



**USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER**  
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

**Issue No. 1072, 27 August 2013**

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Tehran Times – Iran

## Iran's Ambassador to IAEA to Leave Post

Political Desk

Saturday, August 24, 2013

TEHRAN – Iran's envoy to the UN atomic agency will leave his post next month, in what may be a further sign of new President Hassan Rohani's desire for a fresh start with the outside world over Tehran's nuclear program, Reuters reported on Wednesday.

Ali Asghar Soltanieh's surprise departure comes after Rohani last Friday appointed former Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi, seen as a pragmatist, to head Iran's atomic energy organization.

Rohani has pledged to improve Iran's ties with world powers in an attempt to ease international sanctions on the Islamic Republic over its nuclear program, which it says is entirely peaceful but the West suspects has military aims.

Soltanieh, an energetic diplomat in his early 60s who often criticizes the West in meetings of the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), had been leading so far fruitless negotiations with the agency.

"I confirm that my mission, assignment, will be over on September 1," nuclear physicist Soltanieh told Reuters on Wednesday. "I'm proud that I've served my country, and I'm grateful for their trust and I will go back home of course to serve my country."

It was not immediately clear whether his move was planned or was a more recent decision by Tehran.

One Western diplomat accredited to the IAEA said Soltanieh "was the face" in Vienna of the previous Iranian government and that his replacement may be another indication of Rohani seeking a new atmosphere in Tehran's international dealings.

"If the president wants a new dynamic maybe he needs a new person" as ambassador to the UN agency, the diplomat said.

Meanwhile, the appointment of Salehi - also a former ambassador to the IAEA - was seen as a further signal that Rohani intends to pursue a more flexible approach to Iran's nuclear dispute with the West than his predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

IAEA chief nuclear inspector Herman Nackaerts, Soltanieh's counterpart in the talks, is due to retire next month, meaning both sides may enter any new round of discussions with new chief negotiators. The next meeting has yet to be scheduled.

There was also no word yet on who would replace Soltanieh, who has held the job for some seven years, diplomats said.

The IAEA has for years been investigating allegations that Iran has carried out research and tests relevant for the development of nuclear weapons, a charge the country denies.

One European diplomat said Soltanieh seemed to have cordial personal relations with IAEA officials in talks that got under way in early 2012.

"He is skilled and knowledgeable," the diplomat said.

Rohani is still deciding who will lead broader diplomatic talks with world powers on Iran's nuclear program, the Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday, more than two months after the moderate cleric was elected.

The Iran-IAEA talks are separate, but still closely linked to the negotiations between six major powers and Iran aimed at finding a diplomatic solution to the decade-old dispute.



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Some Western states and Israel say Iran's atomic energy program is in fact an attempt to attain a nuclear weapons capability. Tehran denies the charge and says it only wants the technology to generate electricity and for medical research.

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/110211-irans-ambassador-to-iaea-to-leave-post>

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The Kansas City Star

## **Doctors Cite Deaths, Injuries from Toxin Attack in Syria as Obama, Allies Ponder Lethal Action**

By Lesley Clark and Mitchell Prothero, McClatchy Washington Bureau  
Saturday, August 24, 2013

President Barack Obama met with his national security team to discuss potential military options in Syria Saturday, as an international relief group said Syrian hospitals reportedly treated 3,600 patients displaying symptoms of chemical weapons exposure after an attack that killed scores of civilians.

Obama convened the Saturday summit at the White House amid pressure for the administration to respond to the attack in Syria, which if confirmed, would be Syrian President Bashar Assad's most flagrant violation yet of Obama's "red line" warning against the use of chemical warfare.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told reporters Saturday that Obama had asked the Defense Department for "options" in a situation that Obama described on Friday as a "big event of grave concern." Obama also sought backing from a key US ally, speaking Saturday with British Prime Minister David Cameron and agreeing to consult on "possible responses by the international community to the use of chemical weapons." Cameron issued a stern warning too on the lethal consequences.

A White House official said Saturday Obama had directed U.S. intelligence agencies to pull together facts and evidence to determine what happened and that "once we ascertain the facts, the president will make an informed decision about how to respond."

The official said the U.S. has a "range of options available" and that Obama would "act very deliberately so that we're making decisions consistent with our national interest as well as our assessment of what can advance our objectives in Syria."

The Syrian regime, which has denied the use of chemical weapons and sought to put the blame on the opposition, reportedly will allow UN inspectors to visit the site of last week's attack.

Press TV, Iran's state-run satellite news channel quoted Iran's foreign minister as saying he had spoken with his Syrian counterpart who told him the government would cooperate with a UN team in the country. Syria's Information Minister warned that a U.S. strike would backfire, telling Lebanon-based Al-Mayadeen TV that the "repercussion would be a ball of fire that would burn not only Syria but the whole Middle East," the Associated Press reported.

Doctors Without Borders said Saturday that three hospitals in Syria it supports are reporting that they received approximately 3,600 patients displaying symptoms of exposure to toxic chemicals on the day of the attack last week in eastern Damascus. Of those patients, 355 reportedly died.

Doctors Without Borders has not been able to access the facilities due to "significant security risks," the international medical group said, adding that it has a "strong and reliable collaboration" with medical networks and hospitals in the area.

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Medical staff working in the Syrian facilities provided detailed information to the group's doctors regarding "large numbers of patients arriving with symptoms including convulsions, excess saliva, pinpoint pupils, blurred vision and respiratory distress," said Dr. Bart Janssens, Doctors Without Borders' director of operations.

Patients were treated using atropine, a drug used to treat neurotoxic symptoms, which the aid group said it's now trying to replenish.

Janssens said his group "can neither scientifically confirm the cause of these symptoms nor establish who is responsible for the attack." But he added, "the reported symptoms of the patients, in addition to the epidemiological pattern of the events - characterized by the massive influx of patients in a short period of time, the origin of the patients, and the contamination of medical and first aid workers - strongly indicate mass exposure to a neurotoxic agent."

He said the use would "constitute a violation of international humanitarian law, which absolutely prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons."

The number of dead from last week's attack is still undetermined. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, generally considered the most authoritative chronicler of casualties in the war-torn country, said it had confirmed that at least 322 people had died in the attacks, including at least 90 rebel fighters, 86 women and 54 children. Director Rami Abdurrahman said he was still reviewing hundreds of names and expected the final tally to be much higher.

In Syria, Abu Ahmed, a pharmacist who has been volunteering as a medic for the rebels for two years, said he arrived on the scene at 5 a.m., two hours after the attack, and that he and others treating the injured became sick.

"The people helping did get sick with symptoms like headache, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea," he said Saturday via Skype. "I had headache only, and diarrhea."

He said the medical staff of 72, includes five doctors who had gloves and masks and suffered fewer problems.

He said the staff treated about 600 people and about 150 of them died, the majority of them children who had been sleeping in basements for protection from the shelling.

"There has been very bad fighting the last two days," he said.

The administration has expressed caution about intervening in what Obama has called a "sectarian, complex" conflict, but the use of chemical weapons would be the second transgression since Obama a year ago warned Damascus that the use of chemical weapons was a "red line" for the U.S., and critics say the administration risks American credibility if it does not respond more aggressively.

Obama, however, expressed caution in a CNN interview that aired Friday, warning against "very expensive, difficult, costly interventions that actually breed more resentment in the region."

And although Obama underscored that the use of chemical weapons "starts getting to some core national interests," he made it clear he's concerned about taking military action without a U.N. Security Council resolution.

With Assad's ally, Russia, likely to use its veto to block such a resolution, one option would be for Obama to follow the precedent set by former President Bill Clinton with the 1999 U.S.-led air campaign to halt Serbia's bloody onslaught against Kosovo's independence-seeking Albanian majority.

Denied Russian support for a U.N. resolution, Clinton used the backing of NATO and the justification of stopping the slaughter and ethnic cleansing of Albanian civilians to launch the air campaign.

In the case of Syria, Obama could look to build international support for U.S. military strikes against Syria from the Arab League, which suspended Damascus from its membership in 2011, and from NATO. Defense Secretary Hagel did not rule out the possibility of unilateral U.S. action, but said the U.S. is "working in close consultation with our international partners on this."



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The White House says Obama has all but ruled out U.S. military on the ground in Syria. Hagel noted that the U.S. has a battery of F-16 fighter jets in Jordan, and Patriot surface-to-air missiles in Turkey. A fourth Tomahawk cruise missile naval destroyer has been moved closer to Syria to supplement three warships already deployed in the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has warned of the risks of U.S. military intervention in Syria, telling Congress in July that "should the regime's institutions collapse in the absence of a viable opposition, we could inadvertently empower extremists or unleash the very chemical weapons we seek to control."

Hagel, warning of the possibility of a follow-up chemical weapons attack in Syria, said a decision on a response by the United States and its international partners "should be made swiftly."

*Prothero, a McClatchy special correspondent, reported from Beirut. Clark reported from Washington. McClatchy reporters Jonathan Landay and James Rosen also contributed to this report.*

<http://www.kansascity.com/2013/08/24/4433707/doctors-cite-deaths-injuries-from.html>

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FARS News Agency – Iran  
Sunday, August 25

## **Saudi Arabia to Build 16 N. Reactors by 2030**

TEHRAN (FNA) - Saudi Arabia plans to build 16 nuclear reactors with a combined capacity of 22gigawatts, which will make the country a leader in renewable energy, a Saudi nuclear energy official said.

Abdul Ghani bin Melaibari, the coordinator of scientific collaboration told the Arab News that Saudi Arabia is scheduled to produce over 22gigawatts of electricity after completion of its 16 nuclear power plants by the end of 2030.

Saudi Arabia has about 11gigawatts of electricity output at the moment.

The ambitious project will cost the country more than \$100bln, but the price may vary because of the extreme and hot climate.

The first two reactors may be ready in 10 years time.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920603001400>

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FARS News Agency – Iran  
Monday, August 26, 2013

## **Ayatollah Khamenei Renews Call for Nuclear-Free Middle East, Raps Israel**

TEHRAN (FNA) - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei warned about the major threat posed by Israel's nuclear arsenals to the global peace and security, and once again called for the establishment of a nuclear-free Middle East.

"Having vast WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) arsenals, the corrupt Zionist regime is highly dangerous and a serious threat to the region," Ayatollah Khamenei said in a meeting with visiting Omani King Sultan Qaboos in Tehran on Monday.

He also blasted the US for its all-out and blind support for Israel which is perceived as a permanent danger to the region.

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"The region needs overall security and this important goal will be materialized merely by the declaration of a real ban on the WMDs," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Sultan Qaboos, for his part, expressed his confirmation of Ayatollah Khamenei' remarks on the Zionist regime's threat, and said, "Ending the current conditions requires attention to the regional people's interests and cooperation among the regional countries."

The Middle-Eastern states have repeatedly cautioned that Israel's nuclear arsenal poses a threat to Middle East peace and security. Israel, which has hundreds of nuclear warheads, avoids joining the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Iran, an NPT-signatory, has repeatedly asked for Israel's disarmament and removal of all weapons of mass destruction from across the globe.

In pursuit of global nuclear disarmament, Tehran held a conference on nuclear disarmament on April 18-19, 2010 with officials from different world countries in attendance. During the two-day conference, world officials and politicians put their heads together to address issues and concerns in connection with nuclear disarmament.

Despite Iran's compliance with the NPT, Washington and its western allies accuse the country of trying to develop nuclear weapons under the cover of a civilian nuclear program, while they have never presented any corroborative evidence to substantiate their allegations. Iran denies the charges and insists that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

Political observers believe that the United States has remained at loggerheads with Iran mainly over the independent and home-grown nature of Tehran's nuclear technology, which gives the Islamic Republic the potential to turn into a world power and a role model for the other third-world countries. Washington has laid much pressure on Iran to make it give up the most sensitive and advanced part of the technology, which is uranium enrichment, a process used for producing nuclear fuel for power plant.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920604000983>

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

## **Assad Says Chemical Weapons Claims ‘Insult to Common Sense’**

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Monday, 26 August 2013

Damascus -- Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said Western claims his regime used chemical weapons were "nonsense," warning that the United States "faced failure" if it attacked Syria, in comments to Russian newspaper Izvestia published on Monday.

"The comments (accusing the regime of using chemical weapons) made by politicians in the West and other countries are an insult to common sense... It is nonsense," Assad said, dismissing the claims as politically motivated.

He added: "The United States faces failure (if it attacks Syria), just like in all the previous wars they waged, starting with Vietnam and up to our days."

### ***Calling for caution***

China called for a "cautious" approach to the Syrian chemical weapons crisis on Monday.

"All parties should handle the chemical weapons issue cautiously to avoid interfering in the overall direction of solving the Syria issue through political settlement," Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a statement on the ministry's website, according to AFP.

Beijing backed a U.N. investigation to "find out the truth as soon as possible", he said.

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Wang made the comments as the West mulled possible military action against President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

### ***Russia concerned***

Russia, in similar comments made by Iran, voiced concerns on Monday over the possibility Washington may respond militarily to a suspected chemical weapons attack by Syria's government.

"The minister (Lavrov) stressed that the official announcements from Washington in recent days about the readiness of U.S. armed forces to 'intervene' in the Syrian conflict have been received in Moscow with deep concern," Reuters news agency reported the foreign ministry as saying in a statement.

Lavrov also warned U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry over the "extremely dangerous consequences" of launching military action against the Syrian regime.

"Sergei Lavrov drew attention to the extremely dangerous consequences of a possible new military intervention for the whole Middle East and North Africa region," it said in a statement.

Syria's opposition says more than 1,300 people died when regime forces unleashed chemical weapons against rebel-held towns east and southwest of Damascus Wednesday, while Doctors Without Borders said 355 people had died of "neurotoxic" symptoms.

The Syrian government has strongly denied it carried out such an attack, instead blaming opposition fighters.

Assad's closest ally Iran said on Sunday the United States should not cross a "red line" by attacking Syria.

Two and a half years since the start of a war that has already killed more than 100,000 people, the United States and its allies have yet to take direct action, despite long ago saying Assad must be removed from power.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/08/26/Assad-says-chemical-weapons-claims-insult-to-common-sense-.html>

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Tehran Times – Iran

## **Crossing Red Line on Syria will have Severe Consequences, Iran Warns U.S.**

Political Desk

Monday, August 26, 2013

TEHRAN – An Iranian general has warned the United States against crossing the red line on Syria, saying any military intervention by Washington will have severe consequences.

"The United States knows the boundaries of the red line of the Syrian front and any crossing of the red line on Syria will have severe consequences for the White House," the deputy chief of the general staff of Iran's armed forces, Brigadier General Massoud Jazayeri, said on Sunday in reference to recent hawkish remarks on Syria by U.S. officials.

The war which is raging in Syria is the result of a plot hatched by the United States and certain countries in the region to undermine the resistance front against the Zionist regime, he said, adding that the Syrian government and people have achieved major victories in spite of the fact that a large bloc of enemies have launched a massive offensive against them.

"The Syrian government and people have the upper hand in the imposed war (waged by) terrorists (and backed by) the global arrogance (forces of imperialism) and reactionaries, and the propaganda campaign mounted by Western media outlets is due to Syria's achievements in dealing with its enemies," he said.

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According to AFP, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said on Sunday the U.S. military was ready to take action against the Syrian government if ordered, but stressed that Washington was still evaluating claims of a chemical weapons attack.

“President Obama has asked the Defense Department to prepare options for all contingencies. We have done that,” Hagel told reporters in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur.

“Again, we are prepared to exercise whatever option, if he decides to employ one of those options.”

He said the U.S. and its allies were assessing intelligence on allegations that Syrian government forces used chemical weapons in an attack against armed rebels near Damascus last week.

“I would not go further than that, until we have more intelligence based on facts,” Hagel said.

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/110269-crossing-red-line-on-syria-will-have-severe-consequences-iran-warns-us>

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Reuters – U.K.

## **Iran Adds to Atom Capacity, Holds Down Stockpile Growth - Diplomats**

By Fredrik Dahl, Reuters  
Monday, August 26, 2013

VIENNA (Reuters) - A report by the U.N. nuclear watchdog is expected to show that Iran is pressing ahead with its nuclear programme by further increasing its capacity to enrich uranium, diplomats said on Monday.

They said Iran also appears to have started making fuel for a heavy-water reactor that could produce plutonium, a development that concerns the West because of its potential to be used in a nuclear weapon.

On the other hand, the diplomats said this week's report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is also likely to include data showing that Iran is limiting growth of its most sensitive nuclear stockpile, a step that could buy time for negotiations with major powers.

If confirmed, such findings would give a mixed picture of Iran's atomic activities at a time when the outside world is waiting to see if its new president, Hassan Rouhani, will move to ease tension with the Islamic Republic's Western critics.

Iran says its nuclear programme is for power generation and medical purposes only, rejecting Western allegations that it seeks the capability to make atomic arms.

Israel has threatened to attack Iran if diplomacy fails to curb its programme and it amasses enough medium-enriched uranium to make a nuclear weapon, if processed further. But the election in June of the relative moderate Rouhani has raised Western hopes of breaking a deadlock in talks to address the decade-old nuclear dispute.

### **INSTALLING CENTRIFUGES**

Envoys accredited to the IAEA cautioned against reading too much into the U.N.'s quarterly report, expected to be issued to member states on Wednesday, as it will mainly cover developments before Rouhani took office in early August.

It is expected to say that Iran has continued to install both first-generation IR-1 centrifuges and advanced IR-2m machines, the Western diplomats said.

Centrifuges spin at supersonic speed to produce enriched uranium, which Iran says it needs to fuel a planned network of nuclear power plants. But if further processed, uranium can also provide the explosive core of a nuclear bomb.

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Outgoing nuclear energy chief Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani, a hardliner whom Rouhani has replaced with a pragmatist, said this month that Iran now has about 1,000 IR-2m centrifuges - a statement the diplomats said seemed credible.

Though the advanced machines are not yet believed to be operating, the report will be scrutinised for any sign of increased readiness to go into service, they said.

Abbasi-Davani's comments suggested, however, that the pace of IR-1 installation may have slowed from early this year.

A U.S. security institute last month said it believes that Iran will by mid-2014 will have the capability to produce, without being detected, sufficient weapons-grade uranium from its declared low-enriched stock for a nuclear explosive.

"Iran would achieve this capability principally by implementing its existing, firm plans to install thousands more IR-1 centrifuges and perhaps a few thousand IR-2m centrifuges," the Institute for Science and International Security said.

Rouhani, a former nuclear negotiator who oversaw a previous deal to suspend Iran's uranium enrichment, has pledged to improve ties with the outside world. But he insists on Tehran's right to refine uranium.

The diplomats said they believed Iran had continued converting some of its most controversial nuclear material - uranium gas refined to a fissile concentration of 20 percent - to make fuel for a medical research reactor in Tehran.

As a result, Iran's holding of 20 percent uranium gas is expected to show little growth since the IAEA's previous report in May and remain well below the 240-250 kg (529 to 551 lb) needed for a bomb.

This stock is closely watched in the West as it represents a short technical step from weapons-grade uranium.

Iran is also believed to have begun producing fuel for another research reactor, Arak, which Western experts say could yield plutonium for bombs once operational, diplomats said. Iran says Arak will make isotopes for medical and agricultural use.

Iran plans to commission the heavy-water research reactor in the first quarter of 2014. Israel, widely believed to be the Middle East's only nuclear-armed power, has bombed such construction sites in the region before - in Iraq in 1981 and in Syria in 2007.

*Editing by Mark Trevelyan*

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/08/26/uk-iran-nuclear-iaea-idUKBRE97P0JW20130826>

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The Miami Herald

## **Kerry Says Syrian Use of Chemical Weapons 'Undeniable;' U.N. Investigates**

By Anita Kumar, Mitchell Prothero and Matthew Schofield, McClatchy Washington Bureau  
August 26, 2013

A U.N. team began inspecting the site of a possible chemical weapons attack near Damascus on Monday as the United States used its strongest language yet to condemn the Syria government for purportedly using deadly nerve gas to kill hundreds of its own people in an escalating and bloody civil war.

Secretary of State John Kerry described Syria's use of chemical weapons as "undeniable," "inexcusable" and "a moral obscenity" that "should shock the conscience of the world."

But Kerry – the most senior U.S. official to speak publicly about the issue in recent days – stopped short of detailing the administration's response to a conflict that already has killed more than 100,000 people, saying only that talks with allies were continuing as President Barack Obama looks to make "an informed decision."



Kerry did not allude to any possible military strike, as other Obama administration officials have done, and contributed to an atmosphere of expectation where the question appears no longer to be “if” some kind of attack on Syria will occur, but “when?”

Kerry’s brief remarks came after three key American allies – Britain, France and Turkey – indicated that they would support military action against Syria by the U.S. even without a United Nations mandate. The British navy is reportedly moving into position to assist the U.S. Navy in any possible strike on Syria. The Telegraph reported that the British navy was drawing up a list of cruise missile targets.

Russia – which has prevented the U.N. Security Council from taking strong action against Syria – immediately criticized the United States, saying any attack against Syrian President Bashar Assad would lead to more chaos in the region and be reminiscent of former President George W. Bush’s invasion of Iraq a decade ago.

“Obama is moving unstoppably toward war in Syria, just like Bush moved toward war in Iraq,” Alexei Pushkov, head of the Russian Parliament’s international affairs committee, said in a statement. “Like in Iraq, this war will not be legitimate, and Obama will become a clone of Bush.”

In Syria, U.N. weapons inspectors dodged sniper fire Monday as they tried to visit a neighborhood in suburban Damascus after receiving permission by Assad’s government to investigate rebel claims that a regime-led chemical attack Wednesday killed more than 1,000 people. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, generally considered the most authoritative chronicler of casualties in the war-torn country, and Doctors Without Borders confirmed that at least 300 people had died in the attacks.

Assad has repeatedly denied responsibility for the attack, which he blames on terrorist groups attempting to draw the West into the war.

“The area is contiguous with Syrian army positions, so how is it possible that any country would use chemical weapons – or any weapons of mass destruction – in an area where its own forces are located?” Assad told the daily Russian newspaper Izvestia.

Despite both sides offering inspectors a safe passage, U.N. officials said they were forced to retreat and replace a vehicle after unknown gunmen opened fire. The inspectors returned, however, and visited at least one of the scenes, gathering soil samples and interviewing rebels and residents.

Rebel spokesmen said the U.N. convoy was assailed by paramilitary regime loyalists intent on intimidating inspectors.

“They were fired on in the no-man’s land just as they passed the last regime checkpoint outside Moadamiyeh,” said Abu Musab, a local activist sympathetic to the rebels. “The (rebel) leadership had ordered a ceasefire today to allow them access.”

The Syrian government immediately blamed the incident – in which no one was hurt – on “armed terrorist groups” that broke the ceasefire as Syrian government guides were attempting to help the inspectors gain access to the sites.

Obama has long been reluctant to intervene in Syria, considered to have the largest chemical weapons stockpile in the Middle East, despite describing the use of such weaponry as a “red line” that would draw American involvement.

Direct U.S. military action against Assad’s regime would occur over the misgivings of a majority of Americans, according to a new poll, and with only limited support from Congress.

The fallout from such action includes possible retaliation from Iran, Russia and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah – Assad’s three chief foreign patrons – and U.S. entanglement in a new Middle East conflict after years of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan.

However, many foreign policy analysts argue that Obama has a moral imperative to step in now, though he faces the tricky task of devising a meaningful punishment for Assad without pulling the U.S. deeper into a long-term war that is already spilling into neighboring countries.



Asked about Americans being held in Syria even as the administration weighs military action, White House spokesman Jay Carney said it is “obviously aware” of Americans held by the Assad regime but declined to comment on how the issue would play into its deliberations. This month marked a year since American journalist Austin Tice, who wrote for McClatchy, was detained while covering the civil war in Syria.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel indicated Monday that the United States would be unlikely to take unilateral military action in Syria.

“If there is any action taken, it will be in concert with the international community and within the framework of a legal justification,” Hagel told reporters in Indonesia.

But British Foreign Secretary William Hague said that Western nations could intervene even without U.N. backing.

“Otherwise it might be impossible to respond to such outrages, such crimes, and I don’t think that’s an acceptable situation,” he said in a BBC interview. “We cannot, in the 21st century, allow the idea that chemical weapons can be used with impunity, that people can be killed in this way, and there are no consequences for it.”

Obama, meanwhile, faced increasing pressure in Washington to declare his intentions.

Republicans Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina called on the White House to take decisive action to end the war and Assad’s rule.

But House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, who spoke to White House officials Monday afternoon, believes that before any action is taken there must be “meaningful consultation with members of Congress,” said his spokesman, Brendan Buck.

Carney declined to say whether Obama would act without congressional or U.N. authorization, but he said the president is likely to make the case for whatever he decides.

“He has not made that decision and when he does,” Carney said, “I’m sure you will hear from him.”

*Hannah Allam, Lesley Clark and James Rosen of the Washington Bureau contributed.*

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2013/08/26/3587558/kerry-says-syrian-use-of-chemical.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea  
August 26, 2013

## **China's Point Man on N.K. Nukes Visits Pyongyang**

SEOUL/BEIJING, Aug. 26 (Yonhap) -- China's chief negotiator to the six-nation talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear program arrived in Pyongyang on Monday, the North's official news service reported.

The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Wu Dawei was in Pyongyang, but it gave no details such as the purpose of his visit or his itinerary.

However, Wu's visit is widely seen as being related to ongoing efforts by Beijing to restart the stalled multilateral dialogue aimed at getting the North to give up its nuclear ambitions.

The six-party talks, which have been stalled since late 2008, involve the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia.

Related to negotiations aimed at getting Pyongyang to give up its nukes, Chinese Defense Minister Chang Wanquan had recently told his U.S. counterpart Chuck Hagel that it is best not to have preconditions and that three or four interested parties can meet to try resolving outstanding issues. The smaller group can reduce the preparation time for talks.



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Wu's visit comes as North Korea's vice foreign minister Kim Kye-gwan visited Beijing in June to make clear Pyongyang's willingness to engage in talks, although the official did not touch on calls to give up its nuclear program.

On the latest trip by the Chinese official, a government source said that Seoul is carefully following the event, and waiting to see the results of talks.

"The important thing is that South Korea and the international community send a consistent message and create conditions conducive for dialogue," said the official, who declined to be identified.

Seoul and Washington have maintained that all talks must be based on Pyongyang's clear intent to give up its nuclear weapons. In defiance of international warnings, the communist country tested its third nuclear device in February.

The visit by Wu to North Korea came nearly a month after Chinese Vice President Li Yuanchao visited Pyongyang and met with North Korea's young leader, Kim Jong-un.

After the meeting with Li, who delivered a personal message from Chinese President Xi Jinping to Kim, the two sides reportedly expressed their support for reconvening the six-party talks.

"The visit by Wu to Pyongyang is seen as a follow-up measure after last month's visit by Vice President Li," a diplomatic source in Beijing said.

"During the visit, Wu is expected to call for North Korea to denuclearize, while making efforts to lead the North to resume the six-party talks," the source said on the condition of anonymity.

Meanwhile, the visit by Wu to Pyongyang came on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the launch of the six-party talks.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/08/26/61/0301000000AEN20130826009700315F.html>

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The Washington Free Beacon

## China Launches Three ASAT Satellites

*Small maneuvering orbiters include one with a robotic arm*

By Bill Gertz

August 26, 2013

China's military recently launched three small satellites into orbit as part of Beijing's covert anti-satellite warfare program, according to a U.S. official.

The three satellites, launched July 20 by a Long March-4C launcher, were later detected conducting unusual maneuvers in space indicating the Chinese are preparing to conduct space warfare against satellites, said the official who is familiar with intelligence reports about the satellites.

One of the satellites was equipped with an extension arm capable of attacking orbiting satellites that currently are vulnerable to both kinetic and electronic disruption.

"This is a real concern for U.S. national defense," the official said. "The three are working in tandem and the one with the arm poses the most concern. This is part of a Chinese 'Star Wars' program."

China's 2007 test of an anti-satellite missile shocked U.S. military and intelligence leaders who realized the U.S. satellites, a key to conducting high-performance warfare, are vulnerable to attack. Officials have said China could cripple U.S. war-fighting efforts by knocking out a dozen satellites. Satellites are used for military command and control, precision weapons guidance, communications and intelligence-gathering.

The official discussed some aspects of the Chinese anti-satellite (ASAT) program on condition of anonymity after some details were disclosed in online posts by space researchers.

**Issue No. 1072, 27 August 2013**

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“The retractable arm can be used for a number of things – to gouge, knock off course, or grab passing satellites,” the official said.

The three satellites also could perform maintenance or repairs on orbiting satellites, the official said.

Details of the small satellite activity were first reported last week in the blog “War is Boring.”

The posting stated that one of the satellites was monitored “moving all over the place” and appeared to make close-in passes with other orbiting satellites.

“It was so strange, space analysts wondered whether China was testing a new kind of space weapon — one that could intercept other satellites and more or less claw them to death,” the report said.

The U.S. official said: “It is exactly what was reported: An ASAT test.”

According to space researchers who tracked the satellites movements, one of the satellites on Aug. 16 lowered its orbit by about 93 miles. It then changed course and rendezvoused with a different satellite. The two satellites reportedly passed within 100 meters of each other.

One space researcher was quoted in the online report as saying one satellite was equipped with a “robot-manipulator arm developed by the Chinese Academy of Sciences.”

The Chinese appear to be testing their capability for intercepting and either damaging or destroying orbiting satellites by testing how close they can maneuver to a satellite, the U.S. official said.

“They are learning the tactics, techniques and processes needed for anti-satellite operations,” the official said.

The Chinese have given a code name to the satellites and numbered the satellites differently. Chinese state-run media identified the satellites as the Chuang Xin-3 (Innovation-3); the Shi Yan-7 (Experiment-7); and Shi Jian-15 (Practice-15). The Shi Jian-15 is believed to be the satellite with the robotic arm. The official said the designation used in the blog, SY-7, was not correct.

A Pentagon spokesman said the three Chinese spacecraft are being monitored by the U.S. Strategic Command’s Joint Functional Combatant Command for Space (JFCC-SPACE), “consistent with its routine operations to maintain track of objects in space.” The spacecraft were tracked since the July 20 launch and the command “noticed the relative motions of these satellites amongst each other and with respect to other space objects,” the spokesman said.

The official said the Obama administration is keeping details of the Chinese anti-satellite warfare program secret as part of its policies designed to play down threats to U.S. national security.

“There is a Star Wars threat to our satellites,” the official. “But the official said the administration does not want the American people to know about it because it would require plusing up defense budgets.”

The use of satellites for space warfare appears to be a departure from past Chinese ASAT efforts. China faced international condemnation in 2007 for firing a missile that blasted a Chinese weather satellite in space, leaving tens of thousands of debris pieces.

A recently translated Chinese defense paper on the use of a kinetic energy anti-satellite missile revealed that China is making progress with its anti-satellite warfare program. The report reveals that a U.S. software program called Satellite Tool Kit is being used by the Chinese military for its ASAT program.

“Kinetic energy antisatellite warfare is a revolutionary new concept and a deterrent mode of operation,” the 2012 translation of the report stated. “The construction of the corresponding information flow is certainly important to the effectiveness of the kinetic energy antisatellite operation. The STK package, being a powerful professional space simulation platform, will play an active supporting role in research on information flow in kinetic energy antisatellite warfare.”



A joint State Department and Pentagon report on export controls published last year stated that China is working on several types of anti-satellite warfare systems.

“China continues to develop and refine its ASAT capabilities as one component of a multi-dimensional program to limit or prevent the use of space-based assets by potential adversaries during times of conflict,” the report said.

“In addition to the direct-ascent ASAT program, China is developing other technologies and concepts for kinetic and directed energy for ASAT missions.”

The report said China has said that to support its manned and lunar space program, it is “improving its ability to track and identify satellites—a prerequisite for effective, precise counter-space operations.”

“The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) is acquiring a range of technologies to improve China’s space and counter-space capabilities,” the report said.

A recent PLA analysis concluded that space is the “commanding point” for the modern information battlefield.

“Battlefield monitor and control, information communications, navigation and position guidance all rely on satellites and other sensors,” and Chinese military writings emphasize, “destroying, damaging, and interfering with the enemy’s reconnaissance ... and communications satellites.”

The military writings suggest that satellites could be part of an initial attack aimed at blinding the enemy. “Destroying or capturing satellites and other sensors ... will deprive an opponent of initiative on the battlefield and [make it difficult] for them to bring their precision guided weapons into full play,” the PLA report said.

Rick Fisher, a Chinese military affairs specialist, said the maneuvering satellites are a significant element of China’s military space program.

The satellite with the robotic arm is a clear dual-use, military-civilian satellite, said Fisher, with the International Assessment and Strategy Center.

“The robot arm will develop a larger arm for China’s future space station, but this satellite can also perform ‘co-orbital’ surveillance or attacks against target satellites,” Fisher told the *Free Beacon*. “It is essentially China’s version of the 2007 DARPA Orbital Express satellite that was criticized by liberals as step toward ‘militarizing’ space.”

According to Fisher, the satellites are part of a space surveillance and targeting system that will monitor space debris and also allow interception of space targets.

Elements of the satellite system also will be used for China’s missile defense system, which is linked to China’s anti-satellite missiles.

“But despite any potential ‘peaceful’ uses, the main point for the United States is that the PLA owns these programs and will use them as weapons against American space assets when it so chooses,” Fisher said. “All future U.S. military satellites require low-cost stealth or defense capabilities if the U.S. is to keep its essential military space architecture.”

The space weapons program in China shows that no amount of American restraint will halt Beijing’s drive for military advantage in space.

“Today China’s dictatorship rejects all forms of strategic arms control that could deny the Communist Party a capability that it deems essential to the survival of its dictatorship,” Fisher said. “When China gains superiority in any strategic category it will be even less willing to bargain away capability for the sake of ‘stability.’ China will not ‘reward’ any future U.S. nuclear weapon reductions or restraint in developing space weapons.”

China also conducted a maneuvering small satellite test in 2010, according to defense officials, which also was deemed an ASAT-related experiment.

Two Chinese satellites rendezvoused several hundred miles above Earth in August 2010 as part of what was viewed by officials as a contribution to the anti-satellite weapons program.





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The Pentagon said at the time, "Our analysts determined there are two Chinese satellites in close proximity of each other. We do not know if they have made physical contact. The Chinese have not contacted us regarding these satellites."

The two satellites also maneuvered during the Aug. 22, 2010 encounter. Based on the behavior, it appeared one of the satellites made contact with another satellite causing it to change orbits. The two satellites were estimated to have been as close as 200 meters to each other.

<http://freebeacon.com/china-launches-three-asat-satellites/>

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The Times of India – India

## Second Test-Firing of Agni-V Missile Next Month

By Jatinder Kaur Tur, Tamil News Network (TNN)

August 25, 2013

HYDERABAD: Working at a fast pace towards production and induction of Agni-V missile into the forces, Defence Research and Development Organisation is reportedly planning its second test fire next month. The maiden test fire of Agni-V, the first intercontinental ballistic missile of India, was carried out in April 2012. The successful trial catapulted the country into the exclusive ICBM club comprising six elite countries, United States of America, Russia, China, France and United Kingdom.

Dr V G Sekaran, chief controller R&D (Missiles & Strategic Systems) and programme director, Agni, said that while no date has been fixed for the test as of now, it will be conducted in September. "This test shall be aimed at repeatability of the previous test for stabilizing the performance of sub-systems," he said, adding that DRDO is working at starting the production and delivery phase by 2015 for Agni-5. Dr Sekaran further revealed that the forthcoming test fire is a part of development trials (usually 2-3, if successful) and the user trials will start after this.

Meanwhile, DRDO is leaving no stone unturned for kick starting the canisterization process for Agni V by this year end. Simultaneous qualification tests will be conducted for the same as well. Canister launch of the missile will enable higher flexibility in launching speedy firing from any location on a road.

The indigenously developed 50-tonne long range surface-to-surface ballistic missile Agni-V, which is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead weighing more than a tonne, has a 5,000 km range as per DRDO officials, who confirmed that preparations are at full swing at Wheeler Island off the Odisha coast for a September launch. Once inducted, India's range with respect to missile reach would include the entire Asia as well as parts of other continents. Agni V will be inducted into the force equipped with Multiple Independently Targetable Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs) for shooting multiple warheads at the same time.

RCI to celebrate silver jubilee

Research Centre Imarat, DRDO, Hyderabad, is celebrating its silver jubilee on August 26, 2013. Governor ESL Narasimhan, former president Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, minister of state for defence Jitendra Singh will be present at the celebration. RCI is the premier DRDO Laboratory spearheading the design, development and delivery of state-of-the-art avionics systems for the entire Indian missile development programmes.

[http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-08-25/india/41445539\\_1\\_agni-v-missile-agni-v-second-test-firing](http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-08-25/india/41445539_1_agni-v-missile-agni-v-second-test-firing)

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Russia & India Report (RIR) – India

## India all set to Lease a Second Nuclear Submarine from Russia

*Sources say New Delhi is ready to pay a billion dollars for a 10-year lease, but Moscow is demanding a higher amount*

Issue No. 1072, 27 August 2013

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By Rajeev Sharma, specially for RIR  
August 27, 2013

India is all set to acquire a second nuclear submarine on lease from Russia. The two sides have had preliminary discussions and a serious push is expected when Indian Defence Secretary RK Mathur meets his Russian counterparts during his visit to Moscow next week.

The idea had germinated in the Indian strategic establishment long before the Russian-built electric-powered submarine INS Sindhurakshak got sunk at its moorings in Mumbai naval dockyard on August 14.

Now with the Sindhurakshak practically gone forever and the Indian submarine fleet having been constricted to just 13 – of which only 7 or 8 can be operational at a given time – the Indian idea has acquired a greater steam. The loss of INS Sindhurakshak seems to have catalysed the Indian defence establishment to come up with ideas that would ensure that India's undersea warfare capabilities are actually bolstered, and not dented.

Indian Defence Secretary RK Mathur is all set to lead an Indian tri-service delegation to Moscow for the next round of High Level Monitoring Group on Defence. Mathur will be reaching Russia on September 1 for these crucial talks and the issue of taking on lease a second Russian nuclear submarine for the Indian defence forces will be very high on his agenda.

Sources say the Indian defence secretary will be negotiating with his Russian counterparts on many other agendas but his foremost talking point would inevitably veer around the subject of India acquiring the nuclear submarine on lease as it would provide New Delhi an immediate solution to deal with maritime threats in the neighbourhood.

The Russians are positively inclined to the idea of leasing a second nuclear submarine to India, according to sources. Actually, if this idea were to translate into reality, it would be the third nuclear submarine that the Russia would be leasing to India.

The first time it was then Soviet Union which had leased a nuclear submarine (named INS Chakra by the Indian Navy) way back in 1988. The lease at that time was only for three years and the Indians duly returned the vessel after the lease expired.

The second time India got on lease a nuclear submarine from Russia was a couple of years ago when India and Russia finalised the contract for it in 2011 and the Russian Nerpa class submarine was inducted into the Indian Navy last year as INS Chakra. The lease cost a billion dollars to India for a period of ten years.

The third lease, if it transpires (which it should given the political will from both the sides), should also be for a minimum of ten years. However, the lease values may be a bone of contention for the two sides. While the Indians are willing to shell out a billion dollars for taking on lease another nuclear submarine for a period of ten years, the Russians have jacked up the monetary value.

Moreover, the Russians have already conveyed to their Indian interlocutors that India cannot hope to get a nuclear submarine on lease from any other country. From India's point of view, though the Russian logic seems to be well in place but then other countries like France and the UK may be persuaded to lease a nuclear submarine given India's standing in the comity of nations currently.

The Indian strategic establishment seems quite upbeat on the idea of acquiring another nuclear submarine. The Indians have even named their probably acquisition as INS Chakra III.

[http://indrus.in/economics/2013/08/27/india\\_all\\_set\\_to\\_lease\\_a\\_second\\_nuclear\\_submarine\\_from\\_russia\\_28849.html](http://indrus.in/economics/2013/08/27/india_all_set_to_lease_a_second_nuclear_submarine_from_russia_28849.html)  
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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency



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## Russia to Unveil New Air Defense System at MAKS-2013

24 August 2013

MOSCOW, August 24 (RIA Novosti) – Russia’s Almaz-Antei corporation will showcase for the first time its newest S-350E Vityaz mid-range air defense system at the upcoming MAKS-2013 air show near Moscow, the company said.

The Vityaz, which is expected to replace the outdated S-300 systems, is superior to similar foreign models, according to Almaz-Antei statement released on Friday.

The new Russian system was reportedly shown to President Vladimir Putin during his June 19 visit to a St. Petersburg plant where it is being manufactured by the Almaz-Antei corporation.

The system has been in the works since 2007 and features advanced all-aspect phased array radar, a new mobile command post and a launcher carrying 12 vertical-launch missiles, which will use a variant of the 9M96 active radar homing missile, according to the company.

Almaz-Antei plans to hand over the system to the Russian Defense Ministry for testing before the end of 2013 and start deliveries to the Russian military next year.

The Vityaz will complement the Morfey, the S-400 and the S-500 air defense systems in the future aerospace defense network to engage targets at ranges from five to 400 kilometers, and at altitudes from five meters to near space.

[http://en.ria.ru/military\\_news/20130824/182940830/Russia-to-Unveil-New-Air-Defense-System-at-MAKS-2013.html](http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20130824/182940830/Russia-to-Unveil-New-Air-Defense-System-at-MAKS-2013.html)

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Santa Maria Times – Santa Maria, CA

## Missile Inspectors Visit Sites

By Janene Scully

August 24, 2013

Arms control inspectors from Russia were at Vandenberg Air Force Base this week to examine missile defense facilities.

The low-key inspection is occurring under New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty or New START, which was signed in 2010.

While past START inspections were announced upon arrival, officials are remaining mum about this examination, which reportedly falls under a controversial clause of the treaty.

“A scheduled exhibition related to the implementation of the New START Treaty is being conducted at Vandenberg AFB. We are not permitted to discuss the details of ongoing treaty implementation activities,” the Defense Department said in a written statement.

Under the original START pact from 1991, teams of arms control inspectors routinely visited Vandenberg. Likewise, U.S. teams inspected sites in the former Soviet Union to confirm the number of weapons matched what was reported.

Typically, those inspections — limited to Minuteman and retired Peacekeeper missile facilities on North Base — prompted an announcement from Vandenberg officials that an inspection was underway.

A conservative publication says the missile defense inspection falls under a special clause in New START that allows the Russians to check out former ICBM facilities converted for use by the missile-defense interceptors at Vandenberg.

New START took effect Feb. 5, 2011, and is set to expire 10 years later with one five-year extension possible. The treaty reportedly limits each side to 1,550 warheads deployed on 700 strategic missiles and bombers.

[http://santamariatimes.com/news/local/military/vandenberg/missile-inspectors-visit-sites/article\\_60c25fe2-0c81-11e3-b48a-0019bb2963f4.html](http://santamariatimes.com/news/local/military/vandenberg/missile-inspectors-visit-sites/article_60c25fe2-0c81-11e3-b48a-0019bb2963f4.html)

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Great Falls Tribune – Great Falls, MT

## **Security Forces Chief Removed: Malmstrom's Lynch Relieved of Command**

August 24, 2013

Malmstrom Air Force Base announced Friday that the 341st Security Forces Group commander has been relieved of command.

Col. David Lynch was relieved of his duties Thursday by 341st Missile Wing commander Col. Robert Stanley “due to a loss of confidence in Lynch’s ability to lead his group,” according to a news release.

Col. John Wilcox, Air Force Global Strike Command Security Forces Division director, will serve as an interim commander until a replacement is found. There is no timeline for selecting a new commander, according to the 341st Missile Wing Public Affairs Office.

The missile wing received an unsatisfactory rating this month during a Nuclear Surety Inspection, but the wing continues to remain certified to perform its mission, according to the release. The inspection happens every two years for bases that handle nuclear weapons.

The release states Lynch’s removal is not related to MAFB’s recent Nuclear Surety Inspection failure. But it added: “However, as the 341 MW prepares for a re-inspection, Stanley must have full confidence in the leadership ability of his commanders.”

According to Public Affairs, Lynch’s removal was not related to any misconduct.

Lynch did not meet the expectations of wing commanders, Public Affairs said.

MAFB spokesman Capt. Chase McFarland said Lynch will “transition to retirement.”

Lynch became commander of the 341st Security Forces Group in June 2012, after 37 years in the armed forces. He served in Grenada in 1983 and in Iraq in 2005 and 2010, according to the MAFB website.

During a portion of an exercise in one of the 13 major graded areas unrelated to the command and control of nuclear weapons, a team did not demonstrate the correct procedures. The inspector general failed the team on that exercise, which resulted in the unsatisfactory rating.

According to the news release, the Security Forces Group has more than 1,200 personnel and four squadrons.

It provides security protection for the 341st Missile Wing, 15 launch control centers and 150 intercontinental ballistic missile silos in 13,800 square miles of central Montana.

*Tribune Staff Writer Jenn Rowell contributed to this report.*

[http://www.greatfalls Tribune.com/article/20130823/NEWS01/308230031/Security-Forces-chief-removed-Malmstrom-s-Lynch-relieved-command?nclick\\_check=1](http://www.greatfalls Tribune.com/article/20130823/NEWS01/308230031/Security-Forces-chief-removed-Malmstrom-s-Lynch-relieved-command?nclick_check=1)

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R & D Magazine

## **Laser Fusion Experiment Yield Record Energy**

Source: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory

Tuesday, August 27, 2013

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In the early morning hours of Aug.13, 2013, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory's National Ignition Facility (NIF) focused all 192 of its ultrapowerful laser beams on a tiny deuterium-tritium filled capsule. In the nanoseconds that followed, the capsule imploded and released a neutron yield of nearly  $3 \times 10^{15}$ , or approximately 8,000 joules of neutron energy—approximately three times NIF's previous neutron yield record for cryogenic implosions.

The primary mission of NIF is to provide experimental insight and data for the National Nuclear Security Administration's science-based stockpile stewardship program. The experiment attained conditions not observed since the days of underground nuclear weapons testing and represents an important milestone in the continuing demonstration that the stockpile can be kept safe, secure and reliable without a return to testing.

This newest accomplishment provides an important benchmark for the program's computer simulation tools, and represents a step along the "path forward" for ignition delivered by the NNSA to Congress in December 2012.

Early calculations show that fusion reactions in the hot plasma started to self-heat the burning core and enhanced the yield by nearly 50%, pushing close to the margins of alpha burn, where the fusion reactions dominate the process.

"The yield was significantly greater than the energy deposited in the hot spot by the implosion," said Ed Moses, principle assoc. dir. for NIF and Photon Science. "This represents an important advance in establishing a self-sustaining burning target, the next critical step on the path to fusion ignition on NIF."

The experiment was designed to resist breakup of the high velocity imploding ablator (shell of the target capsule) that has degraded the performance of previous experiments by lowering compression of the target. To create this resistance, the laser power is turned up during the picket that occurs at the beginning of the laser pulse. This raises the radiation temperature in the foot or trough period of the pulse (hence the name "high-foot" pulse), increasing the stability of the ablator but reducing compression later in the implosion.

The high-foot campaign was born after systematically exploring possible causes for the shell breakup observed in a series of lower foot, more compressed experiments and developing hypotheses for how to address the issue.

"In the spirit of what Livermore is good at, this work was born out of the fierce competition of ideas of how to fix the problem, but then coming together as a team to move the best ideas forward," said Omar Hurricane, lead scientist on the campaign. "In this particular experiment, we intentionally lowered the goal in order to gain control and learn more about what Mother Nature is doing. The results were remarkably close to simulations and have provided an important tool for understanding and improving performance."

These promising returns were the result of a laser experiment that delivered 1.7 MJ of ultraviolet light at 350 TW of peak power. NIF is the world's largest and most energetic laser system, which has already pushed past its design specifications of 1.8 MJ and 500 TW, leaving headroom for more exploration of this idea. The campaign is the product of a strong collaboration between LLNL's NIF and Photon Science and Weapons and Complex Integration directorates.

<http://www.rdmag.com/news/2013/08/laser-fusion-experiment-yield-record-energy>

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S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies – Singapore  
OPINION/Commentary #157

## **The END of Strategic Stability in the Asia-Pacific?**

By Christine M. Leah and Bradley A. Thayer  
August 23, 2013

### **Synopsis**

*With the expansion of Chinese power, and with nuclear strategy and deterrence again becoming relevant to the Asian great-power game, the US requires a wider range of options to bolster Extended Nuclear Deterrence (END). As such, Washington may have to seriously consider re-introducing tactical nuclear weapons into the Pacific.*



## **Commentary**

THE UNITED States' strategy of Extended Nuclear Deterrence (END) is not what it should be. This is, perhaps, not very surprising, given that the degree of threat is the most important driver of such capabilities. As Soviet power waned, there was less need to devote the time and energy to extended nuclear deterrent capabilities.

Accordingly, the US was able to reduce its forces and take a "holiday" from the demands of END against a peer competitor. With the expansion of Chinese power, and with nuclear strategy and deterrence again becoming relevant to the Asian great-power game, a wider range of options to deal with any potential conflict is necessary. As such, Washington may have to seriously consider re-nuclearising its military and re-introduce medium-range and tactical nuclear weapons into its Pacific force.

### **Advancing US strategic interests**

America's superpower status depends on possessing a robust extended deterrent capability in order to advance its strategic interests, including providing for the security of its allies. Whilst the US has sufficient *strategic* nuclear forces on-hand, these need to be supplemented by smaller nuclear forces that broaden the ladder of conflict escalation. Such smaller US nuclear forces no longer exist in Asia, after President George H.W. Bush withdrew US tactical nuclear weapons from the region in the early 1990s. Today, the Asia-Pacific military balance is shifting, and a posture that does not allow for flexibility of response undermines the credibility of US END.

Extended nuclear deterrence, a seemingly simple task, is still difficult to achieve. It involves convincing a challenger that the consumer of END represents a vital interest to the defender; there should be no doubt that the "assuror" is resolute in protecting its potentially threatened friends and allies. The strength of END, however, rests first and foremost on its credibility - basic deterrence, second strike capabilities, assured destruction, first use (even if officially denied), targeting flexibility, etc. – and especially on its war-fighting abilities as they relate to the spectrum of strategic warfare, escalation control, and escalation dominance.

The ability and willingness to "fight" a nuclear war, or at least control both conventional and nuclear escalation, falls into that logic. As such, a certain level of conventional capabilities and, in particular, the *regional* deployment of tactical nuclear capabilities are needed to prevent an automatic escalation to the strategic nuclear level.

### **Need for credible US END posture**

The growth of Chinese military power will require a credible US END posture to reassure its friends and allies, to prevent destabilising nuclear proliferation, and ameliorate the intense security competition in Asia. Chinese military thought suggests that Beijing does not see nuclear weapons as solely a small, minimal deterrent but as useable forces to be employed at the right time against the US. China is expanding its nuclear and missile forces, and these are increasingly capable of threatening Japan – including Okinawa - and Guam.

Recent reports also suggest China is on the verge of having a credible sea-based nuclear capability, with five submarines capable of launching JL-2 nuclear-armed missiles with a range of several thousand kilometres.

Whilst the numbers for 2013 are omitted from this year's report, the assessment of the Defence Intelligence Agency is that China's nuclear arsenal consists of roughly 50-75 ICBMs, including the silo-based DF-5, the road-mobile DF-31 and DF31-A, and the DF-3. As of 2012, China is said to have 75-100 Medium-Range Ballistic Missiles (MRBMs), 5-20 Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs), and 1000-2000 Ground-launched Cruise Missiles (GLCMs).

### **Asia's future resembling Europe's past?**

Consequently, if US END is to be credible, Asia's future may yet need to resemble Europe's past. As the front line of conflict gets closer to the consumers of extended deterrence, the supplier (i.e., the US) will also need to become more intimate. American deterrence looks a lot better if the US has physical valuables on one's territory: troops, weapons, bases, facilities. Europe, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Thailand all understood this during the Cold War, and both the American and Australian governments acknowledge that deployed forces make an unambiguous





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statement about US commitment and priorities, and complicate the planning of any prospective belligerent in the region.

Beijing has, of course, one important advantage over Washington, and that is the fact that China is not a party to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Under the provisions of this treaty, the US cannot deploy ground-launched ballistic missiles with a range of 500 to 5000 kilometres. Given Russia's own concerns about the possible military implications of rising powers in Asia, Washington and Moscow might be able to strike a deal to revise the provisions of the treaty so that it better reflects and helps deal with the emerging nuclear reality in the Asia-Pacific.

It would not, therefore, be unrealistic for the US and its Asian allies to seriously reconsider the possibility of forward deploying short-range nuclear forces in the region. The Armed Services Committee of the US House of Representatives actually raised this possibility last year. At the very least, Washington could redeploy tactical nuclear weapons systems aboard some of its attack submarines and aircraft carriers, without necessarily specifying which ones.

END as a concept and a policy is all very well when allies are not worried about their security. But unless the eagle has talons ready for when push comes to shove, then that security assurance isn't really going to fly.

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<http://www.rsis.edu.sg/publications/Perspective/RSIS1572013.pdf>

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The Boston Globe  
OPINION/Columnist

## US Nuclear Weapons Poised for Catastrophe

By James Carroll, Globe Columnist

August 26, 2013

IT WAS bad enough when, last April, 17 US Air Force missile officers were relieved for dereliction of duty at the Minuteman III base at Minot, N.D. A commander there decried "rot" in the force that controls the most sensitive tripwire in the nuclear arsenal. The Minot missile wing is made up of squadrons named "Vulgar Vultures," "Gravehaulers," and "Wolf Pack."

The good news last spring, according to an Air Force spokesperson at the time, was that the sister missile wing at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Wyoming was rated "excellent." Its squadrons have slightly less puerile names: "First Aces," "Red Dawgs," and "Farsiders." But the second shoe fell this month when the Malmstrom officers, too, failed a safety and security inspection. "This unit fumbled," said Lieutenant General James M. Kowalski, chief of the Global Strike Command. "The team did not demonstrate the right procedures." The general declined to elaborate, lest he reveal "potential vulnerability" in America's intercontinental ballistic missile force.

But the vulnerability is there for all to see. The United States nuclear establishment has been wracked with problems for years. These are especially acute among thousands of officers at the controls of three bases where 450 Minuteman III missiles stand in buried silos on high alert.

In 2008, a Pentagon review found "a dramatic and unacceptable decline" in the way the Air Force was handling its nuclear mission. Senior officials were cashiered. Their replacements were ordered to fix the problems. They have failed to do so. What should be the most rigorously disciplined element in the US military is repeatedly found unworthy of its awesome responsibility. That's a wake-up call, yet the nation sleeps on.

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In-house investigators have defended the proficiency of the Minuteman III force, blithely faulting mere “attitude” problems in the ranks of the missile control officers. Their once prestigious work has been marginalized as the role of nuclear weapons in national security strategy is de-emphasized. Investigators sympathetically explain that missile officer morale is hurt by damaged career prospects, and by the interminable routine of maintaining readiness for an all-out missile launch that no one actually expects. With President Obama emphasizing the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, as he did again in Berlin last June, the Americans in charge of existing nuclear weapons can feel like specimens caught in amber.

But, of course, fossils are indeed what they are, and their morale problem is itself the warning. Sitting at bunkered controls awaiting the order to turn the key that will spark an irrational and wholly unjustifiable armageddon is absurd, and the key-holders know it. Minuteman missiles embody the madness of America’s post-Cold War nuclear posture, even while these aging land-based weapons are irrelevant to the still-necessary posture of deterrence. Officers’ “attitude” problems show they are attuned to the senselessness of their situation. The hair trigger is harebrained.

And supremely dangerous. The missiles are positioned in easily targeted fixed silos across a wide-open western landscape. They are poised for launch on moments’ notice less because of strategic necessity than because they are bound by the rule of “use them or lose them.” The scenario was conceived 50 years ago, under circumstances that are now forgotten. The land-based ICBMs, more than nuclear armed submarines or aircraft, have become the thread from which hangs the sword of accidental holocaust. Fail-safe “right procedures” are the only protection — yet current crews are proving incapable of following those procedures. Fail-safe is the joke that is not funny.

President Obama’s Berlin speech, a call to negotiate far lower levels in the number of nukes, was rebuffed by Moscow, but there is no need for negotiations to deal with the outmoded, redundant, and dangerous Minuteman III missile force. In 1991, George H.W. Bush exercised what was called “presidential nuclear initiatives” to unilaterally cut thousands of outmoded and dangerous short- and intermediate-range weapons from the nuclear arsenal. The Soviet Union matched the reductions. Obama could cite the precedent, and do likewise with the Minuteman IIIs, even more outmoded elements of the nuclear force. Budget sequestration is forcing a recasting of the Pentagon’s priorities, and the many billions spent on a senseless, perilous, and militarily useless nuclear behemoth is obviously the place to begin.

*James Carroll writes regularly for the Globe.*

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2013/08/26/nuclear-tipped-missiles-posed-for-nightmare-holocaust/VZ3KQOUsAUFm4qfuchjmCI/story.html>

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The National Interest – Washington, D.C.

OPINION/Commentary

## **India's Nuclear Blunder**

By Zachary Keck

August 26, 2013

It’s fashionable in Western security circles to proclaim that nuclear weapons never make a state more secure. This is hogwash. Nuclear weapons, more so than any other single factor, are why Western Europeans doesn’t speak Russian. Similarly, it is inconceivable that India would not have responded militarily to the 2008 Mumbai attack if Pakistan did not have a nuclear arsenal, just as it is inconceivable that the United States would’ve invaded Iraq in 2003 if Saddam Hussein had built the bomb.

But just because nuclear weapons can solve some security problems, doesn’t mean that a nuclear-armed state enjoys total security. Like any other military capability, nuclear weapons are particularly well suited for some contingencies, and particularly ill-suited for others.

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Not surprisingly, given the amount of time and resources involved in building a nuclear weapon, most states that have acquired them had compelling reasons to do so. There are exceptions to this, however. One particularly obvious example is South Africa, which—under the apartheid government—built a small nuclear arsenal in an apparent attempt to coerce its former Western allies to intervene on its behalf against a security threat it struggled to define.

But South Africa is just the most bizarre example. Indeed, it has become exceedingly clear that India's decision to acquire nuclear weapons was a strategic blunder. Unlike their South African counterparts, Indian leaders built the bomb with a very specific security threat in mind. Unfortunately, nuclear weapons have proven ill-suited for addressing that security threat, while India's pursuit of atomic weaponry has opened up new challenges that wouldn't have existed otherwise.

Although a number of domestic and ideational factors were essential to India's success in building nuclear weapons, China was the initial impetus behind the decision to pursue them.

Specifically, it was the PLA's swift rout of Indian military forces in the 1962 border war and its nuclear test two years later that provided the initial rationale for India's decision to militarize its nuclear program. Little had changed over three decades later when India carried out its first "nonpeaceful" nuclear tests in 1998. In explaining his decision to order those tests in a letter to Bill Clinton, Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote just days after the tests:

*I have been deeply concerned at the deteriorating security environment, specially the nuclear environment, faced by India for some years past. We have an overt nuclear weapon state on our borders, a state which committed armed aggression against India in 1962. Although our relations with that country have improved in the last decade or so, an atmosphere of distrust persists mainly due to the unresolved border problem.*

Indeed, the 1962 border war fundamentally changed India's approach to foreign policy. Before the war, India under Jawaharlal Nehru pursued an idealistic foreign policy that prioritized the non-aligned movement and third-world solidarity. Nehru's China policy was especially friendly, as summed up by the slogan "Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai" or "Indians and Chinese are brothers." These were not empty words; Nehru took a number of notable actions to win over Maoist China. For example, Delhi boycotted the San Francisco Peace Treaty in 1951 in protest of the decision to not give Taiwan back to China. Nehru also acquiesced to China asserting its dominance over Tibet in the first half of the 1950s.

China's attack on India in 1962 was therefore particularly humiliating to Nehru, and significantly undermined his legacy on foreign policy matters. A few days after the war commenced, Nehru himself would tell Parliament of the pre-war era: "We were getting out of touch with reality in the modern world and we were living in an artificial atmosphere of our own creation." He passed away less than two years later, "'broken' by China's betrayal," as some have put it. Two years after Nehru's death, his daughter Indira Gandhi took over the premiership, and in doing so ushered in a more pragmatic era in Indian foreign affairs.

Even before then, in the immediate aftermath of the war, India took concrete steps to strengthen its security. For example, in February 1963 parliament decided to double the 1963-1964 defense budget; that year defense made up 28 percent of the national budget compared to just 15 percent earlier in the decade. Furthermore, the following year India unveiled a five-year plan for national defense that called for once again doubling spending by 1969.

Two years after India's humiliating loss in the 1962 border war China tested its first nuclear weapon. This sent shock waves throughout India's elites. Shortly after the test, for instance, Homi J. Bhabha—the father of India's nuclear program—told the nation, "With the help of nuclear weapons...a state can acquire what we may call a position of absolute deterrence even against another having a many times greater destructive power under its control."

Even the more dovish Indian leaders who rejected Bhabha's nuclear advocacy did so by arguing that India could secure a nuclear guarantee from either the Soviet Union or the United States. India would pursue this approach during Lal Bahadur Shastri's time as premier, and even into Gandhi's term. Ultimately, it failed to secure such a guarantee.

Instead, Moscow and Washington reacted to China's test by pursuing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT). Delhi unsuccessfully lobbied against the NPT, and following its passage conducted a "peaceful nuclear explosion" in 1974.



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Yet nearly four decades after India's first nuclear test, the absolute deterrence Bhabha promised remains elusive. Although Sino-Indo ties have improved since the 1970s, this was wholly unrelated to India's nuclear arsenal. More importantly, India and China's border row remains unresolved, and the PLA has repeatedly violated the Line of Actual Control (LoAC) that serves as the *de facto* border. In fact, according to one scholar, the "Indian military has recorded nearly 600 incursions over the last 3 years alone."

Where Bhabha's analysis went wrong was in failing to specify what kind of threat China posed to India. As was clear at the time, and remains true today, China holds limited objectives along the border with India. This was evident from how it prosecuted the war. Although Beijing struck with heavy force, and quickly annihilated India's defending troops, it didn't push this advantage further into India proper. Instead, it announced a unilateral ceasefire.

China's limited objectives significantly limits the utility of India's nuclear arsenal in defending the border. Contrary to Bhabha's assertion, nuclear weapons only provide an absolute deterrent against large scale attacks. As India's interactions with China have demonstrated, low-level violence between nuclear-armed adversaries is wholly possible. And, since low-intensity operations are sufficient for China to achieve its goals vis-à-vis the border with India, Delhi's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal has done little to address the security threat that first led it to seek the bomb.

Making matters worse, India's decision to pursue the bomb also had the unintended consequence of weakening its position relative to Pakistan by pushing Islamabad to acquire its own nuclear deterrence. More so than nearly any other historical case, Pakistan's nuclear weapons program followed George Shultz's dictum that "proliferation begets proliferation." Delhi had every reason to foresee this outcome. Indeed, as early as 1965 Pakistani President Z.A. Bhutto had declared: "If India builds the bomb, we will eat grass or leaves, even go hungry, but we will get one of our own."

In the bilateral Indo-Pakistani relationship, Islamabad derives far more utility from its nuclear deterrent than India does from its own. Like China, Pakistan has limited goals towards India, which center on Kashmir. Armed with nuclear weapons, Islamabad has been able to pursue its objectives in the Kashmir by supporting militants in the area, as well as allowing Pakistani troops to directly stir up trouble along the border. Even more troubling, nuclear weapons have emboldened Pakistan to support proxy attacks deep inside the Indian homeland.

A Pakistan without nuclear weapons would never act in such reckless a manner given the prevailing power asymmetry. After all, far more so than during the Cold War, India's conventional superiority vis-à-vis Pakistan is undisputable. Besides its greater development and technological expertise, India's population is around seven times larger than Pakistan's, its economy nearly nine times richer and its landmass about four times bigger. Without nuclear weapons, Pakistan would have to be extremely judicious in its provocations, given the potential there would be for India to launch a devastating conventional attack that would undermine the Pakistani military's self-perpetuated myth that it protects the country.

With nuclear weapons, however, they have been able to continue to provoke with impunity. India has struggled to find a way to respond to these provocations, in a way that it didn't struggle to before the two sides acquired nuclear weapons.

In short, by failing to properly pair its military capabilities to its political objectives, India spent billions of dollars and decades of time undermining its security.

*Zachary Keck is associate editor of The Diplomat.*

<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/indias-nuclear-blunder-8946>

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The Chicago Tribune  
OPINION/Editorial

## **Editorial: Syrian showdown**

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*A sharp military retaliation by the U.S. and its allies will show not only the Syrian strongman but other dictators around the globe that they cannot deploy such terrible weapons with impunity.*

August 26, 2013

Hundreds of victims streamed into Damascus-area hospitals last week, all suffering from the same symptoms. They trembled. They had blurred vision. They gasped for breath. They convulsed.

And then many died.

Those are the classic signs of chemical weapons poisoning, and they provide a graphic reminder of why these horrific weapons of mass destruction were banned after World War I by the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

"Only 4 percent of all battlefield deaths in the Great War had been caused by gas, yet the foul nature of those deaths meant that gas held a particular terror in the public imagination," writes historian Andrew Roberts in a Wall Street Journal op-ed. "Since 1925, it has only been countries that are recognized to be outside the bounds of civilization that have taken recourse to it."

Those include Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 1987 and 1988 and Benito Mussolini's Italy in a campaign against Ethiopia from 1935 to 1941.

The U.S. moved closer Monday to a declaration that President Bashar Assad's Syria joined that shameful list last week.

On Monday, Secretary of State John Kerry said that the use of chemical weapons in Syria was "undeniable."

"Moreover, we know that the Syrian regime maintains custody of these chemical weapons. We know that the Syrian regime has the capacity to do this with rockets. We know that the regime has been determined to clear the opposition from those very places where the attacks took place. And with our own eyes, we have all of us become witnesses," Kerry said.

President Barack Obama has warned Assad that if he "made the tragic mistake" of deploying chemical weapons, "there will be consequences and you will be held accountable."

There are strong indications that America and its allies are preparing to launch military action against Assad. Such action may not be imminent. Kerry said the U.S. is assessing more information about the chemical weapons attack and will release that information "in the days ahead."

If a response is launched, one possibility is the use of cruise missiles against the heart of Assad's forces. Any response will be most effective if mounted by a large coalition of NATO allies and Arab nations.

Realistically, there are limits to the damage the U.S. and its allies can inflict from airstrikes alone. Such attacks may weaken Assad and help the rebels regain lost ground. They could give the rebels enough leverage to push Assad to the negotiating table.

They would, without doubt, demonstrate that the use of chemical weapons invites a punishing response.

This is vital. A sharp military retaliation by the U.S. and its allies will show not only the Syrian strongman but other dictators around the globe that they cannot deploy such terrible weapons with impunity. That anyone who dares use these weapons *will* pay a steep price. That the world will not shrug and look away.

The war in Syria has killed more than 100,000 people with conventional weapons and sent more than a million people fleeing from their homes. Many Americans may ask, if the U.S. did not intervene to stop those deaths, why should it act now?

Because the use of chemical weapons is a red line drawn not just by the U.S. but by the entire world, to protect civilians. It may seem like a strange distinction: Someone killed by a conventional rifle or bomb is just as dead as someone killed by a chemical weapon.

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But the damage from chemical agents, like nuclear weapons, cannot be finely targeted. Such weapons can kill wide swaths of people in a matter of seconds or minutes. They pose a special risk to civilians. These are weapons that many governments possess but few ever imagine using.

The 1925 Geneva Protocol said the prohibition against chemical weapons "shall be universally accepted as part of International Law, binding alike the conscience and the practice of nations." Note that phrase: *The conscience and the practice of nations*. For nearly a century, nearly every government has abided by this treaty, forswearing use of such weapons. Were that to change, should such weapons be regularly deployed, wars across the globe would be even more destructive and ruinous.

Assad may have calculated that he will not be caught or punished for a war crime. That he can win his civil war by unleashing ever-escalating horrors upon innocent civilians, including women and children. The world needs to show him that he is wrong.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-edit-syria-20130827,0,3712675.story>

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The Diplomat – Japan  
OPINION/The Editor

## **Obama's Most Dangerous WMD Precedent in Syria**

By Zachary Keck  
August 27, 2013

The harrowing pictures and videos of likely chemical weapon victims in Syria last week has prompted the Obama administration to reconsider the use of military force against the Bashar al-Assad regime.

As noted before, this would place the U.S. in uncharted territory as it has never attacked a country before because it had used chemical weapons.

This is one reason proponents of the use of force hold their position. By attacking Syria today the U.S. would be deterring other regimes in the future from deciding to use chemical weapons. And by further devaluing chemical weapons, Washington just may convince the last remaining hold outs to sign and implement the UN Chemical Weapons Convention.

Then again, nations in possession of chemical weapons may draw another conclusion from the U.S. handling of Syria's alleged use of chemical weapons. Specifically, almost exactly a year ago President Obama called chemical weapons a redline and game changer, implying that their use would prompt the U.S. to take a much more hostile stance to the Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Then, when allegations that Assad's regime had used small amounts of chemical weapons (which the U.S intelligence community confirmed) surfaced, President Obama ordered only symbolic action be taken in response. If the White House now responds with armed force it would send a message to other regimes that the U.S. does not have a zero tolerance policy towards chemical weapons per se, only towards the large scale use of them. Assuming that a future regime believes it can judge what level of chemical weapons use the U.S. will tolerate, they may decide to use them.

This would no doubt be unfortunate. Still, it's not the most dangerous weapons of mass destruction precedent the Obama administration has unwittingly set in its handling of the Syria case. That is reserved for how it responded when the first allegations of chemical weapons use surfaced.

When reports first emerged that chemical weapons had been used in Syria, the Obama administration immediately began trying to walk back the president's earlier comments that this constituted a redline. One way they did this was by insisting on an investigation into who exactly had used them. Did Bashar al-Assad himself order a chemical weapon

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attack or was it a rogue general on the ground? What about the opposition? Answering this question was vital before deciding how to respond, the administration said.

This made perfect sense in the context of Syria. After all, reports at the time suggested that the Assad regime had begun mixing the chemical weapons and dispersing them ahead of time, giving rogue generals the option of using them without Assad's approval. Furthermore, the Syrian opposition is made up at least in part by al-Qaeda operatives who we have every reason to believe would use chemical weapons if they believed it would advance their cause.

But the larger precedent this set is likely to far exceed the Syrian case in terms of its importance. What the U.S. was basically saying was that its decision to retaliate against a WMD attack would take into account who had authorized the attack, instead of merely which country's weapons were used.

This has enormous implications that are best illustrated in the nuclear context. Fortunately for humanity's sake, and despite concern over a decline in this capability, nuclear forensics has advanced enough to make nuclear attribution a relatively easy affair. That is, God forbid, were a nuclear weapon ever used, the U.S. and its allies would be able to identify which country had made the weapon.

Especially with so many nuclear weapon states out there, nuclear attribution is an essential component of nuclear deterrence. If a country knows the U.S. can identify them as the source of a nuclear weapon, they will know that they will be punished severely if they launch use their arsenal.

Importantly, nuclear attribution also helps ensure that nuclear armed states have adequate command and control measures in place, and don't share their nuclear arsenal with other countries or sub-state actors. That is because the assumption up to now has been that if a rogue general in say, North Korea, launched a nuclear weapon without Kim Jong-Un's approval, the U.S. would hold North Korea as a whole accountable for that attack. Similarly, if a terrorist group used a nuclear weapon that was built by Pakistan, Islamabad would also be at least one place the U.S. would retaliate against.

The Obama administration's handling of the Syria situation could lead some states to doubt this assumption. After all, when chemical weapons were used in Syria, the White House suggested that its response would be dependent on who gave the orders to use the weapons. This implies that in handling WMD attacks, Washington will differentiate between who built the weapons and who used them.

In a perfect world, this would in fact be the preferable option. But attributing fissile material to a country's nuclear program is a lot more manageable than attributing the decision to use a nuclear weapon to a precise individual. As a result, the U.S. must make absolutely clear that when it comes to nuclear weapons, it holds the right to make zero distinction between who ordered a nuclear attack and who built the weapon that was used.

This will send the proper signal to nuclear weapon states that they must make absolutely sure that they maintain control of their nuclear weapons and have measures in place to prevent their unauthorized launch. This should be obvious but with nuclear weapons we can't leave anything to chance. This is especially true in light of Syria.

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<http://thediplomat.com/the-editor/2013/08/27/obamas-most-dangerous-wmd-precedent-in-syria/>

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