. Jeff Davis, a Norad spokesman, told the *Free Beacon*.

Davis said the latest Bear H incursions began Monday around 4:30 p.m. Pacific time when radar detected the four turbo-prop powered bombers approaching the U.S. air defense zone near the far western Aleutian Islands.

Two U.S. Air Force F-22 jets were scrambled and intercepted the bombers over the Aleutians.

After tracking the bombers as they flew eastward, two of the four Bears turned around and headed west toward the Russian Far East. The bombers are believed to be based at the Russian strategic base near Anadyr, Russia.

The remaining two nuclear-capable bombers then flew southeast and around 9:30 P.M. entered the U.S. northern air defense zone off the coast of Northern California.

Two U.S. F-15 jets were deployed and intercepted the bombers as they eventually flew within 50 miles of the coast before turning around and heading west.

A defense official said the four bombers also were supported by two IL-78 aerial refueling tankers that were used for mid-air refueling during the operation this week.

The Tu-95 is a long-range strike aircraft capable of carrying nuclear cruise missiles. Other versions are equipped with intelligence-gathering sensors and electronic warfare gear. It has a range of around 9,400 miles without refueling.

Davis said the aircraft “acted professionally” and the bombers appeared to be conducting a training mission.

“They typically do long range aviation training in the summer and it is not unusual for them to be more active during this time,” he said. “We assess this was part of training. And they did not enter territorial airspace.”

The bomber incursion is the latest Russian nuclear saber-rattling amid stepped up tensions over Moscow’s military annexation of Ukraine’s Crimea.

Rep. Mike Conaway (R., Texas), a member of the House Armed Services Committee, called the Russian flights “intentional provocations.”

“Putin is doing this specifically to try to taunt the U.S. and exercise, at least in the reported world, some sort of saber-rattling, muscle-flexing kind of nonsense,” Conaway said in an interview. “Truth of the matter is we would have squashed either one of those [bombers] like baby seals.”

“It’s a provocation and it’s unnecessary. But it fits in with [Putin’s] macho kind of saber-rattling,” he said, adding that he expects Russia will carry out more of these kinds of incidents in the future.

Retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney, a former Alaska commander for the North American Aerospace Defense Command, said he does not remember a case of Russian strategic bombers coming that close to the U.S. coast.

“Again we see the Obama administration through their covert—but overt to Mr. Putin—unilateral disarmament, inviting adventurism by the Russians,” McInerney said in an email.

“At the height of the Cold War I do not remember them getting this close. Mr. Putin had to approve this mission and he is just showing his personal contempt for President Obama right after meeting him in Normandy less than a week ago,” McInerney said.

McInerney said no American president has been treated with such disrespect in U.S. history.

“A sad day indeed and at the same time Mosul and Tikrit [Iraq] fall to radical Islamists after the Obama administration’s failed Iraq policy,” he added. “He snatched defeat from the jaws of victory yet again.”

The Alaska-California bombers flight also came a month after a Russian Su-27 interceptor jet flew dangerously close to a U.S. RC-135 reconnaissance aircraft flying over the Sea of Okhotsk, north of Japan.

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In that incident on April 23, the Su-27 jet flew close to the RC-135, turned to reveal its air-to-air missiles to the crew, and then flew dangerously close to within 100 feet of the cockpit in a maneuver military officials called reckless.

Davis said in the past 10 years, 50 Bear H bombers were intercepted near U.S. air defense zone, although he acknowledged that Monday's flight near California was unusual.

In April, a telephone conversation between two Russian ambassadors was posted on YouTube and appeared to show the diplomats joking about the Ukraine crisis and discussing the possible incursions in the United States and Eastern Europe.

The leaked conversation between Igor Nilokaevich Chubarov and Sergey Viktorovich Bakharev, Russian ambassadors to the African nations Eritrea and Zimbabwe and Malawi, respectively, includes references to post-Crimea Russian imperialism to include Eastern Europe and "Californialand" and "MiamiLand."

Russian Bear H flights elsewhere have increased in recent years.

In February 2013, two of the bombers were intercepted as they circled the U.S. Pacific island of Guam, in a rare long-range incursion.

Two Bear Hs also were intercepted near Alaska on April 28, 2013.

A Russian Bear H incursion in Asia took place in July 2013 when two Tu-95s were intercepted by Japanese and South Korean jets near the Korean peninsula and Japan's northern Hokkaido Island.

The July 4, 2012, bomber flights near the West Coast were the first time since the Cold War that Russian jets have traveled so close to the U.S. coastline.

That action followed an earlier intrusion by Tu-95s near Alaska that were part of large-scale strategic nuclear exercises by the Russians aimed at practicing strikes on enemy air defenses.

Russia has stepped up provocative nuclear war games in recent years as part of propaganda efforts to display Moscow's dislike of U.S. missile defenses in Europe.

<http://freebeacon.com/national-security/russian-bombers-fly-within-50-miles-of-california-coast/>

[Return to Top](#)

The Japan Times – Tokyo, Japan

Japan Failed to Report 640 kg of Nuclear Fuel to IAEA

Kyodo

June 7, 2014

Japan failed to include 640 kg of unused plutonium in its annual reports to the International Atomic Energy Agency in 2012 and 2013, in what experts are terming an "inappropriate omission."

The stock is part of mixed plutonium-uranium oxide (MOX) fuel stored in a reactor that was offline during this period, and was thus deemed exempt from IAEA reporting requirements, said an official at the Japan Atomic Energy Commission.

Experts warn that Japan's reporting does not reflect the actual state of unused plutonium that could be diverted for nuclear weapons. The unreported amount is enough to make about 80 nuclear bombs.

The official said, "There is also no problem in terms of security against nuclear terrorism."

"From the safeguards point of view, this material is still unirradiated fresh MOX fuel regardless of its location," former IAEA Deputy Director General Olli Heinonen said. "If it has indeed not been irradiated, this should be reflected in the statements."

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In March 2011, the MOX fuel was loaded into the No. 3 reactor of Kyushu Electric Power Co.'s Genkai nuclear plant in Saga Prefecture during a regular checkup. It was removed two years later because the reactor has remained idled since the Fukushima nuclear crisis.

When Japan reported to the IAEA in 2012 that it had 1.6 tons of unused plutonium at reactors nationwide as of the end of 2011, down from 2.2 tons the previous year, it excluded the 640 kg. The amount reported a year later remained at 1.6 tons.

The fuel has been kept unused in a fuel pool since March 2013.

Japan is subject to rigorous international monitoring, as it possesses the largest amount of plutonium among nonnuclear weaponized nations, with more than 44 tons extracted from spent fuel and reprocessed for reuse under its nuclear fuel cycle policy.

The unreported plutonium was first reported by Kakujojo, a nuclear information website headed by nuclear policy analyst Masafumi Takubo.

Tatsujiro Suzuki, former vice chairman of the Japan Atomic Energy Commission and a professor at Nagasaki University, said the commission had overlooked the matter and therefore "should make efforts to improve" its reporting.

[http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/06/07/national/japan-failed-to-report-640-kg-of-nuclear-fuel-to-iaea/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+japantimes+\(The+Japan+Times%3A+All+Stories\)#.U5jTOCzjhDw](http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/06/07/national/japan-failed-to-report-640-kg-of-nuclear-fuel-to-iaea/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+japantimes+(The+Japan+Times%3A+All+Stories)#.U5jTOCzjhDw)

[Return to Top](#)

The Hankyoreh – Seoul, South Korea

Washington and Beijing's Conflict Growing over Missile Defense

China objecting to far-reaching detection system that would include parts of its territory

By Kim Oi-hyun, staff reporter

June 9, 2014

The faceoff between Washington and Beijing over US missile defense deployment on the Korean Peninsula is intensifying.

While the issue is a longstanding one between the two powers, it is igniting once again as their 2010 conflict threatens to replay itself.

The US has been stoking the embers on the Korean Peninsula deployment issue since late May. A May 27 article in the Wall Street Journal quoted Defense Department officials as saying a site survey had been conducted for the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, the core component of missile defense. Since then, the possibility of missile defense being deployed in South Korea has repeatedly surfaced in public debate, triggering a strong response from China.

On May 29, China's state-run Xinhua News agency published what amounted to an ultimatum. "South Korea will sacrifice its fast-developing relations with China if it should be seduced into the defense network, ignoring the protests of the largest economy in Asia," the article read.

The chief reason for China's objections is the military threat that missile defense entails. While Washington's outward justification for missile defense on the Korean Peninsula is the North Korean missile threat, Beijing's fear is that it is actually targeting China. A particular concern is the high-performance radar included in THAAD (TPY-2, a kind of X-band radar), which has a detection radius of over 1,000 km. If deployed in South Korea, it could be used to detect warship, missile, and fighter plane activities in parts of China near the Korean Peninsula, including Shandong, Liaoning, Jilin, and Shanghai - and even Beijing.

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“The US is pointing to North Korea and saying missile defense needs to be deployed on the Korean Peninsula for regional peace and stability, but from China’s standpoint, it can’t help raising serious questions about Washington’s sincerity, given that it hasn’t shown much determination with the six-party talks on the nuclear issue,” said Peace Network director Cheong Wook-sik on June 8.

Experts said the recently intensifying conflict between the US and China was the real reason for Washington pushing Beijing’s buttons on an issue it knows is sensitive. The US’s judgment appears to be that China has been acting aggressively in Asia since declaring a new Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea last year that includes the Senkaku (Diaoyu in Chinese) Islands, the subject of a dispute with Japan. Beijing’s decision to start petroleum drilling in the Spratly Islands (known as the Xisha Islands in China and the Hoang Sa Islands in Vietnam) on June 3 - just after US President Barack Obama wrapped up a visit to four Asian countries - was seen by Washington as an attempt to build independent influence in Asia. The islands in question are currently the subject of a territorial dispute with Vietnam.

“It’s been some time now since China started declaring its key interests in Asia and taking strong action, while the US hasn’t done anything in terms of action,” said one South Korean expert on condition of anonymity.

“It’s a situation now where it’s obliged to take some kind of action as a show of trust to its friends and allies,” the expert explained.

The situation unfolding now is reminiscent of the conflict that occurred in 2010 when the US, responding to the sinking of South Korea’s ROKS Cheonan corvette, pressured China with the possibility of deploying its USS George Washington aircraft carrier into the West (Yellow) Sea, where it would be capable of detection as far as Beijing.

http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_international/641453.html

[Return to Top](#)

Want China Times – Taipei, Taiwan

PLA's New Test Submarine Revealed at Zhongshan Expo

By Staff Reporter
June 9, 2014

A model of China's new Type 032 Qing-class test submarine went on display at the Sixth Shipping Expo held in Zhongshan in southern China's Guangdong province between June 6-8, reports the Chinese-language Guangming Daily operated by the Communist Party of China.

The Type 032 is designed as the world's largest conventional submarine to replace the older Type 031 test submarine. With a displacement of 3,797 tonnes, defense analysts claim that China could test launch its JL-2 intercontinental-range submarine-launched ballistic missiles from the new submarine. Others believe that the Type 032 may provide the People's Liberation Army Navy with the opportunity to develop and test a number of "carrier killer" missiles.

The Qing-class submarine can accommodate up to 200 crew and researchers. The model demonstrated at the shipping expo indicated that the boat is equipped with two vertical launching systems to fire various types of tactical weapons including JL-2s, CJ-20A anti-ship cruise missiles and YJ-18 anti-ship missiles. In addition, this test submarine can launch torpedoes as well, the paper said.

Analysts claim that JL-2 missiles launched from Chinese submarines can reach all major cities in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, and the range of the JL-2 is estimated to be between 7,000-8,000 kilometers. By looking at the design of the Type 032, the Guangming Daily concluded that China's future ballistic missile submarines must also be able to fire tactical missiles against enemy ships to confront the enemy anti-submarine force.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20140609000073&cid=1101>

[Return to Top](#)

Issue No.1119, 13 June 2014

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Want China Times – Taipei, Taiwan

Beidou System Can Boost PLA's Missile Accuracy: Expert

By Staff Reporter
June 11, 2014

China's second-generation Beidou Navigation Satellite System can increase the missile accuracy of the People's Liberation Army by 1,000 times, reports the Hangzhou-based Qianjiang Evening News, citing Song Zongping, a Chinese military expert.

Song said that the Beidou navigation system can already cover the entire Far East region, adding that it will be able to track any target on the planet by 2020. The PLA will thus be able to use the indigenous navigation system in the same way the US military uses GPS (global positioning system). With GPS support, the United States was able to defeat enemy forces in Iraq, former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, the paper said.

Systems such as GPS and Beidou are a crucial resource for military navigation and battle management. Prior to the development of Beidou, the PLA relied heavily on GPS, which was considered extremely dangerous by many senior Chinese officers. China must work to continue the development of its own satellite navigation system, Song said, as the PLA cannot rely on the US system, which Washington can simply shut down.

In addition to developing Beidou, China is also looking for a chance to cooperate with Russia, the paper said. Russian deputy prime minister Dmitry Rogozin told the Moscow-based RIA Novosti on June 6 that Russia's GLONASS satellite system is capable of cover up the weaknesses of the Beidou Navigation Satellite System in future operations.

<http://www.wantchinatimes.com/news-subclass-cnt.aspx?id=20140611000104&cid=1101&MainCatID=11>

[Return to Top](#)

Yonhap News Agency – Seoul, South Korea

N. Korea Slams U.S. Plan for Missile Defense on Korean Soil

June 13, 2014

SEOUL, June 13 (Yonhap) -- North Korea slammed the United States and South Korea on Friday over Washington's plan to deploy an advanced missile defense (MD) system in the South, vowing to respond by strengthening its nuclear deterrent.

U.S. officials have said Washington is considering deploying the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery in South Korea to counter the evolving threats posed by North Korea, though the South has said it has not been notified by the U.S. of such a plan and has decided to develop its own long-range surface-to-air missiles (L-SAM).

"The U.S. projected deployment of THAAD in South Korea and the South's moves to join in the U.S. MD are a dangerous military provocation aimed to mount a preemptive nuclear attack on the DPRK ... and to bring a nuclear disaster to the Korean peninsula and the rest of Northeast Asia," the National Peace Committee of (North) Korea (NPCK) said in a statement by its unidentified spokesperson. The statement was carried by the North's Korean Central News Agency.

As an integral part of the U.S.-led MD system, THAAD is designed to shoot down short, medium and intermediate ballistic missiles at a high altitude in their terminal phase.

Warning that the THAAD deployment will turn the Korean Peninsula into "a nuclear forward base" and "the largest nuclear arsenal," the North warned that nuclear war would rather destroy South Korea.

"We will not sit idle ... We will strongly react against them by bolstering nuclear deterrence," the spokesperson said.

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In the latest in a series of signs that Washington could be pushing Seoul to join its MD system, the top U.S. military commander in South Korea, Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, told a forum here last week that there "was consideration being taken in order to consider THAAD being deployed here in Korea."

South Korea, however, has rebuffed the option to join the U.S.-led MD system, of which Japan is part of, and has been developing its own Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) system. Experts say while system aims to guard against North Korea's provocations, Washington's pressure on Seoul to join is also to counter a rising China in the region.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2014/06/13/0200000000AEN20140613009200315.html>

[Return to Top](#)

The London Independent – London, U.K.

Scottish Independence: 'Yes' Vote could Scupper Nuclear Clean-Up

By Mark Leftly

Sunday, 08 June 2014

Fears are mounting that Scottish independence could result in years of delays to the decommissioning of Britain's fleet of ageing nuclear-powered submarines, including four armed with Trident missiles.

More than 10 engineering companies have just registered their interest in working with the Ministry of Defence on dismantling and removing waste from 27 submarines in Devonport near Plymouth and Rosyth on the Firth of Forth.

But they are understood to be concerned that a "Yes" vote for independence could complicate the 60-year programme of defuelling and breaking up the submarines – and that the MoD has refused to draw up any contingency plans.

At present, only the seven out-of-service submarines that are currently floating at Rosyth would be dismantled there. However, space at Devonport is tight and it is expected that Rosyth would eventually have to take on more of the dismantling work.

A post-independent Scottish government would have other priorities, such as building frigates. It would also not want Trident-armed submarines waiting for decommissioning in its waters. The Scottish National Party's post-independence priorities include getting rid of nuclear deterrents.

John Large, a leading nuclear submarine expert, said that independence was "a fly in the ointment" that was "creating a problem the MoD had not foreseen". He added that independence could ultimately lead to "years, if not decades" of delays unless costly docks are built elsewhere in the UK.

Jane Tallents, an anti-Trident campaigner who is a member of the Submarine Dismantling Project Advisory Group, said: "When we've raised independence at the advisory group MoD officials have shuffled papers and looked at their feet."

One industry insider said that delays were "absolutely" a risk, but that the Navy just "laughs off independence as something that isn't going to happen". The US has large decommissioning facilities, but these are nearly full to capacity. Sending vessels there would also add to the cost, said to be about £60m a submarine.

The Scottish government is already furious that a site north of the border, Chapelcross in Dumfriesshire, has been shortlisted as a location that could store radioactive waste removed from the submarines.

When the shortlist was revealed in February, Holyrood environment minister Richard Lochhead wrote to UK Defence minister Philip Dunne demanding that the waste should not be dumped in Scotland. Dismantling cannot start until a storage site for the 90- to 135-ton reactor pressure vessels, which hold the submarines' nuclear cores, is agreed upon.



A MoD spokeswoman said: "We are not developing contingency plans for the submarine dismantling project because we are confident that the Scottish people will vote to remain part of the UK."

A Scottish government spokesman said: "Following independence, the precise division of assets and liabilities will be subject to detailed negotiation between the Scottish and UK governments."

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/scottish-independence-yes-vote-could-scupper-nuclear-cleanup-9506957.html>

[Return to Top](#)

ITAR-TASS- Moscow, Russia

Submarine Vladimir Monomakh Goes on Sea Trials in White Sea

During the sea trials, the crew will check all warship systems, including navigation, radio-electronic systems and sailing features

June 11, 2014

MOSCOW, June 11. /ITAR-TASS/. The Borei-class strategic nuclear submarine Vladimir Monomakh has gone on sea trials in the White Sea, a source in the military-industrial complex said.

"Severodvinsk-based military shipyard Sevmash put the submarine on the two-week sea trials in the White Sea," the source told ITAR-TASS on Wednesday.

"During the sea trials, the crew will check all warship systems, including navigation, radio-electronic systems and sailing features," it said.

The lead submarine Yuri Dolgoruky was brought into service of Russia's Navy in 2012. The first serial warship Alexander Nevsky came into naval service in 2013. The fourth missile carrier Knyaz Vladimir will be laid down at Sevmash on July 19.

The Knyaz Oleg will be the first serial warship created under modernized project 955A.

Borei-class strategic missile-carrying nuclear submarines are designed at the St. Petersburg-based central maritime machinery design bureau. Their main weaponry is 16 new intercontinental ballistic missiles Bulava.

<http://en.itar-tass.com/russia/735735>

[Return to Top](#)

Bellona – Oslo, Norway

Fire-Ravaged Yekaterinburg Nuclear Sub to Reenter Active Duty by Year's End

The Yekaterinburg nuclear submarine – which two years ago was ravaged by a fire during repairs in dry dock while its intercontinental nuclear ballistic missiles were still onboard – will soon be put back into service in Russia's northern fleet, according to a statement from the Zvezdochka shipyard where it was repaired.

By Charles Digges

June 12, 2014

The *Yekaterinburg* nuclear submarine – which two years ago was ravaged by a fire during repairs in dry dock while its intercontinental nuclear ballistic missiles were still onboard – will soon be put back into service in Russia's northern fleet, according to a statement from the Zvezdochka shipyard where it was repaired.

The dramatic December 2011 blaze lasted for 20 hours, killing nine, and flames were reportedly visible from some 10 kilometers away, and damage was extensive. Video footage of the fire can be viewed <http://vimeo.com/34515245>.



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies
CUWS Outreach Journal

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According to the Zvezdochka release (in Russian), the shipyard repaired the *Yekaterinburg*'s critical navigation and weapons systems after the fire that was sparked by shoddy welding works in 2012. The fire nearly destroyed the vessel during short-term repairs at the Roslyakovo naval base near Murmansk.

The submarine, which was taken out of Zvezdochka's dry-dock Monday to great fanfare and set back afloat, will now undergo a series of smaller repairs before it is released back into service during the fourth quarter of this year, Zvezdochka said.

Russia has recently turned its attention to beefing up its submarine presence in the Arctic region, and Zvezdochka director Vladimir Nikitin indicated that the Delta IV class subs, of which the *Yekaterinburg* is one, are "integral to Russia's naval nuclear deterrent."

That such a damaged sub is closer to reentering active service concerns nuclear scientists. The sub – as shown in a YouTube video of its release from dry dock -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ud5LOz5iNL0> – still bears extensive scars from its accident (visible at the 5:15 time marker).

"It is alarming that such an old submarine, so extensively destroyed by a major fire, is now back on the water again, said Nils Bøhmer, Bellona's general director and nuclear physicist.

"There is unfortunately a big risk that next time this submarine is hit by a fire or another accident, we could have a real disaster," he said.

The risk is less than hypothetical: Roslyakovo is one of three shipyards owned by Russia's United Shipbuilding Corporation that have seen major accidents during repair works since 2011.

The original fire at Roslyakovo

The *Yekaterinburg* fire burned for 20 hours, and the submarine had to submerge to douse the flames. Photographs posted at the time by Blogger51, an unofficial Northwest Russian news site, showed an enormous hole cut in the port side of the submarine's bow, exposing its hydro-acoustic navigational chamber.

Bellona analysis of Blogger51's photos concluded that the fire's main locus was the hydro-acoustic chamber, located between the inner and outer hulls of the submarine near the torpedoes.

While the hydro-acoustic chamber is filled with water when at sea, at port the chamber contains heavy flammable oils and other combustible contaminants.

The navigational antennae contain oils for isolation and are positioned near air compressors, which fanned the flames to impressive heights, said Alexander Nikitin, Chairman of the Environment and Rights Center (ERC) Bellona, and a former Russian submarine captain.

ERC Bellona's Nikitin also said his review of the damage revealed nuclear missiles had been aboard the submarine during the fire, something Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, finally admitted was true two months later.

Keeping old subs afloat

Zvezdochka director Nikitin said the shipyard will continue modernizing Delta IV Class submarines, and that the *Yekaterinburg*'s repairs will extend its service beyond 2020. The *Yekaterinburg* is among the navy's oldest subs, but Zvezdochka will be modernizing its sister ship, the *Tule*, later this year. Delta IVs will eventually be replaced by the Borey Class, the Barents Observer news portal reported.

Bellona's Bøhmer questioned the expense producing new sub classes and bandaging older ones for extended service in light of financial problems Russia is having dismantling its aged nuclear battleship fleet.

On Wednesday, Zvezdochka director Nikitin complained he was again short on funds and resources to handle the *Admiral Ushakov* nuclear battle cruiser, which has been awaiting dismantlement at the shipyard for 17 years – a clear environmental hazard by Nikitin's own admission.

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'The Russian navy is currently spending millions on new submarines which is diverting funding from cleaning up radiological challenges left over from the past,' said Bøhmer. "To have this vessel lying around for 17 years with spent fuel is a dangerous and uncertain situation."

<http://bellona.org/news/nuclear-issues/accidents-and-incidents/2014-06-fire-ravaged-yekaterinburg-nuclear-sub-reenter-active-duty-years-end>

[Return to Top](#)

The London Guardian – London, U.K.

Exclusive: UK to Step up Collaboration with US over Nuclear Warheads

Documents released under FoI reveal 'enhanced collaboration' plans, raising questions over independence of UK deterrent

By Richard Norton-Taylor

Thursday, 12 June 2014

Britain is stepping up its cooperation with the US over the design of nuclear warheads, raising new questions about the independence of the UK deterrent, according to documents disclosed after a freedom of information request.

Increased cooperation on warhead design and the exchange of material crucial in the manufacture and stockpiling of nuclear weapons will be sealed in a pact being drawn up by senior officials from the two countries.

The pact, renewing the 1958 mutual defence agreement (MDA) between the UK and US, is expected to be signed in a discreet ceremony in Washington in the next few weeks. It does not have to be debated or voted on in parliament. Though the agreement is incorporated in US law, it has no legal status in Britain.

A document prepared for a visit by a senior American nuclear official to the Aldermaston atomic weapons establishment (AWE) refers to "enhanced collaboration" on "nuclear explosive package design and certification", on "maintenance of existing stockpiles", and the "possible development of safer, more secure, warheads".

The partially censored document refers to a letter Tony Blair wrote to George Bush in 2006 asking for US help in maintaining Britain's "nuclear delivery system" and the white paper of the same year, which gave the green light for replacing the existing fleet of Trident nuclear missile submarines.

One document describes the MDA as an agreement that enables Britain and the US "nuclear warhead communities to collaborate on all aspects of nuclear deterrence including nuclear warhead design and manufacture".

A briefing paper drawn up for ministers and Ministry of Defence officials argues that physical "movements under the MDA do not involve nuclear weapons or devices" and therefore the agreement does not contravene the letter of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT).

Most of the documents now released were drawn up at the time of the last renewal of the MDA in 2004. They make it clear Whitehall did not welcome a debate in parliament about the mutual defence pact. "A debate on the renewal of the MDA would be used by some as an opportunity to raise wider questions concerning the possible renewal of the nuclear deterrent, the future of AWE and our obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty," an internal MoD paper says.

It adds that having refused requests from individual MPs to allocate time for a debate on MDA renewal, the government might nevertheless have to accede if Commons committees demand greater parliamentary and public scrutiny of the issues involved.

It says that "highly complex and sensitive issues will need to be opened to parliamentary scrutiny in due course".



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Peter Burt of Nuclear Information Service, who obtained the papers, told the Guardian: "The UK and US are setting a dreadful example to the rest of the world by renewing the MDA, and are seriously undermining the credibility of international efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons."

He added: "If Iran and North Korea had signed a similar agreement for the transfer of nuclear weapons technology, the UK and US would be branding them pariah nations and screaming for the toughest of international sanctions to be imposed."

Renewing the MDA showed the "worst kind of two-faced hypocrisy" and demonstrated that neither nation was serious about meeting its legal obligations under the NPT, Burt said.

The MoD said the agreement would be renewed by the end of the year.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/12/uk-us-mutual-defence-agreement-exclusive>

[Return to Top](#)

The Daily Star – Dhaka, Bangladesh

Iran, US Announce Surprise Nuke Talks

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Sunday, June 08, 2014

Tehran -- Iran and the United States will hold their first bilateral talks in decades, it was announced yesterday, in a major step toward securing a comprehensive nuclear deal with the West.

The head to head discussions will take place in Geneva on Monday and Tuesday, Iran's foreign ministry said in a surprise statement carried by the official IRNA news agency.

A State Department official confirmed the meeting, noting the US delegation would be led by Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and Undersecretary Wendy Sherman, who is responsible for Iran negotiations.

The two-day meeting is the most senior direct bilateral contact on the nuclear issue so far, with Iran to be represented at vice foreign minister level.

The discussions in Geneva are also the first between Iran and the US to fall outside the P5+1 group of leading nations (Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States plus Germany) which is pursuing talks in the quest for a landmark nuclear agreement.

In yesterday's announcement the foreign ministry also said two days of direct talks with Russia in Rome would immediately follow the talks with the US. Iran was also "working to arrange" other bilateral discussions with members of the P5+1 before the Vienna meeting, the foreign ministry said.

The P5+1 and Iran meet in Vienna, between June 16-20.

The negotiations are aimed at securing a comprehensive agreement on the Islamic republic's disputed nuclear programme ahead of a July 20 deadline imposed under an interim deal agreed last November.

Several rounds of talks have already been held in Vienna but the latest in mid-May ended with no apparent progress on a conclusive deal.

Iran has consistently denied it is seeking nuclear weapons but wants an independent atomic energy programme. Negotiators aim to nail down an exceedingly complex and lasting deal limiting Iran's atomic activities in exchange for the lifting of sanctions.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/world/iran-us-announce-surprise-nuke-talks-27540>

[Return to Top](#)

The Algemeiner – Brooklyn, NY

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Iran: 5,000km-Range Missile Can Hit US Indian Ocean Base

By Dave Bender
June 9, 2014

Tehran has ballistic missiles able to pound targets over twice as distant as previously thought, and can reach the American mid-ocean strategic base at Diego Garcia, a senior Iranian official has explicitly warned.

“In the event of a mistake on the part of the United States, their bases in Bahrain and (Diego) Garcia will not be safe from Iranian missiles,” said an Iranian Revolutionary Guard adviser to Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Majatba Dhualnuri.

Dhualnuri made the statements in the context of talks with the United States and western powers to curb its believed goal of creating nuclear weapons, Israel’s Channel Two reported Monday.

Iranian political and military leaders have, until now, only publicly admitted to possessing ballistic weapons with about a 2,000 km range. Diego Garcia, situated on a lone lagoon in the Indian Ocean, houses major Air Force, naval and submarine, space and communications, and logistics facilities.

The revelation suggests the validity of statements by Israeli leaders in recent years cautioning that the goal of Iran’s missile program and “ballistic umbrella” was to threaten a far wider circle of countries than Israel alone.

The Sejil-2, an Iranian-made surface-to-surface missile, can reach about 2,200 km (1,375 mi) loaded with a 750-kg warhead, according to U.S. Defense Department and arms-control sources.

The Iranian boast comes as Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff, Lt.-Gen. Benny Gantz, on Monday warned of Tehran’s nuclear weaponization ambitions, and increasing regional military and strategic clout.

While “the conventional threat to Israel has slightly diminished,” Gantz said, “Iran has not given up on its nuclear vision and will cling to it by every means. It is most important to prevent [Iran’s acquisition] of this capability and this can be done, whether by force or without it.”

At a similar address in 2012, Gantz said that “Iran is a problem of the whole world, of this region and of Israel.” He charged that “It [Iran] wants to establish itself as a strong regime and it will try to use it in order to fortify its position.”

“Iran’s ballistic missile program is a major threat to the Middle East and beyond,” according to a just released report by the Tel Aviv University-based Institute for National Security Studies (INSS).

“Iran already has operational missiles with ranges of 1,500 to 2,500 km that can reach targets in the Middle East, Turkey, and southeast Europe,” the report charged.

“In addition, it has been working on an extended range version of the Shahab-3 and a 2000 km medium range ballistic missile, the Sejil-2, and may soon be able to produce missiles with a range of 3000 km,” the report said.

“Iran continues to develop long range ballistic missiles that reach beyond its regional adversaries, and may be technically capable of flight testing an ICBM by 2015,” according to a 2012 US Department of Defense report.

“US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 2014 that Iran was expected to test ‘a missile system that could potentially have ICBM-class range.’

“Tehran has also enhanced the lethality and the effectiveness of its existing missile systems with improvements of accuracy and new sub-munition payloads,” the INSS report said.

<http://www.algemeiner.com/2014/06/09/iran-5000km-range-missile-can-hit-us-indian-ocean-base/>

[Return to Top](#)

Al Arabiya – Dubai, U.A.E.

Issue No.1119, 13 June 2014

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Iran Questions Nuclear Deal Deadline as Talks 'Hit Wall'

By Stephanie Nebehay and John Irish, Reuters,
Tuesday, 10 June 2014

Geneva/Paris -- Iran questioned whether a July deadline for a nuclear deal with world powers will be met, fuelling doubts on the outcome as France spoke out to say talks on curbing Tehran's uranium enrichment had "hit a wall."

Iran's talks with six major powers on curbing its nuclear program in exchange for an end to Western sanctions could be extended for six months if no deal is reached by a July 20 deadline agreed by all parties, a senior Iranian official said.

While an extension is possible under the terms of the talks, experts believe both Iran and the international powers may face domestic political pressures to argue for better terms during this extra time period, further complicating negotiations.

The Iranian official, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi, said it was "too soon to judge" whether more time was needed.

"But the good thing is that all parties are seriously committed to meet that goal," he said of the July 20 target. "Whether we can do it or not is something else," he told Iranian media in Geneva. A recording of his remarks were reviewed by Reuters.

Araqchi, in remarks on the sidelines of meetings with senior U.S. officials in the Swiss city, had earlier spoken of a possible half-year extension to the talks.

Singling out a big gap in negotiating positions that will be difficult to overcome in less than two months, France's foreign minister said Iran should drop a demand to have thousands of uranium enrichment centrifuges. Instead it should restrict itself to a few hundred of the machines used to increase the concentration of the fissile isotope of the metal – a process that can make a weapon, though Iran denies it wants to do that.

Iran – which says its nuclear program is peaceful and mainly aimed at generating electricity – has around 19,000 centrifuges, of which roughly 10,000 are operating, according to the U.N. nuclear agency. Enriched uranium can have both civilian and military uses, depending on the degree of refinement.

"We are still hitting a wall on one absolutely fundamental point which is the number of centrifuges which allow enrichment," Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told France Inter radio.

"We say that there can be a few hundred centrifuges but the Iranians want thousands so we're not in the same framework."

"Unrealistic Demands"

Paris has long held out for strict terms in the negotiations and it was not immediately clear whether Fabius was spelling out Paris's position or that also of the other five powers, the United States, Germany, Britain, China and Russia.

French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said the priority was not the July 20 deadline but to achieve a deal that ensured Tehran would not obtain a nuclear weapon.

Western officials say Iran wants to maintain a uranium enrichment capability far beyond what it currently needs for civilian purposes. Iran says it wants to avoid reliance on foreign suppliers of fuel for planned nuclear reactors.

U.S. and Iranian officials held talks in Geneva to tackle ways of breaking a deadlock which has raised the likelihood that the deadline will lapse without a deal meant to head off the risk of a Middle East war over the nuclear issue.

The negotiations ran into difficulty last month with each side accusing the other of making unrealistic demands, raising doubts about prospects for a breakthrough next month.

Issue No.1119, 13 June 2014

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An extension should be possible, but U.S. President Barack Obama would need to secure the consent of Congress at a time of fraught relations between his administration and lawmakers.

Close U.S. ally Israel, which in the past has threatened to attack Iranian nuclear sites, has made clear its deep skepticism about the chances of a deal that sufficiently denies Iran any nuclear weapons capability. Iran says it is Israel's assumed nuclear arsenal that threatens peace in the region.

Iran and the powers included the July 20 deadline to reach a comprehensive agreement in an interim deal agreed in November.

The November agreement – under which Iran suspended some nuclear activities in exchange for limited sanctions relief – allowed for a six-month extension if more time were needed for a settlement. An extension would allow up to half a year more for limited sanctions relief and restraints on Iranian nuclear work.

Nuclear diplomacy expert Mark Fitzpatrick of the International Institute for Strategic Studies think-tank said he did not think an extension was being formally discussed already as that would be to admit failure to meet the target date.

"But some discussion of it must be under way informally because a rollover is not as simple as it might seem," he said.

"To make it politically palatable, each side would want some marginal improvements, which will need to be negotiated."

Iran expert Ali Vaez said both sides "might require additional interim concessions to placate their domestic skeptics" if the interim deal is rolled over because the parties are far apart.

But if they have been able "to narrow the gap and need a few more weeks to hammer out the technical details, they might just opt for a no-cost extension," Vaez, of the International Crisis Group think-tank, said.

"Tough Choices" required

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns and Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, the primary U.S. negotiator with Iran, met an Iranian delegation led by Araqchi in Geneva on Monday and Tuesday.

"We are at a critical juncture in the talks," State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf said in Washington. Another round of negotiations is scheduled for June 16-20 in Vienna.

"We know we don't have a lot of time left," Harf said of the July 20 deadline. "That's why we've said diplomacy will intensify. People need to make tough choices."

Araqchi, the Iranian deputy foreign minister, used similar language: "There are still gaps," he said. "In order to bring our views closer, the other side must make tough decisions."

The French Foreign Ministry said officials from France and Iran would meet on Wednesday to discuss the Vienna negotiations. And Russian officials will have talks with the Iranians in Rome on Wednesday and Thursday, according to Iranian media.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/06/10/Iran-questions-nuclear-deal-deadline-as-talks-hit-wall-.html>

[Return to Top](#)

The Daily Star – Beirut, Lebanon

Iran Must Budge on Centrifuges: France

Reuters

June 10, 2014

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PARIS: Iran must drop its demands to have thousands of centrifuges used to enrich uranium if it wants a lasting deal with major powers over its disputed nuclear programme, France's foreign minister said on Tuesday.

Highlighting a big gap in negotiating positions, Laurent Fabius told French radio that Iran should only have a few hundred centrifuges, machines that spin at supersonic speed to increase the concentration of the fissile isotope.

Iran - which says its nuclear programme is peaceful and rejects accusations that it has been seeking to develop a nuclear weapons capability - now has around 19,000 centrifuges installed, of which roughly half are operating. It says it needs to expand its capacity to fuel planned nuclear power plants.

"We are still hitting a wall on one absolutely fundamental point which is the number of centrifuges which allow enrichment," Fabius told France Inter radio.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2014/Jun-10/259550-iran-must-budge-on-centrifuges-france.ashx#axzz34SD63jHo>

[Return to Top](#)

Press TV – Tehran, Iran

Iran to Reduce Arak Plutonium Production: Official

Thursday, June 12, 2014

Iran says it will scale down the annual production of plutonium at its Arak heavy water reactor to a tenth of its current output level as part of the Islamic Republic's confidence-building measures over its nuclear energy program.

"The amount of plutonium production at Arak heavy water reactor which is about 9-10 kilograms per year will drop to less than one kilogram," Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi said on Wednesday.

The Arak reactor, which uses natural uranium to produce radio medicines, is planned to gradually replace the Tehran Research Reactor, which produces medical radioisotopes for cancer patients.

The West had demanded the closure of the Arak heavy water plant over the alleged concerns that the facility may produce plutonium used in the manufacture of nuclear arms.

However, Salehi said on April 19 that Tehran had put forward a scientific plan to resolve the West's alleged concerns over the plant, adding that the reactor "will be redesigned to produce lesser amounts of plutonium, but it will remain a heavy water reactor."

Iran and the P5+1 group - US, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany clinched a landmark interim deal in the Swiss city of Geneva on November 24, 2013 over Tehran's nuclear energy program.

Under the deal, dubbed the Geneva Joint Plan of Action, the six countries undertook to provide Iran with some sanctions relief in exchange for Iran agreeing to limit certain aspects of its nuclear activities during a six-month period. It was also agreed that no nuclear-related sanctions will be imposed on Iran within the same timeframe. The agreement took effect on January 20.

Iran and the six world powers have been discussing ways to iron out their differences and start drafting a final deal that would end the West's dispute with Iran over the country's nuclear energy program.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/06/12/366606/iran-to-cut-arak-plutonium-production/>

[Return to Top](#)

Israel Hayom – Tel-Aviv, Israel

Satellite Photos Show Construction at Parchin Military Base in Iran

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Classified document presented to the International Atomic Energy Agency says that while Iran agreed to allow an investigation into the claims that it is developing nuclear weapons, it still has not allowed U.N. inspectors into the Parchin complex.

News Agencies and Israel Hayom Staff

June 12, 2014

The U.S. and Iran ended two days of negotiations without success on Wednesday in making progress toward an agreement over Iran's nuclear program.

The United Nation's Nuclear Watchdog reported last week that while Iran has been more cooperative about its nuclear program than in the past, it still will not allow U.N. inspectors in its military installation in Parchin.

A classified document presented to the International Atomic Energy Agency said that while Iran agreed to allow an investigation into the claims that it is developing nuclear weapons, it has yet to allow U.N. inspectors into the Parchin complex, south of Tehran.

Iran says it intends construct a compound for 100,000 centrifuges to create a nuclear reactor for medical testing. Western powers have pressured Iran to reduce the number of centrifuges to 4,000, as the proposed compound could also be used to create fuel for nuclear weapons.

U.S. government officials say it is imperative that Iran answers the council's questions for the U.S. and the other world powers to reach a comprehensive accord with Iran next month. U.S. representatives have said that Iran has been hesitant to admit violating previous agreements, as to not lose dignity.

Last week's IAEA report cites satellite imagery showing "continued construction" at the Parchin compound -- a fact that could support suspicions that Iran is trying to hide incriminating nuclear activity at the site.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and U.S. negotiation team member Wendy Sherman participated in Wednesday and Tuesday's meetings with the Iranian negotiators.

The two sides are expected to convene again next week in Vienna in hopes of reaching an agreement by the July 20 deadline.

http://www.israelhayom.com/site/newsletter_article.php?id=18091

[Return to Top](#)

Press TV – Tehran, Iran

Iran to Resume 20% Enrichment if Nuclear Talks Fail: Araqchi

Friday, June 13, 2014

Iran will resume enriching uranium to the 20-percent purity level, if the country's nuclear talks with the world powers come to an end without an agreement, says a top Iranian nuclear negotiator.

Seyyed Abbas Araqchi, who is also Iran's deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, said at a press conference in Rome on Thursday that a comprehensive nuclear deal is within reach, but the two sides are still far apart on certain issues, Fars News Agency reported.

He said Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – the United States, France, Britain, Russia and China – plus Germany need hard work, wisdom and creativity to bridge the gaps.

He said talks between Iran and the six major powers are at a very critical stage, expressing hope that both sides can clinch a deal by the July 20 deadline.

He said failure to reach a nuclear deal would be "disastrous for all," adding that Iran will resume 20-percent enrichment work should negotiations break down.

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Iran and six world powers have been discussing ways to iron out their differences and start drafting a final deal that would end the West's dispute with Iran over the country's nuclear energy program.

In November 2013, the two sides signed an interim nuclear deal in the Swiss city of Geneva that came into force on January 20.

Under the deal, the six countries agreed to provide Iran with some sanctions relief in exchange for Iran agreeing to limit certain aspects of its nuclear activities during a six-month period. It was also agreed that no nuclear-related sanctions would be imposed on the Islamic Republic within the same time frame.

The next round of high-level negotiations over Tehran's nuclear energy program is scheduled for June 16-20 in the Austrian capital, Vienna.

On January 20, Iran suspended 20-percent uranium enrichment as part of the interim nuclear deal with the major world powers. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has confirmed Iran's commitment to the deal.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/06/13/366750/iran-back-to-20-enrichment-if-talks-fail/>

[Return to Top](#)

The Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Israel

Report: Iran Study Estimates Nuclear Breakout would Take Years, Not Months

US officials have already reportedly disputed Iranian assessments that seemingly intend to downplay Western fears that Tehran could soon develop nuclear weapons.

By JPOST.COM STAFF

13 June 2014

Iran published a study this week that said it would take years for the Islamic Republic to produce nuclear weapon with its current infrastructure, *The New York Times* cited a report published by the government in Tehran as stating.

According to the *Times*, Iran described the estimates as hypothetical on the amount of time it would take scientists and engineers to assemble a nuclear bomb.

The Iranian government issued the study in a move seemingly intended to downplay the West's fear that Iran's nuclear program is not solely intended for peaceful purposes.

American officials have disputed the Iranian report's assessment, according to the *Times*.

The report, titled "How Long Would an Iranian 'Breakout' Really Take?" was the first public acknowledgement by the country that it has studied the necessary measures needed to fuel an atomic bomb.

Meanwhile on Thursday, Iran said it was "busy redesigning" the planned Arak research reactor to sharply cut its potential output of plutonium - a potential nuclear bomb fuel.

The West is worried that Arak, once operational, could provide a supply of plutonium - one of two materials, along with highly enriched uranium, that can trigger a nuclear explosion.

Israel has argued that any nuclear deal with Iran should demand the complete shutdown of the Arak reactor.

On Monday and Tuesday, senior American and Iranian officials held private meetings to discuss advancing talks with world powers over Tehran's disputed nuclear program, only six weeks before a self-imposed deadline on talks aimed at ending the crisis.

At the bilateral meeting, and in quotes placed in state-run Iranian media, Islamic Republic officials suggested world powers may have "no choice" but to extend the negotiations past the July 20 deadline.



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies

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In April, US Secretary of State John Kerry told a Senate hearing that negotiators working on the Iranian nuclear issue were facing a time frame of "about two months" before a possible Iranian breakout.

Israelis have threatened to attack Iran unilaterally if they deem diplomacy incapable of denying it the bomb.

Michael Wilner and Reuters contributed to this report.

<http://www.ipost.com/Iranian-Threat/News/Report-Iran-study-estimates-nuclear-breakout-would-take-years-not-months-358265>

[Return to Top](#)

The London Telegraph – London, U.K.

Pakistan Steps up Security at Nuclear Bases after Karachi Airport Attack

Taliban warns of further assaults to come as government says militants planned 'spectacular' attack to shut down country's aviation industry

By Rob Crilly, Islamabad

09 June 2014

Pakistan stepped up security around nuclear facilities, military bases and government offices on Monday, as more details emerged of how 10 militants brought chaos to the country's busiest airport.

The Pakistan Taliban claimed responsibility for an ambitious commando assault that killed 18 security guards and civilian staff before declaring its fighters would launch a string of attacks in revenge for government hostilities.

The six-hour gun battle at Karachi airport will deal a blow to faltering peace talks and intensify pressure on a government that has so far refused to launch an all-out offensive against militant havens.

Mohyuddin Wani, the Pakistani prime minister's press secretary, said the attack was designed to shut down the country's entire aviation industry.

"Their intention was an all-out spectacular attack, eliminating 20 aircraft and killing more than 200 passengers," he said.

"The airport security force, to our good luck, prevented this, driving the attackers into a cargo area where they could not do so much damage.

However, he added that it was too early to draw conclusions about the prospects for peace talks. Instead, all efforts were focused on securing other potential targets and monitoring radio chatter for intelligence.

The ease with which gunmen were able to enter and shut down Jinnah International Airport will be a concern to the government and to a military which will have to explain such a major intelligence failure.

A senior aviation official told The Telegraph that two groups of fighters entered from different locations just before midnight on Sunday, close to an old terminal used for cargo and VIP passengers.

He said they comprised Uzbek and Chechen nationals, wearing light blue uniforms similar to the police.

They all wore matching trainers – frequently a detail of Taliban attacks – and came equipped for a siege. Backpacks recovered from the scene were stuffed with food, including flat bread and dried fruit, as well as bottles of water.

Airport security forces fought them away from two airliners that were boarding passengers and into a cargo hanger, which caught light during an intense exchange of gunfire. Three died after detonating suicide belts.

Pakistan initially announced the all-clear around dawn, but shooting could be heard later in the morning as clean-up operations continued.

Commanders with the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) issued a string of statements claiming responsibility.

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Abdullah Bahar Mehsud, a senior commander, said the attack was carried out to avenge the death of the group's former leader Hakimullah Mehsud in a drone strike last year.

"As long as we are breathing, our attacks will be continuing till the end of our lives," he said.

Other sources accused the government of using the Taliban's ceasefire to launch attacks against their bases.

"Karachi airport attack is clear message that government should abstain from using talks as a tool of war and politics," said the group's spokesman, Shahidullah Shahid.

The TTP – an umbrella grouping of militants which is loosely associated with Mullah Omar's Afghan Taliban – has waged a seven-year insurgency against Islamabad, responsible for tens of thousands of deaths.

Last year Mr Sharif was elected prime minister in part on a ticket to find peace.

In March, government officials entered face-to-face talks with senior TTP commanders for the first time.

However, optimism faded fast and talks have stalled ever since. Pakistan's military has launched a number of operations against militant-controlled areas in the north-western tribal belt in response to what it said were terrorist attacks against its personnel.

At the same time a split in the ranks – with members of the powerful Mehsud tribe breaking away – has led to speculation that the TTP may have been fatally weakened.

Rahimullah Yusufzai, a senior journalist whose intimate militant contacts meant he helped set up preliminary talks, said the attack would have taken a fortnight to plan.

"This was their message to the Pakistan government to say that they are not finished, that they are still around," he said.

"Airports have been attacked before and now every airport is a potential target."

He added that the Taliban statement had been careful not to rule out future negotiations but Mr Sharif's government would now struggle to make a case for fresh talks amid growing public scepticism.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/10886881/Pakistan-steps-up-security-at-nuclear-bases-after-Karachi-airport-attack.html>

[Return to Top](#)

The Economic Times – Mumbai, India

"No Reason" to Worry about the Security of Pakistani Nuclear Weapons: US

Press Trust of India (PTI)

June 10, 2014

WASHINGTON: In the aftermath of the terrorist attack at the Karachi airport the US has said that there is "no reason" to worry about the security of Pakistani nuclear weapons.

"We know that they (Pak Government) care about this a great deal and have no reason at this point to think it's anything but safe," the State Department Deputy Spokesperson, Marie Harf, told reporters at a news conference yesterday.

"We believe the Pakistani Government understands the importance of protecting all of its arsenal, including things related to its nuclear program," he said.

Harf was responding to a question about the safety of Pak nuclear weapons in the aftermath of militants' attack at the Karachi airport, resulting in killing of 30 people including 10 terrorists.

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The outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed responsibility for the attack.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2014-06-10/news/50478382_1_karachi-airport-weapons-10-terrorists

[Return to Top](#)

The Diplomat – Tokyo, Japan

OPINION/Article

Missile Defense and the North Korean Nuclear Threat

Trilateral missile defense could be a turning point in dealing with the North Korean nuclear threat.

By Stefan Soesanto for *The Diplomat*

June 07, 2014

Pyongyang's saber-rattling of late, coupled with multiple rocket engine tests and increased activity at the regime's Pungyong-ri nuclear test site, have led many in Washington and Seoul to believe that the DPRK is planning to conduct its fourth nuclear test and/or another long-range missile test to enhance the credibility of its nuclear deterrent. But while public attention is once again on the idea of a North Korean nuclear-tipped ICBM that could threaten the continental United States, the strategic ground is shifting.

Over the last nine to eight months the military balance on the Peninsula has tipped dramatically in favor of the U.S.-ROK alliance in terms of projecting land, sea and air superiority. In early 2013 for instance, the alliance introduced the concept of tailored "tit-for-tat" deterrence, significantly enhancing Seoul's active defense posture and, according to South Korean Minister of Defense Kim Kwan-jin, increasing the level of inter-alliance operability to "detect, defend, deter, and destroy" any future North Korean threat.

Meanwhile, the unabated proliferation of U.S. missile defense systems across the Asia-Pacific has progressively degraded Pyongyang's strategic ability to deter Washington with a limited nuclear-tipped ICBM program. On top of these developments, South Korea successfully tested its Hyunmoo-2 cruise missile in April this year, which under Seoul's 2012 renegotiated missile guidelines is able to hit any target inside North Korea.

This renewed emphasis on conventional warfare within the alliance is a serious challenge for Pyongyang, with the asymmetric war stance it adopted two decades ago rapidly losing its ability to deter. As a result, in something of a replay of early 2013, between February and March this year North Korea test-fired its new 300-mm multiple rocket launcher (also known as the KN-09), which is able to shell areas well beyond the greater Seoul area, and re-tested its aging Scud missile arsenal. Contrary to last year, however, when the DPRK deployed but refrained from firing its intermediate Musudan missile, the echelons in Pyongyang decided to send a message by launching two mid-range Nodong missiles, which had not seen action since July 2009.

The resurfacing of the road-mobile Nodong is upsetting the regional balance of power on various levels. First, the Nodong represents the DPRK's most reliable ballistic missile asset to threaten Seoul, Tokyo, and U.S. forces stationed on Okinawa. Second, according to *The Military Balance 2014*, published by The International Institute for Strategic Studies, "some analysts, including in the US Defense Intelligence Agency, believe that, after working on weaponisation for more than 20 years, North Korea is likely to have the ability to miniaturize and mount a nuclear weapon on its mid-range Nodong missiles." And third, given that the two missiles launched earlier this year traveled only an abbreviated distance of 400 miles, Pyongyang seems to be eager to showcase its ability to deliver a higher payload over a shorter distance and thereby compensate for the missile warhead's uncertain re-entry capabilities.

Pyongyang's strategic intentions with the reappearance of the Nodong are not entirely clear. Preliminary analysis however suggests that the emphasis on road-mobile systems combined with the DPRK's low-yield nuclear tests in the past is indicative of a tactical nuclear program rather than a long-range strategic one.

With Congress hardly likely to warm to the idea of redeploying U.S. tactical nuclear weapons to South Korea as a mean to balance against the North, the Republican dominated House of Representatives instead passed the

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National Defense Authorization Act for the Fiscal Year 2015 (H.R. 4435) on May 22 which, if enacted, would require SecDef Hagel to “identify opportunities for increasing missile defense cooperation among the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea.”

In late April, the same concept of trilateral cooperation surfaced during President Obama’s visit to Tokyo, when U.S. National Security Adviser Susan Rice discussed trilateral missile defense cooperation with Prime Minister Abe. While Japan certainly welcomed the U.S. initiative, given Abe’s vocal push towards collective self-defense, Washington’s renewed efforts to deepen cooperation among its East Asian allies is expected to meet some political resistance in South Korea. The experience of Seoul’s failure to sign the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) and the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) in 2012 combined with the lingering historic animosities between Japan and South Korea, has led many in the Obama administration to tread carefully. Hagel’s visit to Singapore last weekend, where he met with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts on the sidelines of the Shangri-La Dialogue, was thus an important step in creating a positive atmosphere for any future talks.

Indeed, trilateral missile defense cooperation is the long awaited 21st century solution to the persisting Cold War problems on the Korean Peninsula. It circumvents Washington’s extended deterrence credibility problem, by creating cross-alliance mechanisms that naturally enhance local defense postures. At the same time the focus on theater missile defense is lowering expectations on the use of the U.S. nuclear umbrella and avoids the necessity of answering the North Korean nuclear threat with a nuclear response.

For Washington the trilateral approach is the perfect solution to managing Pyongyang’s bellicose behavior in a regional security framework. Even for Tokyo, bilateral cooperation with Seoul is beneficial to the extent that South Korean forward-based radar stations will provide early tracking information on any inbound North Korean ballistic missiles. Seoul however, or so the argument goes, is in the peculiar position of buying into an agreement that offers very few political and military incentives other than being a responsible alliance partner.

On the one hand, critics have raised the issue that South Korea has to sway public opinion despite ongoing tensions with Japan. This is actually easier than most analysts outside the region tend to believe. According to a study by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, public support for GSOMIA was at 60.4 percent in September 2013, and dropped only 10 percentage points even after Abe visited the Yasukuni shrine three months later. Indeed the same study goes on to explain that the public backlash that led Seoul to scrap GSOMIA in July 2012, was not due to anti-Japanese sentiment but rather President Lee Myung-bak’s attempt to “enact the agreement with virtually no public debate.” So while President Park Gyeun-hye’s low approval ratings after the *Sewol ferry disaster* may be of some concern in pushing through legislation on trilateral cooperation, there is no indication that the Park government will suffer the same public outrage as her predecessor.

On the other hand, policymakers in Seoul are divided on whether to join the U.S. missile shield or whether to develop its own system dubbed the Korean Air Missile Defense (KAMD). Essentially the question comes down to whether the Park administration is willing to buy into the narrative that missile defense is feasible and preferable to a mutual-assured destruction scenario on the Peninsula. Certainly, one of the major obstacles for selling the U.S. missile defense shield is the cost involved in continuously updating, upgrading, and modernizing the systems. Lockheed Martin’s Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) for instance costs around \$800-950 million per battery, roughly the same amount Seoul would spend on building one of its KDX-III Sejong the Great-class Aegis destroyers, the largest surface warship currently commissioned in the South Korean Navy.

Nevertheless, THAAD and the emerging SM-3 Aegis Ashore system are currently the most promising candidates to defend South Korea from an incoming Nodong missile. Compared to Seoul’s current procurement plan, which is geared towards updating its existing systems to a Patriot Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3), the differences in interception rate, range and altitude could not have any greater. PAC-3 boasts intercept altitude of 20-30 km, which, according to Choi Bong-wan, professor at the Graduate School of National Defense at Hanam University, translates into a reaction time of 1 second to intercept an incoming Nodong missile. In contrast THAAD operates at altitudes of up to 150 km, resulting in a reaction time of 45 seconds, and the SM-3 Aegis Ashore system could push these boundaries even further to guarantee a successful intercept.

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In fact, on May 27, the Pentagon proactively tackled Seoul's problem head on by officially contemplating the deployment a THAAD system to Korea, according to a report in the *Wall Street Journal*. According to defense officials, "the U.S. could deploy its own THAAD system to South Korea temporarily, and then, in time, replace it with a system purchased by Seoul, [...] or it could allow South Korea to purchase its own, and jump ahead in the queue for the system."

While the details are still in limbo, the White House can counterintuitively rely on the broad support of Republicans who are willing to push missile defense in East Asia despite budget constraints at home. The Obama administration can also count on South Korean public support, which according to a poll conducted by the Asan Institute between March 16-18, has cited missile defense (18.7 percent) as the second most import issue for the U.S.-ROK alliance. The South Korean government's initial response to the idea of joining a U.S. missile defense network has been cool, to say the least, but the U.S. looks perfectly willing to apply pressure.

For North Korea, trilateral missile defense cooperation would spell a devastating move. First, Pyongyang's tactical nuclear deterrent would be dead on arrival with no bargaining position gained. Second, the U.S. nuclear umbrella would be supplemented by a multi-layered theater missile defense shield that would bring the most modern military systems to the Peninsula. And third, cross-alliance cooperation is naturally bound to spread from missile defense and information sharing to other issues involving joint military exercises and coordinated military responses. As a result, Washington's strategic patience will prevail, Seoul's and Tokyo's defense posture will be enhanced, and Pyongyang's attempt to deter the alliance will fail.

If there was ever any pressure on North Korea to denuclearize, trilateral missile defense would take the narrative to the next level. With successful deployment, Pyongyang would have to realize that however many nuclear tests it is willing to conduct, its nuclear adventure is coming to an end.

Stefan Soesanto is a non-resident James A. Kelly Fellow at Pacific Forum CSIS.

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/06/missile-defense-and-the-north-korean-nuclear-threat/>

[Return to Top](#)

The Diplomat – Tokyo, Japan
OPINION/Article

Nuclear Bombers in an A2/AD World

Anti-access/area-denial capabilities will not impact the nuclear mission of America's bomber fleet.

By Zachary Keck for *The Diplomat*

June 11, 2014

The past week or so has seen the U.S. send a number of nuclear warnings to Russia in Europe. Last week, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) announced it was temporarily deploying three B-52 nuclear-capable bombers. Then, this week, the USAF announced it was sending two additional B-2 nuclear-capable stealth bombers to Europe. Both deployments were portrayed as routine training exercises. Given the crisis in the Ukraine, and Russia's stepped up nuclear training, it would be foolish to accept the USAF at its word.

The Ukraine crisis is more likely the latest example of the U.S. bomber fleet's utility to America's extended deterrence mission. Last year, during one of North Korea's epic temper tantrums, the U.S. also deployed B-52s to South Korea for "training purposes," followed by a flyover by a pair of B-2 stealth bombers. The purpose of the fly-over mission, according to U.S. military officials at least, was to demonstrate "the United States' ability to conduct long range, precision strikes quickly and at will." Similarly, last November the U.S. used a pair of B-52s to challenge China's newly announced Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea.

A new report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS) argues that the aging bombers' ability to carry out this mission is waning. It notes that 21st century adversaries' growing anti-access/area-denial capabilities threatens to undermine existing bombers' ability to reach their targets.

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“As potential adversaries acquire 21st century defense systems designed to prevent U.S. access to the global commons (sea, air, space, and cyberspace) and to limit U.S. forces’ freedom of action within an operational area, the ability of these Cold War era bombers to get close enough to targets to be effective will continue to deteriorate,” the CRS report, written by Jeremiah Gertler, states.

As the report notes, the USAF ultimately intends to deal with this situation by procuring a new Long Range Strike Bomber (LRS-B). The next generation LRS-B, however, is not scheduled to gain initial operation capability until near 2030. If procurement history is any guide, we shouldn’t expect these new bombers to join the service until much later.

In the interim, the USAF intends to compensate by modernizing and extending the operational lives of the B-52 and B-1 out to 2040, and the B-2 out to 2058. Furthermore, Gertler notes, “Air Force and aerospace industry experts insist that with sufficient funding for sustainment and modernization over their expected lifespans, all three of the existing bombers can physically last and continue to remain credible weapon systems.”

The problem, as is often the case, is cost. The U.S. currently maintains a bomber fleet of 76 B-52H bombers, 63 supersonic B-1B bombers, and 20 B-2 stealth bombers. According to a chart in the CRS report, the military intends to spend around \$2.5 billion–\$3 billion annually between now and FY 2022 to maintain and modernize the existing bomber fleet, as well as invest in the new LRS-B. Already, “from FY2002 through FY2012, the sustainment and modernization appropriations for the B-52, B-1, and B-2 averaged \$160.15 million, \$219.77 million, and \$451.2 million per year respectively.” In the FY 2013 budget, however, funding for the B-52 and B-1 was down 61 percent and 24 percent respectively from the previous 11-year average.

Thus, the U.S. Air Force faces difficult choices in the years ahead. However, it should be recognized that these choices should be made almost entirely based on the bombers’ conventional missions. Indeed, so far as their potential nuclear missions are concerned, adversaries’ A2/AD capabilities are almost completely irrelevant.

That’s because the bomber fleet’s nuclear missions do not actually include dropping nuclear bombs on enemies. Instead, its main utility for America’s nuclear deterrent — including extended deterrent — is to signal to adversaries and reassure allies. As seen in Europe today and North Korea last year, America can send its nuclear-capable bombers abroad to signal to adversaries and allies alike. Because of their visibility, bombers are able to achieve this in a way that ICBMs located in the United States and ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) cannot.

This is an incredibly important mission; in fact, unless something goes terribly wrong, this is the only nuclear mission the U.S. will ever have to carry out. However, if deterrence ever did fail and the U.S. had to carry out a nuclear strike, it would almost certainly not rely on its bomber fleets to do so. America’s ICBMs would be the most likely leg of the triad to be used given their combination of accuracy and ability to penetrate enemy defenses.

Some would argue that the bomber fleet serves another important deterrent mission — namely, survivability. Unlike the ICBM force, which is located at fixed targets and could theoretically be destroyed in a first strike by an adversary, the bombers can be moved around and kept in flight to prevent them from being eliminated.

This argument is unconvincing. In the extremely improbable event that an adversary’s first strike destroys all of America’s ICBMs, the U.S. would almost certainly respond with its submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs). The U.S. currently operates a total of 14 Ohio-class SSBNs, and will continue to do so until at least the end of the 2020s when the replacement for the Ohio-class SSBNs (of which there will be 12) enters into service. In 2012, the at-sea rate (the average number of SSBNs on patrol at any one time) for these SSBNs was 8. As Hans Kristensen notes, “The eight SSBNs that are currently at sea carry 192 missiles with an estimated 860 warheads.” Not only is it extremely unlikely that an adversary would wipe out America’s ICBM force in a first strike, but even if this did occur America’s SSBN would be more than adequate in retaliating.

Therefore, in deciding on the level of funding necessary to modernize the existing bomber fleet to overcome A2/AD challenges, Congress should focus only on the military’s conventional bomber needs.

Zachary Keck is Associate Editor of The Diplomat where he authors The Pacific Realist blog. He also writes a monthly column for The National Interest.

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[Return to Top](#)

Roll Call.com – Washington, D.C.

OPINION/Five By Five

Ten-Year, \$264 Billion Nuclear Weapons Spending Estimate Leaves Out Some Things

By Tim Starks

June 11, 2014

Over the next decade, maintaining and modernizing nuclear weapon capabilities will cost \$263.8 billion, according to a joint estimate by the departments of Defense and Energy. But a new report suggests that figure might fall far short of what the United States will actually spend.

The Government Accountability Office noted that the estimate doesn't include the Air Force's plans to develop a new bomber, or modernize intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"Consequently, DOD may be significantly underreporting its 10-year estimate, depending on the magnitude of the costs resulting from upcoming decisions about how to modernize these delivery systems," a GAO report released Tuesday concluded.

"Air Force officials told us that it would be premature to include potential budget estimates for development programs in their early stages because their long-term costs are uncertain," the report states, and added that the Air Force considered a specific bomber estimate too sensitive to include in the joint report with the DOE, produced annually for Congress.

But the GAO said the Pentagon should've supplied at least a range of possible estimates for the new bomber and ICBM modernization, rather than an assumption of no cost at all: "Without a range of potential estimates and fully documented assumptions and limitations, the report is an incomplete tool for congressional oversight."

The "fully documented assumptions" part is a criticism of how DOD came up with its \$40.8 billion estimate for nuclear command, control and communications, or NC3; the report states that the department didn't do a good job of explaining how it arrived at the figure.

On the DOE side, the estimate doesn't include enough funding for planned nuclear weapon life extensions and construction of key facilities, the GAO determined.

"To improve the completeness and transparency of subsequent joint reports, GAO recommends that the Secretary of Defense direct DOD components to (1) include at least a range of potential 10-year budget estimates for projects and programs, based on preliminary cost information (this is consistent with a December 2013 recommendation GAO made to DOE); and (2) document assumptions and limitations affecting its NC3 funding estimates," the report stats. "DOD agreed with these recommendations."

Tim Starks writes for Five By Five. He has covered national security issues, including homeland security, intelligence and foreign policy, since joining CQ Roll Call in 2003.

<http://blogs.rollcall.com/five-by-five/ten-year-264-billion-nuclear-weapons-spending-estimate-leaves-out-some-things/?dcz>

[Return to Top](#)

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OPINION/Blog

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DOD Report Shows Chinese Nuclear Force Adjustments and US Nuclear Secrecy

By Hans M. Kristensen
June 11, 2014

The Pentagon's latest annual report to Congress on the *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China* describes continued broad modernization and growing reach of Chinese military forces and strategy.

There is little new on the nuclear weapons front in the 2014 update, however, which describes slow development of previously reported weapons programs. This includes construction of a handful of ballistic missile submarines; the first of which the DOD predicts will begin to sail on deterrent patrols later this year.

It also includes the gradual phase-out of the old DF-3A liquid-fuel ballistic missile and the apparent – and surprising – stalling of the new DF-31 ICBM program.

Like all the other nuclear-armed states, China is modernizing its nuclear forces. China earns the dubious medal (although not in the DOD report) of being the only nuclear weapons state party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that is increasing its nuclear arsenal. Far from a build-up, however, the modernization is a modest increase focused on ensuring the survivability of a secure retaliatory strike capability.

The report continues the Obama administration's don't-show-missile-numbers policy. Up until 2010, the annual DOD reports included a table overview of the composition of the Chinese missile force. But the overview gradually became less specific in until it was completely removed from the reports in 2013.

The policy undercuts the administration's position that China should be more transparent about its military modernization by indirectly assisting Chinese government secrecy.

The main nuclear issues follow below.

Land-Based Nuclear Missile Developments

The DOD report formally identifies the new road-mobile ICBM under development as the DF-41, rumored at least since 1997 to be in development. The missile might "possibly [be] capable of carrying multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV)," according to DOD. That obviously doesn't mean that the DF-41 *will* carry them; the DF-5A has also been assessed for years to be capable of carrying MIRV without ever doing so.

The report lends some support to the assessment – although not explicitly – that deployment of the DF-31 ICBM has ceased after only 5-10 launchers deployed in a single brigade.

Instead, the focus of the road-mobile ICBM modernization appears to have shifted to the DF-31A ICBM, of which the DOD report predicts that more will be deployed by 2015.

The liquid-fuel DF-3A (CSS-2) IRBM is not mentioned in the 2014 report, an indication that the 3.3-megaton weapon system has finally been retired after 42 years in service. The last DF-3A-equipped Second Artillery brigade – the 810 Brigade north of Dalian in the Liaoning province – was seen in May 2014 to have been converted to the solid-fuel medium-range DF-21 MRBM.

The only other transportable liquid-fuel ballistic missile, the DF-4 (CSS-3) ICBM, is still operational with 10-15 launchers deployed in one or two brigades. But the missile is expected to be retired soon. When that happens, the only liquid-fuel ballistic missile left in the Chinese arsenals will be the 20 silo-based DF-5As (CSS-4 Mod 1) ICBM, which are still being upgraded.

The report also mentions conventional ballistic missiles under development, including several medium-range versions. That includes that anti-ship version of the DF-21 (CSS-5) – the DF-21D, which the report designates as the CSS-5 Mod 5. That suggests that other conventional MRBMs may also be under development.

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Sea-Based Nuclear Missile Developments

The DOD report states that three Jin-class (Type 094) SSBNs have been delivered and that two more are in various stages of construction. One of these was seen at the Bohai shipyard in October 2013. After the Jin-program is completed, DOD expects that China will proceed to its next-generation SSBN (Type 096) over the next decade.

The report makes the prediction that “China is likely to conduct its first nuclear deterrence patrols with the JIN-class SSBN in 2014,” assuming that the JL-2 SLBM will finally become operational.

The DOD report predicts that the Jin-class SSBNs likely will conduct China’s first “nuclear deterrent patrols” in 2014, even though the Chinese Central Military Commission is through to insist on central control of Chinese warheads under normal circumstances.

The prediction of the upcoming nuclear deterrent patrols is controversial given that the Chinese leadership so far has been very reluctant to hand over nuclear weapons to the military under normal circumstances. China has never conducted a SSBN deterrent patrol before and a Jin SSBN deploying with nuclear warheads loaded on its SLBMs would constitute a significant change in Chinese nuclear operational policy. It would also constitute the first-ever deployment of Chinese nuclear weapons outside the land-territory of China.

Nuclear-Capable Cruise Missile Developments

The DOD report does not explicitly attribute nuclear capability to China’s growing inventory of land-attack cruise missiles. Yet the 2013 NASIC report designates the DH-10 ground-launched cruise missile as “conventional or nuclear,” the same designation given to the Russian AS-4 and the Pakistani Ra’ad and Babur cruise missiles, weapons widely assumed to be nuclear-capable.

The DH-10 ground-launched land-attack cruise missile is described by NASIC as “conventional or nuclear,” the same designation given to Russian and Pakistani dual-capable nuclear cruise missiles.

There are widespread rumors on Chinese Internet sites that the DH-10 has been modified for delivery by the H-6K intermediate-range bomber. It is unknown if that includes the apparently nuclear-capable version.

In addition, US Air Force Global Strike Command last year attributed the CJ-20 air-launched cruise missile with nuclear capability, but neither NASIC nor the DOD does so.

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Hans M. Kristensen is director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists where he provides the public with analysis and background information about the status of nuclear forces and the role of nuclear weapons.

<http://fas.org/blogs/security/2014/06/china-dodreport2014/>

[Return to Top](#)

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 .

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USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies
CUWS Outreach Journal

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

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.

[Return to Top](#)

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