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Issue No. 1079, 20 September 2013

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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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Jerusalem Post – Israel

Tehran Sees 'Opening' in Nuclear Debate with the West

Tehran's nuclear chief expects breakthrough in nuclear talks by March 2014, denies Rouhani offered to close Fordow.

By REUTERS

18 September 2013

DUBAI - An Iranian official said on Wednesday that he saw an "opening" in Iran's nuclear dispute with the West, a news agency reported, in the latest signal that Tehran expects fresh movement to break a decade-old deadlock.

The United States and its allies believe Iran is seeking a nuclear weapons capability, and have imposed sanctions aimed at stopping it. Iran denies it wants a bomb and says its nuclear energy program has peaceful aims.

Iran and world powers have been engaged in negotiations which have so far failed to resolve the dispute. The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Ali Akbar Salehi, said he expected there could be a breakthrough in the talks by the end of the current Iranian calendar year, 1392, which ends in March 2014.

"This year, in the coming months, we will witness openings in this issue...We expect that in the coming months we will see the start of the process of exiting the nuclear issue," Salehi said, according to the Mehr news agency.

The election in June of centrist cleric Hassan Rouhani as president has raised expectations of a settlement to the nuclear dispute. Rouhani has called for "constructive interaction" with the world and more moderate policies at home and abroad.

Salehi, who served as foreign minister under Rouhani's predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said the groundwork for a breakthrough in talks was laid during Ahmadinejad's administration.

"With the information that we had seven or eight months ago, and the indications we saw, we were certain that 1392 would be a very good year especially on Iran's nuclear issue, and today as well we see indications to that effect," Salehi said, according to Mehr.

His comments came a day after Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the ultimate say on nuclear policy, said he was open to "flexibility" when it came to diplomacy.

Salehi also said he doubted news reports that Rouhani had offered to shut Fordow, an underground uranium enrichment facility near the religious city of Qom.

"I think it is unlikely that such a thing has been said," Salehi said, according to Mehr.

<http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Iran-sees-opening-in-nuclear-debate-with-the-West-326481>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Syria Hands Russia Proof on Rebels' Use of Chemical Weapons

18 September 2013

DAMASCUS, September 18 (RIA Novosti) - The Syrian authorities handed over to Russia evidence proving that opposition forces were allegedly involved in the use of chemical weapons last month, a senior Russian diplomat said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Tuesday night after the meeting with his Syrian counterpart Walid Muallem in Damascus that "this evidence must be analyzed."

UN inspectors said Monday that they had found "clear and convincing evidence" that chemical weapons, including the nerve agent sarin, were used in an August 21 attack that killed hundreds of people in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta.

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The inspectors had no mandate to determine who had launched the attack - which the US and some of its Western allies have attributed to the regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad, but Moscow and Syria have called a provocation by anti-Assad rebels.

The diplomat added that Moscow was “disappointed” with the way the UN mission of experts in Syria approached the report and called it as “incomplete.”

“Without the full picture of the events here [in Syria] we cannot but call the nature of conclusions drawn by UN experts... as politicized, biased and unilateral,” Ryabkov said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday the report did not answer many questions and called for additional UN investigations into allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria.

The US position that Assad’s regime was behind the August 21 attack had prompted Washington to threaten “limited” retaliatory military strikes against Syrian government targets. This plan was put on hold last week after Lavrov put forward a proposal, based on off-the-cuff comments by US Secretary of State John Kerry, that a strike could be avoided if Syria were to put its chemical weapons under international control.

On Saturday, after days of intense negotiations, Lavrov and Kerry announced an ambitious plan under which all chemical weapons in Syria would be opened up to international inspectors by November and destroyed by mid-2014.

<http://en.rian.ru/politics/20130918/183534828/Syria-Hands-Russia-Proof-on-Rebels-Use-of-Chemical-Weapons.html>

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

Iran Will ‘Never’ Seek Nuclear Weapon, Says Rowhani

Thursday, 19 September 2013

Al Arabiya

Iranian President Hassan Rowhani praised on Tuesday President Barack Obama’s approach as constructive and vowed that his country would never develop nuclear weapons.

President Obama had sent a letter to President Rowhani congratulating him on winning the presidency.

“From my point of view, the tone of the letter was positive and constructive,” Rowhani said in an interview with NBC news channel ahead of the U.N. General Assembly.

“It could be subtle and tiny steps for a very important future. I believe the leaders in all countries could think in their national interest and they should not be under the influence of pressure groups. I hope to witness such an atmosphere in the future,” Rowhani said.

Rowhani’s statements came a day after Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei urged flexibility in dealing with the West, saying that ‘heroic leniency’ should sometimes be pursued.

“Sometimes a wrestler shows flexibility for technical reasons, but he doesn’t forget who his opponent is and what his real goal is,” Khamenei was quoted by ISNA news agency as telling a meeting of the Revolutionary Guards commanders.

But the White House has played down speculation that the U.S. and Iranian leaders could hold a historic meeting in New York.

“There is an opportunity here for diplomacy,” Obama said in an interview Tuesday with the Spanish-language television network Telemundo, according to Agence France-Presse (AFP).

“I hope the Iranians take advantage of it. There are indications that Rowhani, the new president, is somebody who is looking to open dialogue with the West and with the United States -- in a way that we haven’t seen in the past.



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"And so we should test it," Obama said.

At the very least, Rowhani is virtually certain to project a different image at the U.N. than his predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was known for his harsh denunciations of Israel and questioning of the Holocaust, according to AFP.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has described Rowhani as a "wolf in sheep's clothing" and threatened military action to prevent an Iranian nuclear bomb.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/09/19/Iranian-president-says-Obama-s-letter-positive-and-constructive-.html>

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Russia Beyond the Headlines – Russia

Russia, U.S. could Send Servicemen to Destroy Chemical Weapons in Syria

September 19, 2013

Interfax

Servicemen from several countries, Russia included, will help Damascus safely transport and destroy its chemical weapons, the Kommersant newspaper reported on Thursday.

"The defense ministry is currently holding consultations 'regarding the size of the contingent' which might be sent to Syria," the newspaper quoted its source in the Russian General Staff as saying. It is expected that the group would be comprised of experts from the nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) protection forces of Russia, the source told the newspaper. It is also possible that a special purpose brigade could be sent to the operation site, the newspaper reported.

Russian and U.S. delegations discussed the issue of ensuring the security of the Syrian chemical weapons program's facilities during the recent talks in Geneva, the daily reported. Under the agreements reached which concern the security of the areas where work will be carried out, servicemen from Russia, the United States and a number of European countries will participate, the newspaper reported citing a source.

Russia and the United States have powerful and specialized subdivisions of chemical protection forces, the source said. As to the involvement of Europe, for example, that of the United Kingdom and France, their participation in the operation will lower the risk of possible aggression by the Syrian opposition, a Russian diplomatic source said.

The exact number of servicemen Russia will send to Syria is still unknown, the newspaper reported. "Different variants are being considered. The exact number and composition of the contingent will depend on how many soldiers our foreign partners will allocate for this mission," the newspaper quoted its source in the Russian General Staff as saying.

The total number of participants from all countries could amount to up to 10,000 people, the source said.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov has told Interfax that Russia's contribution to the liquidation of the Syrian chemical weapons stockpile would be considerable and not only involve political support but material as well. "Our assistance will be material, not only political. This could include experts' input, technologies and many other things," Ryabkov told Interfax.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has recently said that Russia may participate in security efforts during the implementation of the initiative on chemical weapons, Ryabkov said.

http://rbth.ru/news/2013/09/19/russia_us_could_send_servicemen_to_destroy_chemical_weapons_in_syria_29948.html

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FoxNews.com

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Kerry on Assad's Chemical Weapons Claim: 'Please'

September 19, 2013

Secretary of State John Kerry, after Syrian President Bashar Assad claimed in an interview with Fox News that his regime did not use chemical weapons, ridiculed the Syrian president and his allies for claiming the rebels might have been behind last month's attack -- as he urged the United Nations to get tough when it convenes next week.

Kerry had a pithy response to the assertions of Assad and the Russian government that the opposition used sarin gas: "Please."

"Sarin was used. Sarin killed," he said Thursday. "The world can decide whether it was used by the regime, which has used chemical weapons before, the regime which had the rockets and the weapons. Or whether the opposition secretly went unnoticed into territory they don't control to fire rockets they don't have, containing sarin that they don't possess, to kill their own people."

To the international community, Kerry said: "This isn't complicated."

Kerry made a surprise appearance at the daily State Department briefing on Thursday ahead of the U.N. meeting next week in New York, where U.S. diplomats will continue working on a U.N. resolution to enforce a newly struck agreement that would have the Assad regime turn over its chemical weapons to international control.

But Kerry was evidently frustrated by the sustained claims by the Syrian and Russian governments that Assad's regime was not behind the deadly attack on Aug. 21 which prompted the stand-off with the U.S.

In an interview with Fox News that was aired Wednesday, Assad admitted he has chemical weapons but adamantly denied that his government was behind the attack, continuing to push the theory that the opposition was behind the strike.

"We have evidence that terrorist groups (have) used sarin gas," he said. "The whole story (that the Syrian government used them) doesn't even hold together. ... We didn't use any chemical weapons."

In the interview, Assad was confronted with the newly released findings of a United Nations report on the Aug. 21 attack. The report said there is conclusive evidence that the chemical attack occurred. It did not assign blame, but included findings about the type of rocket used which the U.S. and its allies claim point to Syrian government culpability.

Russia also criticized the report this week.

But Kerry said the nations cannot "have their own set of facts."

"This fight about Syria's chemical weapons is not a game," he said. "Anybody who reads the facts (in the U.N. report) and puts the dots together ... understands what those facts mean."

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/09/19/kerry-on-assad-chemical-weapons-claim-please/?intcmp=latestnews>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

Arab States Call on Israel to Join Global Anti-Nuclear Weapons Treaty

Iran says Israel's nuclear activities "threaten regional peace and security"; US officials: Nuclear arms-free Middle East will not be a reality until there is Arab-Israeli peace and Iran curbs its program.

By Reuters

20 September 2013

VIENNA- Arab states will push ahead with a bid to single out Israel for criticism over its assumed atomic arsenal at this week's UN nuclear agency meeting, despite Western pressure to refrain, a senior representative said on Friday.



Frustrated over the indefinite postponement last year of an international conference on banning atomic arms in the region, Arab states have proposed a non-binding resolution expressing concern about "Israeli nuclear capabilities".

If adopted at the annual member state gathering of the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, it would call on Israel to join a global anti-nuclear weapons treaty and place its nuclear facilities under IAEA monitoring. Diplomats expect a close vote.

The United States said this week the move would hurt broader diplomatic efforts towards creating a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Israel said it would deal a "serious blow" to any attempt to hold regional security talks.

But Ambassador Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy, head of the Arab League group at the IAEA, made clear the text would not be withdrawn before a vote expected later on Friday.

"The world has to know that Israel is not playing a constructive role, that Israel has a (nuclear) capability," Ramzy told Reuters.

US officials - who see Iran's atomic activity as the main proliferation threat - have said a nuclear arms-free zone in the Middle East could not be a reality until there was broad Arab-Israeli peace and Iran curbed its program.

Israel and the United States accuse Iran of covertly seeking a nuclear arms capability, something the Islamic state denies.

Iran this week said Israel's nuclear activities "seriously threaten regional peace and security".

World powers agreed in 2010 to an Egyptian plan for an international meeting to lay the groundwork for creating a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction.

But the United States, one of the big powers to co-sponsor the meeting, said late last year it would not take place as planned last December and did not suggest a new date.

Arab diplomats said they refrained from putting forward the resolution on Israel at the 2011 and 2012 IAEA meetings to boost the chances of the Middle East conference but it had no effect.

"We have engaged seriously and constructively in the preparations (for the conference). The Israelis have been playing for time, delaying, we have never seen enough seriousness on their part," Ramzy said.

Israel's atomic energy chief, Shaul Chorev, told this week's IAEA meeting that Arab states were using it as a platform for "repeatedly bashing" his country. The Arab move only deepens "existing distrust" among the region's countries, he said.

<http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Arab-states-call-on-Israel-to-join-global-anti-nuclear-weapons-treaty-326622>

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The Korea Herald – South Korea

N. Korea Urges Resumption of Six-Party Talks 'Without Preconditions'

September 18, 2013

North Korea's chief nuclear envoy called for nations involved in the long-stalled talks on the North's nuclear program to resume the multilateral process "without preconditions."

"We are ready to enter the six-party talks without preconditions," the North's First Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan told a forum organized by China's foreign ministry in Beijing.

Kim said "preconditions" set by South Korea and the United States, however, "are in violation of the spirit of the Sept. 19 Joint Statement," referring to a landmark agreement reached in 2005 at the six-party talks.



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Under the 2005 agreement, North Korea pledged to give up its nuclear weapons program in return for a U.S. promise not to attack or invade it and to work toward normalized ties.

The one-day forum has been arranged by China to mark the 10th anniversary of the launching of the six-party talks. The off-and-on forum that involves the two Koreas, China, the U.S., Japan and Russia has been stalled since late 2008.

Titled "Retrospects and Outlooks: A Decade of the Six-Party Talks," the meeting comes amid renewed efforts by China to revive the six-party channel, but South Korea, the U.S. and Japan have shown a cool response to it in the absence of a clear North Korean willingness to disarm. (Yonhap News)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130918000041>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
September 19, 2013

U.S. Snubs N. Korea's Call for 'Unconditional' Talks

By Lee Chi-dong

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18 (Yonhap) -- Apparently rebuffing North Korea's call for "unconditional" nuclear talks, the U.S. government urged the communist nation Wednesday to first demonstrate its seriousness on dialogue through action, not just rhetoric.

"The onus is on North Korea to take meaningful actions toward denuclearization and refrain from provocations," a State Department official said, adding it reflects Washington's formal stance.

The official pointed out Pyongyang committed to abandoning all nuclear weapons, including in the September 2005 Joint Statement with its dialogue partners in the now-suspended six-party talks. The other parties are South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

"We will continue to hold the DPRK (North Korea) to those commitments and its international obligations," added the official.

The comments came in response to a public suggestion by North Korea's senior nuclear envoys at a forum held in Beijing Wednesday (local time).

"We are ready to enter the six-party talks without preconditions," First Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan said during the one-day event organized by China's foreign ministry as part of its efforts to revive the six-party talks.

South Korea, the U.S. and Japan sent lower-ranking diplomats and academics to the session. Another U.S. government official earlier said U.S. government participation at the event was handled by its embassy in Beijing.

Kim accused Washington and Seoul of setting preconditions for the resumption of the six-way talks, last held in December 2008.

"Attaching preconditions to our offer of dialogue would cause mistrust," he added, calling on South Korea, the U.S. and Japan to re-start the six-party process "before it is too late."

U.S. officials contend the North is trying to use the six-way negotiations to get recognized as a nuclear state. The North has carried out three known underground nuclear tests.

Public mistrust in the reclusive regime has grown further since it abruptly withdrew an invitation for Amb. Robert King, the U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights issues, to visit Pyongyang early this month. King was going to travel there to negotiate the release of a jailed American, Kenneth Bae.

Multiple reports, based on commercial satellite imagery, also show that the North might have already restarted its once-disabled nuclear reactor in Yongbyon.

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<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/full/2013/09/19/26/1200000000AEN20130919000200315F.html>

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China Daily – China

Restart Six-Party Talks, says Wang

Easing of tensions on peninsula presents 'a good opportunity'

September 19, 2013

By Zhang Yunbi (China Daily)

Foreign Minister Wang Yi has urged all relevant parties to regard the easing of tensions on the Korean Peninsula as "a good opportunity" for restarting the stalled Six-Party Talks, emphasizing that preconditions should be "justifiable".

He made the remarks at a seminar on Wednesday in Beijing that gathered together leading scholars and officials from all countries participating in the Six-Party Talks: China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States, Russia, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

China's top diplomat noted that the situation on the peninsula recently witnessed some positive changes, which are believed to be "hard-won fruit" achieved by the parties, along with China's contribution.

"To secure a peaceful neighborhood is China's unswerving strategic goal, and maintaining regional peace and stability is an inescapable, shared responsibility of all the relevant countries," Wang said.

Thursday marks the eighth anniversary of the signing of the Sept 19 Joint Statement, which was signed by the six parties on Sept 19, 2005. In the landmark document, the DPRK promised to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs.

Wang introduced four proposals for improving the situation: maintaining restraint, restarting the Six-Party Talks with constructive moves, realizing the goals set by the joint communique and addressing the justified concerns of all the parties.

Yang Xiyu, a researcher on DPRK studies at the China Institute of International Studies, said a great divergence of opinions will remain "if the six parties do not take a flexible and pragmatic attitude".

"Through frank talk, it is possible for us to push the peninsula situation forward. By using political wisdom and a diplomatic approach, we may find common ground, which is accepted by all the parties," Yang said.

The representatives in the seminar responded positively to the call for resuming the Six-Party Talks. The focus is on how to take the first step, said Qu Xing, president of CIIS, the think tank that hosted the seminar.

Kim Kye-gwan, first vice-foreign minister of the DPRK, attended the workshop, which was held on the 10th anniversary of the talks.

State Councilor Yang Jiechi met Kim in Beijing on Tuesday. Kim told Yang that the Six-Party Talks are an important platform for achieving denuclearization of the peninsula, adding that the DPRK supports China's efforts to restart the talks and is willing to maintain in-depth communication with China.

Tension seemed to further cool down after the Kaesong industrial complex, the factory park jointly operated by the DPRK and ROK in the DPRK border town of Kaesong, was reopened on Monday after bilateral reconciliation.

Pyongyang and Beijing have been more proactive than Washington and Seoul about Wednesday's workshop, analysts said, reflecting the reluctance by the US-ROK alliance toward resumption of the talks.

"Washington and Seoul have shown a willingness to resolve the peninsula nuclear issue, but at the same time they have drawn a red line — asking Pyongyang to give up nuclear weapons," said Teng Jianqun, member of the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association and a CIIS scholar.



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Such policy designs — with too many preconditions — by the US and the ROK are negative and unfavorable for a resolution, Teng said.

US Secretary of State John Kerry will host his counterpart Wang Yi for a bilateral meeting on Thursday.

The Six-Party Talks began in 2003 but stalled in December 2008. The DPRK quit the talks in April 2009 in protest against international condemnation of its long-range missile tests.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-09/19/content_16980321.htm

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The Korea Herald – South Korea

Chinese FM 'Confident' of Deal with U.S. on N. Korea

September 20, 2013

In a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, China's top diplomat expressed confidence Thursday that the two global powers will produce a fresh deal associated with efforts to resume multilateral denuclearization talks with North Korea.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed the need for reviving the six-way negotiations, also involving South Korea, Japan and Russia, in the interest of regional peace and stability.

"I believe it is an important time for the six parties to review the past, summarize the good experience, and open up brighter prospects for the future," Wang said at the start of talks with Kerry in Washington. Some opening statements by Kerry and Wang were released to the media.

Through a translator, Wang said the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is in the common interest of both Beijing and Washington.

"I look forward to having a deep discussion with the secretary on how we can work together to re-launch the six-party talks and effectively push forward the denuclearization process," he said.

"And I am confident that we will be able to reach a new, important agreement."

Wang noted his meeting with Kerry is taking place on the eighth anniversary of the signing of the Sept. 19 Joint Statement at the six-way talks. Under the accord, North Korea agreed to abandon all nuclear programs in exchange for political and economic incentives.

Wang arrived earlier in the day on his first trip as China's foreign minister.

Standing next to the minister, Kerry also said they would engage in a "very important conversation" about North Korea.

"China plays a very special role in addressing the North Korea nuclear challenge and in achieving our shared goal, the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," the secretary said.

Kerry and Wang said Syria and Iran are among the other main subjects of their discussions. Detailed results of their talks were not available immediately. (Yonhap News)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20130920000028>

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The New Indian Express – India

Fifth is a Hit, DRDO now Plans Agni VI

By Hemant Kumar Rout

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18th September 2013

BALASORE -- The consecutive success of 5,000-km range Agni-V missile has paved the way for India to go for longer range inter-continental nuclear capable ballistic missiles to bolster its fire power and strengthen its position among the Asian countries.

Defence sources said the next missile in the country's long range weapon series is 'Surya,' which is being developed secretly under the code name - Agni-VI. The missile will have the highest strike range of 10,000 km depending on the payload. As of now, it is being developed for a range of 6,000 km.

The DRDO, which has successfully developed all Agni series of missiles along with some submarine-launched nuclear capable missiles taking the country on a par with select nations like the US, the UK, France, China and Russia, is ready to deliver the missile within the next three years.

<http://newindianexpress.com/states/odisha/Fifth-is-a-hit-DRDO-now-plans-Agni-VI/2013/09/18/article1790045.ece>

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Times of India – India

India's Development of ICBMs likely to Fuel Arms Race with China

By Sachin Parashar, Tamil News Network (TNN)

September 18, 2013

NEW DELHI: India's development of ICBMs is likely to see China deploy its own MIRV missiles which can carry multiple warheads, leading to an intense arms race in the region, says a new report on global nuclear weapons by renowned US experts.

The report says that the decision by China and India to equip their ballistic missiles with multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) will influence the global nuclear stockpile trends. Described by Indian scientists as an ICBM, Agni V is not likely to carry multiple manoeuvrable warheads or MIRVs but its successors, including Agni VI, are likely to have the technology.

"Indian officials have already said that a new ICBM their country is developing will be capable of carrying multiple warheads. This development, combined with increased US missile defense capabilities in the Pacific region, could motivate China to deploy MIRV-capable missiles as well," says the report titled Global Nuclear Weapons Inventories, 1945-2013. The report is authored by Federation of American Scientists' Hans Kristensen and Robert Norris.

Kristensen told TOI that MIRVs are not in keeping with New Delhi's policy of minimum deterrence and that Indian officials needed to explain why they want to develop the technology because it could lead to a buildup with China.

"MIRV is developed for a particular strategic objective, normally to quickly increase the number of warheads deployed on missiles or to be able to hit a lot of targets in a single attack. Both of those objectives are incompatible with India's policy of minimum deterrence because they would significantly increase the size of the arsenal and signal a shift to a nuclear counterforce war-fighting doctrine," Kristensen told TOI.

The report says that such moves by India and China could set off an increased and more intense nuclear arms race in Asia. "The United States, Russia, and the international arms control community should discourage this competition by significantly curtailing their own MIRVed weapon systems and ballistic missile defense programs," it says.

The report estimates that China has an arsenal of roughly 250 nuclear warheads and that it has produced approximately 610 nuclear warheads since becoming a nuclear power in 1964. It says that China has a small inventory of air-delivered nuclear bombs. Chinese warheads are believed to be stored in central storage facilities and not mated with launchers.

"The US intelligence community predicts that China will increase its total number of warheads on long-range ballistic missiles from about 50 to well in excess of 100 in the next 15 years, although this prediction has been sliding since 2001," it says.

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Pakistan is estimated to have produced 100-120 warheads and fissile material for more. India is estimated to have produced 90-110 warheads and is planning to increase its fissile material production capacity. The Indian and Pakistani warheads are not thought to be operationally deployed but in central storage, according to the report.

"Still, we estimate that China's nuclear weapons stockpile has surpassed Great Britain's and could possibly approach the size of the French stockpile by the end of the decade, depending on how many new nuclear submarines and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) China produces and deploys," it adds.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Indias-development-of-ICBMs-likely-to-fuel-arms-race-with-China/articleshow/22676118.cms>

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The Hindustan Times – India

US Cautions against Arms Race between India, China

By Rahul Singh, Hindustan Times

September 19, 2013

New Delhi -- US has cautioned against an arms race between India and China following a top Indian defence scientist's claim that the country had the capabilities to build strategic missiles that could strike targets more than 10,000 km away.

US deputy secretary of defence Ashton B Carter said on Wednesday that Washington did not believe that the Asia-Pacific region should be "the scene of any competition or an arms race, let alone conflict."

Carter was asked to comment on China's growing stockpile of strategic missiles seen against the backdrop of India's capabilities to build intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

India had on Sunday successfully test-fired the 5,000 km-plus range Agni-V missile for the second time. The missile will arm India with the capability of delivering a one-tonne nuclear warhead anywhere in China.

A day later, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief Avinash Chander declared that the country could build 10,000-km range ICBMs within two-and-a-half years, if required. Only five countries — the US, UK, Russia, France and China possess ICBM capability.

China is believed to have a nuclear arsenal of more than 55 strategic missiles. The 14,000-km range Dong Feng-31 Chinese missile can strike targets anywhere on the planet.

The US is giving more attention to Asia-Pacific in what Pentagon calls "rebalancing" in the region, including China's strategic backyard.

"It is not aimed at China. It is the restoration of the historic role that the US has played in the region," said Carter, who during his New Delhi visit sought to explore opportunities for co-development and co-production of weapon systems.

He said the US and India could work jointly on anti-tank guided missiles, equipment for aircraft carriers and transport planes.

He said US would provide priority funding to American defence research companies that collaborate with Indian firms to work on new technologies.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/US-cautions-against-arms-race-between-India-China/Article1-1124094.aspx>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Issue No. 1079, 20 September 2013

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Russian Missile Forces to Adopt New Command System in 2016

19 September 2013

MOSCOW, September 19 (RIA Novosti) – Russia's Strategic Missile Forces will use a new-generation automated command and control system from 2016, the Defense Ministry said Thursday.

The new system, based on the digital transmission of operations orders bypassing intermediary levels straight to the launch pad, allows the prompt targeting and retargeting of missiles and ensures the effective command and control of all units and subunits, Defense Ministry spokesman Dmitry Andreyev said.

The fifth-generation system will use wire, radio and satellite communication channels that are well protected from jamming and other forms of interference, he added.

The system is compact and reliable and boasts low energy consumption, secure information transmission and imperviousness to external impacts, the spokesman said.

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20130919/183582955/Russian-Missile-Forces-to-Adopt-New-Command-System-in-2016.html

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The Moscow Times – Russia

Consequences for Russian Missile Crash Will Be Harsh, Official Says

20 September 2013 | Issue 5217

RIA Novosti

The people responsible for the crash of a Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile at the start of September will be held accountable and possibly fired, a Russian military official told reporters Friday.

The solution to the problem of the Sept. 6 launch failure of a Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) will be "implemented very harshly," said Oleg Bochkarev, deputy chairman of the Military-Industrial Commission, adding that personnel would not be exempt from the consequences for the launch's failure.

"Of course they'll get to the bottom of it, don't doubt it for a second," he said.

Bochkarev said that the commission is still investigating what caused the missile to malfunction in the second minute of its flight during state trials of the Alexander Nevsky nuclear-powered submarine in the White Sea.

He told RIA Novosti earlier this week that all Bulava missiles from the same batch as the one that failed on Sept. 6 will undergo additional tests by their manufacturer.

Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also ordered that trials of two nuclear submarines be halted as a result of the crash.

Including this latest failure, 8 out of 20 test launches of the troubled Bulava have been officially declared unsuccessful.

Despite repeated problems with the missile, the Russian military maintains that there is no alternative to the three-stage Bulava, which carries up to 10 MIRV warheads, has a range of over 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles) and is designed for deployment on Borey-class nuclear submarines.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/consequences-for-russian-missile-crash-will-be-harsh-official-says/486389.html>

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The National Journal

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Air Force Chief Calls New Bomber a 'Must-Have Capability'

By Elaine M. Grossman, *Global Security Newswire*
September 18, 2013

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD. -- The Air Force chief of staff on Tuesday said that despite a threat of continued sequestration or other deep budget cuts in coming years, he regards the service's next nuclear-armed bomber aircraft as a necessary expenditure.

"The Long-Range Strike bomber program is one of our top three programs," said Gen. Mark Welsh, who has served as the top U.S. air officer since August 2012. "It is a must-have capability."

Other modernization priorities for the Air Force include new F-35 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft and KC-46 aerial refueling planes.

The Air Force expects to purchase 80 to 100 of the new bombers, beginning sometime after 2020. The service has requested \$379 million for research and development of the Long-Range Strike bomber in fiscal 2014. Annual expenditures for the stealthy aircraft could reach \$10 billion by 2021, Defense Department leaders have told Capitol Hill.

The service head's remarks this week followed Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's warning last month -- as he unveiled the results of his "Strategic Choices and Management Review" -- about a stark determination to be made in the nuclear-modernization arena.

Hagel said that congressionally mandated spending cuts could force the Defense Department to either buy a limited fleet of new bombers or maintain larger quantities of aging nuclear-capable aircraft, with few or no modern replacements.

Welsh suggested that the Air Force could not afford to compromise on ensuring that it can continue to hit targets at long range, a capability that he called "foundational" to his service. He reiterated the remarks in Wednesday testimony before the House Armed Services Committee.

"Global Strike will continue to be a focus area," the service chief said on Tuesday, speaking at an Air Force Association symposium just outside of Washington.

Welsh also underscored the importance of maintaining high standards in his service's day-to-day handling of nuclear weapons, following a new report last month of failed ICBM unit inspections at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont. That was the second such incident in the past six months, following insufficient ICBM readiness drill results at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., in March.

"The nuclear mission -- continuing to strengthen the enterprise -- is still our No. 1 priority in the United States Air Force and it will remain that way," Welsh said at the AFA event. "In our nuclear inventory, we have two-thirds of the triad that provides nuclear deterrence for the United States of America. That's a huge responsibility."

The Air Force has sought to strengthen its nuclear training and operations over roughly the past five years. The initiative followed an accidental 2006 shipment of warhead fuses to Taiwan and a mistaken bomber transport of six atomic-armed cruise missiles across several U.S. states the following year.

The service created its Global Strike Command in 2008 to oversee nuclear-armed bomber and ICBM units.

"It's a big deal for us," Welsh told the conference audience. "We can't ever afford to get this wrong."

During a separate Tuesday session at the same forum, Maj. Gen. Sandra Finan implied that the recent ICBM readiness-inspection failures reflect her service's dedication to holding its personnel to high performance standards.

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“We do demand perfection in the nuclear enterprise,” said Finan, who commands the Nuclear Weapons Center at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M. “To be honest with you, the nuclear enterprise is not for everybody, because you have to be detail-oriented. You have to pay attention to everything you do, because everything you do matters.”

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/global-security-newswire/air-force-chief-calls-new-bomber-a-must-have-capability-20130918>

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U.S. Air Force News

Generals Speak to Importance, Relevancy of Nuclear Enterprise

By Tech. Sgt. Lesley Waters, Air Force Public Affairs Agency, Operating Location - Pentagon
September 18, 2013

WASHINGTON (AFNS) -- Three Air Force generals discussed the state of the service’s nuclear enterprise during the Air Force Association’s 2013 Air & Space Conference and Technology Exposition here Sept. 17.

Lt. Gen. James Kowalski, the Air Force Global Strike Command commander; Maj. Gen. Garrett Harencak, the Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Integration assistant chief of staff; and Maj. Gen. Sandra Finan, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center commander, shared their perspectives on the nuclear enterprise and the role of deterrence in the nation’s defense.

“The challenges we face today, are different and much more complex than they were back (during the Cold War) in that ideological death struggle with the Soviet Union,” Kowalski said to open the panel.

The only capability some countries have is nuclear weapons, which represent existential threats to the United States and the rest of the world.

Kowalski said the United States must be able to deter any adversary and assure any ally, maintaining an arsenal that is safe, secure and effective.

Harencak covered three items that showed how safe, secure and effective the U.S. stockpile is.

“First, we, your United States Air Force, does nuclear deterrence ops superbly, each and every day,” Harencak said.

“There has not been a time where there has been a safer, more secure nuclear enterprise than today,” Harencak said. “It is because of the senior leadership who is committed to the nuclear enterprise for today and the future.”

“Second, is the relevancy of deterrence and the triad,” he said. “Deterrence is as relevant today in 2013, as is it was in 1973, 1963 and 1953.”

The triad refers to the three arms of the nation’s nuclear arsenal, which consists of strategic bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Harencak echoed Kowalski when he said how difficult it is in sustaining and modernizing the weapon systems to provide deterrence in an ever-evolving strategic environment.

He concluded his remarks by saying, “We maintain a safe, secure and effective stockpile for the United States and its allies for as long as nuclear weapons exist.”

Finan concluded the panel saying the Nuclear Weapons Center is responsible for delivering the nuclear capabilities the warfighters use. She highlighted how the NWC plans to recapitalize on the nuclear systems to include the ICBM program and depot maintenance concept.

“These programs will help us squeeze the value from every dollar we have,” Finan said.

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The Air Force is trying to extend the life of the nuclear systems by working closely with the Navy on an interoperable warhead, she said, fusing capital assets and anything else to share costs and knowledge to make both more effective.

"We are facing some difficult challenges in the budget world," she said. "We have to deliver for the United States the nuclear capabilities with the resources we have."

The three-day conference is a professional development conference sponsored and conducted by AFA in support of the total Air Force.

<http://www.af.mil/News/ArticleDisplay/tabid/223/Article/467151/generals-speak-to-importance-relevancy-of-nuclear-enterprise.aspx>

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The Hindustan Times – India

US Military Intercepts Missile in Defence Test

Indo-Asian News Service (IANS)

September 19, 2013

WASHINGTON -- The US military on Thursday said it successfully intercepted a short-range ballistic missile target during a missile defence test over the Pacific Ocean. The Department of Defence said in a statement it's "an operationally realistic test, in which the target's launch time and bearing are not known in advance, and the target complex was the most difficult target engaged to date", reported Xinhua.

The short-range missile target was launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility on Kauai, Hawaii, at approximately 8.30pm on Wednesday, the Pentagon said. The target flew northwest towards a broad ocean area of the Pacific Ocean.

Following target launch, the USS Lake Erie, equipped with the second-generation Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) weapon system, detected and tracked the missile with its onboard radar, then launched two missiles to engage the target.

The first of the two missiles successfully intercepted the target warhead. This was the "first salvo mission" of two SM-3 Block IB guided missiles launched simultaneously against a single target, the Pentagon said.

"This test exercised the latest version of the second-generation Aegis BMD Weapon System, capable of engaging longer range and more sophisticated ballistic missiles," it said.

Aegis BMD is the naval component of the US Missile Defence Agency's Ballistic Missile Defense System.

The flight test is the 27th successful intercept in 33 attempts for the Aegis BMD programme since flight testing began in 2002. Across all Ballistic Missile Defence System programmes, this is the 63rd successful hit-to-kill intercept in 79 flight test attempts since 2001.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/northamerica/US-military-intercepts-missile-in-defence-test/Article1-1124216.aspx>

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The Olympian – Olympia, WA

No Bail for African Charged in Iran-Uranium Plot

September 18, 2013

By CURT ANDERSON — Associated Press (AP) Legal Affairs Writer

Issue No. 1079, 20 September 2013

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FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — A West African man was ordered jailed Thursday until trial on U.S. charges that he attempted to broker an illegal deal to ship tons of uranium ore from Sierra Leone to Iran, including a trip to the U.S. with uranium ore samples concealed in shoes inside his luggage.

Patrick Campbell, 33, faces a maximum of 20 years behind bars and up to \$1 million in fines if convicted of attempting to violate the U.S. embargo against Iran. A U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement affidavit filed in federal court says Campbell claimed he could supply enough ore — commonly known as yellowcake — to yield 1,000 tons of purified uranium that could be used for nuclear fuel or weapons.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Barry Seltzer agreed with prosecutors at a hearing that Campbell should not be released on bail, although a trial date has not been set. Campbell is scheduled to enter a plea next week.

Using email, telephone and Skype communications that were recorded, the affidavit says Campbell was negotiating the deal with a person in the U.S. who in reality was an undercover ICE agent. Campbell, who said he ran a mining and shipping company called Horizon Limited in Freetown, Sierra Leone, responded to a May 2012 ad posted by the undercover agent on the website "Alibaba.com" looking to buy uranium ore.

Campbell claimed to have mines in three separate parts of Sierra Leone that produced uranium, gold, chromite and diamonds. He also said he had done similar uranium deals in Ecuador and China, according to the ICE affidavit, and would use a chromite mix to disguise the uranium.

In one recorded telephone call, Campbell said the undercover agent "should not worry because he can handle any situation in Sierra Leone because you can pay the government officials to export minerals."

The negotiations continued over several months, with Campbell suggesting at one point they stop using the word "uranium" and instead refer to the shipment as "MEUS," which stands for Middle Eastern uranium shipment. Later, Campbell said he would first try a 200-ton test shipment to Iran's port at Bandar Abbas and that security was no problem "because he has the backing of his country and controls the port in Sierra Leone."

In August, Campbell arranged to fly to New York and then to Miami to meet his purported U.S. partner, falsely telling officials at the U.S. embassy in Sierra Leone he needed a visa because he was a social worker planning to attend a United Nations conference, said Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Walleisa. Campbell was arrested after his flight landed at John F. Kennedy International Airport on Aug. 21.

At first, Walleisa said, Campbell told agents he was meeting with a U.S. investor in an African gold mine. Later, however, he acknowledged involvement in the uranium deal and showed the agents two samples he had concealed in plastic bags in the insoles of a pair of shoes in his luggage, the ICE affidavit says.

ICE agent Lonnie Forgash said at the hearing that the samples tested positive for uranium as well as soil composition consistent with that found in Sierra Leone.

Jan Smith, an assistant federal public defender representing Campbell, questioned whether Campbell had the financial resources or access to such large quantities of uranium. Smith suggested that Campbell might have been running a fraud scheme.

"He would be a far more wealthy and connected man than he appears to be to me here in this courtroom," Smith said.

The government of Sierra Leone issued a statement shortly after Campbell's arrest that he "is not a Sierra Leonean, but an apparent common criminal using a false name." The statement offered no further proof of that assertion, but added that his Sierra Leone passport was issued in 2004 "by very dubious means" that were being investigated in conjunction with the U.S., according to the statement by Sierra Leone spokesman Alpha Kanu.

<http://www.theolympian.com/2013/09/18/2729492/no-bail-for-african-charged-in.html>

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World Politics Review
OPINION/Briefing

India's Undersea Nuclear Deterrent Poses Proliferation Challenges

By Yogesh Joshi
18 September 2013

Despite India's graduation from outlier to tepidly accepted member of the global nuclear order, one area of New Delhi's nuclear activities continues to raise alarm: its undersea nuclear deterrent. India unveiled its first nuclear submarine, the INS Arihant, in July 2009. Though the ship was largely indigenous, Russia helped in designing the miniaturized nuclear reactor. Just last month, the nuclear reactor in INS Arihant went critical, clearing the way for its final operational trials in the Bay of Bengal. India has designs to produce four to five nuclear submarines by the end of this decade. When integrated with nuclear-tipped sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), these submarines will provide India with an underwater nuclear deterrent capability.

This technical development has posed two new challenges to the nuclear nonproliferation regime. First, the highly enriched uranium (HEU) used in naval nuclear propulsion for India's nuclear submarines could be diverted for weapons purposes. India has a dedicated enrichment facility for its naval nuclear program at Rattehali, and some of the uranium from this facility was used for India's 1998 nuclear weapons tests. According to Princeton nuclear scientist and scholar M.V. Ramana, Rattehali has the capacity to produce 22 kilograms of 90 percent enriched uranium annually, or the equivalent of 40-70 kilograms of 45 percent enriched uranium. However, new analysis reveals that qualitative changes in India's enrichment technology may have increased this capacity to 48 kilograms of 90 percent enriched uranium annually. This capacity is destined to grow as India prepares to launch more nuclear submarines in the future.

Some of the inherent restrictions on India's enrichment program were also removed by the India-U.S. nuclear deal. First, the deal allowed India to import uranium from abroad for its civilian energy requirements, thereby allowing India to utilize domestic uranium for strategic purposes, including enrichment for naval nuclear reactors. Second, the deal also opened the international nuclear market for India, which may make it easier for India to improve the sophistication of its enrichment technology. The safeguards agreement India signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) does not apply to India's uranium enrichment program. The India-U.S. nuclear deal therefore not only augmented India's uranium enrichment capability, it also represented a lost opportunity to impose safeguards on India's HEU cycle, leaving a proliferation concern unaddressed.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) does allow states to pursue enrichment for naval nuclear propulsion. However, many have argued that such enrichment is a potential route for future proliferators. The NPT notwithstanding, even the proposed framework of the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), mandated in 1994 by the Conference on Disarmament, declines to confront the challenge posed by naval nuclear reactors. The FMCT endeavors to freeze production of all fissile material, including HEU, for weapons purposes. However, all major states advocating a ban on the future production of fissile material, including India, have been silent on the issue of HEU for naval nuclear reactors.

The second proliferation concern is whether India will resume nuclear testing to validate the warhead designs for its SLBMs. As India prepares for integration of its nuclear submarines with sea-launched ballistic and cruise missiles, questions are being raised about the effectiveness of its nuclear warhead designs. These questions have gained prominence in light of recent allegations that India's 1998 nuclear weapons tests, and in particular the thermonuclear weapons tests, failed. In August 2009, during a major conference on nuclear policy following U.S. President Barack Obama's announcement of the Prague Initiative, K. Santhanam, the project director of the 1998 tests, publicly declared that the explosion was a fizzle. His rationale for making such a dramatic announcement was that the Indian government might have been under pressure from the Obama administration to sign the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). What followed was a huge uproar in India's strategic circles and Parliament.

A vociferous cross-section of India's scientific, military and strategic community has doubts regarding India's deterrent capability, especially the yield of nuclear weapons and their warhead designs since 1998. The pressure to miniaturize warheads for SLBMs has further increased these doubts. The dilemma is evident in a recent assertion by one of India's

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top naval commanders: "All that remains to be tested is how [India's SLBM] nuclear warhead will fare during its hypersonic flight and white-hot re-entry into the atmosphere; and the kind of explosive yield that its nuclear blast will deliver. However, the last bit may remain an unknown, in view of India's self-imposed 1998 test-moratorium and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty."

Clearly, the technical force development of India's nuclear delivery arsenal, especially its nuclear submarine program, has created new challenges for the nonproliferation regime. To reassure the international community that its nuclear force development will not threaten the nonproliferation regime, India needs to take two important measures in this regard.

First, India should support the International Panel on Fissile Material (IPFM) proposal that a verification mechanism be set up under the new FMCT so that HEU produced for naval nuclear propulsion can be effectively supervised by the IAEA. Second, it is important for India not only to continue its unilateral moratorium against nuclear testing but also to show some progress in its attitude toward the CTBT. Since 1998, the world has accommodated India's nuclear weapons, to the extent that India is now treated nearly as a Nuclear Weapons State under the NPT. By signing the CTBT, India can show that accommodation and reconciliation is a two-way street. Doing so will also augment its standing for its eventual entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group and other technology control regimes, further legitimizing India's nuclear weapons status.

The benefits of deterrence notwithstanding, India must also recognize the proliferation concerns associated with its undersea nuclear capability, especially as it aims to become a full member of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime.

Yogesh Joshi is a visiting scholar at the Sigur Center for Asian Studies, George Washington University.

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13222/india-s-undersea-nuclear-deterrent-poses-proliferation-challenges>

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Commentary Magazine.com
OPINION/Commentary

Trust Iran's No Nuke Pledge?

By Michael Rubin
September 18, 2013

It's quite amazing how many pundits and journalists treat Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's promise that Iran does not seek nuclear weapons with anything besides great skepticism.

First of all, Iranian leaders have a history of making sweeping promises to Western audiences and then violating the same promises. Several years ago, I chronicled a number of these promises, My favorite? Promising to lift the *fatwa* ordering British author Salman Rushdie's murder. On May 18, 1999, the Iranian government finally promised to lift the *fatwa* in return for the British reopening their embassy in Tehran. The British obliged. The next day, the Iranian government re-imposed its bounty on Rushdie. Indeed, killing Rushdie remains one of the missions listed on this recent Iranian application to be a suicide bomber.

That Rouhani is making the vow should give pause, given how Rowhani once expounded on a strategy to feint concession while advancing Iran's nuclear program.

Now, some analysts point to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's alleged *fatwa* banning nuclear weapons. Alas, while Khamenei lists his *fatwas* on his website, the so-called nuclear *fatwa* is not among them. Why bother putting something in writing if diplomats are willing to embrace what they have neither seen nor read?

Diplomats often put process against substance. Giddiness at the possibility of sitting down with adversaries too often trumps the results of such meetings. Until Supreme Leader Khamenei publicly and unequivocally announces the suspension of Iran's illicit uranium enrichment, forfeiture of its more highly-enriched stockpiles, and an opening of all

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facilities, both declared and undeclared to inspectors, then Rowhani's outreach must be interpreted as more a tactic for delay than sincere.

Michael Rubin is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute; senior lecturer at the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Civil-Military Relations; and a senior editor of the Middle East Quarterly.

<http://www.commentarymagazine.com/2013/09/18/trust-irans-no-nuke-pledge-rouhani/>

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The Diplomat – Japan
OPINION/Flashpoints

India Is Developing Its First “Real” ICBM

By Zachary Keck
September 19, 2013

India is beginning to develop a new, longer range nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) local media reported on Wednesday, citing unnamed sources.

A scientist with the Defense Research and Development Organization, India's military technology agency, told *The New Indian Express* that DRDO is secretly developing a missile with an initial range of 6,000 km (3,728 miles). Currently, India's longest range ballistic missile is the Agni-V, which has a range of about 5,000 km.

The same source said that the missile that is under development as the Agni-VI, but which will ultimately be called *Surya*, could eventually be extended to have a range of 10,000 km (6,213 miles).

Earlier this week DRDO chief Avinash Chander had said that India was capable of developing a missile with a range of 10,000 km within two and a half years if necessary. He also suggested that Delhi was not interested in utilizing this capability.

“Range is the least problematic area,” Chander said, according to *The Times of India*. “We have the full capability to go to any range...it's just a question of additional propellant and larger motors. But, as of now, we don't see the need for a higher range.”

The report comes just days after DRDO successfully tested the Agni-V for the second time. The first test was back in April of last year. The Agni-V allows India to hold many of China's largest cities under threat from its nuclear arsenal for the first time. As such, it is often called the “China killer” by India's media.

Although the Indian media often refers to the Agni-V as an ICBM, its range of 5,000 km is slightly less than the international standard for an ICBM, which is 5,500 km. Thus, *Surya* will technically be India's first ICBM.

As previously reported, India has been working on equipping the Agni-V with multiple independent re-entry vehicles (MIRV) that would give it the ability to carry multiple nuclear warheads on a single missile. The scientist who spoke with *The New Indian Express* on Wednesday said that *Surya* would be made slightly heavier in order to carry even more nuclear warheads.

“While Agni-V can carry up to three nuclear warheads, the next missile in the series can carry up to 10 nuclear warheads, capable of hitting multiple targets,” the DRDO scientist said, according to *The New Indian Express*.

The same report suggested that the *Surya* will be ready for testing within three years.

This indicates that development of the missile may be encountering difficulties. The first reports of the Agni-VI's existence from earlier this year suggested that development would take just two years. Those initial reports also said that the Agni-VI's initial strike range would be between 8,000 and 10,000 km, instead of the 6,000 km reported on Wednesday.



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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/2013/09/19/india-is-developing-its-first-real-icbm/>

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The National Interest
OPINION/Commentary

Syria's Real Threat: Biological Weapons

By Jill Bellamy van Aalst, Olivier Guitta
September 19, 2013

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has made the fierce debate on intervention in Syria irrelevant with an apparent gaffe suggesting that in order to avoid a strike, Syrian president Bashar al Assad must simply turn over his chemical weapons within a week. Russia, Syria and the United Nations all jumped on this diplomatic godsend when they saw an easy way out of the crisis, despite Kerry's caveat that Assad "isn't about to do it and it can't be done."

Ignoring the vast practical issues around regarding the decommissioning of the largest chemical weapons stockpile in the Middle East—including the challenges of accessing sites in a warzone, the fact the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has neither the manpower nor the wherewithal to conduct such an operation, and the huge doubts over whether Assad could even be trusted to hand over his entire arsenal—even if these obstacles were to be overcome, Assad will still be left with his biological-weapons collection, most worryingly his likely access to the smallpox virus..

In July 2012, Syrian foreign minister Jihad Makdissi stated that Syria would never use chemical or biological weapons and that the Syrian military was guarding all stockpiles and sites, confirming the existence of a Syrian biological-weapons program and putting to rest years of speculation by the international community. As a result James Clapper, the U.S. Director of National Intelligence, confirmed Syria's long-standing biological-warfare program in March 2013.

And while chemical weapons have both a treaty (Chemical Weapons Convention) and an inspection regime (the OPCW), biological weapons do not. Syria is a signatory to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, but has not ratified it.

Depending on which pathogenic agent, virus or toxin was used and how it was deployed, the argument that Assad would not use biological weapons as they could endanger his government or military forces may not even be an issue for the regime. In a retaliatory strike in particular, biological weapons could be effectively released on an unsuspecting population in a geographic region that would not pose a direct health threat to Assad's government or military.

Assad's primary biological-weapon programs are run out of the SSRC (Scientific Studies and Research Centre) in Damascus, with government laboratories in Aleppo and Homs. The SSRC is a huge complex, with wings and units designated for specific pathogen research. The labs are state of the art and, unlike chemical weapons, stockpiling biological weapons is obsolete. The infrastructure to support both clandestine and legitimate research is identical, making identification of the development of biological weapons exceptionally difficult. As with vaccine development, it is only at the very end that the process becomes offensive.

Chemical weapons are calculated, while biological weapons are living organisms and do not distinguish national boundaries. Monitoring Assad's chemical-weapons stockpiles is far more transparent than locating biological programs, which are run out of both military and civilian facilities, in Syria's veterinary labs, its pharmaceutical industry, agroindustries and public-health institutes.

Smallpox is by far the most concerning program Syria likely possesses. Syria has long been suspected of retaining strains of smallpox from its last natural outbreak in 1972, as well as possibly receiving genetically modified versions from North Korea in 2006. Unlike chemical weapons, many biological-warfare agents are highly infective, transmissible, have lengthy incubation periods and are genetically modified to circumvent current medical countermeasures.

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To put this threat into context, in 1972 Yugoslavia experienced one of the last outbreaks of smallpox in Europe. For each person infected, another thirteen contracted variola. Generally a 1:3 ratio is considered the norm. Yugoslavia instituted martial law, vaccinating their entire population in three weeks. Today, with modern air travel, the pace not the space is critical, and this could quickly become an international health emergency.

In light of this, it is indeed Assad's biological weapon complex that poses a far greater threat than his chemical-weapons complex. By ignoring this and letting itself become fixated on just the use of chemical weapons, the West is allowing Syria to retain a dangerous capability.

Dr. Jill Bellamy van Aalst, CEO of Warfare Technology Analytics, is an internationally recognized expert on biological warfare who develops and runs biological and nuclear war-games for EU and NATO states. Olivier Guitta is the Director of Research at the Henry Jackson Society, a foreign affairs think tank in London.

<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/syrias-real-threat-biological-weapons-9093>

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The Christian Science Monitor
OPINION/Op-Ed

US, Britain must Rethink Nuclear Strategy

Some fear that the debate in Britain over whether to renew its nuclear submarine fleet could further strain the special US-UK relationship. Instead, it provides an opportunity for Americans and Britons to take a fresh, pragmatic look at nuclear strategy in the 21st century.

By Jeremy Greenstock, Thomas R. Pickering, *Op-ed contributors*

September 19, 2013

London and Washington

The recent British parliamentary decision against military action in Syria sparked a cascade of media headlines about the demise of the US-UK "special relationship." Similar claims are likely to resurface as Britain considers how and if to replace its Trident nuclear submarines.

But both concerns are overblown.

As former ambassadors for our respective countries, we know that this partnership is based on a broad set of long-term common interests and will weather greater storms than these. In fact, this special strategic relationship could play a decisive role in Britain's nuclear debate. Both sides would do well to avoid knee-jerk reactions and instead actively engage before the final UK Trident decision. Together, they must consider what would add the most value to our joint security over the coming decades.

The British government's junior coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats, are in the throes of their party conference this week. They voted to reduce, but not eliminate entirely, the pool of Trident nuclear submarines operating with the United States on continuous patrol.

The government already issued a controversial Trident Alternatives Review in July, which outlined the official analysis of nuclear alternatives to complete renewal of the fleet. The review is the result of Britain having its first coalition government for generations. When the coalition formed, the Liberal Democrats won an agreement to make the case for cheaper, more flexible alternatives to Britain's existing Trident nuclear program.

The issue is expected to feature prominently in the policy debate running up to the Scottish independence referendum in September 2014 and the British general election in May 2015. A new Parliament is then expected to have a final vote on the issue in 2016, before construction begins on the submarines.

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This debate opens up the possibility that Britain could choose to further delay or reduce its order of Trident submarines or, theoretically, even abandon its nuclear weapons altogether. The reaction from Washington could be highly influential. Whatever the state of the relationship, the British will be keen to stay close.

In fact, it is sometimes said that there is no deeper expression of the extraordinary relationship between the US and Britain than our cooperation over our nuclear weapons systems. From the very beginnings of highly secret military nuclear research during World War II, our nuclear labs worked closely together. The bonds of professional friendship go deep, as they do between the armed services and intelligence agencies. The leadership in both countries, political and bureaucratic, know how central our close strategic nuclear relationship is to our cooperation.

But this debate over how – and if – to fortify the British nuclear deterrent is about more than just personal relationships. It is about strategic, forward-thinking engagement.

The fact is, the US has as much, if not more, to gain from increased British investment in conventional military capacity than from continued investment in the Trident nuclear submarine program in its current form. The strategic environment has changed, and it makes sense for the two countries to examine the relevance of nuclear weapons as part of their continued cooperation across the defense and security spectrum.

Contrary to what critics may say, if Britain were to drop its policy of continuous at-sea nuclear deterrence, but instead continue to dedicate highly capable nuclear submarines to NATO's nuclear mission, it is unlikely to shake Washington's faith in its partner. Whatever Britain's decision, NATO will retain a more than capable continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent.

Indeed, it was reported in The New York Times in April that Obama administration officials have suggested US security interests could be served by greater specialization among allies, with Britain investing its limited resources in capabilities (such as special forces) that are of greater utility. Both countries must maintain relevant capabilities and clear policies in light of a clear sense of overall strategic needs.

This forthcoming debate provides an opportunity for Americans and Britons together to take a pragmatic, fresh look at nuclear strategy in ways that bring it into the 21st century and rise above conventional mantra. Unnecessary nuclear capabilities come at a high cost, both financially and strategically, and knee-jerk reactions based upon past strategic environments, unsubstantiated threats, and bluster are only likely to backfire.

Both sides have much to gain by adjusting their security strategies to the diminished role of nuclear weapons in the post-cold war world, recognizing that the value of the US-UK relationship is far greater than the sum of our nuclear forces.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock served as political director for the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, UK ambassador to the United Nations, and UK special envoy for Iraq. He is a member of the UK BASIC Trident Commission.

Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering served as US under secretary of State for political affairs and US ambassador to the United Nations, Russia, Israel, India, Nigeria, El Salvador, and Jordan. Both he and Amb. Greenstock are advisers to the British American Security Information Council (BASIC).

<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2013/0919/US-Britain-must-rethink-nuclear-strategy>

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Foreign Policy
OPINION/National Security

Keep Cutting Nukes

Four reasons why presidents have pushed for nuclear cuts for decades -- and why there's no reason to stop now.

BY TOM Z. COLLINA, DARYL G. KIMBALL

September 19, 2013

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In June, President Barack Obama announced plans to seek modest reductions in U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons. Critics, including Matthew Kroenig in a recent *Foreign Policy* article, are calling these plans extreme, but they are not. The president is simply moving to retire weapons that U.S. military leaders have already determined we do not need. Such reductions can help reduce the nuclear threat we face from Russia, build international support for U.S. nonproliferation policies, and save billions of dollars.

In fact, Obama's policy is based on 40 years of bipartisan agreement that lowering excess nuclear firepower makes the United States and the world safer. Presidents Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush all embraced this approach -- and it still makes sense today.

Kroenig's central critique of Obama's call for further arms reductions is his simplistic and historically inaccurate assertion that "leaders with fewer nukes at their disposal will be more likely to cave during a crisis." Kroenig argues that during the 1962 showdown over Soviet missile deployments in Cuba, "American nuclear superiority helped compel Moscow to withdraw its missiles from the island."

At the time, the United States had 25,540 nuclear weapons, compared to Russia's 3,346. The United States deployed over 7,000 warheads capable of hitting Russia; the Soviets had about 600 capable of reaching the United States -- an 11-to-1 margin. However, the U.S. numerical nuclear "advantage" did not stop Soviet Premier Khrushchev from deploying nuclear weapons in Cuba in the first place. In fact, it was part of the reason he took the risk.

Furthermore, Khrushchev was not the only leader who backed down to avoid nuclear Armageddon. The Soviet leader agreed to withdraw his medium-range nuclear-armed missiles from Cuba in exchange for Kennedy's private promise to remove U.S. Jupiter nuclear-armed missiles from Turkey and to not invade Cuba.

Far from supporting Kroenig's thesis, the Cuban missile crisis demonstrates that nuclear brinkmanship is too dangerous and should be avoided. Kennedy's defense secretary, Robert McNamara, concluded in 2002, "[W]e're damn lucky to be here. We were so close to a nuclear catastrophe."

Given the catastrophic effects of even a "limited" nuclear attack, a country with a larger nuclear force cannot count on coercing a country with a smaller one. In a nuclear crisis it is much more important to seek stability and mutual security than to seek advantage and risk mutual destruction.

With these lessons in mind, it did not take long for U.S. and Russian leaders to realize that it is in both of their interests to build a more stable nuclear relationship. Seeking to move away from the nuclear brink, they negotiated the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963, the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty of 1972, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987, the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), and the 2010 New START agreement, among other measures.

Fast forward to 2013: President Obama said on June 19 in Berlin that "we can ensure the security of America and our allies, and maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent, while reducing our deployed strategic nuclear weapons by up to one-third" below New START levels of 1,550, to about 1,000-1,100 warheads. These reductions have the support of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Strategic Command, and the secretary of defense.

Even so, Kroenig states that the United States should "strive to maintain clear nuclear superiority over its adversaries" and "refrain from additional reductions." He glibly writes that "you don't bring a knife to a gun fight" and that Obama should not bring "a crippled nuclear arsenal to the second nuclear age."

Far from crippling U.S. nuclear forces, President Obama's plans would maintain a devastating, invulnerable nuclear force while modestly reducing excess weapons. The approach is fully consistent with U.S. policy over the last four decades, during which the United States has reduced its stockpile of nuclear weapons by more than 80 percent. Every administration since Nixon has contributed to this effort for four main reasons. They still hold true today.

1. Nuclear overkill. Since 1967, when the size of the U.S. arsenal peaked at some 31,000 nuclear weapons, American presidents and military leaders have determined time and again that the country's nuclear stockpile was larger than needed for the deterrence requirements of the United States, its allies, and friends.



During George H. W. Bush's four years in office, the total U.S. arsenal shrunk from about 22,200 weapons to 13,700 -- a 38 percent cut. In George W. Bush's eight years, the total U.S. arsenal dropped from about 10,500 weapons to just over 5,000 -- about 50 percent fewer.

Still, the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals remain by far the largest of any of the world's nuclear-armed states. Together, the United States and Russia possess approximately 90 percent of all nuclear weapons. Even under New START, the United States and Russia would be allowed to deploy as many as 1,550 strategic nuclear weapons with thousands more in reserve.

After an extensive review of nuclear deterrence requirements completed in June, U.S. military leaders found that the nuclear arsenal will be "more than adequate" to meet security objectives when New START is fully implemented in 2018, and thus the force can be reduced by up to one-third.

Even at 1,000 strategic deployed warheads, the United States and Russia would retain excess nuclear firepower and each would still have much larger stockpiles than all other nuclear states combined. But moving to 1,000 makes more sense for U.S. security than 1,550, as explained below.

2. Cutting Russian weapons. U.S. arsenal reductions have encouraged corresponding reductions by Russia, via treaties or informal understandings, thereby lowering the nuclear threat we face. Arms control put the Cold War's arms race into reverse. Tens of thousands of warheads that were once deployed and aimed at the United States have been eliminated.

Yes, 1,000 Russian nuclear weapons aimed at the United States is still too many, but we are moving in the right direction. It would mean fewer weapons on high alert that could be launched in error, and more weapons on their way to dismantlement, ultimately reducing the chance they could be seized by a terrorist group.

Today, Russia is already below the deployed warhead limit for New START, five years ahead of schedule. Russia's stockpile is expected to decline further as its delivery systems reach the end of their lifetimes. To discourage Moscow from building back up to New START levels and from deploying new delivery systems, it is important keep the reduction process moving. This could happen through a new treaty or a less formal bilateral understanding, similar to President George H.W. Bush's 1991 initiative to slash U.S. tactical nuclear weapons.

Given the complicated nature of U.S.-Russian relations, Moscow may not choose to follow U.S. reductions immediately. But that should not stop Obama from retiring weapons that we do not need, nor should we give President Putin veto power over U.S. policy.

According to a 2012 Defense Department report to Congress, even if Russia were to go "significantly above" New START limits, this would have "little to no effect on the U.S. assured second strike capabilities," including strategic submarines at sea. The report finds that Russia would not be able to achieve a military advantage "by any plausible expansion of its strategic nuclear forces, even in a cheating or breakout scenario."

Kroenig and others worry that any further U.S. reductions could lead to a possible "sprint to parity" by China, which is estimated to have nearly 300 warheads, some 75 of which are on long-range ballistic missiles. In reality, China has never shown an interest in seeking parity with the United States or Russia, but instead has sought a minimal, survivable force that can carry out a second strike. By clarifying our intentions to go lower and limiting our missile defenses, U.S. reductions could help induce China to restrain the size of its relatively small nuclear stockpile -- over which the United States has a 12-1 advantage.

Maintaining an unnecessarily large U.S. nuclear arsenal, combined with increasingly capable ballistic missile defenses, on the other hand, could push China to increase the size of its strategic force.

3. Curbing proliferation. Today's most pressing security threat is not nuclear war with Russia or China, but nuclear terrorism and proliferation. As Obama noted in March 2012, "The massive nuclear arsenal we inherited from the Cold War is poorly suited for today's threats, including nuclear terrorism."



The United States needs to sustain a strong international coalition to secure nuclear materials across the globe and turn back nuclear programs in Iran, North Korea, and elsewhere. Continued U.S. and Russian arms reductions are essential to demonstrate that the major nuclear powers are holding up their end of the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty bargain, which includes "an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States parties are committed under Article VI."

Undersecretary of Defense for Policy James Miller said in June that, "as we think about our nonproliferation goals," demonstrating additional progress on arms reductions "is in our interest as we look to put pressure particularly on North Korea and Iran ... having a strong coalition in support of us will be vital."

For example, the United States needs international support at the United Nations for economic sanctions against both North Korea and Iran to slow down their nuclear programs. The United States will also need U.N. support for the Sept. 14 deal with Russia to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons, or for sanctions if the Assad regime does not meet its commitments.

Furthermore, maintaining excess nuclear forces does not deter nations, such as Iran or North Korea, or terrorist actors from seeking these weapons, and only provides them with a cynical excuse to sidestep their nonproliferation commitments.

Kroenig writes that he could find no historical correlation between "the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal" and "measurable nonproliferation outcomes." However, his search was too narrow. The 1995 vote to indefinitely extend the Nonproliferation Treaty was one such outcome, and it was aided significantly by political commitments from the nuclear powers to negotiate a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by 1996.

Similarly, the U.S. Senate's failure to approve the CTBT in 1999 had a negative effect on international efforts to strengthen nuclear inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency. According to Mohamed ElBaradei, who headed the agency at the time, the Senate's vote on the CTBT was a "devastating blow" to these efforts.

4. Saving taxpayer dollars. Now that military planners have determined that nuclear reductions are possible, an important side benefit is that they can save money. The United States currently plans to maintain a "triad" of nuclear delivery systems into the foreseeable future. The U.S. Navy wants 12 new ballistic missile submarines that would cost \$90 billion to build. The Air Force is seeking up to 100 new, nuclear-armed strategic bombers for at least \$68 billion, as well as a new fleet of land-based ballistic missiles and air-launched cruise missiles, for billions more. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) plans to spend more than \$60 billion for a new family of "interoperable" warheads for the arsenal over the next decade.

These costs are simply not sustainable in the age of budget sequestration. The good news is that with a strategic arsenal down to 1,000 warheads, we can cut these programs back.

But instead of engaging in an honest debate about how best to scale back the nuclear budget, Kroenig and others sidestep the issue by claiming that nuclear weapons are "cheap." However, independent estimates of total spending on nuclear weapons, which include significant costs borne by the NNSA, run to about \$31 billion per year.

Kroenig writes that savings from a proposal our organization produced to scale back nuclear programs, which could add up to \$45 billion over 10 years, are "trivial" compared to the overall defense budget of \$500 billion per year.

But given the budget crunch, every dollar counts. For example, the Navy cannot afford to pay for the 12 new ballistic missile submarines out of its projected budget. So the Navy is asking Congress to set up a special \$4 billion annual fund to pay for the costs outside of the Navy's budget.

Does the Navy think this amount is "trivial?" No. The Navy estimates that if it receives only \$2 billion in supplemental funding instead of \$4 billion, the service would lose 16 ships it would otherwise have bought over a 15-year period.

Significant savings are possible, especially with smart nuclear reductions. It makes no sense to retain and build more nuclear weapons than we need, especially when other defense needs are going unmet.



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Further reductions to the U.S. nuclear stockpile would bring a variety of benefits, including the prospect of a smaller Russian arsenal and engagement with China on nuclear arms control, a stronger international coalition against nuclear terrorism and proliferation, and billions of dollars that could be saved or spent on higher priority defense needs. Reducing excess nuclear stockpiles has made sense to seven presidents over five decades. It still makes sense today.

Tom Z. Collina is research director and Daryl G. Kimball is executive director at the Arms Control Association in Washington, DC.

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/09/19/keep_cutting_nukes?page=full

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AI-Monitor – Washington, D.C.
OPINION/Pulse

In Iran, Fordow Nuclear Plant Virtually Sacred Ground

By: Ali Hashem for AI-Monitor
September 19, 2013

FORDOW, Iran — In the heart of the desert on the road to the Shiite holy city of Qom, Iran secretly built a nuclear facility called Fordow a number of years ago. It is an underground enrichment plant constructed on a former Revolutionary Guards' base that stirred controversy when its existence was announced by the Iranians in 2009.

Although the facility is located beside the tiny town of Fordow, the Fordow River and the Fordow mountains, this is not the reason behind the name of the facility. Rather, it is because the village of Fordow had the highest percentage of fighters killed in the eight-year Iraq-Iran War, or what's known there as the Sacred Defense Era. Linking the site to such an important point in Iran's collective history adds to its significance in the Iranian consciousness in one respect, but not the most important one.

Less than 30 miles from Fordow lies Qom, the site of the tomb of "Infallible Fatima," the sister of the Shiite's eighth imam, Ali al-Reza (al-Reda in Arabic), the only Shiite imam who lived and is buried in Iran. The city is regarded as the "Oxford" of Shiite studies, along with Najaf, in neighboring Iraq, but it assumed even more importance after the 1979 Islamic revolution when it was regarded as the capital of political Shiism because of the debates and fatwas flowing from it. More than 55,000 students from 77 different countries study in hundreds of schools there. In a few years, some of them will be counted among the ummah's new generation of ayatollahs.

According to an *AI-Monitor* source in Tehran, "Fordow wasn't built near Qom for no particular reason. On the contrary, there is one and only one reason for that — to create a symbolic sacredness between the holy city and the nuclear program and to send a message to the world in general and the West in particular that Iran's nuclear program possesses the same holiness as Shiism in Iran."

This important point might until now have gone without notice. The source explained that during the tenure of US President George W. Bush, when a strike on Iran was the subject of constant discussion, the Islamic Republic made a decision "to defend the nuclear sites as if defending the holy places." The source added, "The nuclear program as a whole has become a national treasure that every Iranian is proud of and is ready to defend in the same way they would defend their most precious beliefs. Everyone here knows that Iran isn't interested in having nuclear weapons. Why do we have to? We have a fatwa from the supreme leader [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei] that it is *haram*, forbidden."

Being a nuclear expert is far from the only prerequisite to understanding Iran's nuclear program. First one has to understand the Iranians. They are a people, religious or not, with a tangible spirituality ingrained in the national psyche. It might be hidden at times in individuals, but it is most certainly always there. The same spirituality is applied to their approach to the political, economic, military and nuclear.

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So what of recent reports that Iran is on the verge of dismantling the Fordow facility and allowing International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors to oversee the process in return for lifting international sanctions on the country's central bank and oil industry?

To get an answer, *Al-Monitor* spoke with Ali Akbar Salehi, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, who adamantly denied the accuracy of such reporting, responding, "These are pure lies. I don't know where they got this. We haven't said a word about shutting down nuclear sites."

Salehi's denial shouldn't be surprising, because the allegation plan is not the Iranian way of thinking. The degree of attachment between the nuclear program and ideology in Iran means that any concessions will have nothing to do with the core of its nuclear program, but with the process, which might involve the level of enrichment, access to plants, degree of coordination with the IAEA, and so on — but certainly not its closure.

Ali Hashem is an Arab journalist serving as Al Mayadeen news network's chief correspondent. Until March 2012, he was Al Jazeera's war correspondent, and prior to that he was a senior journalist at the BBC. He has written for several Arab newspapers, including the Lebanese daily As Safir, the Egyptian dailies Al-Masry al-Youm and Aldostor, and the Jordanian daily Alghad. He has also contributed to The Guardian.

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2013/09/fordow-nuclear-plant-linked-sacred-ground-iran.html>

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