



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies

(CUWS) Outreach Journal

Issue No. 1106, 14 March 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.

The CUWS is seeking submissions for its annual General Charles A. Horner award, which honors the best original writing on issues relating to Air Force counter-WMD and nuclear enterprise operations. The deadline for submissions is March 31, 2014. For more information, please visit our web-site.

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FEATURED ITEM: *"Japan Could Be Building an Irresistible Terrorist Target, Experts Say"*. Authors Douglas Birch, R. Jeffrey Smith and Jake Adelstein; March 11, 2014, published by The Center for Public Integrity.com, 8 pages.

<http://www.publicintegrity.org/2014/03/11/14366/japan-could-be-building-irresistible-terrorist-target-experts-say>

ROKKASHO, Japan — Sporting turquoise-striped walls and massive steel cooling towers, the new industrial complex rising from bluffs astride the Pacific Ocean here looks like it might produce consumer electronics or bath salts. But in reality it is one of the world's newest, largest, and most controversial production plants for a nuclear explosive. Once it is running, the plant will produce thousands of gallon-sized steel canisters containing a flour-like mixture of uranium and plutonium, enough in theory to provide the building blocks for a huge nuclear arsenal. But since Obama was first elected, Washington has been lobbying furiously behind the scenes, trying to persuade Japan that terrorists might regard Rokkasho's new stockpile of plutonium as an irresistible target — and to convince Japanese officials they should better protect this dangerous raw material. Specifically, U.S. officials have struggled, without success so far, to persuade Japan to create a more capable security force at the plant than the white-gloved, unarmed guards and small police unit stationed here now. They also have been trying to persuade the privacy-minded Japanese to undertake stringent background checks for the 2,400 workers employed here.

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Air Force Times.com

Air Force's Findings on Cheating Investigation Expected in Two Weeks

By Brian Everstine, Staff writer

March 11, 2014

The Air Force will announce its response to allegations of cheating among nuclear missile officers in two weeks, as multiple investigations wrap up and the top nuclear commander finalizes his recommendations.

Air Force Global Strike Command commander Gen. Stephen Wilson commissioned three separate studies following the January announcement that more than 90 intercontinental ballistic missile launch officers were caught up in a cheating investigation at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont. Air Force Undersecretary Eric Fanning said Tuesday those investigations are wrapping up and Wilson is finishing his recommendations to Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James.

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Fanning could not say what responsive steps were likely, including the possibility of punitive measures against base and wing leaders.

"We will be able to answer all questions about what we're going to do about the cheating at Malmstrom in about two weeks," Fanning said.

Wilson will report to James in Washington at that time, and then Air Force leaders will provide their reports to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel.

In January, the Air Force announced that 92 officers had allegedly cheated or known about cheating on a monthly proficiency exam last summer. Those officers were temporarily taken off launch duty, as the entire launch force was retrained. About 95 percent of the force passed follow-up testing.

Fanning said the investigation so far has focused only on airmen at Malmstrom, and not on those at the other missile bases: F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., and Minot Air Force Base, N.D.; and training base Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/article/20140311/NEWS/303110043/Air-Force-s-findings-cheating-investigation-expected-two-weeks>

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The Florida Times-Union – Jacksonville, FL

Nuclear Deterrence Ultimate Protection

For U.S. and allies, DOD official tells Congress March 6

By Amaani Lyle, American Forces Press Service

March 12, 2014

The Defense Department's nuclear deterrent is the ultimate protection for the United States while also assuring distant allies of their security against regional aggression, a senior Pentagon official told Congress March 6.

Elaine Bunn, deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear and missile defense policy told the Senate Armed Services Committee's strategic forces subcommittee that while Defense Department modernization goals largely have not changed since 2010, some adjustments are on the horizon.

One such change, she reported, involves the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty force structure.

"The administration is considering how to reduce nondeployed strategic delivery vehicles to comply with the limits of the new START treaty by February 2018," she said, "and we will make a final force structure decision and inform Congress prior to the start of fiscal year 2015."

Bunn expressed concern about Russian activity that appears to be inconsistent with the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. "We've raised the issue with Russia," she told the senators. They provided an answer that was not satisfactory to us, and we told them that the issue is not closed."

With regard to recent ethical issues involving Air Force and Navy nuclear personnel, Bunn noted that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has created both internal and external special review panels. "Those reviews are not about assigning blame," she said. "They're about identifying, assessing, and correcting any systemic deficiencies that we may uncover and in applying the best practices for carrying out our nuclear mission across the nuclear force."

Bunn also said the recently released 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review makes clear the key role of nuclear forces in the DOD strategy.

"It ... supports our ability to project power by communicating to potential nuclear-armed adversaries that they cannot escalate their way out of failed conventional aggression," Bunn said.

The department's budget request for fiscal year 2015 supports DOD's nuclear policy goals as laid out in the 2010 nuclear posture review, in the president's June 2013 nuclear employment strategy, and in the 2014 QDR. Pentagon

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officials will continue to ensure that administrations have suitable options for deterring, responding to and managing a diverse range of situations, including regional deterrence challenges.

“We continue to work closely with our allies, some of whom live in very dangerous neighborhoods, to ensure continuing confidence in our shared national security goals, including assurance of our extended nuclear deterrence commitments,” she told the Senate panel.

Critical to maintaining a safe, secure and effective force is the preservation of the nuclear triad: strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, Bunn said.

<http://jacksonville.com/military/periscope/2014-03-12/story/nuclear-deterrence-ultimate-protection>

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The London Guardian – London, U.K.

US Air Force Documents Reveal 'Rot' in Culture of Nuclear Weapons Officers

Launch officers barely passed inspection at North Dakota base as evidence grows of cheating and 'unprofessional' behaviour

Associated Press in Washington

Thursday, 13 March 2014

Failings exposed last spring at a US nuclear missile base, reflecting what one officer called “rot” in the ranks, were worse than originally reported, according to air force documents obtained by the Associated Press.

Airmen responsible for missile operations at Minot Air Force Base, North Dakota, passed an inspection in March 2013 with a “marginal” rating, the equivalent of a “D” in school. But it now turns out that even that was only because of good marks received by support staff like cooks and facilities managers, as well as a highly rated training program. Launch officers, or missileers, entrusted with the keys to the missiles did poorly and, on their own, would have flunked, the records show.

“Missileer technical proficiency substandard,” one briefing slide says. “Remainder [of missile operations team] raised grade to marginal.”

The documents also hint at an exam-cheating problem in the making among launch crews at Minot, almost a full year before allegations of widespread cheating erupted this January at a companion nuclear base in Montana.

An official inquiry into the troubled inspection of the 91st Missile Wing at Minot in March 2013 concluded that one root cause was poor use of routine testing and other means of measuring the proficiency of launch crews in their assigned tasks. For example, commanders at Minot did not ensure that monthly written tests were supervised. The analysis also said Minot senior leaders failed to foster a “culture of accountability”.

In a more direct hint at fudging on exams, one document said, “‘Group testing’ was viewed as ‘taking care of each other,’” while adding that the missileers felt pressure to score 100% on every test. Those are echoes of explanations air force leaders have recounted from launch officers in the aftermath of the cheating scandal that surfaced in early January at the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom Air Force Base, in Montana. At least 92 officers at Malmstrom have been removed from launch duty for allegedly cheating or tolerating cheating by others, pending an investigation whose results may be released by the end of this month.

The allegation at Malmstrom is that information on “emergency war orders” exams, which test how a launch crew would handle classified messages related to missile targeting and launch, was shared in advance among launch officers. It’s not clear whether this or other forms of cheating have taken place at the air force’s two other ICBM bases, but numerous former missileers have said in recent weeks that cheating does occur.

The air force operates a total of 450 Minuteman 3 nuclear missiles, divided evenly among the three bases.



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An ICBM base has many interconnected pieces, including security forces that provide protection for the missiles and for the underground launch control centers, as well as commanders and others who work from a headquarters base. But at the mission's core are the missileers and their mastery of "emergency war orders," the secret messages that would authorize a launch. They are supported in the missile field by personnel known as facility managers, who run above-ground support buildings where security forces and others sleep and where cooks prepare meals for the full team.

The air force initially called the overall March inspection outcome at Minot a "success", reflecting the fact that the 91st Missile Wing as a whole was rated "satisfactory". But after the Associated Press learned in May about the "marginal" performance in the missile operations sector of the inspection, the service disclosed that 19 officers had been forced to surrender their launch authority in April because of performance and attitude problems. That was an unprecedented mass sidelining of launch control officers, reflecting what the 91st's deputy operations commander at the time, Lt Col Jay Folds, called "rot" in the force.

Until now, however, it was not publicly known that of 11 crews tested on a launch simulator for the inspection, three were rated Q3, or "unqualified", which the air force defines as demonstrating "an unacceptable level of safety, performance or knowledge". Five of the 11 earned a top rating and three got a second-tier rating.

The Minot crews performed much better in a September reassessment. Eleven of 12 launch crews received top qualification ratings, although one was rated unqualified with "one critical and one major error". In back-to-back inspections this January, the 91st as a whole was given outstanding marks.

The newly available air force documents were released to a private group in Philadelphia called Speaking Truth to Power after the group filed a lawsuit asserting that US Strategic Command, which oversees all US nuclear forces, had not provided documents requested under the Freedom of Information Act. Speaking Truth to Power, headed by lawyer Jules Zacher, advocates for the elimination of nuclear weapons. He shared the documents with the AP.

Problems inside the ICBM force, many of them first reported by the AP, prompted Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel in January to order two reviews. A Pentagon team is seeking to define and fix the trouble, and an outside group is undertaking a broader assessment of nuclear weapons operations. Hagel has said failures in this most sensitive of military missions threaten to erode public trust.

Madelyn Creedon, co-leader of the internal review, was at Vandenberg Air Force Base, in California, on Thursday to review how the air force's ICBM launch crew training program is operated. All launch crews are required to train at Vandenberg before being certified and assigned to one of the three operational ICBM bases.

One newly released document said the Minot wing in North Dakota had shown signs of weakness much earlier. In an April-May 2010 "combat capability evaluation," two of 13 launch crews tested on the use of a launch simulator were deemed "unqualified." Eight rated "highly qualified" and three "qualified." By comparison, of 32 crews who underwent the same evaluation at the two other ICBM bases in 2011, 31 were rated either highly qualified or qualified and only one unqualified.

On routine written tests, the Minot group did exceptionally well until the spring of 2013. In assessing the problems at Minot, the air force produced an analysis of test data that showed that in the two years prior to the March 2013 inspection, 87% of all tests resulted in perfect scores. In the three months following the weak inspection, 46% of test scores were perfect, including just 20% in May.

It also found that errors on monthly written tests and errors on launch control simulators soared after the March inspection. In the 10 months of written tests prior to its inspection, the Minot missileers had a total of 162 "job performance requirement" errors, which are mistakes on what the air force considers essential tasks. In the three months following the inspection the total doubled, to 321 errors, according to the data analysis.

Air Force officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

After visiting all three ICBM bases days after the Malmstrom cheating scandal was disclosed, air force secretary Deborah Lee James said she was troubled to hear that missileers "felt driven to score 100% all the time" because

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commanders use scores as the main, or only, factor in promotions. James called this “unhealthy”. She is weighing recommendations on ways to reform testing and training.

But the newly released air force documents show the focus on perfection should not be a surprise. One document that examined emergency war order test scores said, “Given the nature of the ICBM crew mission, a perfect score is the expectation.”

The pressure to be perfect apparently has driven some to cheat and others, possibly including commanders, to look the other way. There is no evidence that this has translated to unsafe handling of nuclear weapons duties, but an air force review found “a culture of toleration” at Minot that “allowed unprofessional and non-compliant behaviors”. It said launch crews had an “artificial sense of preparedness” for tests and inspections.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/13/nuclear-weapons-air-force-officers-cheating-rot>

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Space Daily.com

US Official: Arms Control Work with Russia to Continue

By Staff Writers

Washington, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

March 12, 2014

The White House's top arms control official on Wednesday said US cooperation with Russia on agreements limiting nuclear arsenals would survive the worst East-West tensions in years sparked by Ukraine.

Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall said that US and Russian officials were even now working "effectively" together to prepare for a nuclear security summit in The Hague later this month which President Barack Obama will attend.

"We expect that the Russians will continue to abide by the arms control agreements that they have reached with us," said Sherwood-Randall, the White House Coordinator for Defense Policy, Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction, and Arms Control.

"These are in our mutual interest and we see no reason that tensions that exist over Ukraine should in any way obstruct the path towards fulfilling the commitments that we have made with the Russians to reduce nuclear weapons on both sides," she said at an event sponsored by National Journal in Washington.

As part of its earlier "reset" of relations with Russia, the Obama administration concluded a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that limits both sides to 1,550 warheads and puts caps on the numbers of deployed intercontinental ballistic nuclear missiles and other launch vehicles.

The treaty includes verification mechanisms that include on-site inspections, data exchanges and other notifications so that each side can have confidence the other is complying with the terms of the pact.

The White House had hoped to follow on from the treaty with Russia to make further arms reductions in line with Obama's core counter-proliferation strategy, but those aspirations fell foul of worsening relations since Vladimir Putin's return to the Russian presidency.

The Obama administration, while vigorously condemning Russia's incursion into Crimea, has sought to insulate the wider US-Russia relationship, already rocky, from more permanent damage.

Officials argue that nuclear cooperation, along with common approaches to the Iranian nuclear issue, are two areas where it is in Russia's own national interest not to thwart US foreign policy.

That theory is likely to be put to the test if the White House goes ahead in the coming days with imposing meaningful sanctions on the Russian government and top officials over the Ukraine crisis.

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/US_official_arms_control_work_with_Russia_to_continue_999.html

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USA TODAY.com

Obama Administration Defends Cuts on Nuclear Security

By Aamer Madhani, USA TODAY
March 8, 2014

WASHINGTON — Just weeks before he heads to The Hague to meet with world leaders for the third Nuclear Security Summit, President Obama has unveiled a budget that includes more than \$220 million in cuts for nuclear security programs in the next fiscal year.

One of the biggest reductions will come to the International Material Protection and Cooperation program, which works to secure and eliminate vulnerable nuclear weapons and materials. Obama asked for \$305.5 million, or \$114 million less than was appropriated in the 2014 budget.

Obama also requested \$108 million less than was appropriated last year for the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, a program that plays a key part in the Energy Department's effort at preventing terrorists from acquiring nuclear and radiological materials that could be used in weapons of mass destruction.

With the proposed cuts, some nuclear security experts now question whether Obama, who made nuclear security a pet issue during his time in the Senate and launched the biennial Nuclear Security Summit process, remains committed to the issue.

"What I take away from this budget is that there was a lack of leadership in trying to maintain the prioritization of the funding of this issue," said Kenneth Luongo, who served as senior adviser in the Energy Department on non-proliferation issues during the Clinton administration and is now the president of the Partnership for Global Security. "The signal ... is we are in retreat on this issue, and I think that is a huge mistake."

Administration officials dismiss the notion that the budget reflects a loss of passion on the issue since Obama spoke in his agenda-setting 2009 visit to Prague about his vision for a nuclear-free world. At that time he expressed deep worries about terrorists obtaining nuclear material.

Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz noted with the budget's release this week that the decrease in the nuclear nonproliferation budget is due in large part to the decision to shelve a project in South Carolina to convert weapons-grade plutonium into nuclear reactor fuel that proved to be too costly.

The decision to put the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility, or MOX, on "cold standby" accounts for 54% of the decrease in the administration's nonproliferation request. The facility was to play an important part in an agreement with Russia, where each side has committed to dispose of 34 metric tons of plutonium.

Moniz said the administration is looking for ways to revive the MOX project with substantial cost reductions. The decision will also require the administration to reengage with Russia on the issue at a time when the relationship is under strain over the Russian military action in the Ukraine.

"At the right time, we will have to reengage in those discussions," Moniz said. "Now may not be the right time."

The decision to put the MOX on hold, not surprisingly, has infuriated some lawmakers.

"Requiring Russia to cooperate and dispose of their nuclear bombs should not be up for debate," said Rep. Joe Wilson, R-S.C.

Republican criticism notwithstanding, Obama has already burnished a significant legacy on nuclear issues.

In his first five years in office, he issued a nuclear posture review that reduced the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. policy and signed the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) that commits to further reducing the U.S.- and Russian-deployed nuclear arsenals. He also nudged Iran to negotiations with the world's six leading powers over its nuclear program.



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And since launching the Nuclear Security Summit process in Washington in 2010, the Obama administration notes that 12 countries have disposed of their highly enriched uranium stockpiles, many countries are adopting international requirements for nuclear security and 19 countries have launched a counter nuclear smuggling initiative. (Leaders from 53 countries are expected to take part in the March 24-25 summit, which for the first time is to include a tabletop exercise focused on preventing nuclear and radiological terrorism.)

But despite the positive trends on nuclear security since Obama launched the summit, a number of challenges haven't been overcome, said Page Stoutland, vice president of nuclear materials security at the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Notably, the summit process has failed to produce global standards for how nuclear materials should be stored.

At the summit held in Seoul in March 2012, more than 50 countries pledged to throw their energy into winning ratification of a treaty dealing with nuclear materials' issues in time for the Netherlands summit. The legislation has not made its way through the Senate and Obama will go to The Hague short of his goal.

Luongo, the former Energy Department official, said there is no doubt that progress has been made on nuclear security during the Obama administration.

"But the real question is, 'Is it enough?'" Luongo said. "Are we doing enough ... to prevent nuclear terrorism — not just putting together fences that have holes in them, but they look okay."

In a recent interview with Harvard University's Belfer Center, Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, Obama's principal adviser on countering WMD, pushed back against the suggestion that the international community or the Obama administration is losing steam on the issue.

"I don't think there is a problem with complacency," Sherwood-Randall said. "We are seized with this challenge — with preventing sensitive materials from falling into the hands of terrorists or others who could use it to do us harm."

Contributing: Mary Orndorff Troyan

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2014/03/08/obama-nuclear-security-budget-cuts/6171519/>

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Military.com

Ukraine Refocuses Debate on US Missile Defense

By Kris Osborn

March 12, 2014

Tensions with Russia over Ukraine have led lawmakers and former military leaders to suggest the Obama administration take a tougher defensive posture toward Russia and revisit previous U.S. plans to build land-based missile defense technology in Poland and the Czech Republic.

"There are military options that don't involve putting troops on the ground in Crimea. We could go back and reinstate the ballistic missile defense program that was taken out. It was originally going to go in Poland and Czech Republic. Obama took it out to appease Putin," former Vice President Dick Cheney said Sunday on CBS' Face the Nation program.

The prior plan he mentioned involved constructing missile silos in Poland with Ground Based Interceptors, or GBIs, and radar in the Czech Republic. It was implemented and begun when Cheney was in office as vice president during the George W. Bush administration.

While development of the missile silos in Poland had already begun, this plan was canceled in 2009 when the Obama administration reset relations with Russia. Russia had been strongly opposed to the construction of any kind of missile defense technology close to its borders.

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Resetting relations with Russia paved the way for the Obama administration to broker the New START Treaty in 2010 -- a U.S.-Russian bilateral agreement to limit ICBMs, launchers and warheads.

Also speaking on CBS' Face the Nation, Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., questioned the Russian reset policy and said the current administration should revisit missile defense in light of the problems in Ukraine.

"I think we should definitely revisit missile defense. I think if President Obama himself revisited missile defense that would be a very strong signal. I think you could charitably describe the reset policy as naive wishful thinking," he said.

In place of the Ground Based Interceptor site in Poland, the Obama administration chose to implement what's called the European Phased Adaptive Approach -- an effort to use ship-based Aegis radar and Standard Missile-3 technology to provide a protective envelope for missile defense.

Known as Aegis Ashore, the plan calls for land-based missile defense sites in Romania by 2015 and Poland by 2018, said Rick Lehner, spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency.

Lehner did not comment on various opinions about restarting land-based European GBI development, but did say the Pentagon's Aegis Ashore effort was progressing. Development of the Aegis Ashore site in Romania is already underway, he said.

"The program of record is Aegis Ashore in Romania and Poland. It will be operational by the end of 2015," he explained. "We will have our first Aegis Ashore flight test from Hawaii in the next three to four months."

The Romanian Aegis Ashore site will be configured to fire the SM-3 IB interceptor missile, Lehner said. However, the Polish site for 2018 will be able to fire the larger, more powerful SM-3 IIA missile, which has a longer range, he added.

Unlike the SM-3 weapon, land-based GBIs like those previously planned for Poland are designed to knock ICBMs out of the sky during the midcourse phase of flight when the incoming missile is in space.

"The GBIs are primarily designed against the type of ICBMs that could be developed by North Korea and Iran -- and the Aegis Ashore technology is designed for use against short- to intermediate-range ballistic missiles," Lehner said.

Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense, or BMD, has historically been a ship-based integrated missile defense system that uses radar to identify approaching targets in tandem with SM-3 interceptor missiles engineered to knock them out of the sky.

In existence since 2004, Aegis BMD is now operating on 28 Navy ships and with a number of allied nations. U.S. allies with Aegis capability include the Japan Self Defense Forces, Spanish Navy, the South Korean Navy, the Royal Australian Navy, Italy, Denmark and others, MDA officials said.

The system uses the AN/SPY-1 radar, multiple variants of SM-3 missiles and various software configurations to ensure targets are located, tracked and destroyed.

SM-3 missile technology is capable of what's called mid-course phase missile defense. However, it's only effective against short- to intermediate-range missile threats. Ground Based Interceptors, by contrast, are able to provide full mid-course defense against high-flying, fast-moving ICBMs.

"A GBI can go and hit something that is way out there. It is an extremely big and extremely fast warhead. The standard missile is based on an anti-aircraft missile. It is a relatively small missile," said Daniel Goure, vice-president of the Lexington Institute, a Va.-based think tank.

Goure said ICBMs can travel as fast as 17,000 miles an hour.

There appear to have been many factors informing the decision to abandon the land-based GBI site in Poland, Goure said.

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Signing the New START Treaty, improving relations with Russia and accommodating their concerns about missile defense technology appear to have been a large part of the strategic calculus.

At the same time, the administration seems to believe that the Aegis Ashore system will be sufficient to meet regional threats. The decision seems to have, in part, been based on the belief that Iran was not likely to possess an ICBM in the near future, Goure said.

"The Obama administration rejected the Bush administration's idea that you would need a GBI site in Europe to protect the U.S. coastline," Goure said.

Consequently, the thinking with the European Phased Adaptive Approach seems to be that Aegis Ashore will succeed in defending Europe and the Middle Eastern partners, and the continental U.S. will be protected from threats by the GBIs the U.S. currently has at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif.

In fact, last year the Pentagon announced it would be increasing the number of GBIs from 30 to 44 at those locations in an effort to strengthen missile defense.

Another missile defense related option might be for the U.S. to restart research and development of the SM-3 IIB program, an effort designed to engineer a standard missile that is capable of destroying ICBMs, Goure said.

"There was going to be a version of the standard missile, the Aegis SM-3 IIB, that was going to be ICBM capable, and in a gesture to Putin that was canceled. The Russians have been opposed to any deployment of missile defense in Europe," he said.

<http://www.military.com/daily-news/2014/03/12/ukraine-refocuses-debate-on-us-missile-defense.html?comp=7000023317828&rank=1>

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Military Times.com

DoD Issues New Threat Report on North Korea

March 9, 2014

By Tony Lombardo, Staff report

North Korea has the fourth largest military in the world when it comes to manpower, with as many as 1.2 million people serving on active duty. But in terms of modernization there is — thankfully — much room for improvement.

Despite the country's economic limitations, it remains "one of the United States' most critical security challenges," according to the Defense Department's new report to Congress on the military developments in North Korea.

One major reason to be concerned is the country's continued willingness, under the leadership of Kim Jong-un, to "undertake provocative and destabilizing behavior."

From attacks on the Republic of Korea to the pursuit for nuclear weapons, there is reason to pay attention. So here's a breakdown of North Korea's military might in five general categories:

Ground forces

The ground forces of the Korean People's Army are spread out in several thousand underground facilities and include long-range cannon and rocket artillery capable of reaching deep into South Korea, the report states. There are "numerous light and medium tanks," and evidence suggests North Korea continues to upgrade its equipment.

Air and sea

The North Korean air force includes more than 1,300 aircraft, mainly legacy Soviet models. Its "most capable combat aircraft" is the MiG-29, procured in the late 1980s, and its most recent aircraft buy was a number of MiG-21s from Kazakhstan in 1999.

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Its navy has only shown “limited modernization,” although the country has a number of small submarines that while “unsophisticated” are quite “durable.”

Cyber

The report appears to do a little guess work when it comes to North Korea’s cyber skills. The country “probably has a military offensive cyber operations capability.” It’s a cost-effective measure of attack so it may be appealing to the leadership given the country’s “bleak economic outlook.” Last year, North Korea was allegedly behind two successful attacks that targeted data erasure on South Korean banking, media and government networks.

Ballistic missiles

DoD describes North Korea’s ballistic missile defense mission, known as Strategic Rocket Forces, as “ambitious,” noting that it “has deployed mobile theater ballistic missiles capable of reaching targets throughout ROK, Japan and the Pacific theater.” In March 2013, North Korea made “the SRF the focus of its threat to launch a nuclear attack.” Targets included the U.S. mainland, Hawaii, Guam and U.S. bases in South Korea.

During military parades in 2012 and 2013, the country displayed Hwasong-13 missiles — intercontinental ballistic missiles that, if successfully designed and developed, could reach the U.S. The report adds, however, that these missiles have not been flight tested so “current reliability as a weapon system would be low.”

WMDs

“One of the gravest concerns about North Korea’s activities in the international arena is its demonstrated willingness to proliferate nuclear technology,” the report states. North Korea continues to conduct nuclear tests, most recently in February 2013, and invest in nuclear infrastructure.

Sources report the country is also investigating bacterial and viral agents that “could support an offensive biological weapons program.” It’s likely the country also has a stockpile of chemical weapons including nerve, blister, blood and choking agents.

<http://www.militarytimes.com/article/20140309/NEWS05/303090002/DoD-issues-new-threat-report-North-Korea>

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The Korea Times – Seoul, South Korea

March 13, 2014

Japan's Nuclear Ambitions Troublesome

By Kim Tae-gyu

Japan is causing concerns among its neighbors once again.

This time around, it is about the country’s plan to activate a reprocessing facility that will produce vast amounts of weapons-grade plutonium.

Constructed over several decades, the plant in Rokkasho on Japan’s Pacific coast will open this October, and Japanese leaders have confirmed that it will go into operation.

The Rokkasho facility has raised concerns about Japan’s real motives for operating it as many experts say it lacks commercial viability and has questionable security.

Japan claims that the Rokkasho site is merely for energy. But once it is running at full capacity, it will roll out some eight tons of plutonium every year, which observers say would be enough to build hundreds of nuclear warheads.

Seoul has expressed concerns about Tokyo’s move.

“Any state that produces and retains more nuclear material than is necessary will be subject to suspicions. It will also become vulnerable to outside threats, thus creating security problems for itself and its neighbors,” Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se said.

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“The surplus nuclear material should be dealt with in consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and associated countries so that neighboring states don’t have to worry.”

The plant could also be one of the major points of discussion during the Nuclear Security Summit later this month in The Hague, observers said.

The Center for Public Integrity (CPI) also warned this week that the \$22 billion facility may become a target for terrorism, and the U.S. is concerned about this.

“Publicly, the U.S. has said little about Japan’s plans to enlarge its existing stockpile of plutonium,” the CPI said.

“But since President Obama was elected, Washington has been furiously lobbying behind the scenes, trying to persuade Japanese officials that terrorists might regard the Rokkasho plant as an irresistible target.”

However, the official U.S. stance is that it is not concerned about the project and Japan’s large stockpiles of nuclear fuel.

Korea may regard this as a double-standard since Washington has completely forbidden reprocessing by Seoul.

“The U.S. has refused to allow Seoul to recycle its spent nuclear fuel, but lets Japan do so. It’s not easy to understand,” said Professor Shin Yul from Myongji University.

“This may become a very serious issue, which might end up generating anti-U.S. sentiment since Koreans are very offended by Japanese politicians’ controversial acts and remarks.”

Since Korea’s storage capacity for highly radioactive nuclear waste is running out fast, Seoul has tried to revamp the Korea-U.S. Atomic Energy Agreement to deal with it.

To deal with Washington’s suspicions on proliferation, Seoul came up with an alternative technology called “pyro-processing,” but this was rejected.

“I think that the U.S. is required to do something to grapple with the criticism of its approach, which could be understood as a double standard,” Shin said.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2014/03/120_153329.html

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The Chosun Ilbo – Seoul, South Korea

March 13, 2014

S.Korea to Upgrade Patriot Missile Defense

South Korea will procure new Patriot missiles capable of intercepting North Korea's ballistic missiles starting in 2016. The Defense Project Promotion Committee chaired by Minister Kim Kwan-jin reached the decision on Wednesday.

The military now has a PAC-2 Patriot air defense system which can destroy an incoming ballistic missile or aircraft with shrapnel by exploding near it.

But it has a low interception rate and debris from the exploded missile can cause damage on the ground.

In contrast, the newer PAC-3 has a higher interception rate and directly hits the target.

The PAC-3 will be able to intercept a North Korean ballistic missile at an altitude of 40 km. It is being produced by U.S. arms manufacturer Lockheed Martin, which also makes the F-35A, a candidate for South Korea’s next-generation fighter system.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2014/03/13/2014031301013.html

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The London Guardian – London, U.K.

North Korea Using Complex Web to Evade Arms Sanctions, Says UN Report

Embassies, foreign shell companies and reflagged ships used in cases such as Cuban arms haul found on freighter in Panama

Reuters in Seoul

Thursday, 13 March 2014

North Korea has developed sophisticated ways to circumvent United Nations weapons sanctions, including the suspected use of its embassies to facilitate illegal trade, a United Nations report has found.

It said North Korea was also making use of more complicated financial countermeasures and techniques “pioneered by drug- trafficking organisations” that made tracking the isolated state’s purchase of prohibited goods more difficult.

The eight-member expert panel responsible for the report said it found a relatively complex “corporate ecosystem” of foreign-based firms and individuals that helped North Korea evade scrutiny of its assets as well as its financial and trade dealings.

In some of the most comprehensive evidence presented publicly against Pyongyang’s embassies, the report said the missions in Cuba and Singapore were suspected of organising an illegal shipment of Cuban fighter jets and missile parts that were seized on a North Korean container ship in Panama last July.

It included secret North Korean documents addressed to the ship’s captain that offered detailed instructions on how to load and conceal the illegal weapons shipment, and how to make a false declaration to customs officers in Panama.

“Load the containers first and load the 10,000 tonnes of sugar [at the next port] over them so that the containers cannot be seen,” said the document, translated from Korean.

Panama seized the ship, named the Chong Chon Gang, for smuggling Soviet-era arms, including two MiG-21 jet fighters, under thousands of tonnes of sugar. After the discovery Cuba said the freight was “obsolete” Soviet-era weapons to be repaired in North Korea and returned to Cuba.

Chinpo Shipping, a firm that the report said was “co-located” with the North Korean embassy in Singapore, acted as the agent for a Pyongyang-based company that operated the vessel, and North Korean diplomatic personnel in Cuba arranged the shipping of the concealed cargo.

North Korea had gone to great lengths to mask the origin of its merchant shipping fleet by reflagging and renaming ships, the report said, particularly after the introduction of tightened UN sanctions in early 2013 that followed the country’s third nuclear test. Most of the registered owners of the ships were small companies that rarely owned more than five vessels, meaning Pyongyang was able to keep its fleet running if a ship or shipping company was seized or had its assets frozen.

Under UN sanctions North Korea is banned from shipping and receiving cargo related to its nuclear and missile programmes. The importation of some luxury goods is also banned, along with the illicit transfer of bulk cash.

North Korea has fostered a complicated corporate network outside the international financial system that it uses to buy both banned and permitted goods, according to the report. The panel cited an example of an “unusually complex” transaction involving a contract by Air Koryo, the North’s national carrier, to purchase new aircraft in 2012. It said payments were structured through eight Hong Kong-registered companies that asserted they were trading partners of Air Koryo and were wiring funds they owed it.

The purchase of civilian aircraft is not prohibited under UN sanctions, but some of the companies appeared to have been recently formed shell entities, the report said, suggesting it might have been a test-run for illegal

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transactions. North Korea's embassies abroad play a key role in aiding and abetting such shadowy companies, the report said, confirming long-held suspicions in the international community.

North Korea was still dependent on foreign suppliers for its missile programmes, the report said, referring to a long-range rocket salvaged by South Korea that contained parts originating from China, the United States, the former Soviet Union, South Korea, the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The rocket was fired out to sea in December 2012.

A shipment of missile components sent from China and seized by South Korea in 2012 was destined for Syria, the panel said, adding that it had also investigated reports that Myanmar, Eritrea, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia and Iran might have bought North Korean weapons.

The report is part of an annual accounting of North Korea's compliance with layers of UN sanctions imposed in response to Pyongyang's banned nuclear weapon and missile programmes. The panel reports to the UN security council.

"From the incidents analysed in the period under review, the panel has found that [North Korea] makes increasing use of multiple and tiered circumvention techniques," a summary of the 127-page report said.

China, North Korea's main trading partner and diplomatic ally, appeared to have complied with most of the panel's requests for information. Some independent experts and western countries question how far Beijing has gone in implementing sanctions, although the report did not specifically address that issue. Beijing has said it wants the sanctions enforced.

Singapore's foreign ministry said its policy was to fully implement United Nations sanctions, adding that it had been co-operating with the UN experts ever since learning in January that a Singapore-registered company was implicated in the Chon Chon Gang case.

"The government of Singapore immediately launched an investigation of this case," a ministry spokesman said. "We are unable to share any further information at this juncture as our investigations are ongoing."

A North Korean Embassy official, reached by telephone, denied the Singapore mission had engaged in any wrongdoing.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/13/north-korea-using-complex-web-to-evade-arms-sanctions-says-un-report>

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The Japan Times – Tokyo, Japan

Kerry Assures Congress that Tokyo, Seoul Won't Go Nuclear over North

Kyodo

March 14, 2014

WASHINGTON – U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Thursday that the United States has made efforts to ensure that North Korea's nuclear threat does not motivate Japan and South Korea to arm themselves with atomic weapons.

"We are working with Japan and (South Korea) in order to make sure they don't feel so threatened that they move toward nuclearization in self-help," Kerry told a congressional session on the State Department's fiscal 2015 budget outline.

He was briefing members of a subcommittee under the Senate Appropriations Committee on Washington's diplomatic efforts involving Japan, South Korea and China aimed at dealing with North Korea's nuclear threat.

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"We're bolstering our bedrock alliances with South Korea and Japan" and developing deeper partnerships with countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, he said.

Kerry also said he and his Beijing counterparts have held very serious discussions about what the Chinese can do "in order to have a greater impact on the denuclearization process" for North Korea.

Nonproliferation talks

KYODO

Japan will host a foreign ministerial meeting April 11 and 12 in Hiroshima to promote nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida said Friday.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa and Rose Gottemoeller, U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control and international security, are among those who will participate in the meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative.

"Just before a planned visit to Japan by President (Barack) Obama, I think it is beneficial that the United States will take part in the NPT meeting to be held in atomic-bombed Hiroshima," Kishida told reporters, referring to Obama's trip to Japan in late April.

"I hope the meeting will contribute to international debate to achieve a world without nuclear weapons," he said.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/03/14/national/kerry-assures-congress-that-tokyo-seoul-wont-go-nuclear-over-north/>

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The Korea Times – Seoul, South Korea

March 14, 2014

NK Missile Threats to U.S. 'Practical,' Not Theoretical Any More

The U.S. military views ballistic missile threats from North Korea and Iran as having reached a level of "practical" consideration, not just theoretical, a top U.S. missile defense official said Thursday.

"With regard to missile defense, tangible evidence of North Korean and Iranian ambitions confirms that a limited ballistic missile threat to the homeland has matured from a theoretical to a practical consideration," Gen. Charles Jacoby, head of the Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), told a Senate hearing on next year's defense budget.

He said the U.S. is also concerned about the potential for those lethal technologies to proliferate to other states or terrorist groups.

The commander agreed to the need for deploying a new long-range discriminating radar to improve the defense of the U.S. homeland against North Korean missile threats.

At a House hearing, meanwhile, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also underscored the risk from North Korea.

"Our threats can be described as two, two, two and one: two heavyweights, Russia and China; two middle weights, (North) Korea and Iran; two networks, al-Qaida and the transnational criminal network that runs from south to north in this hemisphere; and one domain, cyber," he said at the hearing of the Defense Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2014/03/116_153353.html

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Yonhap News Agency – Seoul, South Korea

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March 14, 2014

N. Korea Threatens to Boast 'Nuclear Deterrence'

SEOUL, March 14 (Yonhap) -- North Korea threatened on Friday to boast its "nuclear deterrence" if the United States continues to make "nuclear threats" against the communist nation, a possible warning of an additional nuclear test or long-range rocket launch.

The so-called nuclear threats from the U.S. have long been the basis for North Korea's development of nuclear weapons.

"If the U.S.'s nuclear threats and blackmail continue, the struggle of our military and people to strengthen our self-defensive nuclear deterrence will continue, and the (U.S.) should bear in mind that additional steps to display that might will also follow," the North's powerful National Defense Commission said in a statement.

The "additional steps" could be a warning for a fourth nuclear test or an additional long-range rocket launch, both of which are banned under relevant U.N. resolutions.

The commission also stressed that the North will not be the first to give up its nuclear weapons program despite the wishes of the U.S.

"(The U.S.) is holding on to some 'patience strategy' with the hopes that we will be the first to make a move and change, but in fact, we are the ones waiting with great patience for someone with a normal and realistic perspective and way of thinking to enter the White House," the statement said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2014/03/14/0200000000AEN20140314008400315.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Mulls Banning US Nuclear Arms Inspections – Source

09 March 2014

MOSCOW, March 9 (RIA Novosti) – Russia's Defense Ministry is considering a ban on US inspections of Russian nuclear weapons under the New START deal over the standoff in Ukraine, a ministry source told RIA Novosti on Saturday.

The ban would be a reaction to the US decision to suspend military cooperation with Russia over Ukraine, said the source, who requested anonymity.

Russia has vehemently opposed Ukraine's pro-Western government that was installed last month following street clashes between police and the opposition led by far-right nationalist groups.

Russia was also accused of backing separatists in the Ukrainian Republic of Crimea – which is planning to secede – and deploying thousands of troops there, though official Moscow has denied sending troops to the pro-Russian region.

The New START, signed in 2010 by US President Barack Obama and his Russian then-counterpart Dmitry Medvedev, envisages curbing nuclear arsenals of both countries by half by 2021.

The treaty's implementation is overseen, in addition to satellite and remote monitoring, by 18 on-site inspections a year.

The United States has not conducted any inspections under the New START since the start of this year, according to the US Department of State's website.

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20140309/188223005/Russia-Mulls-Banning-US-Nuclear-Arms-Inspections--Source.html

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Prague Post – Prague, Czech Republic

Zeman: Proposed US Missile Defense Ineffective

Senator John McCain has suggested reviving the Bush-era radar and missile plan

By Czech News Agency

11 March 2014

Prague, March 11 (ČTK) — Czech President Miloš Zeman considers a possible building of a part of the U.S. missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland ineffective, he told ČTK via his spokesman Jiří Ovčáček today.

He reacted to Monday's suggestion by U.S. Republican Senator John McCain that the US resume the project, originally planned by the George W. Bush administration and scrapped by Barack Obama in 2009, in reaction to the recent Russian invasion of Crimea.

"The president opposed the project [from the beginning], he considered it ineffective, and nothing has changed about his position," Ovčáček told ČTK.

Zeman was inaugurated as Czech president in March 2013.

Speaking on the U.S. television channel Fox News, McCain said Washington should restart the planned construction of missile defense installations in the Czech Republic and Poland in order to calm down Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In today's interview with the Parlamentní listy server, Zeman recalled that lawyers are disputing over whether the recent unseating of Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich was legitimate.

"I recognize that the Ukrainian constitution includes the institution of impeachment, similar to the USA's, and that a two-third majority [of lawmakers] is required for the president to be unseated. This [required majority condition] seems not to be met in this case," Zeman said.

"On the other hand, by leaving his homeland, a politician voluntarily gives up his influence on it. Yanukovich could have left for eastern Ukraine, thus remaining on his home country's territory. The fact that he departed for Russia indicates a certain weakness of his position," Zeman added.

Czech Foreign Minister Lubomír Zaorálek (Social Democrats, ČSSD) said the situation in Crimea is a threat on "an entirely different level" than what the previously planned U.S. radar base in Bohemia was to help avert.

"Such a system would not change the current situation at all. Moreover, our security is not threatened today," Zaoralek told CTK on Monday.

Deputy Prime Minister Pavel Bělobrádek (Christian Democrats, KDU-CSL), on his part, said for the Czech Republic the only possible foreign political path is to be a part of collective defense within NATO.

"If you ask me about the radar base ... the KDU-ČSL supported its construction when the plan was discussed a few years ago," Bělobrádek said.

The United States said the missile defense system, which it planned to build in the Czech Republic and Poland, would help protect Western Europe and particularly the United States from a possible attack with an inter-continental missile launched by a country hostile to the US, such as Iran.

Russia sharply opposed the plan.

<http://www.praguepost.com/eu-news/37704-zeman-proposed-us-missile-defense-ineffective>

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USA TODAY.com

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Ukraine May Have to Go Nuclear, Says Kiev Lawmaker

By Oren Dorell, USA TODAY
March 11, 2014

KIEV, Ukraine — Ukraine may have to arm itself with nuclear weapons if the United States and other world powers refuse to enforce a security pact that obligates them to reverse the Moscow-backed takeover of Crimea, a member of the Ukraine parliament told USA TODAY.

The United States, Great Britain and Russia agreed in a pact "to assure Ukraine's territorial integrity" in return for Ukraine giving up a nuclear arsenal it inherited from the Soviet Union after declaring independence in 1991, said Pavlo Ryzanenko, a member of the Ukrainian parliament.

"We gave up nuclear weapons because of this agreement," said Ryzanenko, a member of the Udar Party headed by Vitali Klitschko, a candidate for president. "Now there's a strong sentiment in Ukraine that we made a big mistake."

His statements come as Russia raised the possibility it may send its troops beyond the Crimean peninsula on the Black Sea into the eastern half of Ukraine.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said lawlessness "now rules in eastern regions of Ukraine as a result of the actions of fighters of the so-called 'right sector' with the full connivance" of Ukraine's authorities.

Ryzanenko and others in Ukraine say the pact it made with the United States under President Bill Clinton was supposed to prevent such Russian invasions.

The pact was made after the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991 and became Russia, leaving the newly independent nation of Ukraine as the world's third largest nuclear weapons power.

The communist dictatorship that was the Soviet Union had based nuclear missiles in republics it held captive along its border with Europe, and Ukraine had thousands. World powers urged Ukraine to give up the arsenal but its leaders balked, expressing fear they needed the weapons to deter Russia from trying to reverse Ukraine's independence.

To reassure the Ukrainians, the United States and leaders of the United Kingdom and Russia signed in 1994 the "Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances" in which the signatories promised that none of them would threaten or use force to alter the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine.

They specifically pledged not to militarily occupy Ukraine. Although the pact was made binding according to international law, it said nothing that requires a nation to act against another that invades Ukraine.

The memorandum requires only that the signatories would "consult in the event a situation arises which raises a question concerning these commitments." Ukraine gave up thousands of nuclear warheads in return for the promise.

There is little doubt that Russia has in fact placed its military forces in Ukraine's province of Crimea. Russia's foreign minister has said its troops are there to protect Russian lives and interests.

And Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the commitments in the agreement are not relevant to Crimea because a "coup" in Kiev has created "a new state with which we have signed no binding agreements."

The U.S. and U.K. have said that the agreement remains binding and that they expect it to be treated "with utmost seriousness, and expect Russia to, as well."

President Obama has talked to Putin over the phone and said there is no danger to Russians in Ukraine and that they should agree to let international forces enter Crimea so differences can be resolved peacefully, according to the White House.



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But Putin insisted to Obama that ethnic Russians in Crimea needed protection and reiterated that the government in Kiev is illegal because the parliament ousted pro-Moscow President Viktor Yanukovich.

"Everyone had this sentiment that for good or bad the United States would be the world police" and make sure that international order is maintained, Ryzanenko said of the Budapest pact.

"Now that function is being abandoned by President Obama and because of that Russia invaded Crimea," he said.

"In the future, no matter how the situation is resolved in Crimea, we need a much stronger Ukraine," he said. "If you have nuclear weapons people don't invade you."

The White House and U.S. State Department did not respond to e-mails requesting comment.

Ryzanenko spoke a day after returning from a visit to the Crimea, where armed Crimeans under orders from Russian commanders blocked him from visiting a Ukrainian border post, he said.

Russian military units have ringed Crimea's borders to block the Ukrainian military from exerting control on the territory, and Ukraine's army cannot defeat Russia's, he said.

Obama had warned Putin of "costs" should he persist in Crimea but the main action against Moscow so far has been a ban on travel to the United States of unnamed persons. Europe and the United States said they are considering economic sanctions against Russia but none have been imposed.

Meanwhile, "all the time Russia is moving more and more troops into Crimea," Ryzanenko said. "Only force will influence (Putin's) decision."

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/03/10/ukraine-nuclear/6250815/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russian Military to Deploy Security Bots at Missile Bases

12 March 2014

MOSCOW, March 12 (RIA Novosti) – Russia is planning to deploy mobile security robots in 2014 to protect its strategic missile facilities, the Defense Ministry said Wednesday.

"In March, the Russian Strategic Missile Forces [RVSN] began testing mobile robotic systems being developed to protect key RVSN installations," spokesman Maj. Dmitry Andreyev said.

Andreyev said the security bots will be deployed at five ballistic missile launch sites around Russia as part of an upgrade to the existing automated security systems.

The official said the robots will carry out reconnaissance and patrol missions, detect and destroy stationary or moving targets and provide fire support for security personnel at the guarded facilities.

Mobile robotic platforms play an increasingly important role in military and security applications, helping personnel to meet challenges posed by the growing threat of terrorist attacks or "guerilla warfare."

<http://en.ria.ru/russia/20140313/188363867/Russian-Military-to-Deploy-Security-Bots-at-Missile-Bases.html>

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The London Daily Telegraph – London, U.K.

Scrapping Trident after Independence 'Would Harm Scotland's Nato Membership'

Sir David Omand, the former GCHQ director, tells The Telegraph the SNP's nuclear stance would 'appal' allies and cast a 'very dark shadow'

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By Ben Riley-Smith, Scottish Political Reporter
13 March 2014

Scrapping Trident would throw an independent Scotland's Nato membership into jeopardy and lead to diplomatic alienation, Sir David Omand has warned.

America would be "hostile" and France "appalled" if the SNP made good its promise to remove the nuclear weapons from Scotland within the next parliament, he warned.

Allies could refuse to share vital intelligence or cooperate with the country's burgeoning intelligence service because of their anger at the plans, creating the "worst possible start" after independence.

Removing Trident in such a timescale would also be a "very big ask" and cost billions of pounds that are unaccounted for in Alex Salmond's blueprint for separation, the former GCHQ director said.

The SNP's White Paper calls Trident "an affront to basic decency with its indiscriminate and inhumane destructive power", adding that it would be removed within the first term of the Scottish Parliament following independence.

Sir David said: "The attitude of the United States to such an anti-nuclear stance could be expected to be hostile. That's going to bleed across into a wider security relationship; it's going to affect the application for Nato membership.

"France will be appalled at part of the United Kingdom adopting that policy and attempting to promote that policy, including in Nato. So there will be no friends there ... It would get an independent Scotland off to the worse possible start."

He added: "I find it hard not to conclude that that would cast a very dark shadow over all the negotiations on intelligence and security and perhaps more widely on other issues. I can't imagine that the United States would be very happy about a new member joining Nato with such a profound anti-nuclear stance."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/10694054/Scrapping-Trident-after-independence-would-harm-Scotlands-Nato-membership.html>

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Press TV – Tehran, Iran

Iran Resolved to Achieve Final Nuclear Deal: Zarif

Sunday, March 9, 2014

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has reaffirmed Tehran's determination to reach a final agreement with the six world powers over its nuclear energy program provided that the Iranian nation's rights are recognized.

"Iran is determined to reach an agreement. We have shown good faith. We have shown political will and as far as verification of our side of the bargain is concerned, we have done our side," Zarif said at a Sunday press conference with European Union's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, in Tehran.

"It is up to the other side, first, to fulfill its commitments under the Geneva agreement with regard to the first steps, and also come to the negotiating table with a desire, decision and commitment to reach a mutually acceptable agreement," Zarif said.

Iran and the six world powers – the United States, China, Russia, France, Britain and Germany – clinched an interim nuclear deal in Geneva, Switzerland, on November 24, 2013. The deal took effect on January 20.

"I believe if that is the case, we can do it even within the five months or four months that is left of the first phase and even shorter. But that requires a recognition that Iran will only accept a solution that is respectful, that respects the rights of the Iranian people," he added.

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Experts from Iran and the six other countries, who ended their latest round of talks on Friday in Vienna, are working to hammer out a comprehensive deal following the Geneva accord.

The next round of the high-level talks between Iran and the six countries is to be held in Vienna on March 17.

"Iran finds it in its own interest to make sure that there are no ambiguities about Iran's intentions, because we have no intention to seek nuclear weapons," Zarif pointed out.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/03/09/353936/iran-resolved-to-reach-ndeal-zarif/>

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Al Jazeera – Dubai, U.A.E.

Ashton Says No Guarantee of Iran Nuclear Deal

EU foreign policy chief says agreeing on a final agreement with Tehran is still "difficult and challenging".
09 March 2014

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton has said there is "no guarantee" that talks with Iran on its disputed nuclear programme will lead to a comprehensive final agreement.

Ashton made the comments on Sunday during her first trip to the Islamic Republic.

"This interim agreement is really important but not as important as a comprehensive agreement [which is] ... difficult, challenging, and there is no guarantee that we will succeed," Ashton told a joint news conference in Tehran, which was also attended by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Zarif said Iran will only accept a deal that respects its "rights," a reference to uranium enrichment on its soil.

Iran clinched the interim deal in November with the so-called P5+1 - Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States and Germany - under which it agreed to curb its nuclear activities in exchange for sanctions relief.

Negotiators are trying to reach a final accord in the coming months.

Western nations and Israel have long suspected Iran is covertly pursuing a nuclear weapons capability alongside its civilian programme, charges denied by Tehran.

Ashton arrived in Tehran on Saturday night to meet with Iranian leaders, including President Hassan Rouhani.

Iranian media said the visit signalled the normalisation of Iran's relations with Europe after eight years of tension under Rouhani's predecessor, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Experts of all parties have already met to prepare the way for the next high-level talks in Vienna, Austria, on March 17.

Source: Agencies

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/03/ashton-says-no-guarantee-iran-nuclear-deal-20143993555507360.html>

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Wall Street Journal
March 10, 2014

Israel, Arab States Attended Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament

By Jay Solomon

Israel and Arab states held their third round of exploratory talks in the Swiss resort of Glion last month that are focused on establishing a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, according to a participant.

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The discussions, largely kept from the public eye, are being held under the auspices of the United Nations and led by a Finnish diplomat, Jaakko Laajava. The dialogue was running in parallel to the negotiations in Vienna between Iran and global powers that are aimed at scaling back Tehran's nuclear program.

The participant in the talks, and diplomats briefed on them, downplayed the potential for any major breakthroughs in the near term. But they said the sustained presence of midranked Israeli and Arab diplomats discussing the nuclear issue is encouraging.

The first round of talks last October was also held in Glion, a mountain retreat overlooking Lake Geneva. The U.N. empowered Mr. Laajava to try and stage a formal conference on the establishment of a nuclear-free Mideast. The U.N.'s Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review Conference mandated it in 2010.

"It's definitely been useful," said a Mideast diplomat who took part in the most recent round in February.

Israel has agreed to take part in the exploratory talks despite concerns the Jewish state will be singled out by Arab government. Israel is believed to have the only nuclear-weapons arsenal in the Mideast, but its government refuses to confirm or deny them.

Iran sent a low-level diplomat to the first round in Glion, but hasn't attended the last two sessions, according to diplomats. The Iranian official told participants he was only in attendance to "observe" the discussions.

U.N. officials hope progress in the negotiations to scale back Tehran's nuclear program can have wider repercussions in the region. Israel and most Arab governments are concerned Tehran is developing nuclear weapons that could set off a larger arms race in the region. Iran says its nuclear program is solely for civilian purposes.

Israel and the U.S. both say they support the formal establishment of a nuclear-weapons free zone in the Mideast. But both countries said such declaration was unlikely until Israel forges peace agreements with the Palestinians and its other Arab neighbors, Lebanon and Syria.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2014/03/10/israel-arab-states-attended-meeting-on-nuclear-disarmament/>

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Press TV – Tehran, Iran

Iran, Russia Reach Initial Deal on 2 More N-Plants

Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Iran and Russia have reached a preliminary agreement to build at least two more nuclear power plants in the Iranian port city of Bushehr in south of the country.

The spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), Behrouz Kamalvandi, said Wednesday that the two sides reached the agreement after negotiations between AEOI officials and Nikolai Spassky, Russia's Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation, in Tehran.

He said that the agreement is part of a 1992 deal between the two countries on further nuclear cooperation.

Under the agreement, the new facilities will be built next to the first unit of the Bushehr nuclear plant and each will have a capacity to produce at least 1,000 megawatts of electricity, Kamalvandi said, adding that the agreement also includes the construction of two desalination units.

He said that the agreement needs to be signed by AEOI Head Ali Akbar Salehi and Rosatom's Director General Sergei Kiriyenko.

According to Kamalvandi, the two sides will also soon discuss technical and commercial terms of the agreement.

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After signing a deal on the construction of nuclear plants in 1992, Tehran and Moscow reached an agreement in 1995 to complete Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant, but the project was delayed several times due to a number of technical and financial problems.

The plant became officially operational and was connected to Iran's national grid in September 2011, generating electricity at 40-percent capacity.

The 1,000-megawatt plant, which is operating under the full supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), reached its maximum power generation capacity in August 2012.

In September 2013, Iran officially took over from Russia the first unit of its first 1,000-megawatt nuclear power plant for two years.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2014/03/12/354365/iran-russia-agree-on-2-more-nplants/>

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FARS News Agency – Tehran, Iran
Wednesday, March 12, 2014

Iran Rejects Discussing Defensive Capabilities in Talks with World Powers

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran once again underlined that it would never accept to discuss its defensive capabilities, specially its missile program, in nuclear talks with the world powers.

"Issues related to our missile program and defensive capabilities lie outside the negotiations and we may never accept to discuss this issue," Deputy Foreign Minister for European and American Affairs Majid Takht Ravanchi, who is also a senior member of the Iranian team of negotiators in the talks with the sextet, told reporters in Tehran on Wednesday.

In relevant remarks in February, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif dismissed media reports that Tehran and the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) would discuss Iran's missile program in their talks in Vienna, and said the country's nuclear program has no military dimensions.

"Iran's nuclear program is not related to the military issues and our military program is not related to the current negotiations," Zarif told reporters.

His remarks came after US Undersecretary of State Wendy Sherman promised that Iran's ballistic missile work would be addressed at a later time in a final agreement. "We see this as a first step," she said, addressing a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) on the nuclear deal with Iran. "We don't consider the gaps that exist loopholes because this is not a final agreement. This is a first step."

Iran says the missiles are part of its defense establishment and beyond the limits of nuclear talks.

Mid February, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) successfully test-fired two domestically made ballistic missiles, one was a laser-guided air-to-surface and surface-to-surface missile, but the second one was much more important as it can carry a Multiple Reentry Vehicle (MRV) payload.

While the US officials said they were surprised by the tests, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani praised the tests. And members of his nuclear negotiating team who traveled to Vienna insisted the negotiations would not focus on the issue of Tehran's ballistic missile capabilities.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13921221000678>

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The Jerusalem Post – Jerusalem, Israel

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'The Moment Iran Goes Nuclear, the Saudis Will Buy the Bomb from Pakistan'

Director of Political-Military Affairs for the Defense Ministry, Amos Gilad, warns Iran could set off nuclear arms race in Arab world.

By YAAKOV LAPPIN

12 March 2014

As soon as Iran gets a nuclear bomb, Egypt will develop its own nuclear weapon, and Saudi Arabia will purchase one from Pakistan, Maj.-Gen. (res.) Amos Gilad, director of political-military affairs at the Defense Ministry, warned on Tuesday.

Speaking at a conference held by the Institute for Policy and Strategy, at IDC Herzliya, Gilad said, "The Arabs will not tolerate the Persians having the bomb. From the moment the Iranians get the bomb, the Egyptians have the resources, capability and know-how to achieve nuclear capabilities, and the Saudis will run to buy the bomb from the Pakistanis with a 'member's discount.'"

Iran is trying to get nuclear weapons, and won't give up on this goal in talks with the powers, Gilad cautioned.

The Islamic Republic will not forfeit "any essential component in its quest for nuclear capabilities. This is true even if it agrees to reduce uranium enrichment for tactical needs, and maintaining the stability of the regime there. I'm disturbed that they [the international community] are going for an interim agreement mechanism. After six months, there will be another six months, and then there will be cracks in the wall of sanctions," he added.

Israel has exercised a great deal of deterrent power, Gilad stated.

"The sense among our rivals is that we can deal with every aggregate of strategic threats," he said.

The good news in the region, Gilad said, is that in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood had been beaten back by Field Marshal Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, meaning that a ring of Islamist powers has not formed around Israel.

The Egyptians have managed to block "between 90 to 95 percent of [smuggling] tunnels to Gaza, and are fighting a determined war against al-Qaida in Sinai," Gilad said.

"In Turkey, [Prime Minister Recep Tayyip] Erdogan has been substantially weakened, and returned to his natural dimensions. The stability of the Hashemite Kingdom in Jordan is an optimistic point of light," Gilad observed.

Turning his sights to Syria, Gilad said, "there is no military threat to the north. The Russians, the Iranians and Hezbollah allow the Assad regime to survive with artificial life-support. There is not a Syrian state, but there is a regime. And there's a difficult humanitarian problem. I'd like to officially declare Syria dead, but the date of the funeral is not yet known."

<http://www.jpost.com/Defense/Amos-Gilad-The-moment-Iran-goes-nuclear-the-Saudis-will-buy-the-bomb-from-Pakistan-345102>

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Helsinki Times – Helsinki, Finland

US Adopts Hard Line on Iranian Missiles

By Johannes Hautaviita

March 13, 2014

Negotiations aimed at reaching a permanent settlement of the nuclear dispute between Iran and the West continued last week in Vienna, Austria. The talks build on the foundation of the interim agreement signed last November. The following rounds of talks will commence next week.



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Although last week's talks were hailed by both sides as productive, serious disagreements still have to be overcome before a final agreement can be reached. One such new issue is Iran's ballistic missile program. On 19 February, White House spokesperson Jay Carney asserted that the Iranians "have to deal with matters related to their ballistic missile program" in the upcoming nuclear talks. Washington views this missile program as an integral part of Iran's nuclear "threat".

Three days later in a press-conference, Iran's foreign minister Mohammad Javad Zarif countered by saying, "[n]othing except Iran's nuclear activities will be discussed in the talks with the six powers and we have agreed on it." Iran's deputy foreign minister Abbas Araghchi emphasised that the issue of missiles is "definitely among our red lines in any talks." Russia has also opposed the inclusion of Iran's missile program in the nuclear talks.

From Iran's point of view, its missile program is a central component of its defensive security strategy. According to the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Iran's "military strategy is designed to defend against external threats, particularly from the US and Israel. Its principles of military strategy include deterrence, asymmetrical retaliation and attrition warfare. Iran can conduct limited offensive operations with its strategic ballistic missile program and naval forces."

Uzi Rubin, former head of Israel's Missile Defense Organization and fellow at the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University is considered among the leading analysts on missile systems in the Middle East. His analysis on Iran's missile strategy is worth quoting at length.

Rubin questions the claim that the Iranian missile program is designed to deliver a nuclear warhead. "From a western point of view, long range ballistic missiles make sense only when they carry a nuclear weapon. This is a legacy of Cold War thinking. The Iranians don't see it that way. Missiles are for them what both tactical and strategic air power are for the West." According to Rubin, the "Iranians believe in conventional missiles", which comprise their "main striking power".

Echoing the analysis of US intelligence, Rubin asserts that Iran will use its missiles if attacked and says their main purpose is "to deter any U.S. or Israeli attack". This analysis is also supported by Flynt Leverett and Hillary Mann Leverett, both former high-level foreign policy analysts at the US National Security Council and State Department. They assert that in order to "deter American or Israeli military action" Iran has "developed increasingly robust capabilities for asymmetric defense and deterrence". Since the 1990s, Iran has moved towards missile-based deterrence.

The threats against Iran are not just theoretical nit-picking. According to the Leverett's, Israel consolidated a "near-absolute freedom of military initiative" in the Middle East after the end of the cold war enabling it "not just to 'preempt' perceived threats but to 'prevent' them from arising in the first place—by striking first, with overwhelming force, whenever and wherever it deemed necessary."

In January, US Secretary of State John Kerry reiterated that the US is ready to use of force against Iran if diplomacy fails. Referring to the interim agreement, he stated: "We took the initiative and led the effort to try to figure out if, before we go to war, there actually might be a peaceful solution." In contrast to the widespread condemnation of Russia's illegal threats and actions against Ukraine, illegal and routine US and Israeli threats and actions against Iran are a non-issue in Western public discourse.

<http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/world-int/world-news/international-news/9771-us-adopts-hard-line-on-iranian-missiles.html>

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The Times of India – New Delhi, India

Post-Accident, Lens on Nuclear Submarine Projects

By Rajat Pandit, Tamil News Network (TNN)

March 10, 2014

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NEW DELHI: Questions till now were being raised on the lack of proper quality controls, safety audits, accountability and monitoring during construction and refit of conventional warships and submarines after a series of accidents over the last several months. But now, even the construction of nuclear "platforms" is under the scanner.

Both the defence ministry and DRDO downplayed Saturday's accident at the secretive and well-guarded Ship Building Centre (SBC) at Visakhapatnam, where India's first three nuclear submarines are being built. "The accident is in no way related to any nuclear-related activity. The submarines are safe and the accident does not adversely affect the project," the defence ministry said on Sunday.

That may well be the case but even minor accidents connected to the nuclear arena can raise the spectre of nightmarish scenarios. "The level of quality checks and technical oversight has to be much, much higher and stringent for nuclear platforms. A proper inquiry and safety audit is needed in the matter," said an officer.

A civilian worker of Larsen & Toubro was killed and another two injured when the hatch of a "tank" to be installed in INS Aridhaman — the follow-on submarine to the first one, INS Arihant — blew off during its "hydro-pressure testing" in building number 5 of the SBC on Saturday. "It would have been catastrophic if it had happened inside the submarine," said the officer.

The accident comes at a time when the "hull and full form" of INS Aridhaman, designated 'S-3' at present, is ready for "launch" into water. It will also be powered by a miniature 83 mw pressurized light-water reactor like the 6,000-tonne INS Arihant (S-2), whose enriched uranium-fuelled reactor went "critical" on August 10 last year.

The first PWR reactor designed for indigenous nuclear submarines, dubbed S-1, is located at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Kalpakkam as a prototype. A third submarine called S-4 is also being built under the secret advanced technology vessel (ATV) project underway with an initial sanction of around Rs 30,000 crore at the SBC.

The long delay in the sea-acceptance trials of INS Arihant, which was "launched" in July 2009, has itself raised eyebrows. The explanation is that since the submarine's reactor went critical last August, its self-sustained power was being gradually raised by 5 per cent to 10 per cent at a time in a deliberate and calibrated manner.

"The pipelines are extensively pressure-tested every time ... the leaks detected in the secondary and tertiary systems of the power plant are then rectified. INS Arihant will head for sea trials, which will take around 18 months and include firing of its K-15 ballistic missiles (750km range), only after its reactor achieves 100 per cent power," said another officer.

INS Arihant's fully operational status is critical to completing India's long-standing quest for a nuclear weapons triad - the capability to fire nukes from land, air and underwater. But it will become a reality only sometime next year. Till then, India will have to make do with the land-based Agni missiles and fighters jury-rigged to carry nuclear weapons for its deterrence posture.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Post-accident-lens-on-nuclear-submarine-projects/articleshow/31758017.cms>

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Bloomberg View.com
OPINION/Editorial

Yes to Nukes. No to Silos.

By The Editors
March 9, 2014

Intercontinental ballistic missiles armed with nuclear warheads are the most fearsome weapons devised by man -- and today among the least useful. In his review of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, prompted by personnel problems, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel shouldn't be afraid to step back and acknowledge the obvious: Land-based missiles are obsolete.

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ICBMs embody the Cold War logic of “mutually assured destruction.” The sense that this doctrine is no longer relevant to modern defense has apparently infected the Air Force units that operate the missiles. Reports of drug use, drunkenness and cheating on proficiency tests led Hagel to call for the review. This wasn't the first such scandal. The underlying problem is that ICBMs have become a weapon without a purpose.

At a time of budget stringency, the Pentagon expects to spend about \$1 trillion over the next 30 years on modernizing its aging nuclear "triad" of land-based missiles and nuclear-armed bombers and submarines. Almost all of these weapons are nearing the end of their planned operational lives. It's a good moment to think afresh about cost-effectiveness in nuclear deterrence.

The Air Force badly wants a fleet of new long-range bombers costing more than \$100 billion to replace its B-52s and B-2s. Strategic bombers have the advantage of being recallable: They can be launched to signal U.S. resolve or intent in a crisis, and ordered home once the message is received. They are also dual-use platforms, capable of carrying nuclear or conventional bombs and missiles.

The 14 Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarines are also reaching the end of their anticipated service. The Navy wants new ones at a cost of more than \$6 billion apiece. Submarines are the least vulnerable part of the triad, able to patrol the world's oceans undetected and respond with a devastating counterattack even if U.S. bomber and ICBM forces were destroyed. But they're expensive to build and operate.

Then there's the Air Force's aging force of 450 Minuteman III ICBMs. Because they sit in fixed silos, they're individually vulnerable. Their sheer numbers and dispersal make them a credible deterrent, but they can't be used flexibly: It's Armageddon or nothing. Under their current life extension the Minutemen IIIs will last to about 2030, and the Air Force has no plan yet for a replacement.

There's no need to replace them. This portion of the triad can be dispensed with. The land-based missiles are the least cost-effective, and their drawbacks will only loom larger as arms-control efforts move forward. Under the New START agreement, the U.S. and Russia are limited to 1,550 deployed warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers, and President Barack Obama has already said he's willing to reduce nuclear forces by an additional third (to roughly 1,000 to 1,100 deployed warheads). At lower numbers of warheads and launchers, the relative vulnerability and inflexibility of ICBMs matter more.

Spending on bombers and submarines makes better sense than spending on ICBMs, but savings that don't compromise security are possible there, too. Hagel's review should propose some.

Obama rightly says he wants to decrease U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons. Achieving that goal will require abandoning some of the orthodoxies of mutually assured destruction. Chief among these is the idea that nuclear deterrence requires maintaining enough weapons to “make the rubble bounce” on doomsday. That's a great way to waste money, but has nothing to do with effective defense.

<http://www.bloombergvew.com/articles/2014-03-09/yes-to-nukes-no-to-silos>

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The Brookings Institution – Washington, D.C.

OPINION/The National Interest

Nukes, Dollars and Sense

By Steven Pifer

March 10, 2014

Two recent studies make clear that maintaining and recapitalizing U.S. strategic nuclear forces will be expensive, at a time when fiscal realities will undoubtedly continue to constrain the defense budget. Washington thus should consider how, in an era of limited defense dollars, it might adjust its strategic force structure.

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Nuclear forces cost serious money. A Congressional Budget Office report issued in December projected the cost of U.S. nuclear forces over the next ten years at \$355 billion. A January study by the Center for Non-Proliferation Studies at Monterey put the cost of the strategic triad over the next 30 years at a cool trillion dollars.

These two reports suggest an average cost of \$33-35 billion per year for U.S. strategic forces. In one sense, that is not a lot of money. Excluding the overseas contingency account (Afghanistan), the Department of Defense budget for FY 2014 is \$520 billion. Strategic forces thus account for just about 6.5 percent of the total budget.

But only in Washington would one consider \$35 billion not a lot of money. The U.S. military has other needs, and buying new strategic submarines, missiles and bombers has an opportunity cost: the new conventional arms—such as the F-35 and Virginia-class attack submarine—that the military is far more likely to use than nuclear weapons.

Given fiscal realities, it would be prudent to anticipate that the nuclear part of the budget will come under pressure in future years. While some operations and support costs might be saved in the near term, the real potential savings come in the out years, when steps must be taken to recapitalize each of the three legs of the strategic triad: ballistic missile submarines, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and heavy bombers.

The Defense Department will almost certainly find that it must cut something. There is room to do so.

Last summer, President Obama proposed to reduce the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) limit of 1,550 deployed strategic warheads by one-third, i.e., to about 1,000. The Joint Chiefs of Staff validated that level, so it presumably in their view suffices to meet the requirements of deterrence and war plans.

Administration officials have said privately that the United States would be prepared to make commensurate reductions in the New START limits of 700 deployed strategic delivery vehicles (missiles and bombers). A one-third cut would bring that number down to about 500.

If tight budgets require that the United States reduce its strategic forces, what options might it consider?

First, take ballistic missile submarines. The Ohio-class submarines will begin to retire at the end of the 2020s. There is no question that there will be a replacement submarine, as the sea-based leg of the triad has long been considered the most survivable. The Pentagon plans to keep over 60 percent of its allowed deployed strategic warheads on submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).

The U.S. Navy wants to replace its 14 Ohio-class submarines with 12 new submarines. (The new submarine's planned reactor will not require refueling, a time-consuming process, so 12 new submarines can do the work of 14 Ohios.) This suggests, however, that the Navy plans to maintain roughly the same deterrent patrol tempo for the next 50 years as it has for the past 15, i.e., to keep five to seven submarines at sea at any one time.

The primary reason for keeping a significant number of submarines at sea is to avoid a surprise Russian "bolt from the blue" attack that could destroy submarines in port, along with bombers at their air bases and ICBMs in silos. But, even with the tensions with Moscow over Ukraine, how likely is a nuclear bolt from the blue?

Were the Navy to reduce its patrol tempo, e.g., to keep three to four submarines at sea at day-to-day readiness levels, it could maintain that pattern with fewer overall boats. If one assumes that a period of crisis would precede a situation in which the use of large numbers of strategic nuclear weapons might be contemplated, there would be time to generate the force and put additional submarines to sea.

The potential savings are significant. Each new submarine is expected to cost \$6-7 billion, with an additional \$19-20 billion of operating costs over its lifetime. That means a potential savings of \$75-80 billion if the planned buy of new ballistic missile submarines was reduced from 12 to nine. That's serious money.

In the near-term, early retirement of two to three Ohio-class submarines would save operations and support costs. Those costs would not be insignificant, but they would pale in comparison to the savings if the new submarine buy were cut.

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Second, the U.S. Air Force under New START plans to maintain 400-420 deployed Minuteman III ICBMs (down from the current 450), each armed with a single warhead. When most analysts raise the possibility of moving from a strategic triad to a dyad, they suggest dropping the ICBM leg. Stories about Minuteman launch officers cheating on qualification tests do not strengthen the case for keeping ICBMs.

But having even just 200-300 silo-based ICBMs scattered across the plains greatly complicates an attacker's plans by dramatically increasing the number of strategic force targets. ICBMs, moreover, are by far the cheapest leg of the triad to sustain.

A recent Rand report, "The Future of the U.S. Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Force," offered important insights. It noted that, given the New START limits on Russian strategic forces and the decision to deploy Minuteman III ICBMs with single warheads, there is no need to look at more exotic options, such as mobility, in the analysis of alternatives for the future ICBM.

The Rand report further noted that the cheapest ICBM option is simply to refurbish and keep the Minuteman IIIs in silos. Rand placed the cost at \$1.6-2.3 billion per year—at least 30 percent cheaper than building a Minuteman IV and much less expensive than building and deploying a new mobile ICBM.

The limiting factor is the number of Minuteman III missiles. Rand calculated that the U.S. Air Force could deploy 420 Minuteman IIIs until 2030, after which it would have to draw down three to four missiles per year in order to have ICBMs for reliability tests. If the number of deployed Minuteman IIIs were reduced to 300, which would still leave the United States with a larger ICBM force than Russia, the Air Force would have enough missiles for reliability tests until at least 2060.

The third leg of the triad comprises the bomber force. Under New START, the U.S. Air Force plans to maintain 40 to 60 B-2 and B-52 bombers in the strategic nuclear role, in addition to B-1 and B-52 aircraft that have conventional missions only. The Defense Department would like to purchase 80-100 penetrating strategic bombers, estimated to cost \$550 million per aircraft...and the cost is rising.

Bombers offer two big advantages compared to strategic ballistic missiles. First, they can be visibly alerted and deployed in a crisis for political signaling, as the B-2 and B-52 flights over South Korea demonstrated last year. Second, bombers provide a hedge, an insurance policy, against a missile defense development by another country that could threaten to negate a significant portion of the U.S. ICBM and SLBM force.

Having insurance is a good idea, but how much insurance one carries depends on the likelihood one will need it and the cost. Thirty years after Ronald Reagan launched the Strategic Defense Initiative, it has become clear that intercepting large numbers of strategic ballistic missile warheads is really, really hard. While it may make sense to carry some insurance against the risk of a missile defense advance, B-2 and B-52 bombers—which will remain in the force until 2040—provide that for the foreseeable future.

This suggests that, if the Defense Department wants a new penetrating bomber, it should make that decision based primarily on conventional mission requirements. As far as the nuclear mission is concerned, the decision could be pushed into the future.

Taken together, these ideas could save serious money and still leave the United States with a robust, survivable and agile strategic nuclear force. Reducing the number of strategic delivery vehicles to 500 would be consistent with President Obama's proposal to reduce the New START deployed strategic warhead limit by one-third.

Should the United States decide to maintain New START warhead levels given concern about Russia's future course and intentions, 500 deployed strategic delivery vehicles could carry 1,500 strategic warheads—and more if the U.S. Air Force decided to put multiple warheads back on Minuteman III ICBMs.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine will undoubtedly and understandably cause some to question the wisdom of considering any strategic nuclear force cuts. But the Defense Department will still have to contend with fiscal realities and tight budgets. Decisions about force needs must consider the longer term, not just the crisis of the moment, and must weigh the opportunity costs.

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Consider how Washington has responded militarily to Russia's seizure of Crimea. It ordered the guided missile destroyer Truxton to proceed into the Black Sea for scheduled exercises with Bulgaria and Romania, deployed an additional six F-15 fighters to Lithuania to back up the four already there to provide air policing for the Baltic states, and sent an F-16 squadron to Poland.

As far as anyone can tell, U.S. strategic nuclear forces remained at normal readiness levels.

This article originally appeared in The National Interest

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<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2014/03/10-nuclear-dollars-sense-strategic-forces-pifer>

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Federation of American Scientist (FAS).com

OPINION/FAS Strategic Security Blog

NATO Nuclear Weapons Security Costs Expected to Double

By Hans M. Kristensen

March 11, 2014

The cost of securing U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons deployed in Europe is expected to nearly double to meet increased U.S. security standards, according to the Pentagon's FY2015 budget request.

According to the Department of Defense NATO Security Investment Program, NATO has invested over \$80 Million since 2000 to secure nuclear weapons storage sites in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey.

But according to the Department of Defense budget request, new U.S. security standards will require another \$154 million to further beef up security at six bases in the five countries.

After a US Air Force Blue Ribbon Review in 2008 discovered that "most" U.S. nuclear weapons sites in Europe did not meet U.S. security requirements, the Dutch government denied there were security problems.

Yet more than \$63 million of the over \$80 million spent on improving security since 2000 were spent in 2011-2012 – apparently in response to the Blue Ribbon Review findings and other issues.

The additional \$154 million suggests that the upgrades in 2011-2012 did not fix all the security issues at the European nuclear bases.

The budget document – which also comes close to officially confirming the deployment of nuclear weapons in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey – states:

"NATO funds infrastructure required to store special weapons within secure sites and facilities. Since 2000, NATO has invested over \$80 million in infrastructure improvements in storage sites in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey. Another \$154 million will be invested in these sites for security improvements to meet with stringent new U.S. standards."

In addition to the growing security costs, the United States spends approximately \$100 million per year to deploy 184 nuclear B61 bombs in the five NATO countries. And it plans to spend an additional \$10 billion on modernizing the B61 bombs and hundreds of millions on integrating the weapons on the new F-35A Lightning fighter-bomber.

No doubt the United States and NATO have more urgent defense needs to spend that money on than non-strategic nuclear weapons.

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<http://blogs.fas.org/security/2014/03/nato-nuclear-costs/>

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The Diplomat – Tokyo, Japan

OPINION/Article

Responding to Russia's Nuclear Inspections Ban

If Moscow makes good on its threat to ban nuclear inspections, the US should respond with a nuclear arms buildup.

By Zachary Keck for *The Diplomat*

March 12, 2014

Over the weekend Russia threatened to halt U.S. nuclear inspections over America's decision to stop military cooperation with Moscow because of its invasion of Crimea.

The U.S. and Russia are allowed 18 annual on-the-ground inspections of each other's nuclear arsenals under the terms of the New START arms control agreement the two sides signed in 2010. It's not clear if Russia's statements about halting the nuclear inspections are genuine or a bluff; over the weekend the Deputy National Security Adviser Tony Blinken said that the U.S. had not received any official communications from Moscow on the subject.

However, as Blinken also noted, such a development would be very serious. The on-the-ground nuclear inspections were one of the key provisions of the New START agreement particularly from the vantage point of the United States. Before New START was signed, mutual inspections have been halted for a number of years and resuming these inspections was a key consideration for the Obama administration in negotiating the New START treaty.

The time to plan for a response should Russia make good on its threat is now. Fortunately, there is a readily available option for the U.S. to take if Russia halts the nuclear inspections, which would force Moscow to restart the nuclear inspections or pay an exorbitant cost for having suspended them.

Given the importance the U.S. placed on nuclear inspections in the New START treaty, there should be zero doubt that Russia banning them would mean it has abrogated the New START treaty. As such, the U.S. would be free to pursue policies proscribed to it under the arms control treaty. The U.S. should therefore respond to Russia banning the nuclear inspections by announcing a huge quantitative buildup of its nuclear arsenal that will only be stopped by Russia reinstating nuclear arms inspections.

The logic behind such a move is two-fold. First, Moscow simply cannot afford to build and maintain as large of a nuclear arsenal as the United States. Indeed, as critics of the New START treaty were fond of pointing out, the New START treaty simply pledged that the U.S. would reduce the size of its arsenal to the level of nuclear warheads Russia could afford.

Second, Russia takes great pride in the fact that it has maintained nuclear parity with the United States. In truth, this nuclear parity is a façade. As already noted, the numerical parity in the size of the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals has only been maintained because the U.S. has voluntarily agreed to reduce its arsenal to the levels that Moscow can afford.

Moreover, in actual terms the U.S. nuclear force is greatly superior to Russia's since America has made great qualitative improvements to its arsenal since the end of the Cold War while Moscow's has rapidly deteriorated. Indeed, just a few short years ago reasonable scholars could maintain that: "Today, for the first time in almost 50 years, the United States stands on the verge of attaining nuclear primacy. It will probably soon be possible for the United States to destroy the long-range nuclear arsenals of Russia or China with a first strike."



Although patently false, the notion that Russia is America's nuclear equal is a useful façade for Vladimir Putin and is especially important for the more nationalistic members of the Russian elite. This is the same group of people that Putin is likely trying to court by annexing Crimea and banning nuclear inspections with the U.S.

Thus, by responding to the ban on nuclear inspections by proposing a buildup of its nuclear forces, the U.S. would be forcing Putin to make a stark choice. In the first instance, he could reinstate nuclear inspections at which point the U.S. would call off its nuclear arms buildup. This would be the preferred option and the smartest one the Russian leader could make.

On the other hand, Putin could remain defiant by pledging to match the U.S. nuclear arms buildup. This would be unfortunate from the standpoint of President Obama's quest to abolish nuclear weapons. However, this quest is already stalling if not already dead.

Moreover, Putin's quest to maintain nuclear parity in the face of a U.S. nuclear arms buildup would have other positive consequences. For example, it would greatly sap funds Putin intends to use to modernize Russia's conventional forces, which are much more deployable as an instrument of Russian power. Ultimately, Putin's efforts to maintain nuclear parity would exacerbate many of the challenges facing the fragile Russian state, and hasten the pace of its inevitable decline. And given recent events, that may be the only sustainable solution for dealing with the challenge that is Vladimir Putin.

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.

<http://thediplomat.com/2014/03/responding-to-russias-nuclear-inspections-ban/>

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Breaking Defense.com – New York, NY

OPINION/Commentary

Change How We Test, Care, Feed Air Force ICBM Crews

By Bob Butterworth

March 12, 2014

Outrage and worry greeted the news that some of the Air Force officers who would launch nuclear missiles were being investigated for drug use. More outrage and worry greeted the news that a substantial number of the crews who would launch nuclear missiles cheated on the written tests they must regularly take. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, who has handled the public portions of the crisis with aplomb and apparent effectiveness, told the world the missile crew force faced "systemic problems." Bob Butterworth, expert on nuclear and space issues and a member of the Breaking Defense Board of Contributors, offers his critique of the Air Force's management of the force, and more importantly, suggests concrete measures to help fix the problems. His discussion of the relative merits of the written tests as compared to the Missile Procedures Trainer simulator that forces officers to demonstrate they know the procedures and actually execute them is particularly interesting. Which is more important: a written test or a test as close to the real world as one can get? The Editor.

Paper Tests Don't Simulate Simulators. The test in question is a monthly training test that is treated as a proficiency test. If a missileer scores below 90 percent then he is retrained, retested and returned to duty, all per AFGSC (Air Force Global Strike Command) regulations. The simulator is the more accurate measure of proficiency. Mistakes on the test do not necessarily indicate weaknesses in performance in the simulator, and vice versa.

As one officer with recent command experience explains: "The classroom is where we talk about what we should do on alert, the simulator is where we actually demonstrate what to do. The simulator (Missile Procedures Trainer-MPT) is a high-fidelity launch control center simulator. It is the best way to train and evaluate real-world actions for alert. It consists of a full console and the major communication systems all laid out the same way it is in a launch control center. The instructors can fully simulate the status that may happen on alert — everything from



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faults with the missiles, failing equipment, security problems, fires, and emergency war order messages from the President directing launch actions.

“Classroom training is great for discussing why you may receive certain faults and what to do, but the MPT is where we can actually ‘drop’ the status on the crew and watch them perform exactly the way they would on alert. In the MPT, we run through realistic scenarios that show messages sent from the higher authorities if we were to escalate tensions with another nation and launch our weapons. It is a Top Secret environment where we have all the decode documents, classified regulations and technical orders that we would have on alert.”

His view of the relative merits of the test and the simulator? “The classroom just isn’t the same. We review basic concepts and what we are supposed to do when we receive certain classified messages, but the test is not written to the analysis level. It is held at the knowledge level, which leads to tricky questions, hooks and the need to develop good test taking skills that really don’t translate to MPT and alert performance. Please note, these tests are not impossibly tricky—if you invest the time and study, then you will do just fine I did as a lieutenant and captain, but there are plenty of people who just want to watch movies on alert and don’t want to invest in their missile career—being good at your job takes work!!.”

So let’s do more in the simulator and emphasize analysis in the classroom. “We take one monthly MPT ride and are required to take an annual evaluation in the MPT. We also have three separate classroom training sessions a month: one covers emergency war orders, one covers the code components used to provide nuclear surety and positive control and one class covers unclassified weapon system training. That translates to four hours in the MPT and about 10 classroom hours. I really think this is out of balance. I would rather our crew members receive two MPT rides a month, two evaluations per year and one day of classroom training that covers concepts and the ‘why’ behind what we do, not the ‘what.’ The MPT is where we can demonstrate the ‘what’ and the ‘why’ all at once.”

Most of the errors on the monthly training tests occur on questions that are intentionally written to be easily misunderstood (double negatives, misleading lead-ins), thereby testing the crew’s ability to take tests but not their mission-related knowledge or understanding. As the training and test are given each month, the instructors foot-stomp the most missed questions prior to the tests, and the high scores are won by people who take the test later in the month (or who have learned to spot the tricky wording).

The big blow up at Minot last fall over “rot in the crew force” blew because the average classroom test score of the Minot crews was lower than that at the other two bases—but it was still passing. No one mentioned that 100% of the crews passed the EWO evaluations conducted in the simulators.

But missileer crew morale is definitely an issue, one that has been building for years. Missile crews sit in the middle of remote areas, training for a task no American has — or would want to — execute. The country as a whole pays little attention to nuclear issues anymore and the mission certainly is not publicly regarded as glamorous. Serving on a missile crew is not considered a fine way to win promotion or to win a medal. So here are six corrective measures that would help recognize the critical job the missile forces perform.

1. Fix broken equipment and deficient facilities. It’s hard to believe your mission is important if you can’t get your broken or worn equipment replaced in timely fashion. Retired Gen. Larry Welch’s review for the Defense Science Board published last April called attention to continuing deficiencies in timely logistics and repair support for the ICBM force and their negative effects on morale.

2. Ensure adequate representation in higher headquarters. Is the number of bomber pilot/navigator officers about equal to the number of ICBM operations officers among the colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors assigned to the nuclear mission areas at the headquarters of the Air Force Global Strike Command, the Air Staff and Secretary of the Air Force Staff, and USSTRATCOM? If not, they should be. There needs to be a defined career path for a senior captain/major leading to squadron command.

3. Return “strategic” to our ICBM organizations. After Strategic Air Command was disestablished, the Strategic Missile Wings and Strategic Missile Squadrons became simply Missile Wings and Missile Squadrons. A missileer’s

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chain of command on alert is Deputy Combat Crew Commander, Missile Combat Crew Commander, Commander of Strategic Forces Command, President of the United States. That is strategic.

4. Restore competition among the “shooters.” For years — from the early days of the Minuteman missile — the ICBM force held annual Missile Competitions at Vandenberg AFB where there are crew training simulators and silos to conduct force-wide competitions to decide the best of the best. Do something like this again.

5. Restore the Minuteman Education Program. Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James recently applauded the Navy for having master’s degree education program for the SLBM force. Years earlier, SAC established the Minuteman Education Program, which paid for and scheduled class room days for Minuteman Crew members to earn an MBA while assigned to the Minuteman Crew force on their first crew assignment.

6. Feed the crews while they’re on alert. Free meals for the missileers and protective services on alert won’t save them a lot of money but it certainly would boost morale and do something toward reducing envy for air crews who collect temporary duty (TDY) funds.

Bob Butterworth is a consultant and expert on intelligence, especially spy satellites and the policies governing them. He is a former senior advisor to the leader of Space Command.

<http://breakingdefense.com/2014/03/change-how-we-test-care-feed-air-force-icbm-crews/>

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National Review Online
OPINION/Article

Iran’s Arak Reactor and the Plutonium Bomb

If the Iranians are allowed to finish the reactor, a bomb will be a very real possibility.

By Gregory S. Jones

March 13, 2014

The P5+1 (the five permanent U.N. Security Council members plus Germany) are set to resume negotiations with Iran regarding its nuclear program on Monday. The talks will likely focus on Iran’s centrifuge enrichment program and its ability to produce highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons. However, Iran is also constructing a 40-megawatt “research” reactor at Arak that could provide enough plutonium for two to three nuclear weapons per year. This reactor was clearly intended to be a plutonium-production reactor as part of Iran’s structured nuclear-weapons program (which existed up until 2004) and could still be part of an ongoing effort to acquire nuclear weapons. As it is currently designed, the reactor would use heavy water as the moderator and coolant and natural uranium as fuel, producing about 11 kilograms of plutonium per year.

The obvious solution to the concerns about the Arak reactor is for it never to be completed and for its components to be destroyed. This is widely acknowledged to be the preferred solution, but, as in the case of Iran’s centrifuge enrichment program, Western “realists” have objected, saying that Iran would never agree to the reactor’s destruction.

As an alternative, it has been suggested that the heavy water could be replaced with ordinary water and the fuel of the reactor changed so as to reduce the amount of plutonium that it could produce. If, instead of natural uranium, the reactor used 3.5 percent enriched uranium, the amount of plutonium produced would be about 6 kilograms per year — enough to make one or two nuclear weapons. If the fuel were 20 percent enriched uranium, then the reactor would produce only about 1 kilogram of plutonium per year. In this latter case, however, Iran could put natural-uranium target elements into the reactor and still produce about 6 kilograms of plutonium per year.

To further decrease the amount of plutonium that could be produced by the Arak reactor, it has also been proposed to reduce its power level. The amount of plutonium that the reactor could produce is directly proportional to its power level, so if the reactor had an output of 10 megawatts instead of 40, the plutonium-



production rate would be only about 1.5 kilograms, for a reactor using either 3.5 percent enriched uranium or 20 percent enriched uranium.

Even with these changes, though, there would still be significant problems. Iran could use this modified reactor to strengthen its claim that it should be allowed centrifuge enrichment; as I have written elsewhere, there are significant dangers in affirming Iran's "right to enrich." Additionally, Iran would still have to give up the approximately 100 metric tons of heavy water that it has already produced, and shut down and dismantle the heavy-water-production plant at Arak. Is Iran any more likely to agree to this?

It is a slippery slope when one starts to make concessions in order to get any sort of agreement with Iran. One supporter of such an agreement suggested in December that Iran's number of centrifuges be limited to "3,000 or fewer," yet by last month had changed its position to allow about 5,000 centrifuges.

Iran has said that it might be willing to "make some change in the design, in order to produce less plutonium." However, it is possible that Iran might just agree to reduce the power of the reactor somewhat, while retaining it as a natural-uranium heavy-water reactor. If no substantive changes are made to the reactor's design, Iran could easily increase the power and plutonium-production rate whenever it desired.

Undersecretary of state for political affairs Wendy Sherman has said, "[the Iranians] do not need a heavy-water reactor at Arak in order to have a peaceful nuclear program." The U.S. should follow through on the logic of this statement and insist that Iran never complete the reactor at Arak, and that it destroy the components for this reactor, export the 100 metric tons of heavy water that Iran has already produced, and shut down and dismantle the heavy-water-production plant at Arak. Otherwise the U.S. will be granting Iran a "plutonium option" for acquiring nuclear weapons in addition to the dangers posed by Iran's centrifuge enrichment program.

Gregory S. Jones is an adjunct senior defense-policy analyst at the RAND Corporation.

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/373252/irans-arak-reactor-and-plutonium-bomb-gregory-s-jones>

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B61-12 Nuclear Bomb Integration on NATO Aircraft to Start in 2015

By Hans M. Kristensen

March 13, 2014

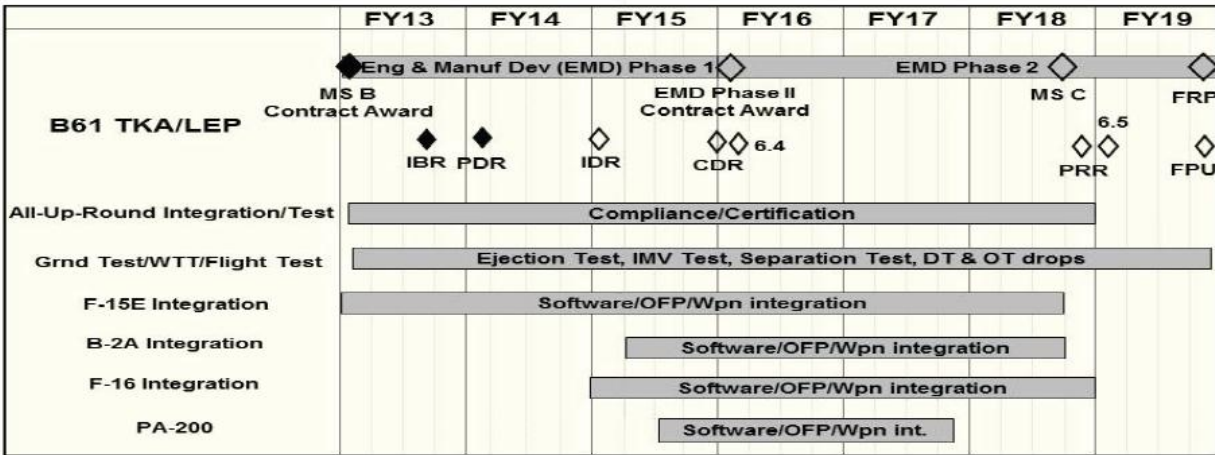
The US Air Force budget request for Fiscal Year 2015 shows that integration of the B61-12 on NATO F-16 and Tornado aircraft will start in 2015 for completion in 2017 and 2018.

The integration marks the beginning of a significant enhancement of the military capability of NATO's nuclear posture in Europe and comes only three years after NATO in 2012 said its current nuclear posture meets its security requirements and that it was working to create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.

The integration will take place on Belgian, Dutch, and Turkish F-16A/B and on German and Italian PA-200 Tornado fighter-bombers. It is unknown if US and NATO F-16s happen simultaneously or US aircraft are first, but the process will last four years between 2015 and 2018. Integration of German and Italian Tornados will take a little over two years (see graph below).



B61-12 TKA Schedule



The USAF budget request shows the timelines for integration of the B61-12 onto US and NATO legacy aircraft. Later the weapon will also be integrated onto the F-35A and LRS-B next-generation long-range bomber.

The B61-12 will also be integrated on USAF F-15E (integration began last year), F-16C/D, and B-2A aircraft, and later on the F-35A Lightning II. The F-35A will later replace the F-16s. The US Air Force plans to equip all F-35s in Europe with nuclear capability by 2024.

In addition to the US Air Force, the nuclear-capable F-35A will be supplied to the Dutch, Italian, Turkish, and possibly Belgian air forces.

From the mid-2020s, the B61-12 will also be integrated on the next-generation heavy bomber (LRS-B) planned by the US Air Force.

The integration work includes software upgrades on the legacy aircraft, operational flight tests, and full weapon integration. Development of the guided tail kit is well underway in reparations for operational tests. Seven flight tests are planned for 2015. The nuclear warhead and some non-nuclear components won't be ready until the end of the decade. The first complete B61-12 is scheduled for 2020.

Through 2019, the integration efforts are scheduled to cost more than \$1 billion. Another \$154 million is needed to improve security at the nuclear bases in Europe.

Integration of US nuclear weapons onto aircraft of non-nuclear weapon states that have signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and promised "not to receive the transfer from any transferor whatsoever of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or of control over such weapons or explosive devices directly, or indirectly," is, to say the least, problematic.

The arrangement of equipping non-nuclear NATO allies with the capability and role to deliver US nuclear weapons was in place before the NPT entered into effect and was accepted by the NPT regime during the Cold War. But for NATO to continue this arrangement contradicts the non-proliferation standards that the member countries are trying to promote in the post-Cold War world.

How scattering enhanced nuclear bombs across Europe in five non-nuclear countries will enable "bold reductions" in US and Russian non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe and help create the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons is another question.

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<http://blogs.fas.org/security/2014/03/b61-12integration/>

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The Diplomat – Tokyo, Japan

OPINION/Article

Could Ukraine Drive Nuclear Proliferation in Asia?

Could China's East Asian neighbors be tempted to seek nuclear weapons? That would be a mistake.

By Andrew Gawthorpe for The Diplomat

March 14, 2014

Recent events in Eastern Europe raise the issue not only of Russia's future actions but also the lessons that will be drawn regarding other revisionist states. In East Asia, a China that is nurturing territorial ambitions of its own and has recently become less shy about asserting them will watch to see how the West reacts to Vladimir Putin's expansionism. So will China's East Asian neighbors, who fear they may become the next Ukraine.

One of the most potentially disturbing effects of the situation in Ukraine is the possibility it may drive nuclear proliferation. The present crisis in that country could well have been a nuclear nightmare. When the USSR was unraveling in the early 1990s, a sizeable portion of its strategic forces, along with tactical nuclear weapons, were deployed in Ukraine. Had the new Ukrainian government in Kiev taken control of these weapons upon becoming independent, it would have been the third-largest nuclear power in the world, behind only the U.S. and the Russia.

Concerned about nuclear proliferation throughout Europe if new nuclear powers were created by the Soviet Union's demise, the U.S. pressured Ukraine to denuclearize and to return its nuclear forces to Russia. Basking in a post-independence glow and seeking U.S. support on other issues, Kiev went along. This was the origin of the so-called Budapest Memorandum of 1994, in which Ukraine promised to give up its nuclear weapons in return for Russia, Britain and the U.S. guaranteeing its sovereignty and territorial integrity. With the wholesale invasion of Crimea by Russian forces in recent days, Kiev can be forgiven for asking if the agreement is any longer worth the paper it's written on.

Since Russia's occupation of Crimea, a former Ukrainian foreign minister has called for his country to restock its nuclear arsenal and some Western analysts have questioned whether Putin would have acted so boldly if Ukraine still had its nuclear deterrent. The question can be expected to occur to leaders of other countries who are concerned about the territorial ambitions of their neighbors or the sincerity of Western security assurances.

The issue is of particular salience in East Asia, where China has recently been flexing its muscles in a range of territorial disputes. Regional powers such as Japan and Taiwan must be watching America's unwillingness to forcefully confront a nuclear-armed Russia and wondering how much backbone the exhausted and drained superpower would have if China made similar moves. This is especially the case since the Obama administration's so-called "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific seems to be much more an excuse for disengaging from the Middle East than it is a real exercise in strengthening the American alliance system in the Asia-Pacific.

Any such moves towards proliferation would be unwise. Acquiring nuclear weapons may appear to provide an effective way for countries worried about their neighbors' territorial ambitions to deter them, but the truth is not so simple. While nuclear weapons provide an effective deterrent against an all-out attack, they are not necessarily effective in deterring lower-level conflict. Just as it is implausible to imagine that Ukraine would have responded to the appearance of balaclaved soldiers in Crimea with a first strike, so it is equally implausible to imagine any country responding to the Chinese declaration of an Air Defense Identification Zone in the same manner.

Revisionist powers are adept at nibbling away at international norms and agreements slowly and avoiding big, sweeping gestures. Countries responding to such a nibble with nuclear brinkmanship risk making their adversaries

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look reasonable by comparison, giving nuclear weapons questionable utility in territorial disputes. And if their use is indeed threatened and taken seriously, the result can be a dangerous cycle of escalation.

U.S. security guarantees are also much more credible and likely to be honored in the event of a conventional war than if there is a risk of the conflict going nuclear. Defending an ally who might unilaterally take the war nuclear and hence make the U.S. homeland a target for retaliatory strikes from Beijing would be risky for a U.S. president indeed. Countries in the Asia-Pacific worried about their U.S. security guarantees ought to be giving Washington more reasons to trust them and stick by them, not fewer.

A more sensible course, for both Ukraine and countries worried about China, would be to bolster their conventional military capabilities. Russia and China may be large countries, but their militaries have not been seriously tested for a long time. The prospect of a grueling, expensive and unpopular war would serve to deter both Moscow and Beijing more than the unlikely chance of a nuclear exchange. U.S. guarantees to its allies also remain more credible in such scenarios. And although events in Ukraine may have shown it is a dangerous world even for those with such assurances, further nuclear proliferation would only increase the danger further.

Andrew Gawthorpe is a teaching fellow at the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. The views in this article are his own.

<http://thediomat.com/2014/03/could-ukraine-drive-nuclear-proliferation-in-asia/>

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ABOUT THE USAF CUWS

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

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

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

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

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