



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1080, 24 September 2013

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

Syria Completes Handover of Chemical Weapons Inventory on time

Saturday, 21 September 2013

Al Arabiya

Syria has completed the handover of an inventory of its chemical stockpile by a Saturday deadline laid out in a U.S.-Russian disarmament plan, the world's chemical weapons watchdog said.

The "OPCW has confirmed that it has received the expected disclosure from the Syrian government regarding its chemical weapons program," the Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons said in an email received by Agence France-Presse.

"The Technical Secretariat is currently reviewing the information received."

The watchdog, which will oversee the removal of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's chemical weapons stockpile, said it expects to receive more information from the Syrian government in the coming days.

Syria gave the first details of its chemical arsenal on Friday, the agency said.

"The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has received an initial disclosure from the Syrian government of its chemical weapons program," an OPCW statement said.

A spokesman for the U.N.-backed agency said: "We have received part of the verification and we expect more."

The organization has postponed a meeting of its Executive Council set for Sunday that had been due to discuss how to dismantle Syria's chemical weapons program, AFP reported.

Damascus had until Saturday to supply details of its arsenal, in line with a U.S.-Russian plan that helped prevent military action on regime targets following a chemical attack last month that killed hundreds of people.

China on Friday has called for the quick implementation of the plan, voicing hope for a political solution to the crisis.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi, said that China was "firmly opposed to the use of chemical weapons by any country or individual," AFP quoted him as saying.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had agreed on Friday to continue cooperating, "moving not only towards the adoption of the OPCW rules and regulations, but also a resolution that is firm and strong within the United Nations," Kerry told reporters in Washington.

One Western diplomat warned on Friday that a failure by Assad to account for all the suspected stockpile would cause world powers to seek immediate action at the U.N. Security Council to force Damascus to comply.

If there were gaps in the documentation, the diplomat said, "this matter is going to go straight to the Security Council."

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/09/21/-U-N-chemical-weapons-watchdog-begins-assessment-of-Syria-file-.html>

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The London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Syria: 'Bashar al-Assad Ordered Me to Gas People - but I Could Not Do It'

General Zaher al-Sakat tells Richard Spencer that he was ordered three times to use chemical weapons against his own people in Syria - but he could not go through with it.

By Richard Spencer, Amman

21 September 2013

Issue No. 1080, 24 September 2013

United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
Phone: 334.953.7538 | Fax: 334.953.7530



Few thought that the Syrian regime's promise to destroy its chemical weapons would be the end of the story. Brigadier-General Zaher al-Sakat, a former chemical weapons chief in President Bashar al-Assad's own army, certainly did not.

Gen Sakat says he was ordered three times to use chemical weapons against his own people, but could not go through with it and replaced chemical canisters with ones containing harmless bleach.

He also insists that all such orders had to come from the top – President Assad himself – despite insistent denials by the regime that it has never used chemical weapons.

Now he also claims to have his own intelligence that the Syrian president is evading the terms of a Russian-brokered deal to destroy his chemical weapons by transferring some of his stocks to his allies – Hizbollah, in Lebanon, and Iran.

Gen Sakat spoke to The Sunday Telegraph last week, his first interview with a western newspaper, as Mr Assad confirmed for the first time what he and much of the rest of the world already knew – that regime possessed a huge arsenal of chemical weapons, and the delivery systems to go along with them.

The Syrian leader's admission came in the form of written declarations on Friday and Saturday to the United Nations' Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It was an extraordinary and unexpected outcome of the wrangling between the United States and Russia which followed the murderous attack on the Damascus suburbs of East and West Ghouta a month ago.

But now attention is turning to whether Mr Assad will comply with the deal's terms – and whether it will lead to a wider opportunity to bring the warring parties together. On that score, both sides' backers, pleased with progress so far, profess less optimism.

Gen Sakat's personal history gives new insight into the extent to which, it is said, the Assad regime gradually turned to the use of chemical weapons, despite angry public denials, after rebels encroached on Damascus and Aleppo, the country's two biggest cities, in the summer of last year.

As chief scientific officer in the army's fifth division, he ran chemical weapons operations in the country's southern Deraa province, where the uprising began in March 2011. He says he witnessed the first uses of violence against peaceful protesters – and the first use of "dirty tricks", placing weapons in the mosque where the protests started to suggest the protesters were armed.

Gen Sakat said the regime wanted to "annihilate" the opposition using any means, and said he received his first orders to use chemical weapons in October last year. On three occasions, he said he was told to use a mixture of phosgene and two other chlorine-based agents against civilian targets in Sheikh Masqeen, Herak, and Busra, all rebel-held districts.

However, under cover of darkness, he said he had replaced the canisters containing the chemicals with ones containing water mixed with dilute bleach which would give off a similar chlorine smell.

At first, his trick worked. "They were completely convinced that this was the same poisonous material," he told the Sunday Telegraph in an interview. "In this way I saved hundreds of lives of children and others."

But after the third occasion, in January, his bosses became suspicious at the lack of deaths in his "attacks" and he began to plot his escape to Jordan, where he has been based since the spring.

Gen Sakat believes chemical weapons have now been used 34 times, rather than the 14 occasions cited by international intelligence agencies. But he agrees with a variety of assessments that differing substances and concentrations are used, which would account for the differing death rates, with some attacks killing very few or none.

Although phosgene has been banned internationally since the 1920s, it is much less potent than sarin, the chemical now known to have been deployed in Ghouta. The army was concerned not to use the most dangerous chemicals in the far south because of its proximity to Israel, Gen Sakat said.



In other parts of the country, notably the Damascus suburbs, Homs and Aleppo, the regime was subsequently accused of using small quantities of stronger chemicals, culminating in the attack on Ghouta, where UN inspectors found traces of sarin across wide areas. The US, and the rebels themselves, believe that more than 1,400 people were killed there.

Now the world waits to see whether Mr Assad will comply with the Russian-led deal to dismantle his nuclear stocks which saw American missile strikes postponed indefinitely.

Last week, more details emerged of the behind-the-scenes negotiations which preceded the deal, and which make it seem like much less of a victory for Mr Assad. He will no doubt be aware of the subsequent fates of the two most recent Arab leaders to have abandoned their chemical weapons at the West's command – Saddam Hussein and Col Muammar Gaddafi.

The proposal for Mr Assad to hand over his weapons had been discussed previously between the United States and Russia, so that the suggestion by John Kerry, the secretary of state, that it might be a way out of the missile crisis was less off-the-cuff than it appeared.

Russia then enforced the deal on Mr Assad, despite Moscow's public claims that it was the rebels rather than the regime which perpetrated the Ghouta massacre.

In another sign of Moscow's apparent scepticism, President Vladimir Putin said last week he was not "100 per cent sure" Mr Assad would comply, and the Kremlin's chief of staff, Sergei Ivanov, said on Saturday it was making contingency plans if he were to fail to do so.

"I am speaking theoretically and hypothetically, but if we become convinced that Assad is cheating, we can change our position," he said.

Gen Sakat says the deception has already begun.

"Before the Lavrov deal, they were already mobilising them to move to Lebanon and even Iraq," he said. "There have already been weapons handed over to Hizbollah."

Both the political opposition and the armed rebels have complained that the deal lets Mr Assad off the hook, making their claims that Mr Assad is now trying to hide his chemical weapons stocks convenient.

Their claims cannot be verified, but they cite a variety of sources for their allegations.

American newspapers have already reported western intelligence agencies' allegations that Unit 450, the central command-and-control structure of the chemical weapons programme, has been dispersing the arsenal to different sites inside the country.

"We, along with many other international sources learned, through documents and other evidence about the transfer of Syrian chemical weapons to Hizbollah in Lebanon nearly three months ago," Fahad al-Masri, a spokesman for the western-backed Free Syrian Army said.

He said the rebels had a network of informers inside the regime's chemical weapon apparatus, who sympathised with the rebels but were being prevented by threats to their lives from defecting. He said the FSA had also been shown intelligence estimates by western governments which said the same thing.

He said the weapons were being stored at four sites under the direct control of Hizbollah.

Gen Sakat says he has his own sources: a network inside the country of activists who are specifically monitoring the programme. One member, calling himself Abu Mohammed, told The Telegraph he had hacked into Unit 450 computer systems and read orders, including some relating to the transfer to Hizbollah.

Gen Sakat said a team of his activists had observed a column of more than 20 vehicles, some identifiable as belonging to the programme, heading towards the Lebanese border. He also alleged that other stocks were being transferred through Iraq to Iran.



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"They saw these shipments start before Lavrov appeared and mentioned the deal," he said.

International agencies are monitoring the possible transfer of weapons to Lebanon closely, and Israel has declared this its own "red line" – and it has already bombed Syria twice since the start of the uprising, including Unit 450's presumed base north of Damascus.

Israeli intelligence sources would not comment on the allegations. But one retired Israeli Major-General and former attache to Washington, Gadi Shamni, said: "I am positive they're already trying to move things from one location to another to hide it.

"It will be very hard to cheat in one week. But November is a very long time away – in winter, the sky is cloudy, and visibility is low. US satellites cannot be very effective – it's a very problematic issue and the Syrians understand it very well."

Additional reporting by Inna Lazareva.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10325193/Syria-Bashar-al-Assad-ordered-me-to-gas-people-but-I-could-not-do-it.html>

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Tehran Times – Iran

Iran Regrets IAEA Failure to Curb Israeli Nuclear Threat

Political Desk

Sunday, September 22, 2013

TEHRAN – Iranian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Marzieh Afkham has cautioned against the danger of Israel's covert nuclear arms program and called on the international community to responsibly address the issue.

Her comments came after the members of the UN's nuclear agency narrowly rejected a resolution calling on Israel to join a global treaty banning nuclear arms.

Following a lively debate at the International Atomic Energy Agency's annual general conference on Friday, the measure was defeated by 51 votes against and 43 in favor with 32 abstentions, according to Al-Jazeera.

"The Western countries' vote against the resolution on the Zionist regime at the agency's general conference depicts that the double standard in dealing with weapons of mass destruction is still continuing," she noted.

"Excluding the Zionist regime of Israel from laws and regulations on banning weapons of mass destruction will have negative impact on the non-proliferation of such a global threat," she stated.

She reiterated Tehran's position that Iran has taken an "explicit and clear stance on the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the establishment of a Middle East region free of such arms."

Afkham added that Israel has not joined any treaty on banning weapons of mass destruction and urged the international community to responsibly deal with it.

Israel is widely thought to have nuclear arms but has not confirmed so, and is not a signatory to the landmark Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Although Israel is a member of the IAEA, it is not subject to its inspections except for at a small research facility.

According to Aljazeera, the resolution debated at the meeting of all 159 IAEA member states expressed "concern about Israeli nuclear capabilities and calls upon Israel to accede to the NPT and place all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards."

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In 2009, the same resolution was narrowly approved by members of the IAEA and in 2010 it was defeated only after intensive lobbying efforts by Western countries.

Oman's ambassador Badr Mohamed Zaher al-Hinai, talking on behalf of Arab states at the IAEA, said that the proposed resolution "could resuscitate" efforts towards a nuclear-free Middle East.

Attacking the "double standards" of Western countries, he said allegations that other Middle East countries were seeking nuclear weapons are a "huge distortion of the facts".

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/110946-iran-regrets-iaea-failure-to-curb-israeli-nuclear-threat>

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Times of India – India

Iran's Elite Military Warns of Dangers of Dealing with US

Reuters

September 22, 2013

DUBAI: Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard has warned the country's diplomats about the dangers of dealing with US officials, according to a statement at the weekend ahead of expected diplomatic contacts between the United States and Iran.

"Historical experiences make it necessary for the diplomatic apparatus of our country to carefully and sceptically monitor the behaviour of White House officials so that the righteous demands of our nation are recognised and respected by those who favour interaction," a statement from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said.

The statement was published by Iran's Tasnim news agency on Saturday evening and added that the IRGC would support initiatives that were in line with national interests and strategies set forth by Iran's theocratic leader and highest authority, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The IRGC, an elite force that was established to protect Iran's revolution in 1979, has been under pressure in the past week not to involve itself in politics and to support the new Iranian government's goals of better diplomatic ties and improving the economy.

On Tuesday, Khamenei appeared to give his strongest endorsement yet to new President Hassan Rouhani's attempts to initiate talks with the United States, saying he agreed with "heroic flexibility".

Khamenei also echoed a statement by Rouhani a day earlier that there was no need for the IRGC to be active in the political arena but that it should be familiar with politics.

The United States and its allies suspect Iran's nuclear programme is aimed at developing a nuclear weapons capability and has imposed tough economic sanctions on Tehran. Iran says the programme is purely peaceful.

Analysts say Rouhani will pursue a comprehensive charm offensive in the coming week while in New York for the UN general assembly in order to set the right tone for further nuclear talks with world powers which he hopes will bring relief from sanctions. US President Barack Obama and his aides have made clear that they are ready to test Rouhani's intentions to seek a diplomatic solution to Iran's long-running nuclear dispute with the West.

The White House has left open the possibility Obama and Rouhani could meet on the sidelines of the UN meeting, and a US official has privately acknowledged the administration's desire to engineer a handshake between the two leaders, which would be the highest-level US-Iranian contact since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Saturday's IRGC statement was published on the eve of Iran's annual "Sacred Defence Week" to commemorate Tehran's 1980-1988 war with neighbouring Iraq. Iranian media said the IRGC and conventional armed forces would mark the occasion on Sunday with a parade to showcase their latest military advances.

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<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/Irans-elite-military-warns-of-dangers-of-dealing-with-US/articleshow/22884162.cms>

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FARS News Agency
Sunday, September 22, 2013

Nationwide Parades Mark Sacred Defense

TEHRAN (FNA) - The Sacred Defense Week, commemorating Iranians' sacrifices during the 8 years of Iraqi imposed war on Iran in 1980s, officially started on Sunday with nationwide parades by various units of the Islamic Republic Army, Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and Basij (volunteer) forces in Tehran and other cities across the country.

The ceremony took place at the mausoleum of the Founder of the Islamic Republic, the Late Imam Khomeini, in Southern Tehran.

Different units of Iran's military forces marched in uniform before top Army and IRGC commanders in a show of military might and defensive power.

The ceremony was participated by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and senior military and government officials as well as foreign diplomats, military attaches and reporters.

Typical units of the Islamic Republic Army, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Basij (volunteer) forces and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Law Enforcement Police participated in the parade.

Foreign delegates as well as military and civilian officials were also present in the ceremony. Ranking commanders of the Armed Forces also took part in the ceremony.

During the parade Shahab 1, 2 and 3, Sejil, Qadr, Sahab, Persian Gulf (Khalij-e Fars) and Zelzal missiles were displayed.

The Shahab-3 has a range of up to 1,250 miles (2000 kilometers) and is capable of carrying a 1,000-760 kilogram warhead.

This is while the solid-fuel, two-stage Sejil missile with two engines, is capable of reaching a very high altitude and therefore has a longer range than that of the Shahab 3 model.

The latest military and defense achievements made by the Iranian experts were put on display at the parade.

September 22 is the start of the Sacred Defense Week in Iran which marks the anniversary of the beginning of Iraq's imposed war against the country in 1980.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920631000368>

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

Rowhani Says West Must Accept Iran's Right to Enrich Uranium

Sunday, 22 September 2013
Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Tehran -- President Hassan Rowhani said Sunday that Western governments must recognise Iran's right to enrich uranium in any deal to allay their concerns about its nuclear programme.

Rowhani said that should extend to "all rights of the Iranian nation, particularly nuclear rights and the right to enrich uranium on its territory within the framework of international rules".

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His comments, at an annual military parade, came on the eve of his departure for the U.N. General Assembly in New York where he is scheduled to meet French President Francois Hollande on the sidelines.

"If they (Western governments) accept these rights, the Iranian people are a rational people, peaceful and friendly. We stand ready to cooperate and together we can settle all the region's problems and even global ones," Rowhani said.

"The Iranian people want development and are not looking to make an atomic weapon."

Iran claims the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes under the terms of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

But the U.N. Security Council has imposed successive rounds of sanctions on Iran for failing to heed ultimatums to suspend the sensitive activity, which Western governments suspect conceals a covert drive for a weapons capability.

Rowhani, a moderate on Iran's political scene, has made several diplomatic overtures since his election in June, and there has been speculation that he could also meet U.S. President Barack Obama on the sidelines of the General Assembly, which opens on Tuesday.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/world/2013/09/22/Rowhani-says-West-must-accept-Iran-right-to-enrich-uranium-.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Urges Syrian Rebels to Destroy Chemical Weapons – Lavrov

22 September 2013

MOSCOW, September 22 (RIA Novosti) – Moscow insists that the Syrian opposition groups should also eliminate their chemical weapons stockpiles, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Sunday.

In the interview with Channel One, Lavrov said “when our western partners repeatedly say that only the regime has weapons and that’s why only the regime could have used them, and the opposition has no chemical weapons, they are cunning.”

The Russian foreign minister cited “Israeli reports” saying that the rebels had at least twice seized the districts where the chemical weapons were stored. He also said the rebels have their own laboratories where make chemical weapons.

Lavrov has stressed the need for “those who finance the rebel groups, including the extremists, to find the way to demand that they hand over those [weapons] that had been seized and are to be destroyed.”

Evidence given by witnesses and journalists showed that rebels acquired “some shells from abroad that they had never seen and had no idea of how to use them, and then finally they used them,” Lavrov said.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130922/183647018/Russia-Urges-Syrian-Rebels-to-Destroy-Chemical-Weapons--Lavrov.html>

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Deutsche Welle – German Republic

Israel Keeps Mum on its Chemical Weapons

Syria has agreed to dismantle its chemical weapons arsenal over the next year. Some voices are now calling for Israel to do the same. But it remains unclear whether or not the Jewish state has such weapons.

By Friedel Taube

22 September 2013

The international pressure seems to have worked - at least for the time being. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime, which has been accused of using sarin gas against civilians, has agreed to join the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in October.

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Should Syria follow through with its promise, there would be only six states left in the world that have not signed the convention: Egypt, Angola, South Sudan, North Korea, Myanmar and Israel.

Some voices are now calling for Israel to publicly declare whether or not it possesses chemical weapons, and if it does, to destroy them. The left-liberal Israeli newspaper Haaretz wrote in an editorial last Monday that "it would be a pity if in the future Israel finds itself in the position of Syria -forced to sign the convention under international pressure."

Ambiguity over Israel's alleged arsenal

For more than a decade, the world community has waited in vain for the Israeli government to join the convention. Israel's reluctance to ratify the convention could indicate that the Jewish state has a chemical weapons arsenal, according to Mideast expert, Guido Steinberg, of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

"It would make sense, if one wants to avoid inspections," Steinberg, with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, told DW. "But in the end, we only know that Israel has nuclear weapons. When it comes to chemical weapons, we don't know."

But according to *Foreign Policy magazine*, a CIA report from 1983 indicates that Israel does indeed have chemical weapons. The report details production facilities for poison gas in the Negev Desert, and says that Israel possesses nerve and mustard gas as well as chemical agents for crowd control - including the appropriate shells.

At the time, the CIA also found indications of sarin gas in Israel, according to Foreign Policy. That's the type of nerve gas that was used in Syria on August 21 of this year. Israel, for its part, has also been accused of using phosphorous in the Gaza Strip in 2009.

No pressure expected on Israel

According to Mideast experts, it's unlikely that pressure will mount for Israel to declare whether or not it has chemical weapons.

"I believe that's due to a certain rhetoric," Rachid Ouaisa, with Marburg's Center for Near and Middle Eastern Studies, told DW. "The kind of international pressure that has been put on Syria will not be applied against Israel."

Neither the United States nor the United Nations has made demands of Israel comparable to those made of Syria. And even if international pressure does grow in the coming weeks, it's unlikely to make any impression on Israel, according to Steinberg.

"It's critical that the American government acts," Steinberg said. "And it definitely will not intensify pressure on Israel. And what the Europeans think about security policy has never really mattered to the Israelis."

It's part of the political culture in Israel not to publicly disclose information about weapons arsenals - whether they be nuclear or chemical, Steinberg said. In addition, President Assad might have calculated that, by joining the convention, he could turn the world community's attention to Israel.

"Don't fall for it," Steinberg said. "This is about Syria's chemical weapons. And it will be difficult enough to effect a change in Syria's policy."

Hardly comparable with Syria

Rachid Ouaisa agrees with Steinberg and advises to put the question of Israel's chemical weapons aside for the time being. Currently, there are other actors that present more pressing causes for concern, according to Ouaisa.

"First, Syria is on the agenda - then (North) Korea, then Hezbollah and then Egypt," he said, adding that Israel is hardly comparable with the Assad regime.

"Israel found its place in the world system long ago and enjoys a good standing, even with all its stupidities and unfair behavior," Ouaisa said.

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And in Steinberg's view, it's not altogether unlikely the Jewish state would join the CWC one day.

"I could imagine such a scenario at the end of a political process, in which the Americans convinced the Israelis that it made little sense to insist on chemical weapons," Steinberg said.

"Anyway the Israelis, because of their nuclear arsenal, have military superiority over all the neighbors in their region," he added.

<http://www.dw.de/israel-keeps-mum-on-its-chemical-weapons/a-17104647>

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Tehran Times – Iran

Foreign Minister to Lead Iran's New Nuclear Negotiating Team: report

Political Desk

Monday, September 23, 2013

TEHRAN – Iran's Foreign Minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, will lead nuclear negotiations with the major powers over the country's nuclear program, the Fars News Agency reported on Sunday.

Earlier this month, Iran announced that the Foreign Ministry would take over talks with world powers from the Supreme National Security Council, which was headed by Saeed Jalili who was also Iran's chief nuclear negotiator.

According to the Fars report, the new nuclear team also includes Abbas Araghchi, the deputy minister for legal and international affairs, and Majid Takht-Ravanchi, the deputy foreign minister for European and American affairs.

It also said that Zarif and European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton were scheduled to hold talks on Monday on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Ashton leads diplomatic efforts to resolve the decade-old nuclear dispute on behalf of the six major powers, namely the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France, and Germany, which are known as the P5+1 group.

The report also said that a meeting between Iran and representatives of the 5+1 group was "probable" on Wednesday.

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/110980-foreign-minister-to-lead-irans-new-nuclear-negotiating-team-report>

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FARS News Agency – Iran

Monday, September 23, 2013

Iran, Russia Strike Agreement on Construction of More N. Power Plants

TEHRAN (FNA) - Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi announced on Monday that Tehran and Moscow have agreed on the construction of more nuclear power plants once the Russian contractor is through with the full launch of the Bushehr power plant and delivers its full control to Iran.

"Certain agreements have been made at the Iran-Russian Joint Economic Commission meetings for building the second unit of the new nuclear power plant," Salehi told reporters in Bushehr city today.

The Iranian experts on Monday afternoon will receive the temporary operational control of the Bushehr nuclear power plant from the Russian contractor after signing a relevant protocol.

Salehi said that Iranian experts will receive the temporary control of the unit of the Bushehr power plant this afternoon, adding that the full (everlasting) operational control of the plant will be delivered to Iran after a two-year-warranty or 7,000 hours of operation.

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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Salehi, Iranian Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian, and the Head of the Russian contractor company are slated to attend the ceremony in Bushehr this afternoon which will be held to mark the endorsement of a protocol for the temporary delivery control of the Bushehr nuclear power plant to Iran.

The power plants' temporary control will also be delivered to Iran right after the endorsement of the protocol.

Late in August, Head of the Bushehr nuclear power plant Hossein Derakhshandeh announced that "the Bushehr power plant is now in the operational phase to produce safe and secure electricity".

"Once the control of the Bushehr nuclear power plant is delivered to the Iranian experts in the next two months, the plant will start industrial operation phase (meaning a full capacity operation)," he added.

In relevant remarks in August, Head of the Russian State Nuclear Energy Corporation Sergey Kiriyenko said that his company is ready to transfer the full operational control of Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant to the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization (IAEO).

"The state company (Rosatom) will soon sign the documents to transfer the full operational control of the Bushehr nuclear power plant to Iran," Kiriyenko said.

The Russian official underlined that Bushehr nuclear power plant is currently operating at 100-percent capacity and the process of preparing it for transfer to the project originator (Iran) is concluding.

Rosatom's construction arm, Atomstroyeksport, took over construction of Bushehr nuclear power plant after a German company pulled out of the project after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran.

The Islamic Republic signed the Bushehr contract with Russia in 1995 and the nuclear power plant reached its full capacity by August 2012.

The Bushehr nuclear power plant is located about 18 kilometers South of the provincial capital.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920701001144>

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FoxNews.com

9 Years on, Libya still Not Free of Chemical Weapons

By Imed Lamloum, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

September 23, 2013

TRIPOLI (AFP) – Syria's regime says it will need at least a year to dismantle its chemical weapons arsenal, but if Libya's experience is anything to go by, this is a hopelessly optimistic forecast.

Damascus has provided the Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) with a full inventory of its chemical arsenal, in order to avert US-led military strikes in line with a US-Russian deal.

The plan calls for Syria's arsenal to be destroyed by mid-2014 amid hopes that it could pave the way for peace talks to end the 30-month Syrian conflict which has killed more than 110,000 people and forced two million more to flee abroad.

Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad said last week "it needs a year, or maybe a little bit more" and \$1 billion for Syria to surrender its chemical weapons.

But judging by the Libyan experience, that "little bit more" could stretch to years.

Nine years after Tripoli signed on to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the new authorities are still trying to destroy the remainder of the stockpile they inherited from slain dictator Moamer Kadhafi.

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The process began early in 2004 when Kadhafi, keen to shake off Libya's "pariah state" image, signed the Convention and joined the OPCW.

Libya had 13 tonnes of mustard gas when it signed the treaty, but the former regime claimed at the time to have destroyed the munitions needed to deliver the deadly substance.

In the years following the signing, Kadhafi's regime destroyed around 54 percent of its mustard gas stocks and about 40 percent of the chemicals used to manufacture the substance, besides 3,500 bombs intended to deliver deadly chemicals.

The process, supervised by OPCW experts, was interrupted by the 2011 uprising against Kadhafi in which he was ultimately toppled and slain by Western-backed rebels.

The experts' work resumed in 2012.

"The process of elimination is being conducted step-by-step, with the latest stage of the destruction of chemicals taking place between December, 2012 and May, 2013," said Colonel Ali Chikhi, spokesman for the Libyan army staff.

To date, he told AFP, "Libya has destroyed 95 percent of its mustard gas stocks and is on course to eliminate the remainder by 2016 at the latest".

The largest stockpile of the gas is inside a warehouse in the city of Al-Raogha, around 700 kilometres (435 miles) south of the capital Tripoli.

"Chemical substances stored in warehouses are strictly monitored and subject to draconian controls by Libya and the international community," said Chikhi.

Libyan Foreign Minister Mohamed Abdelaziz, meanwhile, told AFP that agreement had been reached with the United States earlier this month for technical help in destroying the remainder of Libya's chemical weapons.

Abdelaziz added that a team of US experts was expected in the country in the next few days.

Washington, the minister added, will meet 80 percent of the costs for the operation while Germany will pick up the shortfall. Latest technologies will be used to prevent the environment being impacted in any way.

Abdelaziz stressed that the project envisages destroying only "mustard gas and chemical products considered toxic and dangerous". For the moment, Libya's stocks of concentrated uranium, or yellowcake, will not be touched.

At the end of 2011, in the aftermath of the revolution that toppled Kadhafi, a large stock of yellowcake was discovered at an arms depot in the city of Sabha, in southern Libya.

"Libya is trying to determine if the concentrated uranium can be used for peaceful nuclear energy purposes or sold to countries which use the product for peaceful purposes," said the minister.

The stockpile has since been secured in collaboration with International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors.

But the Centre for Strategic Studies in Tripoli has asked the Libyan authorities to ensure the concentrated uranium is used for the benefit of Libyans, in "industrial and agricultural development and in the production of clean energy".

<http://www.foxnews.com/world/2013/09/23/years-on-libya-still-not-free-chemical-weapons/>

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Huffington Post

Obama Announces that John Kerry Will Pursue Nuclear Weapons Agreement with Iran

September 24, 2013

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UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Barack Obama says he has directed Secretary of State John Kerry to pursue a nuclear weapons agreement with Iran and that he firmly believes "the diplomatic path must be tested."

Obama told the United Nations General Assembly Tuesday he's encouraged that Iranian President Hasan Rouhani is pursuing a more moderate course. But he said Rouhani's "conciliatory words will have to be matched by actions that are transparent and verifiable."

The West has long suspected that Iran is seeking a nuclear weapon. Tehran has consistently denied the charge.

It's still unclear if Obama will meet with Rouhani while at the United Nations. The leaders of the two countries haven't had face-to-face contact in more than 30 years.

U.S. officials say no meeting is planned, although they haven't ruled one out.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/24/obama-iran_n_3982009.html?utm_hp_ref=politics

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People's Daily Online – China

Development of China's Fourth-Generation Nuclear Submarine Completed

(People's Daily Online)

September 22, 2013

At the recent 2013 Four Northeastern Provinces Cooperation Leaders' Conference held in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, Tan Zuojun, vice governor of Liaoning Province and former general manager of China State Shipbuilding Corporation, revealed that development of China's fourth-generation nuclear submarines and other high-tech weapons and items of equipment in the Northeastern Provinces of China had been completed. The news attracted considerable attention.

The fourth generation nuclear submarine features high performance and low noise

Military expert Du Wenlong pointed out that the main characteristic of the fourth generation nuclear submarine would be its high performance. Compared with earlier submarines, modern attack submarines differ significantly in offensive power, possessing both anti-submarine capabilities and also strong potential for anti-ship action and attacks on land-based targets. He pointed out that the fourth generation nuclear submarines of the United States and Russia already have these capabilities; China's fourth-generation nuclear submarines too will be equipped with the appropriate torpedoes, along with missiles suitable for use against other sea-going or land-based targets. In addition, the Chinese submarine will have low noise output, a key indicator for measuring a modern nuclear submarine's underwater survival capacity, as well as its ability to remain hidden during maneuvers, or undetected while launching an attack. He pointed out that the fourth-generation nuclear submarine will possess effective noise damping features, such as a quieter nuclear power plant with less vibration, and a more advanced hull muffler system, so that it will be difficult to detect even if within range of enemy sonar.

On the question when the fourth-generation nuclear submarine will enter service, Du Wenlong said that completion of development and completion of construction are two different phases - the cycle from completion of development to manufacturing, and then to fitting out and launch, can be very long, perhaps several years. Progress is determined by two factors: one is technical indicators, and the other is strategic need.

A significant enhancement of nuclear counterattack capability

Analysts believe that continual development of attack submarines and strategic nuclear submarines at times of peace, adding better performance and greater combat ability, can enhance strategic deterrence capability. China's strategic nuclear forces are weapons to deter third parties from becoming involved in local conflicts. China firmly adheres to the principle of non-first use of nuclear weapons, but the existence of strategic nuclear submarines will give China a

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stronger voice and more room for maneuver in the case of any crisis. In addition, Song Xiaojun points out that the United States, Russia, Britain and France all possess modern strategic nuclear submarines as a symbol of their status as 'Great Powers'; it is natural that China should be unwilling to lag behind.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90786/8406448.html>

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Xinhua News – China

China Urges Diplomacy to Curb Missile Proliferation

September 23, 2013

BEIJING, Sept. 23 (Xinhua) -- China advocates political and diplomatic means in dealing with missile proliferation, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told a regular press briefing on Monday.

Hong made the comments in response to media reports that Japan's Kyoto Prefecture on Thursday officially approved the installation of an advanced U.S. military radar.

An X-band radar will be set up on the Japanese Air Self-Defense Force's Kyogamisaki sub-base in the city of Kyotango in the prefecture, in a bid to defend against any missile threat from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Hong said China has taken note of the relevant reports and is concerned about the action.

China believes that unilaterally deploying an anti-missile system or forging an alliance is not conducive to the resolution of the regional nonproliferation issue as well as the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region, and will bring about a severe negative impact on global strategic stability, he said.

The spokesman said China advocates political and diplomatic means in dealing with missile proliferation and hopes to fully accommodate the legitimate concerns of each country on the missile defense subject, so as to safeguard global strategic stability.

The X-band radar is capable of precisely tracking the trajectory of a ballistic missile and allows U.S. forces to launch interceptor missiles from the ground and sea.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/23/c_132743634.htm

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BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) News – U.K.

23 September 2013

North Korea Rocket Engine Test 'Probable' – Report

New satellite images of North Korea indicate that it probably tested a long-range rocket engine in August, a US think tank says.

Imagery showed fresh activity at North Korea's Sohae Satellite Launching Station, including what looked like a rocket stage, the report said.

The report also described blackened vegetation that was probably caused by flames and exhaust from the engine.

Last December, Pyongyang successfully launched a rocket into space.

The move angered its neighbours, who said the launch was a disguised missile test.

Satellite imagery from 20 and 25 August suggested a rocket engine had been tested between those dates, the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University wrote on the 38 North website.

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The first image showed "a probable rocket stage" that was 2.5m (8ft) wide and 9m (30ft) long at Sohae, the report said. It was difficult to identify the type of rocket engine tested, the report added, although "it [was] possibly the second stage of an Unha-3 space launch vehicle".

"Other possibilities include a second or third stage engine for a much larger DPRK rocket believed [to be] under development."

The second image showed changes at the site, including a crane which would be necessary to mount and remove the rocket engine, and vegetation in front of a flame trench which had turned brown, probably as a result of the engine test, the report said.

On 12 December 2012, North Korea successfully launched a long-range Unha-3 rocket, defying international warnings. South Korea, Japan and the US said the launch was a disguised missile test, and the UN Security Council unanimously approved a resolution condemning the launch and tightening sanctions.

Last year's launch triggered a sharp downturn in the North's international image, the BBC's Lucy Williamson in Seoul reports.

Relations between the two Koreas have improved since then, but tensions have resurfaced in the past few days, with Pyongyang abruptly cancelling a cross-border reunion for separated relatives, our correspondent adds.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24203461>

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The London Guardian – U.K.

North Korea 'Has Technology to Build Uranium-Based Nuclear Bombs'

Pyongyang thought to be mastering production of components for gas centrifuges needed to make such bombs, say experts

Associated Press in Seoul

Tuesday 24 September 2013

North Korean scientists are thought to have attained the ability to build uranium-based nuclear bombs on their own, cutting the need for imports that had been one of the few ways outsiders could monitor the country's secretive atomic work.

According to evidence gathered by two North American experts, material published in North Korean scientific publications and news media shows that Pyongyang is mastering domestic production of essential components for the gas centrifuges needed to make such bombs.

The development further complicates long-stalled efforts to stop a nuclear bomb programme that Pyongyang has vowed to expand, despite international condemnation.

If Pyongyang can make crucial centrifuge parts at home, outsiders cannot track sensitive imports, which could spell the end of policies based on export controls, sanctions and interdiction that have been the centrepiece of international efforts to stop North Korea's nuclear programme over the last decade, Joshua Pollack, a Washington-based expert on nuclear proliferation, said.

"If they're not importing these goods in the first place, then we can't catch them in the act," said Pollack, who gathered the evidence with Scott Kemp, an expert on centrifuge technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "We won't necessarily see anything more than what the North Koreans want us to see."

The state of North Korea's nuclear programme is of vital concern to Washington because Pyongyang wants to build an arsenal of nuclear-armed missiles that can reach American shores.



The North has conducted three nuclear tests of apparently increasing power since 2006, most recently in February, and it is believed to have a handful of crude plutonium-based bombs. Many experts estimate, however, that Pyongyang has not yet mastered the miniaturisation technology needed to mount a warhead on a long-range missile.

Fuel for North Korea's plutonium bombs has been made in a reactor that is large and easily monitored. But uranium-based weapons are more difficult for outsiders to investigate because the centrifuges needed to enrich uranium for bombs can be easily hidden from satellites and prying inspectors.

The US and others long suspected North Korea was clandestinely developing a uranium programme, despite denials from Pyongyang. US officials confronted North Korea in 2002 with claims its scientists were pursuing uranium enrichment, sparking a nuclear crisis. In a reversal, visiting Americans were shown in November 2010 what they called a sophisticated, modern uranium enrichment facility with 2,000 centrifuges at the North's main nuclear facility.

Restrictions on imports to North Korea are tightening thanks to China, which is a key ally of Pyongyang but also has been pressing it to give up nuclear weapons. A notice posted on the commerce ministry's website on Tuesday listed 236 pages of items and technologies banned from export to North Korea because of their potential use in manufacturing weapons of mass destruction.

International sanctions banning nuclear weapons-related shipments to North Korea did not stop its progress even when it relied on imported equipment, but the US enjoyed some success tracking the parts allegedly used in the programme. In 2007, for instance, the then US nuclear envoy, Christopher Hill, said Washington had evidence that Pyongyang had bought equipment used only for uranium enrichment.

News media reports and unclassified government documents showed North Korea imported large amounts of centrifuge parts in the early 2000s, Pollack said, but an apparent dearth of observed imports since then suggests that Pyongyang is making the necessary components at home. He said the knowhow for domestic production of key parts appears to have been in place no later than 2009.

Pollack said he and Kemp found "strong and clear" evidence in state media photographs taken inside North Korean factories of specialised lathes that produce the strong metal cylinders needed for centrifuges.

He also spoke of accounts in North Korean propaganda and technical journals of iron and steelmaking consistent with the production of an extremely hard steel alloy that can resist high rotational speeds in centrifuges, although the final step of the process was not described.

Pollack said their research also found scientific reports and patent awards describing work on technologies for crucial centrifuge parts. Those include vacuum pumps that remove air from centrifuges and pipes before uranium-bearing gas is added and electronic devices that control the speed of the electric motor in the base of each centrifuge.

North Korea's nuclear programme is cloaked in secrecy and treated domestically as a national treasure. The small, impoverished country says it must defend itself from US attempts to overthrow its political system.

It is not clear whether North Korea has made bomb-grade uranium, and Pyongyang says the programme is for peaceful, energy-generating purposes. But analysts strongly suspect that, even beyond the facility Americans toured in 2010, Pyongyang has other uranium enrichment facilities that could be producing large amounts of weapons-grade material.

Earlier this year, during a barrage of threats aimed at Washington and Seoul, Pyongyang vowed to resume all its nuclear fuel production. Recent satellite imagery appears to show that North Korea was restarting its plutonium reactor.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/24/north-korea-uranium-based-nuclear-bombs>

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BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) News – U.K.
24 September 2013



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China Bans Several Weapon-Related North Korea Exports

China says it has banned the export to North Korea of several weapon-related technologies which could be used in the development of nuclear weapons.

China's Commerce Ministry published the list, which includes components for nuclear explosive devices and rocket systems, on Monday.

It said the move would help implement UN resolutions on North Korea, and would be effective immediately.

Analysts say the ban shows China taking a firmer line against its ally.

The list includes technology in nuclear, missile, chemical and biological fields.

It says the restrictions are developed in accordance with several UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea.

China is North Korea's only ally and its major trading partner.

Western powers have previously criticised China for not rigorously enforcing UN sanctions imposed on North Korea because of its nuclear programme, the BBC's Martin Patience in Beijing reports.

However, relations between Beijing and Pyongyang have been seriously strained in recent months, our correspondent adds.

In March, China supported a UN Security Council resolution tightening sanctions against North Korea, in response to Pyongyang's third nuclear test in February.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-24216993>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

US Prepared to Strike Syria if UN Deal Falls Short – Official

21 September 2013

WASHINGTON, September 20 (RIA Novosti) – The United States has not ruled out military strikes against Syria if Damascus does not abide by a US-Russian plan to hand over its chemical weapons arsenal, a White House official said Friday ahead of UN Security Council talks on enforcing the disarmament program.

“We are not forsaking the option of the United States and our allies taking military action,” White House deputy national security adviser Ben Rhodes told reporters during a conference call.

Washington and Moscow are expected to clash in negotiations at next week's UN General Assembly over the terms of a Security Council resolution that would enforce Syria's compliance with a US-Russian plan hammered out in Geneva last week.

US State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told a news briefing Friday that the five Security Council members met Friday to discuss a resolution on Syria's chemical weapons, which the United States hopes will be up for a vote next week.

The administration of US President Barack Obama will continue to push for a resolution that includes the option of military action if Syrian President Bashar Assad's government fails to adhere to the US-Russian plan to place Syria's chemical weapons under international control for eventual destruction, Rhodes said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said this week, however, that the threat of the use of force is not acceptable in a resolution, a position in line with Russia's consistent rejection of outside military intervention in Syria's civil war.

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Obama will argue in a speech to the UN General Assembly on Tuesday that Assad and his government must face “consequences” should “they fail to cooperate with the international community” in the effort to dispose of Syria’s chemical arsenal, Rhodes said.

Rhodes’ comments followed the announcement earlier Friday by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which monitors the global ban on these arms, that Syria had provided it with details of its chemical weapons program.

The Netherlands-based group, which is tasked with overseeing the US-Russian framework agreement, said in a statement that it had “received an initial disclosure from the Syrian Government of its chemical weapons program, which is now being examined by the Technical Secretariat.”

Under the US-Russian plan, Assad’s government has until Saturday to submit to the OPCW a “comprehensive listing” of Syria’s chemical weapons program, including types and quantities of chemical weapons agents, types of munitions, and “location and form of storage, production, and research and development facilities.”

Harf said Friday that the United States, as a member of the OPCW executive council, would conduct a “careful and thorough review” of the report after it is passed on to the council by the organization’s technical secretariat.

“We’ve said all along that we need to see forward momentum,” Harf said. “... We have a document we didn’t have yesterday at the OPCW, and we’ll be taking a look at it and making an assessment.”

An OPCW spokesman quoted by Reuters said that the watchdog had received from the Syrian government “part of the verification, and we expect more.”

The news agency quoted a UN diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, as saying that the document is “quite long” and in the process of being translated from Arabic.

US Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov discussed Syria by telephone Friday morning in what America’s top diplomat called “a fairly long conversation.”

“We talked about the cooperation which we both agreed to continue to provide, moving not only towards the adoption of the OPCW rules and regulations, but also a resolution that is firm and strong within the United Nations. We will continue to work on that,” Kerry said before a bilateral meeting in Washington with Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the Americans had initiated the call.

The Obama administration has accused Assad’s government of responsibility for an Aug. 21 chemical weapons attack outside Damascus that Washington claims killed more than 1,400.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday, meanwhile, repeated Moscow’s claim that the attack was likely carried out by rebels seeking to frame Assad as they battle to remove him from power.

Moscow has also cast doubt on the findings of a report by UN inspectors released this week about the Aug. 21 attack and has called for a follow-up inspection. US officials say the report clearly demonstrates the Assad regime’s culpability.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20130921/183623492/US-Prepared-to-Strike-Syria-if-UN-Deal-Falls-Short--Official.html>

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Space Daily.com

US Navy Launches Two Raytheon-Made SM-3 Missiles against Single Ballistic Missile Target

By Staff Writers
Kauai HI (SPX)

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September 22, 2013

In a Missile Defense Agency test, the U.S. Navy launched two Raytheon Company (NYSE: RTN)-made Standard Missile-3 Block IBs from the USS Lake Erie against a complex, separating short-range ballistic missile target. The first guided missile successfully destroyed the target using the sheer kinetic force of a massive collision in space.

The SM-3 is a defensive weapon used by the U.S. and Japan to defend against short- to intermediate-range ballistic missiles.

"Confidence in the SM-3 Block IB's defensive capability continues to grow with each flight test," said Dr. Taylor Lawrence, Raytheon Missile Systems president. "When this weapon deploys in 2015, the U.S. and our allies will have a tremendously reliable, capable defensive asset on their side."

During the test, two SM-3 interceptors were launched at a single target consecutively. The first SM-3 eliminated the target. The second SM-3 was designed to test the ship weapons system's ability to launch multiple missiles at one time against a threat. An intercept for the second SM-3 was not part of the test scenario.

"We're gaining a tremendous amount of information about what this missile can do, and in many instances it is far surpassing design requirements," said Dr. Mitch Stevison, Raytheon Missile Systems' SM-3 program director.

"The SM-3 Block IB is proving it can take on increasingly sophisticated scenarios, and that kind of confidence sets the stage for a production decision."

The test was the 25th successful flight test for the SM-3 program and the fourth back-to-back successful test of the next-generation SM-3 Block IB variant. Based on the highly successful SM-3 Block IA currently deployed around the world today, the SM-3 Block IB incorporates an enhanced two-color infrared seeker and the Throttleable Divert and Attitude Control System, a mechanism that propels the missile toward incoming targets.

Standard Missile-3

SM-3s destroy incoming ballistic missile threats by colliding with them, a concept sometimes described as "hitting a bullet with a bullet." The impact is the equivalent of a 10-ton truck traveling at 600 mph.

- + More than 155 SM-3s have been delivered to the U.S. and Japanese navies.
- + Raytheon is on track to deliver the next-generation SM-3 Block IB in 2015.
- + SM-3 Block IB will be deployed in both sea-based and land-based modes.

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/US_Navy_launches_two_Raytheon_made_SM_3_missiles_against_single_ballistic_missile_target_999.html

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Santa Maria Times – Santa Maria, CA

VAFB Tests Minuteman Missile in early Morning Launch

Staff Report

September 22, 2013

An unarmed Minuteman 3 missile popped out of an underground silo at Vandenberg Air Force Base early Sunday morning, the first of two ICBM test launches planned for this week.

The three-stage intercontinental ballistic missile blasted out of Launch Facility-10 on North Base at 3:01 a.m. Sunday, the opening of a six-hour window.

Upon liftoff, the Air Force tracked the weapon and its lone re-entry vehicle as it traveled some 4,200 miles southwest of Vandenberg to a predetermined target in the Kwajalein Atoll.



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A successful launch Sunday clears the way for this week's second Minuteman 3 test from Vandenberg. That test launch is planned for 3:01 a.m. Thursday with the team having until 9:01 a.m. for the launch to occur.

Each test costs about \$21 million, Air Force officials have said.

http://santamariatimes.com/news/local/military/vandenberg/vafb-tests-minuteman-missile-in-early-morning-launch/article_52ddfea2-23bc-11e3-8060-001a4bcf887a.html

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Omaha World-Herald – Omaha, NE

Clock Is Ticking on Aging B61 Bomb, StratCom Chief Says

By Steve Liewer / World-Herald staff writer

Monday, September 23, 2013

The oldest atomic bomb in the U.S. arsenal desperately needs to be upgraded before its aging electronics go bad early in the next decade, the head of the Offutt-based U.S. Strategic Command says.

Gen. C. Robert Kehler has been telling anyone who will listen that the clock is ticking on the B61 bomb. It was designed in the 1960s to be dropped from NATO's strategic bombers and tactical fighters, thwarting a Soviet invasion of Western Europe.

"The B61 life-extension program is absolutely necessary," Kehler said in an interview with The World-Herald. "Much has been deferred. Now we don't have the luxury of waiting."

But congressional opponents on the right and left are lining up against the program, citing cost estimates that have doubled in just two years to more than \$28 million per bomb. As anti-nuclear activists are fond of pointing out, that's about twice what it would cost if the B61 were made of solid gold.

What's more, the battle looks like a precursor to a much larger one over the planned retooling of America's nuclear weapons as well as the missiles, submarines and aircraft that carry them. The projected price tag for some of those upgrades already stands at \$65 billion, even as the Pentagon enters an era of tight spending.

"The B61 is the first in that queue," said Kingston Reif, director of nuclear nonproliferation at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in Washington, D.C. "There's concern about whether these plans make any sense."

About 180 B61s are deployed at NATO air bases in Europe for tactical use to blunt a Russian attack, according to calculations by Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists. An estimated 250 more are in place to arm B-52 and B-2 strategic bombers in North Dakota and Missouri, he said, and an additional 500 are inactive.

After decades of storage, though, some of the electronic parts have grown obsolete and unreliable. The Pentagon wants to upgrade the four aged B61 types into a single new one called the B61-12.

"Some of the components are so old, they can't be replaced," said Michaela Dodge, defense and strategic policy analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation, who supports the upgrade. "We are facing a very serious situation when it comes to nuclear weapons."

President Barack Obama has championed the B61 upgrade in spite of his frequently stated goal of reducing nuclear weapons. In 2010, he asked Congress to spend \$4 billion over 10 years to refurbish 400 of the bombs as part of the larger program to modernize the nuclear arsenal.

He agreed to boost spending on the modernization plan to win the support of Senate Republicans that year for the extension of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that Obama had negotiated with the Russians, analysts say.

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The plan pitched by the National Nuclear Security Administration, which manages the country's nuclear stockpile, would do more than just replace obsolete parts of the B61.

It also would add certain security features that backers say would make the bomb safer even if it fell into the wrong hands, although critics contend those features are unnecessary. And it would retrofit the bomb so it could be used with the new F-35 fighter jet.

Significantly, it would add a guided tail kit that would turn the B61 from a gravity-dependent “dumb” bomb into a “smart” one that could be aimed more precisely at a target.

“The big plus to the (B61-)12 is the additional precision guidance,” said Barry Watts, a retired Air Force officer who is now a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments. “The anti-nuclear groups look at it as a new capability, a new warhead.”

Arms-control advocates have argued the B61-12 upgrade violates Obama's 2010 nuclear strategy, which pledged not to add military capabilities when upgrading nuclear weapons.

The trouble with that strategy, Watts said, is that the U.S. arsenal is full of larger weapons designed for a massive Cold War confrontation with the Soviets. Now, though, the Russians and other nations in the nuclear club are focusing on smaller, tactical weapons designed to take out armies instead of cities.

Watts believes the U.S. emphasis on reducing weapons is misguided.

“If everybody on Earth were following (Obama's) lead, that would be fine,” Watts said. “But most countries are walking in the opposite direction.”

The escalating cost of the B61 upgrade has inspired some Tea Party conservatives in Congress to join forces with nuclear skeptics on the left.

By 2012, cost estimates had more than doubled, to \$10.4 billion. Kristensen has called it the “most expensive nuclear bomb project in history.”

“It's a huge budget-buster,” said Reif, from the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

Members of Congress are beginning to cut back the B61 program. The current year's budget sequester already reduced appropriations for the project by about 20 percent. For next year, congressional subcommittees that oversee the nuclear stockpile budget are threatening to cut the Obama administration's \$537 million B61 request by about one-third.

The tug of war is frustrating for Sen. Deb Fischer of Nebraska, who has spoken up for StratCom's priorities from her position on the Senate Armed Services Committee — which, she said, has fully supported the president's B61 plans.

“Cost growth and schedule slips are serious issues, and another year of sequestration cuts will only exacerbate these problems,” she said in a statement released from her Washington office. “As these issues compound, and the weapons continue to age, we approach the possibility that our military may not have this critical tool at its disposal. I hope Congress acts before this point is reached.”

Kristensen, however, said he hopes the cuts imposed by Congress will force the Obama administration to look at lower-cost alternatives to the souped-up B61-12.

“How exotic do you need to make the upgrade?” he said. “There are cheaper ways to do these things.”

Kristensen has proposed one such plan. His idea is to upgrade only one of the four current models, the B61-7, of which about 215 are deployed in the United States. That would fix three of the most critical aging components, skipping the F-35 compatibility upgrade and the expensive guided-tail kit.

He estimates the B61-7 alternative would cost no more than \$2 billion, or one-fifth as much as the current plan. His plan also would remove all the weapons from Europe, because the versions used there would not be upgraded.



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In his view, that's a plus. Anti-nuclear groups in Western Europe have long opposed the presence of the weapons there, and Kristensen sees the threat of a Russian attack as remote. President George W. Bush already had cut the number of warheads in Europe by half.

"This is an irritant for a mission that's not very important," he said.

Kehler and his allies, though, see the European weapons as important, and they favor the full modernization.

"What they provide is assurance for our (European) allies," Dodge said. "They're a visible testament to NATO's cohesion."

Kehler believes scrimping on the B61 upgrade now will only cost more later.

"We think this is a good investment in the long term," he said. "It makes the most sense to do a more comprehensive life-extension now because, also in the long term, that's going to be the most cost-effective way to go forward."

There is not much time to delay. Under the current schedule, the first of the upgraded B61s are scheduled to be ready in 2019 — just as the old ones are expected to age out.

And with critical nuclear upgrades planned for missiles and their delivery systems in the coming decades, the military says it can't afford to slow down now.

"We have a series of life-extensions that need to occur in order here," Kehler said. "And now is the time to get moving."

<http://www.omaha.com/article/20130922/NEWS/130929616>

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The London Daily Telegraph – U.K.
OPINION/Commentary

Would Ed Miliband Trade our Nuclear Arsenal for the Keys to Downing Street?

Scrapping the Trident missile system would put our nation at risk. But would Ed Miliband do it to seal a Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition, asks Dr Julian Lewis.

By Dr Julian Lewis MP
22 September 2013

Since the United Kingdom became a nuclear power, successive governments have maintained a continuous strategic deterrent. If the Liberal Democrats have their way, this will end and the country will no longer be capable of instant retaliation to a nuclear attack. Under plans voted for at the Liberal Democrat conference in Glasgow last week, the four-boat ballistic missile submarine fleet would be reduced to three, or more probably two, making the restoration of a continuous deterrent unlikely - or more probably, impossible.

The remaining submarines would go to sea unarmed, thus providing no deterrent at all. While they are at sea, all their nuclear warheads will be safely locked up at the Coulport depot ashore, ready for redeployment at times of "heightened tension".

In the Alice-in-Wonderland world of Liberal Democrat strategy, we are expected to believe six impossible things not just before breakfast but indefinitely:

First, that we shall have plenty of warning of an impending attack.

Secondly, that any submarine in port will not immediately be targeted.

Thirdly, that any submarine at sea will have time to return and re-arm.

Fourthly, that any returning submarine will not be attacked as soon as it reaches Faslane.

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Fifthly, that the Coulport depot will not instantly be obliterated with all our nuclear warheads still inside it.

Finally, that deploying the deterrent only in the midst of a crisis will lessen the danger rather than increasing it.

None of these assertions is believable by anyone who takes the threat of nuclear aggression seriously. Unfortunately, the Liberal Democrats do not. In March 2007, they voted together with the Labour left against renewing the Trident submarine fleet. Thanks to Conservative support, the Blair government nevertheless won the vote by 409 votes to 161. If there were a vote in Parliament now to sign the 'main gate' contracts for these successor submarines, it would also be overwhelmingly carried.

Until 2010, no party in government rejected the view that, as long as other countries possess nuclear weapons, Britain must retain the ability to retaliate if attacked.

Fortunately, the Liberals were not in power during the 1980s, when Paddy Ashdown rightly described them, in the *CND* magazine *Sanity*, as "the only British political party that has always opposed a British nuclear deterrent". If the Liberals were unilateralist at the height of the Soviet threat, it is hardly surprising that they continue to detest the deterrent in the post-cold war world.

Yet, it is dangerous for them to be too open about this: under Foot and Kinnock, Labour paid a terrible electoral price for its one-sided nuclear disarmament stance in 1983 and 1987. In the Trident renewal debate in 2007, Gerald Kaufman memorably reminded his party that he dubbed the 1983 Labour manifesto "the longest suicide note in history". He added: "It is one thing to revisit the scene of the crime; it is quite another to revisit the scene of the suicide".

For this reason, the Liberals shun the honesty of the *CND* position. Both during and after the Cold War years, poll after poll showed two-thirds of the British people supporting the retention of a nuclear deterrent as long as other countries possess nuclear weapons, and only one-quarter favouring unilateral nuclear disarmament. Instead, they recommend a policy which flouts all the rules of deterrence and which invites an aggressor to mount a devastating first-strike, before our impotent submarines can be reunited with their nuclear warheads.

How much does this matter, given that the Conservative and Labour front benches are united in support of renewing the Trident fleet? Quite a lot, actually, as was demonstrated in October 2010 when it was suddenly announced that, instead of the 'main gate' contracts being signed in this Parliament, putting the future of the deterrent beyond doubt, they would be delayed until after the next general election. It has been estimated that extending the life of the existing submarines, to enable this delay, cost the country £1.4 billion.

If the Liberal Democrats hold the balance of power in 2015, will they stand by their commitment to a toothless and vulnerable Trident successor, or will they come out in their true unilateralist colours – demanding its scrapping altogether as part of the price of coalition? What would Ed Miliband do, if scrapping this single weapons system were all that stood between him and the keys to 10 Downing Street?

As for the Conservatives, it is true that David Cameron has constantly reiterated his commitment to Trident and, most importantly, to maintaining continuous at-sea deterrence. Yet, he too would be vulnerable to Liberal Democrat blackmail on the issue, if the outcome of the election gave them the choice of coalition with either main party.

The solution is obvious. The 'main gate' decision should be brought forward and the contracts should be signed irrevocably before 2015. If signing them for all four submarines now is felt to break the spirit of the 2010 Coalition Agreement, then sign them just for the first two or three. After all, even the Liberal Democrats now claim to want a 2 or 3-boat Trident fleet. Should we not take them at their word?

Only if their real agenda is to scrap Trident completely, as the price of a future coalition, can they possibly object to such a step? It is, after all, in the national interest.

*Dr Lewis was the Conservative Party's defence spokesman on the nuclear deterrent between 2002 and 2010. He is the author of *Changing Direction: British Military Planning for Post-war Strategic Defence, 1942-1947*. His essay, *Nuclear Disarmament Versus Peace in the 21st Century*, was awarded the *RUSI Trench Gascoigne Prize*.*

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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/10325410/Would-Ed-Miliband-trade-our-nuclear-arsenal-for-the-keys-to-Downing-Street.html>

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The Salt Lake City Tribune
OPINION/Op-Ed

Seelig: Time to Ratify Ban on Nuclear Testing

By Jennifer Seelig
September 23, 2013

While all eyes were recently on Syria, another important international security issue escaped attention. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, signed 17 years ago this week, is not high on Congress' to-do list, but it should be.

The threat of nuclear proliferation remains one of the greatest dangers to the safety and security of the United States. Though fragile, there currently exists a global taboo against nuclear weapons testing. Should this erode, and nations resume their nuclear testing programs, public health and U.S. global security would both be deeply damaged. Permanently preventing other nations from testing and developing nuclear weapons is in our nation's best interest. The CTBT is the best means of achieving this end.

Signed September 24, 1996, the CTBT was intended to put a stop to the growing list of countries seeking to develop their nuclear capabilities, a key tactic in the strategy to disrupt global nuclear proliferation.

In order to take effect, the CTBT requires ratification by the U.S. Senate, plus a few other countries. When it goes into effect, the CTBT will mandate that other states not conduct explosive nuclear tests and will provide a strong disincentive to make sure they don't. The Test Ban Treaty also put in a place a worldwide network of monitoring and surveillance to detect covert nuclear weapons tests to catch nations tempted to cheat.

As most Utahns know, the U.S. conducted hundreds of nuclear weapons tests between 1945 and 1992. A majority of these tests took place in Nevada, right outside our state's borders. Testing's deadly detritus then rained down across Utah and other western states, disrupting American lives with cancer, leukemia and a host of other deadly illnesses.

The United States has conducted more nuclear tests than any other nation on Earth. For decades we pursued testing despite the tragic human cost. Those days are over. Knowing the effects of testing on downwind populations as we now do, we cannot, in good conscience, resume explosive nuclear testing in our own backyards.

The United States no longer needs to test nuclear weapons. Our nuclear stockpiles are cared for by the most advanced laboratories on the planet. If, God forbid, we ever need those weapons, we can be confident they are well maintained and secure.

In 2010, I sponsored a resolution in the Utah House of Representatives calling for the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. At committee hearings and during House debate, my colleagues, downwinders, and many others spoke about a state haunted by its experience with nuclear weapons. Their laments for the past preceded their fear that some day, nuclear weapons might again be tested without penalty, not just by our nation, but also by those representing a threat to our nation.

In a rare bipartisan display, the Utah House voted unanimously to urge the United States Senate to ratify the Test Ban Treaty. My colleagues were convinced by the argument that ratifying the treaty would improve our nation's security, strengthen the regime against global nuclear nonproliferation and honor the sacrifices of those affected by previous nuclear weapons tests.

While recent international events demand Congress' immediate attention, the lessons of the past — the experiences of Utah's downwinders and the success of non-proliferation agreements — should guide our thinking in the future. The

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United States should make good on our promise of nearly two decades ago, and pursue ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Rep. Jennifer Seelig, D-Salt Lake City, is the minority leader in the Utah House of Representatives.

<http://www.sltrib.com/sltrib/opinion/56909719-82/nuclear-weapons-testing-ban.html.csp>

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Pittsburg Tribune-Review – Pittsburg, PA
OPINION/Commentary

Prepare for Strategic Terrorism

By Nathan Myhrvold
September 23, 2013

Several powerful trends have aligned to profoundly change the way the world works. Technology allows stateless groups to organize, recruit and fund themselves in an unprecedented fashion. That, coupled with the difficulty of finding and punishing a stateless group, means that such groups are positioned to be lead players on the world stage.

Meanwhile, technology trends mean that small numbers of people can obtain incredibly lethal power. Throughout history, the lethality of weapons technology has inexorably increased. Bronze weapons were better than those made of stone; steel outdid bronze; guns replaced bows. Each new generation of weapons technology was more lethal than its predecessor.

Yet a general rule prevailed: Successively more lethal weapons required successively larger investments and industrial bases. Making a bronze sword involved mining, smelting and casting. Steel required forced-air furnaces and forging techniques to shape the blade. A single nuclear device could destroy an entire city, but it also cost as much as a city and was far more difficult to build.

For the first time in human history, the curve of lethality and cost has been turned on its head. Biological weapons can be incredibly dangerous, but they can also be cheap to produce and deploy. Another path to cheap lethality is simple theft: A terror group could steal a nuclear bomb. A small group can now execute a strategic terror attack that could kill millions of people.

An attack of that magnitude differs in a fundamental way from the typical, tactical-level suicide bombings. The body count and total harm from tactical terrorism is limited. In contrast, a single nuclear or bio-terror attack could kill more people than all previous terrorist attacks put together.

Our defense establishment was shaped to address what was, for a long time, the only strategic threat our nation faced: Soviet or Chinese missiles. So far, strategic terrorism has received relatively little attention in defense agencies, and the efforts that have been launched to combat this existential threat seem fragmented.

That's a natural human reaction — nothing like this has happened yet, so it is hard for people to take it seriously. That is exactly the sort of complacency that preceded Sept. 11, Pearl Harbor and other great defense disasters.

History suggests that the only thing that shakes the United States out of complacency is a direct threat from a determined adversary that confronts us with our shortcomings by repeatedly attacking us or hectoring us for decades. The Cold War is an excellent example; the defense establishment we built in response largely worked and nuclear war was avoided.

Unfortunately, current and future foes are unlikely to follow this playbook. Instead, they wait patiently between attacks. For now, they are satisfied with tactical terrorism, but at some point they will have the means, opportunity and motive to turn to strategic terror weapons.

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The most likely scenario is that the United States will continue to lumber along. Terrorists will launch their next attack. With luck, we will detect it in time to prevent a major disaster, but it's possible that a strategic terror attack in the next decade or so will kill 100,000 to 1 million Americans. Surely, we then will get serious about strategic terrorism.

Or we could start now.

Nathan Myhrvold is chief executive and founder of Intellectual Ventures and a former chief technology officer at Microsoft.

<http://triblive.com/opinion/featuredcommentary/4754772-74/strategic-weapons-attack#axzz2fpZEPRUz>

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CATO Institute
OPINION/At Liberty
September 24, 2013 9:41AM

Reassessing U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy

By Christopher A. Preble

Today Cato released a new white paper, [“The End of Overkill? Reassessing U.S. Nuclear Weapons Policy.”](#) I am proud to have contributed to this effort with lead author Benjamin Friedman of Cato, and Matt Fay, a former Cato research assistant now enrolled in the History PhD program at Temple University. We argue that U.S. security does not require nearly 1,600 nuclear weapons deployed on a triad of systems—bombers, land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs)—to deliver them. We estimate that a smaller arsenal deployed entirely on submarines would save roughly \$20 billion annually while deterring attacks on the United States and its allies.

The paper is part of a broader project, “From Triad to Dyad: Rationalizing U.S. Nuclear Weapons Delivery Systems,” made possible by the generous support of the Ploughshares Fund. The project began as a top-line review of the triad, but expanded into a more comprehensive study of U.S. nuclear strategy and policy. Over the last year, we presented our preliminary findings at over a dozen public events in ten different cities, as well as several engagements here in Washington, D.C. This process generated useful feedback along the way.

Here are a few excerpts from “The End of Overkill?”:

- U.S. nuclear weapons’ policies have long rested on myths—about U.S. force plans, enemy capability, and the difficulties of deterrence—invented to manage Pentagon politics, placate allies and, to an extent, to bluff enemies.
- The triad developed during the Eisenhower administration as a result of competition—both between the Cold War combatants and the U.S. military services. Eisenhower’s “New Look” strategy, which threatened massive retaliation against Soviet adventurism, privileged the Air Force because Air Force bombers were the nation’s primary means for delivering strategic nuclear weapons, and the Air Force also had the lead in developing missile technology.
- Eisenhower’s policies, by producing interservice rivalries, encouraged innovative military doctrine to address the main U.S. military mission of the day: defending Europe from the Soviet Union, what defense intellectuals call extended deterrence. To regain budget share and relevance, the Army and Navy needed a bigger role. They argued that massive U.S. retaliation in response to a Soviet invasion of an ally was suicidal and thus unbelievable. The Army and Navy’s alternative deterrence strategies helped institutionalize the triad.
- The structure of the nuclear force that the Kennedy and Johnson administrations established, and the arguments they constructed to justify it, largely lasted through the Cold War. The interservice debate on how to

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defend Europe might have produced a choice in the early 1960s among doctrines and nuclear delivery systems that allowed a smaller arsenal. Instead, those administrations embraced all three, at least rhetorically.

- The triad survived after the Cold War because each leg had support from a powerful military constituency and congressmen whose districts benefitted from the associated spending. All had cheerleaders among defense intellectuals who received or sought service grants and political appointments. No similarly powerful interests pushed back. Fights over nuclear weapons policy in the late Cold War covered limited ground. Limited debate obscured the flaws in the triad's rationales.
- The declining military usefulness of nuclear weapons increases their delivery systems' vulnerability to budget cuts. Though the arsenal retains powerful backers, their budgetary utility for the Air Force and Navy has declined. Service leaders may see nuclear weapons as a drain on funding for personnel and platforms better linked to the service's preferred organizational purpose and doctrine.
- Policymakers should exploit that circumstance to improve strategic debate. Unity is necessary in war, but dissent is a reliable source of insight in preparing for war. A nuclear weapons policy that better serves the national interest may require the competition of parochial interests.

I believe that all who have an interest in U.S. national security policy will find value in the paper. I especially hope that it helps to dispel some of the most enduring myths surrounding nuclear weapons, and the role that they play in keeping the nation safe and secure. As the military is being asked to accomplish more with less, it is essential that it invest taxpayer resources wisely. The nation's nuclear weapons arsenal is particularly ripe for additional scrutiny.

Christopher A. Preble is the vice president for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute. Preble holds a Ph.D. in history from Temple University.

[http://www.cato.org/blog/reassessing-us-nuclear-weapons-policy?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Cato-at-liberty+\(Cato+at+Liberty\)](http://www.cato.org/blog/reassessing-us-nuclear-weapons-policy?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+Cato-at-liberty+(Cato+at+Liberty))

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