



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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Articles & Other Documents:

Featured Article: [U.S. Has Bombs Designed to 'Vaporize' Chemical, Biological Weapons](#)

1. [Putin Demands Proof as Obama Gains Support for Syria Strike](#)
2. [Military Operation in Syria Can Provoke Unstable Nuclear Situation](#)
3. [As Syria Deteriorates, Neighbors Fear Bioweapons Threat](#)
4. [Russia Warns U.S. of Endangering 'Nuclear Safety' in possible Syria Strike](#)
5. [Rouhani Shifts Responsibility of Iran-Powers Nuclear Talks to Foreign Ministry](#)
6. [IAEA is Looking Into Russian Warning on Syria Nuclear Site](#)
7. [U.S. Failure to Strike Syria May Embolden N. Korea, Hagel Says](#)
8. [China Proposes Informal Six-Party Meeting](#)
9. [S Korea Raises Possible Syria-N Korea Weapons Link](#)
10. [Military Claims NPA Has 'Biological Weapons'; Reds Laugh off Claim](#)
11. [Two Koreas Restore Military Hotline amid Cross-Border Talks](#)
12. [Obama, Chinese President Huddle on North Korea's Nuclear Issue at G-20](#)
13. [Room for Improvement in Pakistan's Nuke Arsenal Security: US](#)
14. [Nuclear Programme Cornerstone of Pakistan's Defence: NCA](#)
15. [Russia Does Not Rule Out Backing Military Action in Syria – Putin](#)
16. [DoD Developing Mobile Units to Neutralize Chemical Weapons Materials](#)
17. [Despite Resistance, Senate Panel Passes Syria Strike Measure](#)
18. [Top US Lawmaker Rejects Syria Talks With Russian Counterparts](#)
19. [U.S. Has Bombs Designed to 'Vaporize' Chemical, Biological Weapons](#)
20. [Report: Conventional Prompt Global Strike Weapons Face Challenges](#)
21. [Picture of Mistrust](#)
22. [Is Democracy an Insufficient Force Against Weapons of Mass Destruction?](#)
23. [Pakistan and the Nuclear Nightmare](#)
24. [Column: The Taboo Against Chemical Weapon Use Is Worth Defending](#)
25. [Ballistic Missiles Make War More AND Less Likely](#)

Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats and countermeasures. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

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Issue No.1075, 06 September 2013

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Arab News – Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Putin Demands Proof as Obama Gains Support for Syria Strike

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

4 September 2013

DAMASCUS: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday demanded “convincing” proof that ally Syria used chemical weapons, even as he softened his tone toward the West ahead of this week’s G20 summit.

Putin’s comments came as US lawmakers began rallying behind President Barack Obama’s plan to launch military strikes against Syria over a suspected poison gas attack outside Damascus that killed hundreds last month.

As Obama seeks to cobble together an international coalition to back his plans for military intervention, France was Wednesday to hold an emergency parliamentary debate from 1400 GMT on the Syrian crisis.

Putin, in an interview apparently aimed at presenting a more pragmatic face to the world ahead of the G20 summit in Saint Petersburg, said he did not exclude Russia agreeing to US-led military strikes if it was proven Syria’s regime had carried out the August 21 attack.

But, he told state-run Channel One television, the West still needed to put forward watertight proof of the circumstances of the attack.

“If there is evidence that chemical weapons were used, and by the regular army... then this evidence must be presented to the UN Security Council. And it must be convincing,” Putin said.

If there was clear proof of what weapons were used and who used them, Russia “will be ready to act in the most decisive and serious way,” he added.

He stressed that it would be unacceptable for the West to go ahead with military action against the regime of Bashar Assad without the assent of the UN Security Council, where Russia has veto-wielding permanent membership.

UN experts have taken samples from the sites of the alleged attacks, which are now being analyzed. However their mandate is only to determine if chemical weapons were used at all, not who may have used them.

Since the start of the Syrian conflict, the United States has frequently lamented Moscow’s support for Assad and its decision to block any UN Security Council action to censure him or to use military action against his regime.

With relations between the Kremlin and the White House considered as brittle as they have been since the end of the Cold War, no official bilateral meeting is planned between Obama and Putin at the G20 summit.

A White House official said on Wednesday however that the two presidents are expected “to have an opportunity to speak on the margins of the various meetings of the G20.”

Since British lawmakers voted down a bid to take any military action against Assad’s regime, Washington has found a strong partner in France but is seeking other allies.

France has vowed to “punish” Assad and this week released an intelligence report pinning the blame for the chemical attack on the regime.

The issue was to be debated by the French parliament in what is expected to be a fiery session from 1400 GMT as pressure mounts on President Francois Hollande to follow Washington’s lead and put the matter to a vote.

Hollande is under no obligation to obtain parliamentary approval for action, but with public opinion deeply skeptical of military strikes many lawmakers are clamouring for a vote.

Ahead of the debate, Syria’s parliament speaker urged France “not to hasten” to act against his war-torn country.

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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“Syrian lawmakers are determined to get to the truth... and we ask you not to hasten to commit a heinous, senseless crime, as you must steer the French republic away from the war path and toward diplomacy,” Jihad Lahham said in a statement.

Launching his international foray, Obama arrived Wednesday in Sweden for a two-day visit likely to revolve around Syria, before traveling on to Russia.

Obama stepped off Air Force One at Stockholm’s Arlanda Airport fresh from efforts in Washington to secure bipartisan support for military strikes against Syria.

After a passionate plea by US Secretary of State John Kerry not to succumb to “armchair isolationism,” lawmakers in Washington on Monday drafted a bipartisan measure imposing a 90-day deadline for any US military intervention.

It would also ban the deployment of any US troops on the ground in Syria, where fighting now in its third year has claimed more than 110,000 lives.

“This is not the time for armchair isolationism. This is not the time to be spectators to a slaughter. Neither our country nor our conscience can afford the cost of silence,” Kerry told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

His words were echoed by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who said a US refusal to act after Obama had clearly set chemical weapons use as a “red line” would undermine America’s credibility abroad.

Obama has deferred any military action in Syria, seeking Congressional approval at a vote scheduled for September 9.

The US Senate committee, after a nearly four-hour hearing, re-worded the resolution put forward by the White House to restrict it to “limited and tailored” use of the United States Armed Forces against Syria, according to a copy of the draft obtained by AFP.

The Syrian army, meanwhile, has retaken control of the strategic town of Ariha in northwest Syria after 10 days of intense bombing and clashes, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

<http://www.arabnews.com/news/463521>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

ITAR-TASS News Agency – Russia
4 September 2013

Military Operation in Syria Can Provoke Unstable Nuclear Situation

MOSCOW, September 4 (Itar-Tass) - Those who are planning a military operation in Syria can face an unstable and difficult nuclear situation, said Andrei Kokoshin, chair of the world politics faculty of Moscow State University.

Speaking at a news conference at the Itar-Tass news agency on Wednesday, Kokoshin said: “Unfortunately, Washington is not aware of it and does not look at future consequences of using force. We should imagine the effects of aggression unleashed by the U.S. and other countries, which may back it.”

He referred to Iran, which “is Syria’s ally. Iran watches the situation and has difficult relations with other countries of the region, particularly with Saudi Arabia”.

“It is not a secret that Iran develops its nuclear program, which may be used for military purposes.” “A state starts developing nuclear energy when a political decision is taken. Iran has such chances,” he said.

“I believe that the military action in Syria can enhance the position of those who seek to create their own nuclear weapons. It is rather possible that Saudi Arabia would like to follow Iran’s example,” Kokoshin said.

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“Saudi Arabia has no own industrial potential to create nuclear weapons. But it is well-known that Saudi Arabia provided several billions of dollars to create a nuclear bomb in Pakistan,” the expert said, adding that Saudi Arabia “maintain very close relations with Pakistan.”

<http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c32/864246.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

As Syria Deteriorates, Neighbors Fear Bioweapons Threat

By Joby Warrick

September 4, 2013

Last month’s alleged chemical attack near Damascus has refocused attention on Syria’s 30-year-old biological weapons research and raised concerns about whether the government there could activate an effort to make a weapon.

Syria’s bioweapons program, which U.S. officials believe has been largely dormant since the 1980s, is likely to possess the key ingredients for a weapon, including a collection of lethal bacteria and viruses as well as the modern equipment needed to convert them into deadly powders and aerosols, according to U.S. and Middle Eastern officials and weapons experts.

This latent capability has begun to worry some of Syria’s neighbors, especially after allegations that the regime of President Bashar al-Assad used internationally banned chemical weapons against civilians in an Aug. 21 attack.

Top intelligence officials in two Middle East countries said they have examined the potential for bioweapons use by Syria, perhaps as retaliation for Western military strikes on Damascus. Although dwarfed by the country’s larger and better-known chemical weapons program, Syria’s bioweapons capability could offer the Assad regime a way to retaliate because the weapons are designed to spread easily and leave few clues about their origins, the officials said.

“We are worried about sarin, but Syria also has biological weapons, and compared to those, sarin is nothing,” said a senior Middle Eastern official, who like several others interviewed for this report agreed to discuss intelligence assessments on the condition that his name and nationality not be revealed. “We know it, and others in the region know it. The Americans certainly know it.”

U.S. officials acknowledge the possibility of a latent bioweapons capability but are divided about whether Syria is capable of a sophisticated attack.

Historically, at least a half-dozen countries have manufactured biological weapons, including the United States, Britain and Russia, all of which abandoned their programs. Syria is one of the few countries that Western intelligence agencies suspect continued some research.

Syria appeared to publicly acknowledge its biological weapons capability in an unusual statement in July 2012 by the country’s Foreign Ministry spokesman, Jihad Makdissi. Responding to Western reports about Syria’s chemical weapons stocks, Makdissi said in a televised interview that the regime would never use “any chemical and biological weapons” inside Syria. He said the Syrian military was safeguarding “all stocks of these weapons.”

It was the first direct acknowledgment by Syria that such stockpiles might exist, and Makdissi’s voluntary mention of biological weapons took many analysts by surprise. Shortly afterward, the spokesman retracted his remarks in a statement posted on Twitter, saying Syria had no chemical or biological weapons of any kind.

But other governments, including the United States, have long believed that Syria had developed at least a rudimentary biological weapons capability along with its massive stockpile of chemical munitions.

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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A report prepared for Congress this year by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence concluded that Syria possesses a “longstanding biological weapons program,” adding that parts of it “may have advanced beyond the research and development stage, and may be capable of limited agent production.”

Other intelligence assessments have been more cautious, citing a lack of hard evidence that Syria’s fledgling efforts progressed to “weaponizing” pathogens for use in military rockets and shells. But some officials and independent experts say military biological weapons are not needed to launch a bioterrorist attack on civilians.

“We know that they went at least as far as research and development,” Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said in an interview. “That means they’re far enough along to have capabilities. It doesn’t take a huge leap to get from there to having the ability to weaponize or finding some other way to deliver.”

Syria’s early research on cultivating strains into weapons has been confirmed by multiple Western governments, with U.S. intelligence agencies tracking the country’s efforts through the 1970s and 1980s to counter arch-rival Israel’s nuclear weapons and conventional military dominance. In 2001, a declassified CIA assessment asserted that it was “highly probable” that Syria was developing an “offensive BW capability.” U.S. assessments have frequently cited the Scientific Studies and Research Center in Damascus, a military-run laboratory previously linked to covert programs for research on chemical and nuclear weapons.

A 2008 profile of Syria’s unconventional weapons programs by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies concluded that its military had developed “probable production capacity for anthrax and botulism, and possible other agents.” The report said delivery systems for such weapons were within the grasp of Syria’s armed forces, which have long possessed missiles and rockets tipped with warheads.

“So is the use of proxy or covert delivery,” stated the report, written by Anthony Cordesman, one of the center’s strategic analysts.

Although little is publicly known about the state of Syria’s bioweapons program today — including whether it is active — the country has gained new capabilities in recent years through massive government investments in its pharmaceutical industry. Much of the equipment acquired by Syria’s military laboratories in recent years is regarded as “dual-use” and can be used either for weapons or legitimate research, said Jill Bellamy van Aalst, a scientist and a biodefense consultant to NATO and the European Union.

Van Aalst, who has studied Syria’s weapons facilities for a decade as part of her research for a book, says the country’s bioweapons program, whatever its size, is capable of serious harm. Many of the basic elements have been in place for years, she said, including what she described as a full complement of lethal human and animal strains, from neurotoxin producers such as botulinum to the family of orthopox viruses such as camelpox and cowpox, both cousins to the microbe that causes smallpox.

“You don’t stockpile biological weapons anymore, because today it’s all about production capacity — and in Syria the production capacity is quite substantial,” van Aalst said. “The dual-use nature makes it very cost-effective. In down times, you can use the equipment for public health purposes, knowing you can ramp it up at any time. These are very agile programs.”

Other weapons experts view Syria’s biomedical expansion as intriguing but not necessarily alarming. “Syria has a chemical weapons program, so anything they do is suspect,” said Jeffrey Lewis, a weapons expert at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, Calif. “It’s easy to see the devil behind every woodpile. But I suspect there’s probably not a lot there.”

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/as-syria-deteriorates-neighbors-fear-bioweapons-threat/2013/09/04/ed5b47e0-10ad-11e3-85b6-d27422650fd5_story.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)



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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

Russia Warns U.S. of Endangering ‘Nuclear Safety’ in possible Syria Strike

Thursday, 5 September 2013

Al Arabiya with Agencie France-Presse (AFP)

Russia warned the United States on Wednesday that any military intervention in Syria without U.N. approval would represent an act of “aggression” and that such action could have far-reaching nuclear security implications.

Russia’s foreign ministry spokesman said on Wednesday that military intervention in Syria could have “catastrophic” consequences for nuclear security.

“The escalation of the situation around Syria is of particular concern since action against the country could reach sensitive targets from the viewpoint of nuclear safety,” said Ministry Spokesman Alexander Lukashevich.

“If weapons fell on a mini-reactor in the suburbs of Damascus it could have catastrophic consequences: a possible contamination of land by highly enriched uranium and other radioactive materials,” he said, adding it would be “impossible to guarantee control of nuclear material.”

The statement came as Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded “convincing” proof that his Syrian counterpart Bashar al-Assad was responsible for using chemical weapons against his own people.

Russian news agencies quoted Putin saying it would be unacceptable for the West to go ahead with military action against Damascus without U.N. Security Council approval.

“Only the U.N. Security Council can give approval for the use of force against another state,” Putin told members of the board of human rights in the Kremlin prior to a meeting of the G-20 in Saint Petersburg.

“Any other ways to justify the use of force against another sovereign and independent state are unacceptable and cannot be qualified as anything other than aggression.

“But Syria, as we know, does not attack the United States, it can therefore be no question of defense.”

Earlier in the afternoon, Putin suggested that Russia could approve military strikes against Syria if strong evidence was presented by the West regarding the use of chemical weapons.

“If there is evidence that chemical weapons were used, and by the regular army... then this evidence must be presented to the U.N. Security Council. And it must be convincing,” Putin said.

If there was clear proof of exactly what weapons were used and who used them, Russia “will be ready to act in the most decisive and serious way,” he added.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/world/2013/09/05/Russia-warns-U-S-of-endangering-nuclear-safety-in-possible-Syria-strike.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

FARS News Agency – Iran

Thursday, September 05, 2013

Rouhani Shifts Responsibility of Iran-Powers Nuclear Talks to Foreign Ministry

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani shifted the leading role in nuclear talks with the world powers from the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) to the country’s foreign ministry.

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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The information center of the Iranian government said president Rouhani in a decree on Thursday has entrusted the responsibility for negotiations with the Group 5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) to the foreign ministry.

In later remarks to FNA on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham confirmed the report, but said the SNSC will continue coordinating the talks, although the foreign ministry will have the lead.

Yesterday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Tehran would announce the names of its negotiators for the upcoming talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in the coming days.

"The members of the negotiating team have been specified and their names will be announced by the president's office," Zarif told reporters on Wednesday.

Last week, Zarif urged the G5+1 to show political will when negotiating with Iran in future.

"They should create a political will on their side and decide to resolve this issue," Zarif said last Tuesday night.

"We hope that we will see this change in the behavior of the G5+1 and the two or three countries which more than others pursue the policy of pressure against Iran, that they want to settle the problem through negotiations," he added.

Zarif underlined that settlement of Iran's nuclear issue means that the Iranian nation's right to use the civilian nuclear technology, including uranium enrichment, will be recognized and the international community's concerns will be obviated.

Iran and the Group 5+1 have held several rounds of talks on a range of issues, with the main focus being on Iran's nuclear energy program.

The two sides wrapped up their latest round of negotiations on April 6 in the Kazakh city of Almaty. An earlier meeting had been held in the city on February 26-27.

Meantime, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi announced on Monday that Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will resume their talks in Vienna, Austria in late September.

"Iran and the IAEA have agreed to hold their new round of talks in Vienna on September 27," Salehi said.

The AEOI chief expressed hope that the upcoming talks would bear tangible results.

Iran and the IAEA last met in Vienna on May 15. The meeting, which was the 10th of its kind, was presided by former Iranian envoy to the UN nuclear watchdog agency Ali Asqar Soltaniyeh and IAEA deputy Director-General Herman Nackaerts.

Iran appointed Reza Najafi as its new envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency on Saturday.

Soltaniyeh served as Iran's permanent representative at the UN nuclear watchdog for nearly a decade. Soltaniyeh's mission came to an end on September 1.

Najafi, a career diplomat, has served as deputy director-general of the foreign ministry's political and international bureau and head of the ministry's disarmament office.

The US, Israel and some of their allies claim that Iran is pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program, with Washington and the European Union using the unfounded allegation as a pretext to impose sanctions on Iran.

Tehran strongly rejects the groundless claim over its nuclear activities, maintaining that as a committed signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it is entitled to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920614000701>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)



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The Jerusalem Post – Israel

IAEA is Looking Into Russian Warning on Syria Nuclear Site

Moscow calls on UN nuclear watchdog to assess risk of hit to Syrian research reactor that contains radioactive uranium.

By Reuters

6 September 2013

VIENNA - The UN nuclear watchdog has received a request from Russia to assess the impact if a missile were to hit a small Syrian reactor and is considering the issue, the Vienna-based agency said on Friday.

Russia said this week a military strike on Syria could have catastrophic effects if the research reactor near Damascus that contains radioactive uranium was struck, "by design or by chance".

It called on the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to urgently assess the risk as the United States considers military action to punish Syria's government for an alleged gas attack.

"I can confirm that the IAEA has received a formal request from the Russian Federation. The agency is considering the questions raised," IAEA spokeswoman Gill Tudor said in an e-mail, giving no further detail.

Russia said nearby areas could be contaminated by highly enriched uranium and that it would be impossible to account for the nuclear material after such a strike, suggesting it could fall into the hands of people who might use it as a weapon.

Nuclear experts say the so-called Miniature Neutron Source Reactor (MNSR), a type of research reactor that is usually fueled by highly enriched uranium, is small and that any radioactive fallout may pose a local hazard.

The amount that such a reactor usually holds, about 1 kg of highly enriched uranium, is less than the 25 kg that would be sufficient to build a bomb, they say.

One Western diplomat in the Austrian capital played down the issue. "It is very unlikely that something like this happens, and the quantity which is in this research reactor is very small," the envoy said. "I have the feeling that the agency does not perceive this as a very grave concern."

Moscow has been the most powerful ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad, shielding him from tougher UN resolutions and warning that any Western military attack on Syria would raise tension and undermine efforts to end the country's civil war.

In 2007, Israel allegedly bombed a desert site in Syria that US intelligence reports said was a nascent, North Korean-designed reactor geared to producing plutonium for nuclear weapons. Syria said the site, at Deir al-Zor, was a conventional military facility.

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/IAEA-is-looking-into-Russian-warning-on-Syria-nuclear-site-325403>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Bloomberg News

U.S. Failure to Strike Syria May Embolden N. Korea, Hagel Says

By Sam Kim & Indira A.R. Lakshmanan

September 3, 2013

A failure to punish Syria over its alleged use of Sarin gas against civilians could embolden other rogue states such as North Korea, which is already stockpiling chemical weapons, U.S. officials said.

North Korea "maintains a massive stockpile of chemical weapons that threatens our treaty ally the Republic of Korea and the 28,000 U.S. troops stationed there," Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told a Senate hearing on Syria in

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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Washington yesterday, referring to South Korea. U.S. allies “must be assured that the United States will fulfill its security commitments.”

His comments came hours after the publication of a South Korean Defense Ministry report concluding that North Korea had the capability to launch a missile tipped with a nuclear warhead, technology that the U.S. has contended was years away. North Korea threatened first strikes against South Korea and the U.S. in March after a February nuclear test prompted a tightening of United Nations sanctions against Kim Jong Un’s regime.

North Korea has tested three nuclear devices and is expanding its weapons development. President Barack Obama, who has called on North Korea to renounce nuclear weapons, said in April the country didn’t have the ability to put an atomic weapon on a missile.

International Pressure

North Korea’s nuclear programs will not make the country more secure, said a State Department official who asked not to be named according to department policy. The only way for North Korea to achieve security and prosperity is by complying with its international obligations. Until then, pressure against the regime “will only intensify,” the official said.

The U.S. called upon North Korea to return to the six-party talks aimed at curtailing the country’s nuclear program, the spokesman said. The North officially abandoned the negotiations in 2009 and conducted its second nuclear test the same year.

The South Korean report presented yesterday to lawmakers said the North can turn its nuclear devices into weapons at any time. After details of the study became public, the Defense Ministry toned down the findings, saying in an e-mailed statement that the report meant the possibility of a North Korean ballistic missile being paired with a nuclear warhead was “high.”

“The report is an acknowledgment that the North has the capability to put nuclear bombs on at least short-range missiles,” Yang Uk, a senior researcher at Seoul’s Korea Defense and Security Forum think tank, said by phone.

Easing Tensions

North Korea eased tensions with the South last month when it agreed to open an industrial complex jointly run with South Korea. That park was shuttered in April after the stricter sanctions of its nuclear program and during joint South Korean-U.S. military drills. The North has since agreed to resume the reunions of families separated by the Korean War.

The North “continues to implement its plan to develop nuclear missiles while focusing on inducing the mood for dialogue and creating conditions for developing the economy,” the Defense Ministry report said.

Kim Jong Un’s regime marks the 65th anniversary of his family’s control of North Korea on Sept. 9. The North often uses such events to make a public display of its latest weapons.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-09-04/u-s-failure-to-strike-syria-may-embolden-n-korea-hagel-says.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Korea Herald – South Korea

China Proposes Informal Six-Party Meeting

September 5, 2013

BEIJING (Yonhap News) — China has proposed holding an informal meeting this month with senior officials from six nations involving the long-stalled negotiations aimed at ending North Korea’s nuclear weapons program, a diplomatic source said Thursday.



The proposal was made in August before China's chief nuclear envoy, Wu Dawei, held talks in Pyongyang last week with his North Korean counterpart, Kim Kye-gwan, the source said on the condition of anonymity, in another indication Beijing is stepping up its efforts to re-start the six-party talks.

Organized by the China Institute of International Studies, affiliated with China's foreign ministry, the proposed date of Sept. 18 for the so-called Track 1.5 meeting in Beijing coincides with the eighth anniversary of a 2005 agreement when the six nations achieved their first breakthrough in resolving the North's nuclear standoff during the multilateral dialogue.

"The Chinese side offered a Track 1.5 meeting with senior diplomats from the six-party member states, including North Korea in the wake of the eighth anniversary of the Sept. 19 Joint Declaration," the source said, referring to the 2005 agreement.

China's foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei confirmed that the CIIS will "hold a seminar on Sept. 18 to review the past course of the six-party talks."

During a regular press briefing on Thursday, Hong said the Beijing seminar was organized to "celebrate the eighth anniversary of the Sept. 19 Joint Declaration as well as the 10th anniversary of the six-party talks." He declined to say who would join the meeting.

During the talks between Wu and Kim in Pyongyang, North Korea agreed to send its nuclear envoy, Ri Yong-ho, to the proposed meeting, according to the source.

China has also asked South Korea, the U.S. and Japan to send their chief nuclear negotiators to the informal six-party talks, but the three nations were cold to the Chinese proposal because North Korea has shown no signs of giving up its nuclear ambitions, the source said.

"It is uncertain whether South Korea, the U.S. and Japan would send their chief nuclear envoys to the proposed meeting in Beijing," the source said.

"At stake is whether North Korea would change its stance on denuclearization, but there are no such signs," the source said.

"Under the circumstance, it is difficult for the Chinese efforts to make a significant achievement."

Hong, the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman, urged nations to resume the six-party talks.

"The six-party talks remain an important platform for the realization of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and also an important mechanism for the improvement of relations between relevant parties," Hong said.

"We hope that our relevant parties will stick to the six-party talks and solve relevant issues through dialogue," Hong said.

North Korea, which has conducted three nuclear tests since 2006, walked out of the six-party talks that also involve South Korea, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia in early 2009. Following its third nuclear test in February this year, Pyongyang has said its nuclear program is not negotiable.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula, however, have been eased in recent months as North Korea has reached out to Seoul and Washington, expressing its willingness to rejoin the six-party talks.

South Korea, the U.S. and Japan have called on North Korea to demonstrate its seriousness about denuclearizing through concrete action as a precondition to resuming the six-party dialogue with them.

North Korea has expressed its willingness to rejoin the six-party talks but has shown no signs of accepting such conditions set by Seoul and Washington. Instead, North Korea has insisted on being recognized as a nuclear power.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130905000955>



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[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Channel NewsAsia – Singapore

S Korea Raises Possible Syria-N Korea Weapons Link

South Korea's defence ministry on Thursday called for fresh attention to North Korean chemical weapons, suggesting such arms might have been traded between Pyongyang and Syria.

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

05 September 2013

SEOUL: South Korea's defence ministry on Thursday called for fresh attention to North Korean chemical weapons, suggesting such arms might have been traded between Pyongyang and Syria.

The warning comes amid international outrage over the Syrian regime's alleged use of chemical weapons against its own people.

"We believe there has been a chemical weapons connection between North Korea and Syria," Defence Ministry spokesman Kim Min-Seok told reporters.

Any link between North Korea and the attacks in Syria could further isolate Pyongyang, which is prohibited from international sales of its weapons under UN sanctions for conducting nuclear and missile tests.

Suspicious over chemical weapons trade between Pyongyang and Damascus have been raised in the past.

Concerns have grown since South Korea intercepted a North Korean shipment of protective gear on a vessel sailing near the southern port of Busan in 2009, Kim said.

Later that year Greece also seized almost 14,000 suits that provide protection from chemical weapons on a North Korean ship they believed was headed to Syria.

"Protective gear related to chemical weapons was traded," Kim said, declining to disclose details.

Japan's Sankei Shimbun newspaper reported last month that North Korea tried to export gas masks to Syria this spring.

Acting on the tip from the United States, Turkey intercepted a vessel carrying rifles, pistols, ammunition and gas masks, it said.

The North is believed to have up to 5,000 tonnes of chemical weapons deliverable by artillery or missile, Kim said.

South Korea supports international sanctions against Syria because the regime's use of chemical weapons, if confirmed, could give the wrong signal to North Korea, he said.

A report by a UN Security Council panel of experts said in June that Pyongyang had continued to import and export items relevant to missile and nuclear programmes.

<http://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/asiapacific/s-korea-raises-possible/803090.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Inquirer Mindanao – Philippines

Military Claims NPA Has 'Biological Weapons'; Reds Laugh off Claim

By Allan Nawal, and Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao

Thursday, September 5th, 2013

DAVAO CITY – The military insisted Thursday that the New People's Army now uses "biological weapons" to further its goal of toppling the government.

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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In a press statement, the Eastern Mindanao Command based here said laboratory examination of unexploded land mines seized from NPA camps in Southern Mindanao showed the presence of “deadly toxin” and bacteria “not usually found in steel rebars and nails used as shrapnel.”

The NPA unit operating in the region laughed off this claim, calling it “malicious and wildly concocted military propaganda.”

Quoting military doctor Victor Dato, the Eastmincom said laboratory tests showed that the shrapnel extracted from the unexploded land mines and from a soldier wounded by shrapnel in recent explosion had “Enterobacter cloacae and Streptococcus agalactiae.”

These types of bacteria are “commonly found in the human intestine,” the statement added.

“This proves that the NPA contaminate these landmines with human or animal feces. We have already had a patient who is a former NPA member who attested to this practice when making land mines,” the Eastmincom statement reported Dato as saying.

The Inquirer tried but failed to reach Dato for elaboration on the alleged use by the rebels of bacteria and deadly toxin in the manufacture of land mines.

In an e-mailed statement, Rigoberto Sanchez, NPA spokesperson for Southern Mindanao, said “to insinuate that the NPA is engaged in a highly criminal biological and chemical warfare is, indeed, pure invention.”

While he did not deny the use of land mines during the past 40 years, Sanchez said these were the “command-detonated explosives made up of traditional, non-biologically toxic ingredients.”

He said the NPA was also not using banned land mines, not in the recent land mine explosion that wounded seven soldiers in Pantukan in Compostela Valley.

“The seven AFP troops who were hurt in a bomb blast in Pantukan Wednesday were hit by command-detonated explosives and not the falsely reported pressure-type bombs that are banned by international laws like the Ottawa Treaty,” Sanchez said.

In parrying Sanchez’s denial, the Eastmincom said a former rebel had testified to the use of biological agents in the manufacture of the bombs.

“Even more daunting is how one of the patients, who was seemingly stable all of a sudden entered a state of shock. We found his leg to be in a severe state of infection, with blackening flesh. A similar pattern was exhibited by another land mine victim who died recently, whose flesh quickly deteriorated and blackened despite heavy antibiotic treatment,” the Eastmincom added.

While fecal bacteria were found on the shrapnel, the Eastmincom said the blackening of the victims’ flesh was the result of “possibly a deadlier venom ingredient.”

“This is no longer the act of a human being. This is simply inhuman. The risk to innocent lives of these land mines has just been increased exponentially by what has been discovered in these findings,” Col. Randolph Cabangbang, Philippine Army spokesman, said from his office in Fort Bonifacio.

Cabangbang also rejected Sanchez’s statement that the NPA was using the “permitted” type of land mines. He said the land mines the rebels used were those that explode when stepped on or pressed by a vehicle’s tire.

Maj. Jake Thaddeus Obligado, civil-military operations chief of the 10th Infantry Division, said the NPA’s use of land mines should be stopped and the rebels should be pressured “to finally respect the ban on these inhuman devices.”

Obligado said the NPA had signed the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL), which “absolutely prohibits the use of land mines.”



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He said despite the signing of the agreement, the NPA continues to use the banned explosives. This year alone, Obligado said, the rebels were linked to 21 land mine explosions.

<http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/481655/military-claims-npa-has-biological-weapons-reds-laugh-claim-off-as-propaganda>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Korea Herald – South Korea

Two Koreas Restore Military Hotline amid Cross-Border Talks

September 6, 2013

South and North Korea restored a military hotline along the west coast on Friday to coordinate cross-border travel as the two sides work toward reopening a shuttered joint industrial park.

Shortly before 11:00 a.m., a South Korean liaison officer at the Customs, Immigration and Quarantine office spoke with his North Korean counterpart over the phone to test the telephone lines, a senior official at the defense ministry said.

The military hotline had been used to provide safe passage for South Korean businessmen visiting the joint complex in Gaeseong before Pyongyang severed the communication line in March amid heightened tensions on the Korean Peninsula following the North's third nuclear test the previous month.

South and North Korean officials on Thursday agreed to restore the military hotline as they seek to reopen the Gaeseong industrial park, which has remained idle since April after the North unilaterally pulled its 53,000 workers from the complex.

In June, the two Koreas restored a Red Cross hotline in the truce village of Panmunjom.

There are military hotlines connected to the North on the eastern coast and western coast used by officials of both sides, but Pyongyang cut the eastern line in 2011 after Seoul's suspension of tours to the North's Mount Kungang following the shooting death of a South Korean tourist by a North Korean guard in 2008. (Yonhap News)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130906000520>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times

Obama, Chinese President Huddle on North Korea's Nuclear Issue at G-20

By Dave Boyer, *The Washington Times*

Friday, September 6, 2013

President Obama and the president of China discussed North Korea's nuclear weapons program Friday during a private meeting at the G-20 summit in Russia.

Mr. Obama met with Chinese President Xi Jinping as world leaders prepared to wrap up their two-day conference in St. Petersburg. White House aides said there was no breakthrough on pressuring North Korea to halt its nuclear program, but the Obama administration is encouraged by China's cooperation on the subject.

"China has been a cooperative partner in underscoring the importance of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula," said Ben Rhodes, White House deputy National Security Council adviser.

Another NSC official, Evan Medeiros, said North Korea must show a willingness to discontinue its nuclear program before China and the U.S. will engage in talks with Pyongyang.

"We don't support resumption of talks simply for the sake of a resumption of talks," Mr. Medeiros said. "Until North Korea demonstrates that it's serious about denuclearization, until it recommits to denuclearization, until it signals that it's serious about some kind of dialogue or negotiation process, we're really not interested."

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<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/sep/6/obama-chinese-president-huddle-north-koreas-nuclea/>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Times of India – India

Room for Improvement in Pakistan's Nuke Arsenal Security: US

Press Trust of India (PTI)

September 5, 2013

WASHINGTON: The US has said that there is room for improvement in Pakistan's nuclear weapons security apparatus but exuded confidence that Pakistani government is well aware of its responsibilities and has secured its nuke arsenal accordingly.

"While there is room for improvement in the security of any country's nuclear programmes, Pakistan has a professional and dedicated security force that fully understands the importance of nuclear security," the state department spokeswoman, Jen Psaki, said.

Welcoming Pakistan's statement that it is fully committed to the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation, Psaki said the US "is confident that the Government of Pakistan is well aware of its responsibilities and has secured its nuclear arsenal accordingly".

The US recognises that Pakistan is fully engaged with the international community on nuclear safety and security issues, and is working hard to ensure its strategic export controls are in line with international standards, she said.

"Pakistan is a state party to both Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention and is a partner in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism," Psaki said.

Psaki said that US was having regular discussions with the Pakistani government on a range of issues including nuclear security, counter-terrorism and fostering a stable Afghanistan and would continue to work together to find ways to make the Pakistan and the region more secure, stable and prosperous.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/pakistan/Room-for-improvement-in-Pakistans-nuke-arsenal-security-US/articleshow/22313522.cms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The News International – Pakistan

Nuclear Programme Cornerstone of Pakistan's Defence: NCA

September 05, 2013

RAWALPINDI: The National Command Authority (NCA) Thursday reaffirmed the centrality of the Pakistan's nuclear programme for the defence of the country, reposing full confidence in 'Pakistan's robust' nuclear Command and Control structure and all security controls related to strategic assets of the country.

According to an official statement, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif chaired a meeting of NCA which was attended by all members of the NCA, the Federal Ministers of Finance and Interior, the Advisor to the Prime Minister on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and the Services Chiefs.

"The NCA reaffirmed the centrality of Pakistan's nuclear programme for the defence of the country. The NCA reposed full confidence in Pakistan's robust nuclear Command and Control structure and all security controls related to strategic assets of the country," the statement said.

The NCA paid rich tribute to various scientists as well as security and policy level officials and diplomats who are associated with Pakistan's strategic programme.

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The NCA reviewed developments at the regional level and reiterated that, as a responsible nuclear weapon state, Pakistan would continue to adhere to the policy of Credible Minimum Deterrence, without entering into an arms race with any other country. Pakistan, however, would not remain oblivious to the evolving security dynamics in South Asia and would maintain a full spectrum deterrence capability to deter all forms of aggression.

The NCA also reviewed the developments at the international level and took note of the discriminatory trends and policies that could have serious implications for Pakistan's national security and the global non-proliferation regime.

The NCA reiterated that while maintaining its principled position on various arms control and non-proliferation issues, Pakistan would continue to oppose any arrangement that is detrimental to its security and strategic interests. As for the proposed Fissile Material (Cut-Off) Treaty [FM(C)T], Pakistan's position will be determined by its national security interests and the objectives of strategic stability in South Asia.

The meeting underscored Pakistan's commitment to play its due part as a mainstream partner in the global non-proliferation regime, and renewed Pakistan's keen interest in joining the multilateral export control regimes on non-discriminatory basis. Pakistan has the requisite credentials for full access to civil nuclear technology for peaceful purposes to meet its growing energy needs for continued economic growth.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/article-116882-Nuclear-programme-central-for-countrys-defence:-NCA->

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Does Not Rule Out Backing Military Action in Syria – Putin

4 September 2013

MOSCOW, September 4 (RIA Novosti) - Russia does not rule out agreeing to a military operation in Syria, provided Damascus' responsibility for using chemical weapons is proven - but only with United Nations approval, President Vladimir Putin said in an interview broadcast Wednesday.

In an interview with the Associated Press and Russia's state TV network Channel 1, the Russian president stressed there is still no "exact information" about what exactly happened in Syria, or even that chemical weapons were used at all.

"It's still not clear whether chemical weapons or simply some kind of harmful chemical substances were used," Putin said. He stressed it was necessary to await the conclusions of the UN inspection team that was sent to Syria at the end of last month to investigate the sites of alleged chemical weapons attacks.

The Russian president described video footage of dead children allegedly killed by the chemical attacks as "horrible," but said the footage did not provide any answers to his questions about who was responsible. He claimed the video could have been produced by militants linked to al-Qaeda, "which has always been noted for its brutality."

Putin said if the UN analysis revealed "clear proof" that the Syrian government was responsible for a chemical weapon attack, Russia "would be ready to act in the most decisive and serious manner," but stressed that military action could only be taken against Damascus following a joint decision by the UN Security Council.

"Any other methods to justify use of force against an independent and sovereign state are unacceptable, and can only be qualified as aggression," he said.

Putin also confirmed that Russia has supplied some components for S-300 air defense missile systems to Syria, but has suspended completion of those deliveries.

"If we see that they [Syria] are taking some steps related to the violation of existing international standards, then we'll consider how to act in the future, including supplying sensitive weapons in certain regions of the world," he told the Associated Press.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130904/183157113/Russia-Does-Not-Rule-Out-Backing-Military-Action-in-Syria--Putin.html>

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Defense News

DoD Developing Mobile Units to Neutralize Chemical Weapons Materials

September 4, 2013

By MARCUS WEISGERBER

WASHINGTON — Should the Pentagon need to destroy stockpiles of chemical weapons, it can do so with new mobile systems that can neutralize and destroy the materials, according to defense officials.

The Field Deployable Hydrolysis System (FDHS) is designed to destroy chemical warfare agents in bulk and can be up and running within 10 days of arriving on site.

“We are acquiring some ability to deal with chemical materials should we be in a position where we have to do that,” Frank Kendall, the Defense Department’s undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics, said Wednesday during a presentation at the IDEEA-sponsored COMDEF conference in Washington.

Syria’s alleged use of chemical weapons against civilians has dominated the debate of whether the US should conduct a punitive strike. While there has been talk of conducting targeted strikes, the Obama administration has said it does not intend to use ground forces.

The Pentagon has been overseeing the destruction of US chemical weapons since the late 1990s. DoD destroys stockpiles of chemical materials such as mustard gas at several facilities in the US. But the new system can eradicate chemical weapon materials on site.

“The Department of Defense recently developed a transportable chemical weapons destruction system designed to fill a gap in the national capability to destroy U.S. bulk chemical agents, wherever they are found,” Jennifer Elzea, a DoD spokeswoman, wrote in an email Wednesday.

The new system was built at the U.S. Army’s Edgewood Chemical and Biological Center in Maryland. The center oversees the handling and processing of recovered munitions in the US and overseas.

The system is “designed to convert chemical agents into compounds not usable as weapons,” Elzea wrote. “Neutralization is achieved by mixing the agent with water and other chemicals and heating it.”

A crew of 15 people is needed to operate the system at any given time, according to the Army. The system can neutralize between five and 25 metric tons of chemicals per day, depending on the material.

<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20130904/DEFREG02/309040029/DoD-Developing-Mobile-Units-Neutralize-Chemical-Weapons-Materials>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Kansas City Star

Wednesday, September 04, 2013

Despite Resistance, Senate Panel Passes Syria Strike Measure

By James Rosen and William Douglas, McClatchy Washington Bureau

Even as Congress took a step Wednesday toward authorizing the use of force in Syria, a growing number of lawmakers spoke out strongly against a U.S. military strike and warned that it would draw the United States into an escalating conflict that could spread throughout the Middle East.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved a resolution for a likely missile attack against Syrian President Bashar Assad in retaliation for his alleged use of chemical weapons two weeks ago, but it prohibited any involvement of U.S. troops.



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“It gives the president the wherewithal to have the limited military action that he’s asked for in order to punish Assad for the use of chemical weapons and the killing of innocent civilians,” said Sen. Robert Menendez, a New Jersey Democrat who chairs the Senate panel. “At the same time, it is tightly tailored by having a timeframe in it and by certainly prohibiting American boots – troops – on the ground.”

But the Senate committee’s 10-7 vote indicated deep divisions within Congress that President Barack Obama still must overcome in his quest to demonstrate to Syria, Iran and other nations that the use of chemical or nuclear arms is unacceptable.

“I don’t see a clear-cut or compelling American interest,” said Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky. “I see a horrible tragedy, but I don’t see that our involvement will lessen the tragedy. I think it may well make the tragedy worse. I think more civilian deaths could occur. I think an attack on Israel could occur. I think an attack on Turkey could occur. I think you could get more Russian involvement and more Iranian involvement. I don’t see anything good coming of our involvement.”

Before voting on the resolution, the Senate panel defeated Paul’s amendment stating that the Constitution doesn’t grant the president power to launch a military attack without congressional approval unless the country faces a direct threat.

Seven Democrats – Menendez, Sens. Barbara Boxer of California, Benjamin Cardin of Maryland, Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, Christopher Coons of Delaware, Richard Durbin of Illinois and Tim Kaine of Virginia – and three Republicans – Sen. Bob Corker of Tennessee and Arizona Sens. John McCain and Jeff Flake – voted for the resolution. Five Republicans – Paul and Sens. James Risch of Idaho, Marco Rubio of Florida, Ron Johnson of Wisconsin and John Barrasso of Wyoming – and two Democrats – Christopher Murphy of Connecticut and Tom Udall of New Mexico – voted against it. Sen. Edward J. Markey, D-Mass., voted “present.”

“This idea that a military response is the only way to respond to what is happening in Syria is just not true,” Rubio said. “Instead, our response should have always been, and still should be, a multifaceted plan to help the Syrian people get rid of Assad and replace him with a secular and moderate government they deserve.”

White House Press Secretary Jay Carney praised the Senate committee for passing the resolution.

“We commend the Senate for moving swiftly and for working across party lines on behalf of our national security,” Carney said.

Obama’s top Cabinet officers shuttled between the Senate panel and a key House committee as lawmakers warned them that only a narrow resolution authorizing a limited U.S. military engagement in Syria has a chance of passing Congress.

Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, painted a bleak scenario that he said could result from attacking Assad but leaving him in power.

“Assad fights back,” Poe said at a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. “He doesn’t just take it. He retaliates against us or lets Iran retaliate against Israel – all because we have come into this civil war. So they shoot back. Then what do we do once Americans are engaged? Do we escalate or do we not fight back?”

Rep. Michael McCaul, another Texas Republican, spoke in still darker tones in worrying about chemical arms being used against Americans by Syrian rebels, who he said are increasingly dominated by radical Islamists from other countries.

“My greatest concern when we look at Syria is, who’s going to fill the vacuum when the Assad regime falls, which we know it will?” McCaul said. “Who is going to fill that vacuum? Are the rebel forces, the extremists, going to take over not only the government, but these (chemical) weapons? Because they are the ones most likely to use these weapons against Americans in the United States.”

Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the Pentagon is prepared for any consequences of a U.S. strike, which is likely to come from Navy destroyers delivering Tomahawk cruise missiles from the eastern Mediterranean Sea near Syria.

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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"I can never drive the risk of escalation to zero, but I think that the limited purpose, the partnerships we have in the (Middle East) region, the contributions we'll seek from others, begin to limit that risk," Dempsey said.

In Stockholm, Obama said his now-famous red line, which Assad allegedly crossed when hundreds of people were killed in an Aug. 21 chemical weapons attack outside Damascus, was set earlier by Congress in ratifying the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention and passing legislation in 2004 imposing sanctions on Syria.

"Congress set a red line when it ratified that treaty," Obama said at a news conference with the Swedish prime minister. "Congress set a red line when it indicated in a piece of legislation titled the Syria Accountability Act that some of the horrendous things that are happening on the ground there need to be answered for."

While some lawmakers rallied to support a military response to Assad's alleged use of chemical weapons, others criticized it and said they would vote against congressional authorization.

"Iraq is as violent today as any time in its history, and Afghanistan is as poor and corrupt as it's always been," said Rep. Brian Higgins, D-N.Y. "The American people are sick and tired of war. It's time to nation-build in America and invest in the growth of the American economy."

In testimony to the House panel, Secretary of State John Kerry was more categorical than he'd been a day earlier before the Senate committee in ruling out any possibility of using American troops in Syria.

<http://www.kansascity.com/2013/09/04/4457540/syria-war-measure-passes-senate.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Top US Lawmaker Rejects Syria Talks With Russian Counterparts

5 September 2013

WASHINGTON, September 5 (RIA Novosti) – A top US lawmaker has declined a Russian request for a meeting between US and Russian lawmakers to discuss how to address the burgeoning crisis in Syria, a spokesman said Thursday.

But a Russian embassy spokesman said plans for a visit next week by a delegation of members of both chambers of the Russian parliament and efforts to organize meetings of some kind were still on track despite the rejection.

Responding to emailed questions, a spokesman for John Boehner, the speaker of the House of Representatives, said Boehner "did decline" the proposal, transmitted by the Russian embassy, for US lawmakers to meet with their Russian counterparts to discuss Syria.

The spokesman, Brendan Buck, did not respond to questions about why Boehner rejected the proposal, which was described earlier this week by the US news agency Associated Press as a possible "publicity stunt" given Moscow's opposition to US military intervention in Syria which Boehner supports.

A similar proposal was also reportedly sent to Harry Reid, leader of the majority in the Senate. Reid's office did not immediately respond to questions on whether he would take up the proposal.

Maxim Abramov, a spokesman for the Russian embassy, said however that planning was continuing for a Russian legislative delegation to come to Washington.

"We are working on some meetings, but I can't tell you now when they will be or who will be the members of the delegation. We are still working on that," Abramov said.

He declined to comment on Boehner's refusal to meet with Russian lawmakers.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday expressed his support for the plan, calling it "timely and correct."

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Putin's comments came two days after US President Barack Obama said he would seek approval from Congress to launch a military strike on Syria in response to the apparent use of chemical weapons there last month in an attack Washington says was committed by Syrian government forces.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20130905/183190338/Top-US-Lawmaker-John-Boehner-Rejects-Syria-Talks-With-Russian-Counterparts.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Washington Times

U.S. Has Bombs Designed to 'Vaporize' Chemical, Biological Weapons

By Douglas Ernst, *The Washington Times*

Thursday, September 5, 2013

If the United States takes part in a military strike on Syria, the Air Force will likely be using bombs designed specifically for the destruction of chemical and biological weapons.

If successful, these weapons would "vaporize" stockpiles of deadly agents and stop any particles from being inadvertently released into the air.

Military.com reports that the U.S. Air Force has spent years developing "Agent Defeat Weapons," which are designed to target and destroy stockpiles of chemical or biological weapons.

An Air Force spokeswoman told the defense website that the munitions are named "PAW," or Passive Attack Weapon, and "CrashPad" (Prompt Agent Defeat), both of which would be delivered by F-15 or F-22 fighter jets and B-2 or B-1 bombers.

The CrashPad is a high-heat explosive bomb designed to incinerate chemical agents before they can be harmful, according to Defense Department official documents.

"When you hit something at high velocity, what you get is a flash of incredible heat in a confined area extremely fast. That can vaporize everything in small area," Daniel Goure, vice president of Virginia-based think tank Lexington Institute, told the website.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/sep/5/us-air-force-has-bombs-designed-specifically-destro/>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

National Defense Magazine

OPINION/Blog

Report: Conventional Prompt Global Strike Weapons Face Challenges

By Yasmin Tadjeh

September 3, 2013

The U.S. military has been putting research and development funding into conventional prompt global strike weapons, but more studies need to be done on the implications of actually using them, a new report released Sept. 3 said.

Conventional prompt global strike, or CPGS, would have the ability to rapidly deliver — within minutes or hours — warheads armed with explosives anywhere in the world. Military leaders are interested in using them against "fleeting targets," or in areas that are hard to reach, so-called anti-access/area denial scenarios.

While the United States already has the ability to quickly launch nuclear weapons, substituting them with conventional warheads is an idea that still being debated, said James M. Acton, a senior associate in the nuclear policy program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and author of the report, "Silver Bullet? Asking the Right Questions About Conventional Prompt Global Strike."

Issue No. 1075, 06 September 2013

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The program will have to contend with budget cuts, and officials still need to study the ramifications of a strategy that could unknowingly set off a nuclear war scare, he added.

Currently, three different types of CPGS weapons are being proposed. The first are land- or sea-based rocket-launched hypersonic gliders, also known as boost-glide weapons. The second are ballistic missiles launched from Ohio-class submarines. Lastly, there are air-launched hypersonic cruise missiles. The Pentagon currently favors the boost-glide systems, he said at a discussion of the report.

One of the biggest sticking points with CPGS is that a conventional weapon may be mistaken for a nuclear bomb, he said. Use of such weapons would likely "increase the risk of escalation in a conflict," said Acton.

And there are ambiguities in other, perhaps even more important areas, he said. If the United States used non-ballistic weapons, there would also be questions about where the weapon was heading, and what exactly it was going to hit, such as conventional or nuclear weapon arsenals. That uncertainty could have serious ramifications, he said.

"Highly maneuverable boost-glide systems — and to an extent hypersonic cruise missiles — have ambiguity about where they are going to land," Acton said. "Countries observing them can't know where they are going to land because they are maneuverable, so this creates a risk that the United States is targeting another country."

Employing such weapons could be a double-edged sword, Acton said.

"There is a paradox here," Acton said. "Conventional prompt global strike may make war less likely, but should war occur, it could make escalation much harder to control."

Countries such as Russia or China, if they thought the United States was going to strike their anti-satellite weapons, could become hostile, he said. At the same time, there is preliminary evidence that both countries believe CPGS weapons would be effective, therefore making them less likely to attack.

The Pentagon needs to do more research before the military begins the procurement process of these weapons, Acton said. Particularly in a time of constrained budgets, the Defense Department needs to develop a scenario-based acquisition process and seriously consider if non-CPGS weapons may be more effective.

"If you don't look at this in a scenario-based way, there is a high risk of buying very expensive weapons that are not found to be very useful, because they just don't have the capabilities of dealing with specific scenarios in which you want to use them," said Acton. "In a time of fiscal austerity, focusing resources on the threats you think are most likely to arise and on the most effective way of combating those threats is the most strategic way forward."

Yasmin Tadjeh is an Editorial Assistant at National Defense Magazine.

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=1247>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The News International – Pakistan

OPINION/Editorial

Picture of Mistrust

Thursday, September 05, 2013

From Print Edition

Pakistan has always insisted that its nuclear programme is safe, with multiple checks and balances to ensure against theft. Most of the security protocols were put in place after the AQ Khan network was revealed and despite our protestations of safety, our nuclear arsenal has been viewed with suspicion since then. We got a confirmation of just how strong that suspicion is when documents leaked by whistleblower Edward Snowden to The Washington Post revealed that the US is constantly trying to gather surveillance about Pakistan's nuclear arms. So worried is the US about this issue that it has only two categories for nuclear proliferation: Pakistan and the rest of the world. We will naturally

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express outrage that an ostensible ally is spying on us, even if it comes as no surprise that it is doing so, and then assure the world that our nuclear weapons are safe from militants. On the latter point, we would actually be right. Nuclear technology is not simply something that militants can come and pick up. The location of warheads is kept secret and often changed. It would require our entire system of government to be overthrown and the militants to take over the country before they have a shot at getting our nuclear technology.

The more worrying development here is yet another glimpse of how toxic the US-Pakistan relationship has become. The leaked files also claim that the US was worried that the government was carrying out extrajudicial killings of suspected militants – although how that is different from drone strikes is not explained – but chose to keep quiet about it since it may have forced a cessation of aid. The picture painted is one of mistrust: the US has no other choice but to work with Pakistan but it doesn't like doing so. This shaky alliance is built on necessity and is unlikely to last once the US doesn't need Pakistan any more. The lesson for this country is to start preparing for that eventuality by building better regional alliances and becoming less reliant on American money. Our nuclear weapons will always make us a potential target so we need to devote even more attention and resources to their safety. And above all, we need to realise that in international relations the only permanent thing is a temporary convergence of interests.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-8-200103-Picture-of-mistrust>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Dhaka Tribune – Bangladesh
OPINION/Op-Ed

Is Democracy an Insufficient Force Against Weapons of Mass Destruction?

Everything about weapons of mass destruction their possession, storage, security and use demands centralised, authoritarian control

By John Lloyd
September 5, 2013

The British parliament's refusal to countenance military intervention in Syria, and President Barack Obama's decision to delay a strike until Congress approves it, point to a larger, even more dangerous contradiction of the mass destruction age.

That is, parliamentary democracy and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) sit ill together. Each confounds the other's natural working.

This is for two reasons. First: everything about weapons of mass destruction their possession, storage, security and use demands centralised, authoritarian control and rapid decision making unimpeded by debate, except from within a tiny command circle. And when a rogue state uses or threatens to use WMD, leaders must react rapidly and forcefully, unconstrained by their legislatures. When they are so constrained, the result can be similar to what the British government suffered last week. Democracies that wish to police the use of WMD are held back by the same protocols that allow these institutions to thrive.

The second, and greater, contradiction between an active and mature democracy and WMD is that many of the countries that possess, or aspire to possess, biological or chemical weapons have weak or non-existent democracies. These leaders are not accountable to their citizens who are powerless and, in the case of Syria, the targets of these weapons. Much of current WMD instability lies in the Middle East. The region is roiling, with Syria's civil war at the head but with conflicts or potential conflicts in Lebanon, Libya and Tunisia. Iran likely has biological and chemical stocks, and is likely acquiring nuclear weapons. Egypt is striving, amid threats of terrorism, to embed democratic polity after its failure under the Muslim Brotherhood government and the Army coup that deposed President Mohamed Morsi. Algeria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia have, or are suspected to have or be developing, biological and/or chemical weapons.

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The leaders of the security services, the military and the executives of the major western states live with this knowledge at the front of their conscious thoughts. Yet they are beholden to a public and to lawmakers who generally don't. Especially in the UK, lawmakers remember, when such issues come up, the debacles of Iraq and Afghanistan, the hostility of their constituents to more commitments in such futile wars, and the belief that the Iraq intervention was launched on a sea of lies.

Their constituents are men and women who have grown up in relative peace and security, and who must be convinced that threats are imminent. Before the Nazi threat of the 1930s, the British people were reluctant to admit the need to fight: Winston Churchill's great speech of November 1934, warning of approaching war with Germany, was imbued with the realisation that he was speaking to a nation of skeptics and was not generally believed.

In the US, it took all of FDR's cunning and more to the point, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour to bring the US into the war. In both countries today, lawmakers spend much more time on domestic than foreign issues which is what their voters want them to do. It is a great irony that countries that police WMD do so without the support of their citizens.

I told my mid-twenties son a few days ago that eradicating WMD was a task for his generation of leaders. I then corrected myself. It's the task for the present generation, from the forty-somethings to the seventy-somethings. Or even eighty-somethings: in 2007 the then 84-year-old Henry Kissinger (now 90) joined other US political figures to argue that "the world is now on the precipice of a new and dangerous nuclear era," and to urge US leadership in seeking a nuclear-free world.

They put it too narrowly. The world is on the precipice of a WMD era, where chemical and biological weaponry less deadly, but hideous enough and much easier to make could lever open a door that is now already cracking. Democratic chambers, democratic publics, must be shown the danger and grasp the need to stop deployment at an extreme, by force. For down the precipice is the threat of democracy's destruction, with much else.

John Lloyd is a co-founder of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford, where he is director of journalism.

<http://www.dhakatribune.com/op-ed/2013/sep/05/democracy-insufficient-force-against-weapons-mass-destruction>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Foreign Policy

OPINION/Shadow Government

Pakistan and the Nuclear Nightmare

Posted By Dan Twining

Wednesday, September 4, 2013

The *Washington Post* has revealed the intense concern of the U.S. intelligence community about Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. In addition to gaps in U.S. information about nuclear weapons storage and safeguards, American analysts are worried about the risk of terrorist attacks against nuclear facilities in Pakistan as well as the risk that individual Pakistani nuclear weapons handlers could go rogue in ways that endanger unified national control over these weapons of mass destruction.

These concerns raise a wider question for a U.S. national security establishment whose worst nightmares include the collapse of the Pakistani state -- with all its implications for empowerment of terrorists, a regional explosion of violent extremism, war with India, and loss of control over the country's nuclear weapons. That larger question is: Does Pakistan's nuclear arsenal promote the country's unity or its disaggregation?

This is a complicated puzzle, in part because nuclear war in South Asia may be more likely as long as nuclear weapons help hold Pakistan together and embolden its military leaders to pursue foreign adventures under the nuclear umbrella. So if we argue that nuclear weapons help maintain Pakistan's integrity as a state -- by empowering and cohering the

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Pakistani Army -- they may at the same time undermine regional stability and security by making regional war more likely.

As South Asia scholar Christine Fair of Georgetown University **has argued**, the Pakistani military's sponsorship of "jihad under the nuclear umbrella" has gravely undermined the security of Pakistan's neighborhood -- making possible war with India over Kargil in 1999, the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001, the terrorist attack on Mumbai in 2008, and Pakistan's ongoing support for the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani network, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and other violent extremists.

Moreover, Pakistan's proliferation of nuclear technologies has seeded extra-regional instability by boosting "rogue state" nuclear weapons programs as far afield as North Korea, Libya, Iran, and Syria. Worryingly, rather than pursuing a policy of minimal deterrence along Indian lines, Pakistan's military leaders are banking on the future benefits of nuclear weapons by overseeing the proportionately biggest nuclear buildup of any power, developing tactical (battlefield) nuclear weapons, and dispersing the nuclear arsenal to ensure its survivability in the event of attack by either the United States or India. (Note that most Pakistanis identify the United States, not India, as their country's primary adversary, despite an alliance dating to 1954 and nearly \$30 billion in American assistance since 2001.)

The nuclear arsenal sustains Pakistan's unbalanced internal power structure, underwriting Army dominance over elected politicians and neutering civilian control of national security policy; civilian leaders have no practical authority over Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. Whether one believes the arsenal's governance implications generate stability or instability within Pakistan depends on whether one believes that Army domination of the country is a stabilizing or destabilizing factor.

A similarly split opinion derives from whether one deems the Pakistan Army the country's most competent institution and therefore the best steward of weapons whose fall into the wrong hands could lead to global crisis -- or whether one views the Army's history of reckless risk-taking, from sponsoring terrorist attacks against the United States and India to launching multiple wars against India that it had no hope of winning, as a flashing "DANGER" sign suggesting that nuclear weapons are far more likely to be used "rationally" by the armed forces in pursuit of Pakistan's traditional policies of keeping its neighbors off balance.

There is no question that the seizure of power by a radicalized group of generals with a revolutionary anti-Indian, anti-American, and social-transformation agenda within Pakistan becomes a far more dangerous scenario in the context of nuclear weapons. Similarly, the geographical dispersal of the country's nuclear arsenal and the relatively low level of authority a battlefield commander would require to employ tactical nuclear weapons raise the risk of their use outside the chain of command.

This also raises the risk that the Pakistani Taliban, even if it cannot seize the commanding heights of state institutions, could seize either by force or through infiltration a nuclear warhead at an individual installation and use it to hold the country -- and the world -- to ransom. American intelligence analysts covering Pakistan will continue to lose sleep for a long time to come.

Daniel Twining is senior fellow for Asia at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. During the Bush administration, he served as a member of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's policy planning staff, with responsibility for South Asia and regional issues in East Asia. He previously worked for over a decade for Senator John McCain, including as his Foreign Policy Advisor in the United States Senate.

http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/09/04/pakistan_and_the_nuclear_nightmare

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Valley News – West Lebanon, NH

OPINION/Columnist

Column: The Taboo Against Chemical Weapon Use Is Worth Defending

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By Clive Crook, For Bloomberg News
Thursday, September 5, 2013

Beyond a reasonable doubt, the forces of Syria's Bashar Assad used chemical weapons on a large scale and should be punished. That's where I end up. But the case isn't cut and dried.

Sometimes, standing on principle doesn't get you very far. The problem is, which principle? The norm forbidding use of chemical weapons, the norm of restraint in use of military force and the norm of upholding international law are in conflict. In addition, predicting the results of action (or inaction) is a matter of weighing probabilities, not certainties.

If you're sure you know what's right in this case, you haven't thought it through. I don't criticize President Barack Obama for being oppressed by these complexities, as he seems to be: Better that than a leader who thinks it's all so simple. I wish he would make decisions faster and pitch a more confident case for the course he has chosen — you can be careful without dithering — but he's not wrong to see this as a difficult choice.

Options have narrowed. Maybe there was a case for intervening to overthrow Assad at the outset, but his domestic enemies are no longer clearly preferable, and the United States lacks the will and the means to reshape a postwar Syria. The choice is between a limited punishment strike or softer censure such as jawboning, sanctions and indictment of Assad under international law.

Choosing not to use force would weaken the norm against chemical weapons. Those milder ways of expressing disgust would still be available, so the norm wouldn't be destroyed — but it would be eroded. Preventing that is both morally right and valuable to the U.S. and the world. But how valuable? And at what cost?

The wider the support for any action, the more effective it would be in upholding the norm. In this case, time isn't critical, so Obama (doubtful as one may be about his motives) is right to look for the broadest possible backing at home and abroad.

It's a shame that Russia and China won't go along — but their calculations are so transparently cynical that their refusal has no moral force. Their reflexive noncooperation merely weakens the conflicting international-law norm. In this case, their objections should be disdained and dismissed.

Yet you can't dismiss the lack of support among U.S. allies or among U.S. citizens. If Britain isn't willing to join airstrikes against Assad, that in itself undermines the chemical-weapons taboo. The same would be true for punitive attacks that weren't supported in Congress or across the country. Remember, the aim isn't just to damage Assad militarily, which the U.S. could do without allies or congressional approval, but to express a moral consensus. If that consensus turns out not to exist — or if it exists in theory but is spineless in practice — the case for action falters. We'll have discovered that the taboo against chemical weapons was so much posturing.

Obama says he's made his decision and has the right to act regardless of what Congress decides. Striking Syria even if Congress says no would be a remarkable gamble. It would also be less potent (because the norm would have been eroded in any event) and on balance unwise. Does that mean he was wrong to ask for authorization? Again, no. The more backing Obama can muster, the stronger the affirmation — and that's what counts.

What about U.S. credibility? Most of those urging an attack say it's on the line. They have a point — credibility matters, to be sure — but they're making too much of it. Obama was wrong to say that chemical weapons were a "red line" in Syria without being sure he meant it. Making threats you aren't ready to carry out is dumb. He did say it, and failing to follow through would therefore cost something. But much of the damage is done. Obama draws red lines first, then thinks about whether to enforce them. This knowledge can't be unlearned.

Would failing to attack Syria make Obama's promise to stop Iran getting nukes less credible? I doubt it. An Iran with nuclear weapons is vastly more threatening to U.S. interests than a Syria willing to use chemical weapons on its own people, and deterring it is a far more challenging prospect. The cases are too different. The credibility argument counts for something, as I say, but it's exaggerated.

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No, the core of the case for action, so long as Obama can win sufficient support, lies in upholding the moral prohibition. And the valid case against turns not on legality or credibility but on the risk of unintended consequences.

All being well, airstrikes could achieve their goal at little cost, deflect Assad from using chemical weapons again and make other morally bankrupt regimes think twice. But they would also cause collateral damage and kill innocent civilians. It's conceivable that Assad would reap a propaganda advantage. He could start using chemical weapons even more aggressively, daring the U.S. to respond again — knowing that escalation might carry Obama into an outright war the U.S. doesn't want to fight.

There could be terrorist retaliation against the U.S. Whether the U.S. intends it or not, airstrikes might swing the civil war against Assad and lead his regime to collapse — with results that would be good or bad for most Syrians, and for the U.S. and its allies, depending on who takes over.

I defy you to consider those possibilities and say the case for action is open and shut. Assad's use of chemical weapons doesn't present a clear and present danger to the U.S.; let's not pretend otherwise. Everything comes down to the importance of the chemical-weapons taboo. Are these weapons really so vile, as governments have been saying for more than a century, that their use should be met, where feasible, with force? Or will they be something we learn to accept, just one more horror of war, along with all the others we deplore yet find ways to tolerate?

It's a close call. I think the taboo is worth defending, and the prize worth the risk. I hope Congress agrees.

Clive Crook is a Bloomberg View columnist.

<http://www.vnews.com/opinion/8351131-95/column-the-taboo-against-chemical-weapon-use-is-worth-defending>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Diplomat – Japan
OPINION/Flashpoints

Ballistic Missiles Make War More AND Less Likely

By Zachary Keck
September 6, 2013

The presence of ballistic missiles makes military crises both more and less likely, according to a new study published in the *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.

The study, which was conducted by Emory University Professors Simon A. Mettler and Dan Reiter, finds that states armed with ballistic missiles are more likely to initiate military crises against others, and less likely to be the targets of military crises themselves.

As Mettler and Reiter explain it:

“A state with ballistic missiles is 266 percent more likely to initiate a crisis as compared to a state without ballistic missiles. Further, a state is 67 percent less likely to initiate a crisis against a potential defender with ballistic missiles, as compared to a potential defender with[out] ballistic missiles.”

The authors also find that, “missile possession by a target makes crisis escalation less likely, though missile possession by an initiator does not make crisis escalation more likely.”

According to the article, this is the first empirical test of the effects of ballistic missiles on international conflict. The findings seem to confirm the longstanding fears in the United States and elsewhere about the proliferation of ballistic missiles, especially among so-called third world countries. Mettler and Reiter's findings suggest that states that acquire ballistic missiles will be more likely to engage in aggression and the U.S. and its allies will be less likely to initiate military action against them.

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This is consistent with the findings of the 1998 Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, which is often referred to as the Rumsfeld Commission. Although not based on empirical research, that commission's report stated:

"A number of countries with regional ambitions do not welcome the U.S. role as a stabilizing power in their regions and have not accepted it passively. Because of their ambitions, they want to place restraints on the U.S. capability to project power or influence into their regions. They see the acquisition of missile and WMD technology as a way of doing so."

There was an important qualifier to Mettler and Reiter's study, however. Namely, the authors find that, "missiles make crisis initiation more likely *only* among nonnuclear states, and missiles make a state less likely to be targeted *only* among nuclear states [emphasis in the original]."

Mettler and Reiter point out that ballistic missiles hold a number of characteristics that make more attractive from a military standpoint than air strikes. Most notably, ballistic missiles are more likely to reach their target compared with aircraft because ballistic missile defense systems are much less sophisticated than air defense and other anti-aircraft capabilities. Furthermore, unlike when using aircraft to deliver bombs, a country launching a missile attack does not put any of its military personnel in jeopardy.

Finally, Mettler and Reiter point out that missiles are able to deliver their ordnance much faster given their ability to travel at rates of thousands of miles per hour. This can have huge military benefits such as being able to destroy the target's retaliatory capabilities.

The author digs deeper on a number of points. For example, the study finds that a state is less likely to be the target of a military crisis if it has solid-fueled missiles than if it has liquid-fueled missiles. The reason that solid-fueled missiles have greater deterrence power is likely because they can be launched with little notice, giving potential adversaries less confidence that they can destroy an arsenal of solid-fueled missiles with a first strike compared to liquid-fueled missiles.

On the other hand, the study finds that having submarine-launched ballistic missiles or underground silos does not make a state any less likely to be the target of a crisis than if it had ballistic missiles with other delivery systems. This is somewhat surprising given the greater survivability of missiles located on submarines or in underground silos.

Zachary Keck is Associate Editor of The Diplomat. He has previously served as a Deputy Editor for E-IR and as an Editorial Assistant for The Diplomat.

<http://thediplomat.com/flashpoints-blog/2013/09/06/ballistic-missiles-make-war-more-and-less-likely/>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

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