



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

Articles & Other Documents:

Featured Article: [Senators' ICBM Group Tells Hagel No Environmental Study](#)

1. [Iran Nuclear: Rivals Rally as Rouhani Returns from UN](#)
2. [Iran Ready for Talks if US Lifts Sanctions: Zarif](#)
3. [Netanyahu Heads to U.S. to Challenge Iran's Charm Offensive](#)
4. [Iranian Foreign Minister: Israel has an Arsenal of 200 Nuclear Warheads](#)
5. [Kerry Says Nuclear Deal with Iran could be Reached in Months](#)
6. [Iran Soldiers on with Enrichment](#)
7. [Obama Reassures Israel over Iran Nuclear Talks](#)
8. [Commander: Iran Capable of Building Aircraft Carriers](#)
9. [Chemical Weapons Inspectors Cross into Syria](#)
10. [No Sign of N. Korea's Seriousness on Dialogue, U.S. Officials Say](#)
11. [China Export Ban Hints at North Korea Nuclear Status: Experts](#)
12. [Hagel Raises Worries about North Korea's Chemical Weapons on DMZ Trip](#)
13. [Park Pledges Strong Defense to Render N. Korean Nuke Useless](#)
14. [S. Korea Shows off Latest Missiles on Armed Forces Day](#)
15. [North Korea Road-Mobile Missile a Concern for U.S., Thurman Says](#)
16. [India's Interceptor Missile Test in the Offing: Reports](#)
17. [Russia Unveils Wartime Plan](#)
18. [Russia Vows to keep up with U.S. Military's High-Speed Aircraft](#)
19. [Senators' ICBM Group Tells Hagel No Environmental Study](#)
20. [No. 2 US Nuke Chief Suspended over Gambling Probe](#)
21. [Charmed by Rouhani, but Only to a Point](#)
22. [Iran, the U.N.'s New Authority on Nuclear Disarmament](#)
23. [Iran, North Korea and Nukes: Good News, Bad News](#)
24. [World Unprepared to Police Chemical Weapons](#)
25. [Nuclear Realities](#)

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Issue No.1082, 01 October 2013

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

Iran Nuclear: Rivals Rally as Rouhani Returns from UN

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has been met by hardline protesters chanting "Death to America" on his return from the UN forum in New York.

During his trip, President Rouhani had signalled a shift in tone on Iran's controversial nuclear programme.

This culminated in a phone call with US President Barack Obama - the first such top-level conversation in 30 years.

Hundreds of people gathered at Tehran airport, with supporters hailing the trip and opponents throwing shoes.

'US initiative'

An Agence France-Presse journalist said some 200-300 supporters gathered outside the airport to thank Mr Rouhani for his efforts.

US President Barack Obama: "The test will be meaningful, transparent and verifiable actions"

But opposite them were about 60 people shouting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel".

Mr Rouhani raised his hand to the crowds as he was driven off.

A New York Times reporter described the scene as chaotic, with dozens of hardliners hurling eggs and shoes at the president's convoy.

The Iranian Labour News Agency (ILNA), said: "A crowd of young people and students gathered at Mehrabad airport to show support for the president's remarks and his stance during the trip to New York."

It said Ali Akbar Velayati, senior adviser to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and a number of cabinet members also welcomed the president.

The call with Mr Obama was made just before Mr Rouhani left New York.

Mr Rouhani, quoted by the Fars news agency, said it was the US that had initiated the call, contradicting some reports in the US.

"Yesterday, as we were getting ready to head to the airport, the White House called and expressed willingness to set up a phone call between the American president and me," Fars quoted Mr Rouhani as saying upon arrival in Tehran.

Reporters described the scene as chaotic

"On our way a call was made to our ambassador's cell phone. The conversation mostly focused on the nuclear issue," he was quoted as saying.

After the call, Mr Obama said: "While there will surely be important obstacles to moving forward and success is by no means guaranteed, I believe we can reach a comprehensive solution."

Mr Rouhani, who is regarded as a moderate and was elected in June, has said he wants to reach a deal over the nuclear issue in three to six months.

He has also asserted that Iran does not seek a nuclear bomb, as Western powers have long suspected.

Mr Rouhani said initial discussions had taken place in an environment that was "quite different" from the past.

The US and China have said they expect Iran to respond to an existing offer by the US, Russia, Britain, France, China and Germany, who form a negotiating group known as the P5+1.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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The group has asked Iran to halt production and stockpiling of uranium enriched to 20% - a step away from achieving a nuclear weapons capability.

It also demanded Iran shut down the Fordo underground enrichment facility, near Qom.

Substantive negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 are due to take place on 15 October, and Mr Rouhani said Iran would bring a plan to that meeting, though he did not give details.

Meanwhile, in another apparent indication of rapprochement between the US and Iran, it emerged that American officials had returned an ancient silver drinking cup to Tehran.

The ceremonial, griffin-shaped cup dating back to the 7th Century BC was seized by custom officials in 2003 when an art dealer attempted to smuggle it into the US, officials said.

The artifact is believed to have been looted from a cave in north-western Iran. Its return reflected "the strong respect the United States has for the Iranian people", the statement said.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24315372>

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

Press TV – Iran

Iran Ready for Talks if US Lifts Sanctions: Zarif

Sunday, September 29, 2013

Iran Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says Tehran is prepared to start negotiations over its nuclear energy program if the US lifts illegal sanctions against the country.

"Iran is prepared to start negotiating.... We are willing to engage in negotiations. Of course the United States also needs to do certain things very rapidly," Zarif said in an interview with ABC's "This Week" program on Sunday.

"One [condition] is to dismantle its illegal sanctions against Iran that are targeting ordinary Iranians," he stated.

The Iranian foreign minister added that the resolution of Iran's nuclear issue "will be a first step, a necessary first step, towards removing the tensions and doubts and misgivings that the two sides have had about each other for the last 30-some years."

He added that Tehran and Washington have similarities in many ways, adding, both "have pluralistic societies where difference of views exists and difference of views are aired. And I think it's very healthy."

"We believe that, if the United States is ready to recognize Iran's rights, to respect Iran's rights and move from that perspective, then we have a real chance and we negotiate with the full authority of the Leader [of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei]," the Iranian minister reiterated.

He expressed regret that there is lack of mutual confidence between Iran and the US and said as declared by Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and his US counterpart, Barack Obama, there has been 34 years of building up of this mutual distrust

"We need to move in that direction of removing some of that mistrust through mutual steps that each side needs to take in order to convince the other side that its intentions are positive and for a better future for all of us," Zarif said.

Zarif, who is also serving as Iran's top nuclear negotiator, reiterated that Iran's nuclear program will always remain peaceful.

"We know that Iran is not seeking a nuclear weapon. Having an Iran that does not have nuclear weapons is not just your goal. It's first and foremost our goal," he said referring to his recent talks with his counterparts from the six major world powers in New York.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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"We believe nuclear weapons are detrimental to our security. We believe those who have the illusion that nuclear weapons provide them with security are badly mistaken. We need to have a region and a world free from nuclear weapons," the Iranian minister added.

Iran's Zarif and his counterparts from the five permanent members of the UN Security Council -- China, Russia, France, Britain, and the US plus Germany -- held discussions about the Western dispute with Iran over its civilian nuclear program in New York on Thursday.

The minister emphasized that Iran's right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes is "non-negotiable," noting that it is a "certainty" that Tehran will never seek "military-grade uranium" and will never "move in that direction."

Zarif further hit back at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's dismissal of Iran's diplomatic efforts at the 68th annual session of the UN General Assembly as "a smile attack."

"A smile attack is much better than a lie attack. Mr. Netanyahu and his colleagues have been saying since 1991 ... that Iran is six months away from a nuclear weapon. And we are how many years, 22 years after that? And they are still saying we are six months away from nuclear weapons."

The West, led by the United States, accuses Iran of following non-civilian purposes in its nuclear energy program.

Iran has vehemently rejected the allegation, arguing that as a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), it is entitled to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/09/29/326750/iran-ready-for-talks-if-us-lifts-bans/>

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

Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

Netanyahu Heads to U.S. to Challenge Iran's Charm Offensive

Sunday, 29 September 2013

Al Arabiya with Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has left for New York early Sunday in a bid to challenge Iran's diplomatic charm blitz last week.

"I intend to tell the truth in the face of the sweet talk and charm offensive of Iran" Israeli public radio quoted him as saying as he boarded the plane at Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport, Agence France Presse reported.

"Telling the truth at this time is essential for world peace and security and, of course, for Israel's security," he was quoted as saying by the agency.

Netanyahu earlier this week described Iranian President Hassan Rowhani's speech to the United Nations General Assembly as "cynical" and "full of hypocrisy."

The Israeli PM will meet U.S. President Barack Obama at the White House on Monday then return to New York to address the General Assembly on Tuesday, AFP reported.

Netanyahu along Western countries suspect that Iran's nuclear program is designed to build a nuclear weapon.

Iran denies the charge and in his U.N. address Rowhani said that "nuclear weapons... have no place in Iran's security and defence doctrine."

Rowhani had a 15-minute telephone conversation with U.S. President Barack Obama on Friday, the first contact between leaders of the two countries in more than three decades.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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Israeli media said that Netanyahu had instructed his ministers and senior officials not to comment on the call, according to AFP.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/09/29/Netanyahu-heads-to-U-S-to-challenge-Iran-diplomatic-char.html>

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

The Jerusalem Post – Israel

Iranian Foreign Minister: Israel has an Arsenal of 200 Nuclear Warheads

In interview with ABC, Zarif says Holocaust "is not a myth"; accuses Israel as source of Mideast insecurity.

By JPOST.COM STAFF

29 September 2013

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif accused Israel on Sunday of having an arsenal of 200 nuclear warheads, and said it is the source of insecurity in the Middle East.

"Israel has 200 nuclear warheads. Israel is the source of insecurity in our region. Israel is the source of aggression and violation of human rights of the Palestinian people. It should not have the audacity to continue to lie to the American people and to the world and mislead everybody," Zarif told ABC's *This Week* in his first appearance on the show in 26 years.

He also responded to reports in the *Sunday Times* that Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu intends to present US President Barack Obama during their meeting on Monday intelligence showing Iran already has enough enriched uranium to produce some nuclear weapon, is developing a nuclear detonator and is testing missiles that could carry nuclear warheads.

"Mr. Netanyahu and his colleagues have been saying since 1991 - and you can refer to your records - that Iran is six months away from a nuclear weapon. And we are how many years, 22 years after that and they are still saying we're six months away from nuclear weapons," he said.

"We're not seeking nuclear weapons. So, we're not six months, six years, sixty years away from nuclear weapons. We don't want nuclear weapons. We believe nuclear weapons are detrimental to our security. We believe those who have the illusion that nuclear weapons provide them with security are badly mistaken. We need to have a region and a world free from nuclear weapons," he continued.

Zarif was also asked about a passage on Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei's English website that refers to the Holocaust as "a myth."

The passage, Zarif said, is a mistranslation from Farsi.

"The Holocaust is not a myth. Nobody is talking about the myth," he said.

"If it said it [on Ayatollah Khamenei's website], it's a bad translation. And it is translated out of context that they have," he continued, explaining that the Ayatollah was "simply asking that we should do some studies" on the topic.

Zarif also promised to speak to the Ayatollah's team about changing the translation.

Echoing similar statements made by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani when he was asked to address the issue, Zarif made the leap from the Nazis' condemnable crime to the suffering of the Palestinian people.

"We condemn the killing of innocent people, whether it happened in Nazi Germany or whether it's happening in Palestine. One crime, however heinous - and [the] Holocaust was a heinous crime, it was a genocide, it must never be allowed to be repeated. But that crime cannot be, and should not be, a justification to trample the rights of the Palestinian people for 60 years. We should have abandoned this game and start recognizing the fact that without respect for the rights of the Palestinians we will never have peace in our region," he said.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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Iran's right for nuclear enrichment 'nonnegotiable'

Not unlike Rouhani, Zarif also demanded relief from the sanctions imposed on Tehran. When pressed on what the Islamic Republic is willing to offer in return, Zarif clarified that the country's right to peaceful nuclear enrichment was not negotiable.

"Negotiations are on the table to discuss various aspects of Iran's enrichment program. Our right to enrich is non-negotiable," he insisted.

Zarif said Iran was willing to open its nuclear facilities to international inspections but the United States must end economic sanctions as part of any deal on Iran's nuclear program.

Speaking in the midst of an intensified effort to resolve the dispute over Iran's nuclear program, Zarif said he could see a "real chance" for agreement with the United States.

Iran consistently has defended its right to enrich uranium as part of a civilian nuclear energy and medicine program, but the United States and its allies have sought an end to higher-grade uranium enrichment that could be a step away from the production of weapons-grade material.

"We do not need military-grade uranium. That's a certainty and we will not move in that direction," Zarif said. "Having an Iran that does not have nuclear weapons, is not just your goal, it's first and foremost our goal."

Reuters contributed to this report.

<http://www.jpost.com/Iranian-Threat/News/Iranian-foreign-minister-Israel-has-an-arsenal-of-200-nuclear-warheads-327408>

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

Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

Kerry Says Nuclear Deal with Iran could be Reached in Months

Monday, 30 September 2013

Al Arabiya

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said Sunday a deal with Iran could be reached within months if Tehran proves that its nuclear program was not being used to build atomic weapons.

In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes" program, Kerry said the stated desire by Iranian President Hassan Rowhani for an agreement within three to six months could be met sooner if Iran satisfied certain conditions.

"It's possible to have a deal sooner than that -- depending on how forthcoming -- and clear Iran is prepared to be," Kerry said.

"We need to have a good deal here. And a good deal means that it is absolutely accountable, failsafe in its measures to make certain this is a peaceful program.

"If it is a peaceful program, and we can all see that -- the whole world sees that -- the relationship with Iran can change dramatically for the better and it can change fast," Kerry added.

The Secretary of State also said the U.S. would not consider lifting sanctions against Iran until it was clear that a "verifiable, accountable, transparent process" was in place.

He also said that providing that Iran takes concrete steps, the U.S. could consider lifting sanctions "by setting up a process that shows them how they can have this peaceful program without disturbing our efforts to make sure that no country is now going to build nuclear weapons."



"Iran needs to take rapid, clear and convincing steps to live up to the international community's requirements regarding peaceful nuclear programs," Kerry told CBS anchor Scott Pelley .

He also added that President Obama clearly welcomes Rowhani's overtures but that words are not going to replace actions.

"We need actions that prove that we and our allies in the region can never be threatened by this program."

Kerry said that Iran would demonstrate that it had no ambitions for nuclear weapons if it opened up for international inspection an underground nuclear enrichment facility in the mountains near the city of Qom.

"They could immediately open up the inspection of the Fordow facility, a secret facility underground in the mountains," Kerry said.

"They could immediately sign the protocols, the additional protocols of the international community regarding inspections," he added.

"They could offer to cease voluntarily to take enrichment about a certain level, because there's no need to have it at a higher level for a peaceful program."

Kerry's comments signaled marked improvement in relations between the U.S. and Iran, as he met with Foreign Minister Mohammad Jawad Zarif.

Rowhani had a 15-minute telephone conversation with Obama on Friday, the first contact between leaders of the two countries in more than three decades.

The rapprochement has raised the prospect of an agreement being reached about Iran's nuclear program, which Western countries suspect that it is designed to build a nuclear weapon.

Iran denies the charge and in his U.N. address, Rowhani said that "nuclear weapons... have no place in Iran's security and defense doctrine."

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/09/30/Kerry-says-nuclear-deal-with-Iran-could-be-reached-in-months-.html>

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

United Press International (UPI)

Iran Soldiers on with Enrichment

September 30, 2013

TEHRAN, Sept. 30 (UPI) -- Nuclear enrichment at the underground Fordo nuclear facility near the holy city of Qom is ongoing without interruption, an Iranian lawmaker said Monday.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani vowed to accelerate talks to de-escalate the dispute related to Iran's nuclear program. The International Atomic Energy Agency said there may be a military dimension to certain aspects of Iran's nuclear research though Iranian officials said weaponization is against their principles.

U.S. President Barack Obama told Rouhani in a phone call last week he respected Iran's right to peaceful nuclear research but insisted on concessions to prevent weapons development.

Esmayeel Kosari, a member of Iran's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, told the semi-official Fars News Agency researchers were working on enriching uranium to a level of 20 percent purity.

"The centrifuges at Fordo [near Qom] have been installed completely and the facility is in full operation and without any problem or deficiency," he said Monday.

Enrichment beyond 20 percent is considered a breakthrough on the path to a nuclear weapon.



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Rouhani said Iran's nuclear rights would garner more respect if his country were able to establish a better relationship with its counterparts in the international community.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/09/30/Iran-soldiers-on-with-enrichment/UPI-59241380560222/

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

Al Jazeera America

Obama Reassures Israel over Iran Nuclear Talks

Iran must prove it is serious about negotiating before sanctions, 'military options' are taken off the table, Obama said
September 30, 2013

The United States reserves the right to keep all options, including military action, on the table with regards to engaging with Iran, President Barack Obama said after holding talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Addressing the media after meeting with Netanyahu at the Oval Office in the White House on Monday, Obama said the U.S. would be cautious before entering negotiations with Iran.

"We have to test diplomacy, we have to see if in fact they are serious about their willingness to abide by international norms and international law," Obama said.

"We enter into these negotiations very clear eyed. They will not be easy."

Obama also made clear that he reserved the right to take military action against Iran.

"We take no options off the table, including military options, in terms of making sure that we do not have nuclear weapons in Iran that would destabilize the region and potentially threaten the United States of America."

The meeting comes just days after Obama's historic phone call with new Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

Netanyahu urged Obama to keep tough economic sanctions on Iran in place, even as the U.S. weighs a potential warming of relations and a restart of nuclear negotiations with Tehran's new government.

"If diplomacy is to work, those pressures must be kept in place," Netanyahu said during the meeting with Obama.

Regarding sanctions on Iran, European Union's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, said the U.S. should go to talks with the best possible atmosphere.

Netanyahu's dilemma is this: Not only does he have no trust in Tehran's peaceful declarations, he is not confident that the U.S. and Europe are willing to escalate a confrontation in order to force Iran to give up its enriched uranium and dismantle its key nuclear facilities.

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/9/30/obama-reassures-israeloverirannucleartalks.html>

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

FARS News Agency – Iran

Commander: Iran Capable of Building Aircraft Carriers

Tuesday, October 1, 2013

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran enjoys the needed capability, technology and know-how to build giant vessels, including aircraft carriers, Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari announced on Tuesday.

"Our country enjoys the power and ability to build aircraft carriers," Sayyari told FNA today.

"Of course, aircraft carriers enjoy hi-techs and are deemed as an effective component of backup and support for vessel units in free waters," he added.

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Sayyari underlined that if one day the Islamic Republic eventually comes to the decision that the country needs to build aircraft carriers, the Navy will be all ready to construct such giant ships.

In relevant remarks on Sunday, Sayyari said that Iran plans to build a training warship named 'Khalij-e Fars (Persian Gulf)' in the near future, adding that the country's destroyer named 'Sahand' will also be launched next year.

"God willing, construction of Khalij-e Fars (training) warship will start this year," Sayyari told FNA.

"Once this warship is built, the Islamic Republic will be the only regional country which has this type of vessel," he added.

Elsewhere, Sayyari also announced that the country's Sahand destroyer will be launched in the next Iranian year (to start on March 21).

Tehran launched an arms development program during the 1980-88 Iraqi imposed war on Iran to compensate for a US weapons embargo. Since 1992, Iran has produced its own tanks, armored personnel carriers, missiles and fighter planes.

Yet, Iranian officials have always stressed that the country's military and arms programs serve defensive purposes and should not be perceived as a threat to any other country.

Iran in June launched its overhauled and modernized destroyer named Bayandor in the Southern waters of the country in the presence of Army Commander Major General Ataollah Salehi and Rear Admiral Sayyari.

Army officials said the Iranian Navy's power of safeguarding the country's territorial waters as well as maintaining security in regional and international waters will increase after the launch of Bayandor.

Overhauling the main engines, heat exchangers and fuel and oil systems as well as optimizing the monitoring control systems are among the measures adopted before launching the destroyer.

Navy experts have also mounted a fire control system for the destroyer's weapons, a 76-mm and a 40-mm canons and a surface-to-surface Nour (Light) missile system on the destroyer.

In May, Sayyari had declared that Iran can use the destroyer to carry out missions in international waters in the future.

He said the destroyer is fitted with state-of-the-art equipment such as missile, torpedo, artillery, sonar and other information and communication systems.

In recent years, Iran has made great achievements in its defense sector and attained self-sufficiency in producing essential military equipment and systems.

Iran's first home-made destroyer, Jamaran, was launched in late February 2010. The Mowdge Class vessel has a displacement of around 14,000 tons and is equipped with modern radars and electronic warfare capabilities and is armed with a variety of anti-ship, surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles.

Iranian defense ministry officials had said earlier that the third generation of the home-made vessel, Jamaran-3 destroyer, will come into operation by the end of the current Iranian year (March 21, 2013 - March 20, 2014).

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920709000726>

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

Chicago Sun-Times – Chicago, IL

Chemical Weapons Inspectors Cross into Syria

By RYAN LUCAS, Associated Press (AP)

Tuesday, October 1, 2013

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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BEIRUT (AP) — An advance group of international inspectors arrived in Syria on Tuesday to begin the ambitious task of overseeing the destruction of President Bashar Assad's chemical weapons program, kicking off a mission that must navigate the country's bloody civil war as well as the international spotlight.

Twenty inspectors from a Netherlands-based chemical weapons watchdog crossed into Syria from neighboring Lebanon on their way to Damascus to begin their complex mission of finding, dismantling and ultimately destroying an estimated 1,000-ton chemical arsenal.

The experts have about nine months to complete the task, which has been endorsed by a U.N. Security Council resolution that calls for Syria's chemical stockpile to be eliminated by mid-2014. It is the shortest deadline that experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have ever faced in any nation, and their first mission in a country at war.

The team arrived in Damascus late Tuesday afternoon in a 19-vehicle convoy that was escorted from the border by two representatives from the Syrian Foreign Ministry. The inspectors were expected to meet with officials from the ministry later in the day.

Experts at The Hague, where the OPCW is based, said Sunday the inspectors' priority is to achieve the first milestone of helping Syria scrap its ability to manufacture chemical weapons by a Nov. 1 deadline, using every means possible. That may include smashing mixing equipment with sledgehammers, blowing up delivery missiles, driving tanks over empty shells or filling them with concrete, and running machines without lubricant so they seize up and become inoperable.

Some of the inspectors will be double-checking Syria's initial disclosure of what weapons and chemical precursors it has and where they are located. Others will begin planning the logistics for visits to every location where chemicals or weapons are stored.

Within a week, a second group of inspectors is scheduled to arrive — fewer than 100 combined — and form teams that will fan out to individual sites. Their routes are secret — both for their safety and because Syria has the right not to reveal its military secrets, including base locations.

The inspectors' mission was born out of a deadly chemical attack on opposition-held suburbs of Damascus on Aug. 21. The U.S. and its allies accuse the Syrian regime of being responsible, while Damascus blames the rebels.

The chemical attack prompted the Obama administration to threaten punitive missile strikes against the Assad regime, touching off weeks of frantic diplomacy that ended with the U.N. resolution Friday to purge Syria of its chemical weapons program.

The resolution also endorsed a roadmap for political "transition" in Syria adopted by key nations in June 2012, and it called for an international peace conference in Geneva to be convened "as soon as possible" to implement it.

The negotiations planned for Geneva have been repeatedly delayed for months, with neither the Syrian regime nor the opposition showing much interest in attending while the war on the ground remains stalemated. Disagreements also have flared repeatedly over who should take part in the talks that aim to broker a political solution to the conflict.

Efforts to bring the sides to the table received another blow over the weekend when Syria's foreign minister said the government won't talk with the main Western-backed opposition group, the Syrian National Coalition. The coalition, meanwhile, faces internal splits over whether to attend a Geneva conference.

Russia, a close ally of Syria, tried to smooth things over on Tuesday, with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov saying that "reasonable" Syrian rebels could take part in prospective peace talks. Speaking to reporters in Moscow, Lavrov said Western powers should help encourage rebels who don't harbor "extremist or terrorist views" to take part.

The rebel movement on the ground also is riven by fissures, both ideological and political. Those differences have burst to the fore in recent months as Islamic extremist rebel brigades associated with al-Qaida have battled more mainstream rebel factions nominally linked to the Western-backed Free Syrian Army.



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In an audio message posted on a militant website on Monday, a spokesman for one of the most powerful Islamic extremist rebel groups, the Islamist State in Iraq and the Levant, accused more moderate rebels of "stealing" credit for battlefield victories from his group.

Abu Mohammed al-Adnani said commanders of the Free Syrian Army are claiming territorial gains made by al-Qaida fighters. He points to the capture of the Mannagh air base in northern Syria as an example, saying some FSA fighters took part in the battle for the base and an FSA commander took credit for it, but it was actually captured by al-Qaida.

Al-Qaida militants have in the past year emerged as some of the most organized and successful fighting forces on the opposition side in Syria.

Syria's conflict has killed more than 100,000 people and forced more than 2 million more to flee the country since March 2011, according to the United Nations. The U.N. casualty figure dates to late July.

On Tuesday, a Syrian activist group that tracks the conflict put the death toll at more than 115,000. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which relies on a network of activists on the ground, said it had documented 115,206 people killed in the conflict. That tally includes 28,804 regime troops, 18,228 pro-government militiamen, and at least 21,531 rebels.

Observatory director Rami Abdul-Rahman said that both tallies are likely lower than the actual number of people killed.

Associated Press writer Laura Mills in Moscow contributed to this report.

<http://www.suntimes.com/news/world/22905515-418/chemical-weapons-inspectors-cross-into-syria.html>

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

No Sign of N. Korea's Seriousness on Dialogue, U.S. Officials Say

September 28, 2013

By Lee Chi-dong

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27 (Yonhap) -- The Obama administration puts a "significant priority" on the North Korean nuclear problem and the communist nation has not shown any signs that it is serious about denuclearization talks, top U.S. officials said Friday.

Daniel Russel, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, said Pyongyang is trying to "have its cake and eat it, too."

The communist nation appears to be seeking economic support from the West but it also wants to be allowed to retain its nuclear weapons program, he pointed out.

"That's not going to happen," Russel said in a video conference with reporters here from New York, together with Evan Medeiros, senior director for Asian affairs at the White House National Security Council (NSC). The two are accompanying President Barack Obama at the 68th regular session of the U.N. General Assembly.

Russel said the threat posed by North Korea's continued pursuit of nuclear weapons is "significant priority and a major component of U.S. policy efforts."

He underscored Washington's unswerving goal of "complete, verifiable, peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which for practical purposes means of North Korea."

"Negotiations must be to achieve the goal that I've described," Russel said. "There's no interest in talks for talks' sake."

His comments are in line with Washington's tepid response to Pyongyang's recent dialogue offer backed by Beijing.

The U.S. has urged the North to first take meaningful steps towards denuclearization.

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Russel said the North Koreans can be under no illusions about what the international community expects them to do, citing international obligations and commitments including the 2005 Joint Statement. Under the deal with the U.S., South Korea, China, Japan and Russia, the North agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons in return for political and economic incentives.

Medeiros echoed Russel's view on North Korea.

"We've seen no indication that North Korea is serious about resuming talks," he said.

He said the U.S. will never accept North Korea as a nuclear state.

On Washington's strategy on Asia, he said Obama's commitment to rebalancing toward the region is "strong and enduring," adding, "The rebalancing is alive and well."

Obama spent much of his U.N. speech earlier this week on the Middle East. He made no mention of Asia, let alone North Korea.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/09/28/52/0401000000AEN20130928000400315F.html>

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

National Journal

China Export Ban Hints at North Korea Nuclear Status: Experts

Global Security Newswire Staff

September 30, 2013

The lengthy list of "dual-use" items that China recently announced it will not export to North Korea provides hints at where Beijing assesses the status of Pyongyang's nuclear-arms development to be, the *New York Times* reported on Monday.

An early assessment of the 236-page list of regulated materials and components indicates Beijing is looking to constrain particular areas of the North's nuclear weapons work, former U.S. Army intelligence officer Roger Cavazos told the *Times*. An example is a prohibition on the sale of ceramics required to shield a warhead as it passes back through the planet's atmosphere, he said.

North Korea is understood to not yet have flight tested a warhead reentry vehicle. The longer the international community can delay the day when Pyongyang tests such a device, the longer it will be before the country can be seen as wielding a credible nuclear-tipped ballistic missile.

"The list gives a good insight into what China knows about the missile and bomb development of North Korea," Cavazos said. "From what I can tell, it lays out almost all China knows about North Korea's missile and nuclear program."

Western and Chinese experts said if China's new export rules are fully enacted, they could impede North Korea's nuclear development. Pyongyang imports a number of critical parts from China, which has previously led U.S. officials to say the broader sanctions regime would not be effective absent Beijing's full participation.

The specificity of some of the banned items, including details about their size in millimeters and inches, very likely shows that China's armed forces and nuclear establishment were involved in the drafting of the list, experts said.

Metal alloys required for uranium enrichment are now banned. As Pyongyang's metallurgical abilities are understood to be mediocre, that could have an important impact on the North's capacity to enrich uranium. Also banned from export is red fuming nitric acid, the material that some U.S. specialists say was used to power last December's successful long-range rocket launch, according to Cavazos.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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Meanwhile, U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Monday met with South Korean President Park Geun-hye at her office in Seoul, according to a Pentagon statement. Hagel and Park discussed steps their two countries are taking to improve their ability to respond to future North Korean provocations, spokesman George Little said.

On Sunday, Hagel said it was too soon to respond to Seoul's petition for a postponement of the planned transfer of wartime authority over South Korean troops, the Yonhap News Agency reported.

In remarks to reporters en route to South Korea, the secretary suggested Washington was carefully considering South Korea's request to delay the command transfer, which is presently slated to take place in late 2015. Seoul is concerned its military is not prepared assume operational control of its troops back from the United States amid concerns about North Korea's growing ballistic missile and nuclear capabilities.

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/global-security-newswire/china-export-ban-hints-at-north-korea-nuclear-status-experts-20130930>

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

Christian Science Monitor

Hagel Raises Worries about North Korea's Chemical Weapons on DMZ Trip

Defense Secretary Hagel's comments about the North's chemical arsenal come amid new concerns over the sophistication of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

By Chelsea B. Sheasley, Staff writer

September 30, 2013

US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said today that how the international community responds to the Syrian chemical weapons stockpile could be an important influence on another chemical weapons holder: North Korea.

Speaking as he toured the demilitarized zone between the two Koreas on Monday, Mr. Hagel warned that, "This is probably the only place in the world that we have always a risk of confrontation" and that efforts to disarm Syria could have ramifications on the Korean peninsula.

According to the Associated Press:

Hagel said it's been pretty clear that North Korea, which also has a large stockpile of chemical weapons, has been monitoring the unfolding international effort to destroy Syria's chemical arsenal. And while he's not sure what message the North may take from the latest Syrian developments, U.S. officials suggest that the unanimous U.N. resolution could send a warning shot to Pyongyang.

Hagel watched military exercises between US and South Korean troops held about 10 miles south of the DMZ, before touring the zone with South Korean Minister of Defense Kim Kwan-jin. In Panmunjom North Korean soldiers watched from about 40 feet away.

Hagel's remarks are one piece of broader concerns that have come to the fore over the past few weeks about North Korea's military capacity – particularly in two recent reports that highlighted concerns over the sophistication of North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

Last week, China published a 236-page list of chemicals and equipment it is banning from export to North Korea due to worries that they could be used to aid nuclear weapon production, The New York Times reported. Some analysts said the move showed China's willingness to put a new degree of pressure on North Korea.

"The release of the new export control list is a signal China is concerned about the speeding up of weaponization" of North Korea's nuclear capabilities, Zhu Feng, the deputy director of the Center for International and Strategic Studies at Beijing University, told the New York Times.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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In particular, he said, the Chinese are concerned about resumption of plutonium production at the Yongbyon complex, the centerpiece of North Korea's nuclear program.

Also last week, two US scientists said North Korean scientists are capable of independently building centrifuge parts, key equipment for development of uranium-based nuclear bombs. As a result, reports AP, tracking North Korea's nuclear progress by watching import lists may no longer give a reliable picture of their capabilities.

The Times notes that the list's publication "came as a surprise to many who follow North Korea and China, given China's longstanding reluctance to do anything that might destabilize the North and allow the United States any more power on the Korean Peninsula." But the export ban "appeared to have been approved at the highest levels of the Chinese government," suggesting a significant change in Chinese policy towards the North.

Hagel's trip to Korea also involved discussion of whether to extend US wartime control of South Korean forces.

Under the current alliance with South Korea, if a renewed war with North Korea broke out, a US military commander would lead both the 28,500 US troops deployed in the region as well as South Korea's 640,000 soldiers. That was set to change in 2015, however, when Seoul would take over command of all troops.

But now Seoul is getting cold feet, reports Agence France-Presse.

... South Korean defence policymakers now say they need more time to prepare for the transition, citing increased military threats from the North after its February nuclear test.

Washington is seen as frustrated by Seoul's caution and is keen to push ahead with the transition.

Earlier this year, North Korea drew attention for conducting a nuclear test in February, and for threats by its generals to "dismantle and terminate" the nation's enemies in "any part of the world." As The Christian Science Monitor reported in March, rhetoric against South Korea peaked earlier this year.

But tension has toned down in recent months, and the two Koreas reopened the Kaesong Industrial Complex, a jointly-operated industrial park, earlier this month after five months of closure.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Security-Watch/terrorism-security/2013/0930/Hagel-raises-worries-about-North-Korea-s-chemical-weapons-on-DMZ-trip>

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

Park Pledges Strong Defense to Render N. Korean Nuke Useless

October 1, 2013

SEOUL, Oct. 1 (Yonhap) -- President Park Geun-hye said Tuesday South Korea will build strong defense capabilities to deter threats from North Korea and render its nuclear weapons useless.

Park made the remark during an Armed Forces Day ceremony, saying the security situation on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia is "very grave" as North Korea is persistently pursuing nuclear weapons development in an effort to build more sophisticated bombs.

"We have to build strong deterrence against North Korea until the North abandons its nuclear program and makes the right choice for the people of North Korea and peace on the Korean Peninsula," Park said during the ceremony at an airbase in Seongnam, just south of Seoul.

Park also stressed that the reason for the military's existence lies in preventing war.

"While maintaining strong (South) Korea-U.S. joint defense system, the government will secure anti-weapons of mass destruction capabilities, such as kill chain and the Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) system, at an early date to make North Korea realize on its own that its nuclear weapons and missiles ... are useless."



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The kill chain system is designed to detect signs of impending missile or nuclear attacks and launch pre-emptive strikes. The KAMD calls for arming Seoul with the ability to track and shoot down the North's low-flying, short- and medium-range missiles.

"Only when we are backed by strong national defense that does not allow provocations can we bring North Korea onto a genuine path of change," Park said. "I hope you will do your duties with a mindset that the country's fate and unification of the Korean Peninsula hinge on the shoulder of every member of the Armed Forces."

North Korea's nuclear program has been a top security concern for the region. In February, the communist nation conducted its third nuclear test, two months after it successfully fired off a long-range rocket.

The two tests worsened concern that Pyongyang is closer to building a nuclear-capable missile.

For nearly a decade, South Korea and four other regional powers have sought to convince Pyongyang to give up its nuclear programs in exchange for economic aid and other concessions. But the on-again-off-again six-party talks, which also involve China, Japan, Russia and the United States, produced no lasting results.

The talks have been suspended since the last session in late 2008.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/10/01/29/0301000000AEN20131001003300315F.html>

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

Global Post – Boston, MA

S. Korea Shows off Latest Missiles on Armed Forces Day

By Kim Eun-jung, *Yonhap News Agency*

October 1, 2013

SEOUL, Oct. 1 (Yonhap) -- South Korea paid tribute to fallen soldiers and staged the largest military parade in a decade with the latest indigenous missiles and weapons on Tuesday to celebrate the 65th Armed Forces Day, which was attended by visiting U.S. defense chief and top commander.

The defense ministry mobilized 11,000 soldiers at Seoul Air Base in Seongnam, south of Seoul, as well as 190 kinds of ground equipment and 120 aircraft to commemorate the establishment of the nation's armed forces in 1948. The military parade was the biggest in a decade.

President Park Geun-hye said in a speech at the ceremony that South Korea will build strong missile defense and pre-emptive strike capabilities to deter threats from North Korea and render its nuclear weapons useless.

"We have to build strong deterrence against North Korea until the North abandons its nuclear program and makes the right choice for the people of North Korea and peace on the Korean Peninsula," Park said at the Seongnam air base.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel and Gen. Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, who were in Seoul for military talks, attended the event for the first time to show their commitment to bilateral alliance with South Korea.

American forces fought in the 1950-53 Korean War alongside South Korean and United Nations Allied forces, and Washington forged a military alliance with Seoul at the end of the conflict, which is outlined in the Mutual Defense Treaty.

Ahead of the event, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin and Dempsey visited the national cemetery in Seoul to pay tribute to the fallen soldiers.

Among the equipment were indigenously developed cruise missiles capable of striking key locales in North Korea.

It was the first time 500 kilometer-range Hyunmoo 2 and 1,000 kilometer-range Hyunmoo 3, both loaded on mobile launchers, were unveiled to the public.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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The South Korean Navy presented a series of homemade torpedoes, which can be launched from warships and submarines, as well as anti-ship missiles and ship-to-air missiles.

It also unveiled Israeli-made Spike missiles deployed in the western border islands, which are capable of striking North Korea's underground facilities with satellite-guidance system.

The Air Force staged F-15K, KF-16 and other combat jets, and Black Eagle aerobatic team put up an air show with T-50 trainer jets built by Korea Aerospace Industries.

Following the official ceremony attended by Park and top military commanders, soldiers and ground forces equipment moved to Seoul to stage a parade in the downtown area with a variety of events for citizens.

The first military parade in five years showcased 105 armed vehicles of 37 kinds, including tanks and armored vehicles. Some 4,500 soldiers from all military units walked down the street, surrounded by spectators gathered to see the rare display of South Korea's latest military equipment.

About 28,500 American forces are stationed in the Asian nation to support South Korea's 650,000 armed forces to counter threat posed by North Korea's 1.2 million standing forces. The two Koreas are still technically at war as the three-year conflict ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/yonhap-news-agency/131001/s-korea-shows-latest-missiles-armed-forces-day-0>

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

Bloomberg News

North Korea Road-Mobile Missile a Concern for U.S., Thurman Says

By Tony Capaccio

October 1, 2013

North Korea's new road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile is of concern to the U.S. in part because it may be difficult to detect, according to the departing commander of U.S. Forces Korea.

The Hwasong-13 is now part of North Korea's weapons portfolio, retiring Army General James Thurman told reporters in Seoul today. While it is "difficult to assess" the missile's full operational capability it demonstrates North Korea's "continued desire to develop long-range missiles," General Thurman said.

North Korea unveiled the road-mobile Hwasong-13 ICBM in April 2012 and continues to develop the Taepodong-2, which could reach the U.S. if it is developed as an ICBM, the U.S. National Air and Space Intelligence Center said in a report this year. The center put the maximum range of both missiles at least at 5,500 kilometers (3,420 miles).

Concerns over North Korea's missile capability have increased since the North conducted its third nuclear test in February. South Korean officials and arms experts have said Kim Jong Un's regime may be getting closer to marrying nuclear warheads to missiles, with North Korea in 2009 abandoning international talks aimed at dismantling its nuclear programs.

'Close Watch'

"Of concern to us, obviously is the road-mobile capability and the ability to detect that," General Thurman said. The missile's development "is something we will continue to keep a close watch on," he said. "What we watch every day is not only that system" but North Korea's entire missile program.

The U.S. National Air and Space Intelligence Center said in its report that continued efforts to develop the Taepodong-2 and the most-recent ICBM "show the determination of North Korea to achieve long-range ballistic missile and space launch capabilities." "North Korea has exported ballistic missile systems and will probably continue to do so," the center said.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-10-01/north-korea-road-mobile-missile-a-concern-for-u-s-thurman-says.html>

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

DefenseWorld.net

India's Interceptor Missile Test in the Offing: Reports

Source: Our Bureau

Monday, September 30, 2013

India for the very first time is planning to conduct a crucial, high-altitude interceptor missile test in the exo-atmosphere.

The first-ever high-altitude interception at around 125-140 km has been proposed, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) official was quoted as saying by The Hindu.

The exercise is part of the developmental trials for the first-phase of the Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system, designed to tackle incoming enemy missiles with a range of up to 2,000 km.

India plans to deploy in two phases a home-grown, two-tiered (interception in endo and exo-atmosphere) BMD system to protect major cities fearing external attacks, according to the report.

The first phase expects the BMD system to intercept and destroy incoming enemy ballistic missiles with a range of up to 2,000 km. The second phase would aim at targeting missiles with a higher range of 2,000-5,000 km.

The critical simulation tests to be held in the last week of November, the report said.

http://www.defenseworld.net/news/9157/India_s_Interceptor_Missile_Test_In_The_Offing_Reports

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

Press TV – Iran

Russia Unveils Wartime Plan

Saturday, September 28, 2013

Russia has unveiled the country's wartime plan, calling on its private and state companies to be ready to supply the Russian armed forces with essential needs in case of any potential foreign military conflict.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced the plan on Friday, saying oil companies, such as Gazprom, Lukoil and Rosneft "should have such reserves, procurement plans and contracts concluded beforehand."

"These companies should clearly know, what, when and at what time they should send to us," he said.

The Russian defense minister said that the strategy applies to the country's transport and power generation firms, including railway monopoly RZD, state-owned firm hydroelectric power holding company RusHydro and others.

Shoigu further said Russia plans to construct National Defense Center, acting as the general headquarters for the Supreme High Command in wartime, on Moscow's Frunzenskaya Embankment by the end of 2014.

"We have started setting up the National Defense Center of the country, which will comprise three components: a center for the control of the Strategic Missile Forces, a center for combat control, and a center for the day-to-day management of the armed forces," he said.

Earlier in August, Shoigu announced Russia had started work on the creation of the single defense center, which aims to enhance the operational management of the armed forces and ensure prompt response to strategic threats.

According to the Russian minister, the center would monitor strategic nuclear forces, military administration issues and everyday life of the Armed Forces.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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Russia's Ministry of Emergency Situations, General Staff's Central Command Center, Russian Federal Atomic Energy Agency (Rosatom) and departments of all other federal bodies dealing with possible crisis situations will come under single command from the center.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/09/28/326507/russia-unveils-wartime-plan/>

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

United Press International (UPI)

Russia Vows to keep up with U.S. Military's High-Speed Aircraft

September 30, 2013

MOSCOW, Sept. 30 (UPI) -- The Russian military is on pace to keep up with its U.S. military counterparts in the field of hypersonic aircraft, a defense official said Monday.

The U.S. Air Force in May said its X-51A Waverider test vehicle accelerated to a speed of Mach 5.1, or about 3,800 miles per hour, during a fight over the Pacific Ocean.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who's in charge of the defense industry, said the Kremlin was working to keep up with the United States in terms of military technology, Russia's state-run news agency RIA Novosti reports.

"Both we and the Americans conduct researches about hypersonic technologies, or speed that is more than six times above the speed of sound. This is not a secret, but everything else is," he was quoted as telling Rossiya TV. "I can tell you that we are running neck and neck with the Americans as far as these technologies are concerned."

Russia and the United States committed to phasing out some aspects of their nuclear arsenals under the terms of an arms reduction treaty agreed to in the 1970s. Both sides are at odds, however, over missile defense advances in Eastern Europe.

Russian officials said last year hypersonic aircraft could enter military service during the 2020s.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/09/30/Russia-vows-to-keep-up-with-US-militarys-high-speed-aircraft/UPI-29061380564997/

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

Minot Daily News – Minot, ND

Senators' ICBM Group Tells Hagel No Environmental Study

September 28, 2013

Minot Daily News

North Dakota's two senators and the U.S. Senate's bipartisan ICBM Coalition are telling Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel to back away from a Defense Department plan to conduct an environmental impact study on the possible elimination of intercontinental ballistic missile silos.

The coalition's letter to Hagel argued that the Defense Department and the Air Force need to determine how many submarine-launched missiles, bombers and land-based missiles it wants under New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) before conducting any study-related to eliminating ICBM silos.

"Our letter makes it clear that environmental studies should not dictate our nuclear force posture," said Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D. "That is why I included language in the 2014 Defense Appropriations bill that prohibits funding for this study."

The Senate Appropriations Committee agreed to an amendment authored by Hoeven that would prohibit the Defense Department from funding a silo-related environmental impact study in 2014. The committee approved that legislation

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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on Aug. 1, and it awaits consideration on the Senate floor. The House of Representatives approved a similar provision in its version of the 2014 defense appropriations bill.

Hoeven, Sen. Heidi Heitkamp and other senators called the Defense Department's plan "premature," given that the administration has not finished its implementation plan for the New START Treaty. They also said that pending legislation in both the Senate and the House of Representatives prohibits the department from moving forward on such an environmental study with fiscal year 2014 funds.

The senators also called on the administration to consult with Congress before implementing New START changes.

The United States' nuclear weapons arsenal is divided into three elements: land-based missiles in silos (ICBMs) and missiles aboard submarines and bombers.

The United States currently has 450 ICBMs, located in states across the American West. Minot AFB's 91st Missile Wing has 150 of the 450 ICBMs in underground facilities in the Minot missile field.

The bipartisan Senate ICBM Coalition also includes Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., and Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo. Also joining the letter are Senators Mary Landrieu, D-La., Mike Johanns, R-Neb., Deb Fischer, R-Neb., and Orrin Hatch, R-Utah.

<http://www.minotdailynews.com/page/content.detail/id/578485/Senators--ICBM-group-tells-Hagel-no-environmental-study.html?nav=5010>

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

RT (Russia Today) – Russia

No. 2 US Nuke Chief Suspended over Gambling Probe

29 September 2013

The general in charge of all US nuclear offensive forces has suspended his deputy, Navy Vice Adm. Tim Giardina, over his suspected role in a casino scandal that involved "a significant monetary amount" of counterfeit gambling chips.

Air Force Gen. Robert Kehler suspended Giardina on September 3 without publicly announcing the move.

Giardina is currently under state investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service, but has not been arrested or charged thus far, a Strategic Command top spokeswoman, Navy Capt. Pamela Kunze, said.

Giardina was prohibited from performing duties related to nuclear weapons and other issues requiring a security clearance, Kunze told AP.

Criminal investigators discovered "a significant monetary amount" in counterfeit chips at the Horseshoe Casino in Council Bluffs, Iowa, DCI special agent David Dales announced on Saturday.

"We were able to detect this one pretty quickly and jump on it,"

Dales said, without giving any details on how Giardina might have been involved. He said Giardina had been under investigation since June 16 and his superior became aware of it on July 17.

Giardina – a career submarine officer and former deputy commander and chief of staff at the US Pacific Fleet – became deputy commander of Strategic Command in December 2011. Strategic Command is one of the Unified Combatant Commands overseeing the entirety of the US nuclear force, including nuclear-armed submarines and nuclear bombers, as well as land-based nuclear missiles. It is also in charge of military satellites, intelligence, surveillance, and US information warfare operations.

The unusual action became another blow to the US nuclear command after an officer in charge of a nuclear missile unit at Malmstrom Air Force Base was relieved of duty last month after the unit failed a safety and security inspection. Last

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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spring another unit in Minot, North Dakota received weak grades on a safety inspection, resulting in 17 launch control officers temporarily being placed off duty.

Meanwhile, the previous head of Strategic Command, Gen. James "Hoss" Cartwright, is under a DoJ investigation for leaking classified information to the press. Cartwright, a four-star general, was stripped of his security clearance, Foreign Policy reported last week.

<http://rt.com/usa/us-nuclear-general-suspended-495/>

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

Los Angeles Times

OPINION/ Op-Ed

Charmed by Rouhani, but Only to a Point

The Iranian president's message was refreshing. Now comes the hard work.

By Doyle McManus

September 29, 2013

NEW YORK — How long does it take for a charm offensive to wear thin?

By the end of a long week of glad-handing at the United Nations, even Iran's new president, Hassan Rouhani, was beginning to sound a little tired of his hazy talking points.

"Global challenges require collective responses," he told foreign policy pundits in a hotel ballroom on Thursday through an interpreter, his voice slightly hoarse after too many meetings and interviews. "We can turn the turbulent past into a beacon lighting the path ahead." Whatever that means.

Rouhani's main message to the U.S. and the rest of the world was undeniably refreshing: Iran wants to work quickly and seriously to end the dangerous confrontation over its nuclear programs.

"My government is prepared to leave no stone unturned in seeking a mutually acceptable resolution," he promised. "We are prepared to remove any ambiguity and answer any reasonable question."

But when it came to specifics — what concrete steps is Iran prepared to take to meet the rest of the world's concerns? — Rouhani was just as vague as his predecessors. When pressed, he either ducked the question or retreated to Iran's insistence that it has the same right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes as any other country. (He doesn't mention Iran's secret enrichment facilities.)

Retaining the right to enrich uranium is a pillar of Iran's foreign policy. In a meeting with nuclear experts and former diplomats Wednesday, Rouhani was more specific, saying Iran wants to enrich enough uranium to provide a reliable fuel supply for at least one nuclear power reactor.

But if Iran insists on that, it will be a major sticking point in negotiations. "That would require tens of thousands more centrifuges than they have now," warned Gary Samore, a former Obama administration official who was in the meeting. "That wouldn't provide the assurance we need that they couldn't move toward nuclear weapons.... I went in pretty skeptical, and my skepticism was reinforced."

Of course, Rouhani didn't want to make concessions in advance of real negotiations. But on other issues too the professorial president bumped into the limits on the amount of charm his boss, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, had authorized him to employ.

He bobbled the predictable question about Iran's past Holocaust denial. "I'm not a historian," he said, then tried to avoid the word "holocaust," and eventually settled on a line condemning all Nazi crimes no matter who the victims were. (Memo to staff: When the wording matters to your audience, make sure the boss rehearses the answer.)

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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And he backed out of an opportunity to shake hands with President Obama — or, as a hard-line newspaper in Tehran put it, to place his "clean hands ... in Obama's bloody grip." Still, he did talk with Obama for about 15 minutes by phone from his limousine on the way to the airport on Friday — the first such contact between Iranian and American leaders since the 1979 revolution.

Those were mostly symbolic issues, but they revealed the constraints on Rouhani's running room. Khamenei sent him off to New York with a widely noticed speech calling for "heroic flexibility" in Iran's diplomacy. But Khamenei also said: "When a wrestler is grappling with an opponent and shows flexibility for technical reasons, let him not forget who his opponent is."

The more impressive charm offensive, in fact, came not from Rouhani but from his ebullient foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif. After finishing a half-hour one-on-one session with Secretary of State John F. Kerry, Zarif announced that they had agreed to the shape of talks that could resolve the nuclear issue within a year.

"I'm optimistic," Zarif proclaimed in the fluent English he perfected during five years as his country's representative in New York. "We will move forward, but we will test each other as we go along."

A U.S. diplomat said Zarif's description was a little exaggerated but added: "In the two years I've been doing this, no Iranian I've met with has sat down and said in such expansive terms, 'Here's what we're willing to talk about.'"

Another cause for optimism is that neither side is making this an all-or-nothing proposition, leaving open the possibility of smaller steps in hopes that they lead to a comprehensive deal.

And it's very good news that Rouhani wants to move fast, even if that's only because Khamenei has given him limited time to prove that sanctions will ever be relaxed and that the United States isn't simply seeking regime change. Until now, the United States, Israel and their allies feared that the Iranians were merely playing for time, time to work toward a nuclear weapon while the diplomats talked. If Iran's leaders agree that time is short and act accordingly, real progress is possible.

For all the haziness of Rouhani's rhetoric, at least one of his bromides was true: This is a window of opportunity, and we should seize it — if only to determine whether there's substance behind the charm.

Doyle McManus, Washington columnist for the Los Angeles Times, has reported on national and international issues from Washington for more than 25 years. His weekly Op-Ed column delivers original reporting and analysis on a wide range of national issues.

<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/commentary/la-oe-mcmanus-column-rouhani-iran-20130929,0,5445258.column>

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

Forbes.com

OPINION/Op-Ed

Iran, the U.N.'s New Authority on Nuclear Disarmament

By Claudia Rosett, Contributor

September 30, 2013

With Iran pushing toward nuclear breakout ability at home, while peddling what some have dubbed "charm" abroad, there were plenty of odd moments as Iran's President Hassan Rouhani swept through the United Nations in New York last week. But for raw cynicism onstage, it's hard to top his starring appearance Sept. 26th at the U.N.'s first ever High Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament.

This meeting showcased Rouhani not as the face of a terror-sponsoring U.N.-sanctioned nuclear-proliferating regime, but as an authority on ridding the world of nuclear weapons. And not just any old authority, but — in a venue where protocol matters — someone high in the UN pecking order. Among the eight plenary speakers addressing the assembled global eminences, Rouhani got the number three slot in the lineup. He was preceded only by the president of

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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the U.N. General Assembly, and Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon — who went out of his way to thank the Non-Aligned Movement “that initiated this meeting.” The Non-Aligned Movement, which includes the Palestinian Authority plus 119 of the UN’s 193 member states, is currently chaired by Iran.

In other words, this U.N. nuclear conclave, presenting Iran not as a proliferator but as a patron of nuclear disarmament, was choreographed into existence by Iran itself. “Historic,” is what Rouhani called this event. He’s got that right. Even at the U.N., it’s something new for a country’s president to be headlining a nuclear disarmament summit in the General Assembly’s main chamber while that same country is under four U.N. Security Council sanctions resolutions for its own rogue nuclear ventures.

But that’s a pretty good sample of how Iran’s regime has learned to exploit large sections of the U.N. maze, maneuvering within the multilateral system to avail itself of the U.N.’s special mix of moral blindness, anti-American mob sentiment, Byzantine procedure and billions of tax dollars from the developed democracies of the world — especially the U.S. It was by diplomatic design, not dumb luck, that while Rouhani was at the U.N. last week, he seemed to glide from one rosy spotlight to the next. Not only did he land a speaking slot on day one of the seven-day General debate, and kick off the nuclear disarmament meeting; he also appeared, cheek-by-jowl with the Secretary-General, chairing a Non-Aligned ministerial meeting on Cooperation for the Rule of Law at the International Level (an intriguing choice of topic for the president of a country notorious for its dazzling array of front companies, shipping dodges and other schemes to evade international sanctions). For years, in some cases bizarrely unchecked by the U.S., Iran has been quietly building itself a large support structure within the UN.

For instance, right now Iran is running for the post of rapporteur for — what else? —the General Assembly’s main committee on Disarmament and International Security. Better known at the U.N. as the First Committee, this is the General Assembly’s prime workshop for drafting resolutions and initiatives dealing with global security, especially efforts to regulate and reduce armaments. The First Committee includes all 193 U.N. member states, and for each annual session of the U.N. General Assembly, the Committee elects a new rapporteur. At least as far back as 1998, as listed on the First Committee’s web site, that rapporteur’s seat has been won by such moderate and non-predatory countries as Norway, Georgia and Mexico.

But, courtesy of Iran, this year’s election, scheduled for Tuesday, is shaping up as yet another historic U.N. event. Thanks to U.N. backroom politics, in which geographic blocs and related deals tend to trump merit and greatly narrow the field, Iran looks sure to win. That’s because, according to a U.N. General Assembly spokesperson, Iran is the only candidate.

For a closer look at Iran’s approach in managing such feats, last week’s nuclear disarmament meeting offers a handy example. Like many of Iran’s current diplomatic maneuvers, this one began with the Non-Aligned Movement, or NAM — which is essentially a large caucus operating within the U.N. General Assembly. Founded during the Cold War as a self-declared alternative to the major powers (though in practice it was largely aligned with the Soviet Union), the NAM after the 1991 Soviet collapse carried on, but seemed destined to fade into irrelevance. Tehran, however, evidently realized it was a potentially useful vehicle, and at a NAM summit in Egypt, in 2009, went after and won the three-year rotating presidency of the NAM for 2012-2015.

For Iran’s diplomats, the NAM currently provides a second hat, allowing them to speak not only for U.N.-sanctioned Tehran, but for the entire (non-sanctioned) Non-Aligned Movement. There is huge diversity within the NAM, whose 120 members range from Singapore and Indonesia to Syria and Sudan. But it is the presiding country that generally takes the lead.

So it was that last November the NAM, led by Iran, drafted a resolution for the U.N. General Assembly’s First Committee (the same disarmament committee on which Iran is now poised to become rapporteur). This resolution proposed that in September, 2013, the General Assembly should convene, for the first time, a high-level meeting on nuclear disarmament. The resolution was introduced, on behalf of the NAM, by Indonesia, a NAM member then chairing the bureau of the First Committee.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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The Committee approved the resolution by a vote of 165 in favor, none against. Five countries abstained: the U.K., U.S., France, Israel and Ukraine. Among those abstaining, the U.K., U.S. and France gave their reasons. According to the U.N. record, Britain's delegate professed himself "puzzled" at how such a meeting might advance nonproliferation activities already in motion, and questioned the need for such a meeting "when venues for such discussions already existed." France's delegate was similarly "bewildered," and said that the proposed meeting "would not address disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in a balanced manner." The U.S. representative worried about the cost of the proposed conference, "indicating that adoption of the resolution would create an additional financial requirement of \$77,000."

None of those concerns appear to have made any difference. On Dec. 3, 2012, the General Assembly adopted the resolution, declaring that on Sept. 26, 2013, the high-level meeting would take place. That was the meeting at which, last Thursday, Ban thanked the NAM for its initiative, and on behalf of the NAM, Iran's Rouhani stepped forward as the next speaker, calling for all nuclear nations to disarm, but singling out, for criticism, by name, Israel.

Rouhani also proposed a "roadmap," to include negotiations toward a new "comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons." And he would like to enshrine his NAM-engendered nuclear conference as an historic event, with "the designation of 26 September every year as an international day to renew our resolve to completely eliminate nuclear weapons." Rouhani said that the NAM will present the General Assembly with "a resolution regarding this roadmap."

Presumably, the soon-to-be "elected" Iranian rapporteur for the U.N.'s First Committee on disarmament will soon be busy preparing this next Iran-drafted resolution for approval by the General Assembly. As a bid to rid the world of nuclear weapons, this is utter farce. But as a long-planned, neatly executed Iranian gambit exploiting the U.N. to provide diplomatic cover for Iran's rogue nuclear program, it's a smart move. That's how it works at the U.N. The U.S. and its allies pay the bills, Iran plays the system. And the clock ticks toward the Iranian bomb.

Claudia Rosett is journalist-in-residence with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, and heads its Investigative Reporting Project.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/claudiarosett/2013/09/30/iran-the-u-n-s-new-authority-on-nuclear-disarmament/>

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

The Kansas City Star
OPINION/As I See It

Iran, North Korea and Nukes: Good News, Bad News

By F. Charles Parker IV
September 30, 2013

I hope that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani does not turn out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing. If he is for real, I hope he can prevail over the Revolutionary Guard and the "Supreme Leader," though the job title is probably described that way for a reason. While keeping this hope in mind, it is still useful to understand the nature of the nuclear game being played and what could be at stake. And "good news, bad news" helps to explain the issue.

The good news is that it is extremely unlikely that either Iran or North Korea will ever deliver a nuclear weapon against an adversary. The very bad news is that they don't have to deliver a strike to achieve their strategic goals, and regional and global stability will suffer as a result.

The nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea pose a much greater threat to nonproliferation and in turn to global stability than the potential increase of two to the number of nations in the nuclear club. It is the combination of these nuclear ambitions with the Obama administration's emphasis of the "nuclear zero" goal of complete disarmament that increases the pressure toward proliferation exponentially.

The Obama administration came into office expressing support for the basic bargain of the Nonproliferation Treaty: countries with nuclear weapons will move towards disarmament, countries without nuclear weapons will not acquire them, and all countries can have access to peaceful nuclear energy.



But there is a more complicated nonproliferation story with regard to the role of the U.S. Simply put, many nations have elected not to have nuclear weapons because the U.S. does have them — the so-called “nuclear umbrella.”

However, when compared with any previous administration, this administration has increased emphasis on the goal of complete nuclear disarmament and simultaneously has appeared inclined to constrain unilaterally U.S. nuclear capabilities.

As a result, nations that have been protected for many years by the U.S. “nuclear umbrella” are questioning the viability of long-term deterrence. Some serious and well-connected observers have noted that though these concerns are being expressed behind the scenes for now, the fact that they are being expressed at all is troublesome.

The administration’s “nuclear zero” efforts unfortunately coincide with the progress of Iranian and North Korean efforts to gain a credible ability to deliver nuclear weapons. Iran has been moving ahead to upgrade its uranium enrichment program and has researched nuclear triggers while North Korea, having already conducted successful nuclear tests, is engaged in extensive open and covert efforts to develop delivery systems. Iran’s new “moderate” president is not the real power in the country, and it is unlikely that Iran will cease its nuclear ambitions.

While the “charm” offensive by the new Iranian president is interesting, Iran continues to enrich uranium. The U.S. has long expressed grave concerns regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons to these nations.

But let’s get real. Iran knows that even if it created a fledgling nuclear weapons capability, it could not begin to match the U.S. Actually, Iranian officials in the past have cited the proportional difference in strength between a newly nuclear Iran and others as an argument that would make it folly for Iran to acquire nuclear weapons. And, despite his odd behavior, Kim Jong Un is aware of the same situation. So, what are they after? Unfortunately, neither Iran nor North Korea needs to acquire the capability to threaten the U.S. directly to achieve their strategic objectives relating to nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons, hopefully, have little military use except for deterrence. For Iran and North Korea “deterrence” comes from the French theory of “proportional deterrence” developed during the Cold War. In this theory a potential attacker such as the U.S. must believe that targets in its own country that would be destroyed in retaliation would be more valuable to it than the benefit of destroying Iran or North Korea. If the price of the total destruction of either Iran or North Korea were a U.S. city or Guam, that price would be too high.

If either country, or both, were able to create the perception that such credible capability exists or could be deployed in a very short period of time, the political leverage that results from having deliverable nuclear weapons will have been achieved. (When you think about it, a perception of Iran as radical and of Kim Jong Un as somewhat crazy could help in selling “proportional” deterrence.)

But Iran and North Korea are long way from the U.S. and neither Iran nor North Korea have missiles with sufficient range to strike the U.S. proper, though Guam could be at risk. Unfortunately, neither country needs that capability to exercise the coercive political leverage that they each seek.

Non-nuclear NATO allies, Saudi Arabia, Japan, South Korea, and Australia are some examples of nations who choose not to have nuclear weapons because the U.S. has such weapons. For there to be confidence in the “nuclear umbrella” the U.S. must treat threats to Ankara, Berlin, Brisbane, Brussels, Riyadh, Seoul and Tokyo as seriously as threats to Guam, Honolulu, Anchorage, Seattle and New York. If the U.S. does not, all bets are off, and the likely result would be many nations choosing to develop their own nuclear capabilities.

Against the backdrop of the Obama administration’s “nuclear zero” emphasis, the U.S. commitment to its “nuclear umbrella” is in question.

Europe and Saudi Arabia are at a much closer range to Iran than the U.S. while the same can be said about Seoul and Tokyo with regard to North Korea. Iran is known to be developing a missile with a range that covers much of Europe. Iran could continue its public charm offensive while allowing intelligence agencies to “discover” that Iran was very close



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to being able to deploy a deliverable weapon, but still truthfully, at least literally, denying that they had nuclear weapons.

This would still make them players in the deterrence game. North Korea has tested a missile that flew over Japan to impact in the Pacific. This was more than a violation of Japanese airspace — it was a clear message to Japan: you are in range.

With specter of a new and credible threat and the perception of the U.S. commitment eroding, some nations may choose to develop their own nuclear capabilities, and this could end up like a snowball rolling downhill in fresh snow.

Can diplomatic and economic tools arrest the nuclear programs of Iran and/or North Korea? The jury is still out. If the threat from Iran and North Korea becomes increasingly credible the administration will have to temper its “nuclear zero” efforts with assurances that the “nuclear umbrella” remains solid and accompany those assurances with a commitment of resources to modernize and maintain the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

If proliferation becomes a stampede, this will be a far more dangerous world.

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<http://www.kansascity.com/2013/09/30/4519721/iran-north-korea-and-nukes-good.html>

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

San Antonio Express – San Antonio, TX
OPINION/Commentary

World Unprepared to Police Chemical Weapons

By Dan Kaszeta, Bloomberg News
September 30, 2013

We may never get to the bottom of what happened Aug. 21 in Ghouta, on the outskirts of Damascus. The report by United Nations inspectors concluded that rockets containing the nerve agent sarin were used against civilians, including children, as well as combatants on a relatively large scale. Circumstantial evidence suggests Syrian government troops fired them, but the lack of proof has given the regime, and its backers in Russia, room to blame rebel forces.

For those of us who have long grappled with chemical weapons, the uncertainties present a familiar frustration. To this day, the world doesn't know the full story of what happened in Halabja, Iraq, where the Saddam Hussein regime in 1988 killed uncounted thousands of Iraqi Kurds using unknown chemical weapons, or in Srebrenica, where allegations arose in 1995 that Bosniak survivors fleeing the city came under a chemical attack by Bosnian Serb forces.

There are lessons to learn from these ambiguities, ways civilized countries can make the use of chemical weapons more transparent so as to better deter would-be transgressors and hold guilty parties accountable.

First, we need to develop the capacity for “standoff” detection of chemical weapons. The world today has no tools to accurately recognize the dispersal of chemical warfare agents from a distance. The most useful detectors have to be present at the site of the attack, rather than on a drone or a satellite.

The intelligence agencies of the major powers need to be able to look at vapor clouds from a distance, perhaps shine a laser on them and be able to tell if sarin or VX, for example, had been used. Second, we need to do a better job of video analytics. In the immediate aftermath of the Ghouta attack, the world was reduced to examining amateur video recordings to determine what did or did not happen. There are many limitations to this evidence, but even intelligence agencies, it seems, were relying on YouTube clips.

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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Third, we need to improve sample collection. In any conflict that affects as many interests as Syria's civil war, there are multitudes of spies. Agents working for Western parties should be trained, in the event of a chemical attack, to quickly collect solid, liquid, gas and blood samples that can be usefully analyzed.

Equipped with a sterile glass jar, an air-sampling bag and a thermal desorption tube — standard gear for hazmat technicians and environmental crimes detectives — spies could provide material more useful than 100 YouTube clips. Just one sample of the actual substance used on Aug. 21, collected at the time, would have saved weeks of speculation and mystery. Better forensic evidence, produced more quickly, might have made a more powerful case that troops loyal to President Bashar al-Assad were responsible for the attack. Although prosecution for war crimes is unimaginable with Russia protecting the regime, definitive proof might have humbled Assad, thereby discouraging Syria from violating a U.S.-Russian timeline for the destruction of its chemical-weapons program.

Even if the regime eagerly cooperates, it will be difficult to complete the plan by its deadline, the middle of next year. Syria is thought to possess more than 1,000 metric tons of chemical warfare agents and precursor chemicals. These materials can be safely destroyed only in specially constructed facilities, which don't exist in Syria. Transporting weapons for destruction poses the risk of horrific chemical accidents and diversion by terrorists.

In this respect, Syria's example offers another lesson: We need to investigate the value of building a large, mobile chemical-weapons demilitarization plant. Small mobile systems exist, but none that could rapidly destroy Syria's arsenal. The plant could be ship-based, like the two emergency hospitals the U.S. Navy dispatches to disaster zones. Better yet would be a system that could go anywhere, including land-locked areas. Its components could be flown in 40-foot cargo containers to where it is needed. It would be naïve to think that once Syria's chemical arms are cleaned up, there will be no need for such a facility. In the event of civil war or regime collapse in North Korea, we may face an urgent situation there; the U.S. thinks the country has significant chemical-weapons stores. Sometimes stockpiles turn up with no warning. Albania unveiled in 2005 that it had discovered 16 tons of sulfur mustard hidden away by its Marxist dictatorship in the 1970s.

The world will almost certainly be shocked by chemical weapons again. The least we can do is a better job preparing for it.

Dan Kaszeta is a former officer in the U.S. Army Chemical Corps and former member of the U.S. Secret Service now working as an independent consultant.

<http://www.mysanantonio.com/opinion/commentary/article/World-unprepared-to-police-chemical-weapons-4857283.php>

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

The Asian Age – New Delhi, India

OPINION/Columnist

Nuclear Realities

October 01, 2013

By Shankar Roychowdhury

The significance of the second test on September 15, 2013, of India's improved Agni-V intermediate range ballistic missile (IRBM) from Wheeler Island test range, off the coast of Orissa, has to be perceived against the background of intensifying Sino-Indian rivalry, which came to a head most recently in the Chinese intrusions and ensuing face-off at Raki Nala in Ladakh. With a reported range of 5,500 kms, Agni-V will possess adequate strike distance to target value targets on the Chinese mainland from launch sites based in the centre of the Indian landmass, a payload of strategic deterrence which will provide some quantum of comfort to Indian planners within the doctrine of second strike mode mandated by national policy. When fully in operational service, complete with ancillaries and support systems, Agni-V will be the credible "threat-in-being" component in India's nuclear triad which was not available earlier. India's nuclear doctrine has consciously adopted a "no first use" policy, which has been emphasised right from the inception of the

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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country's nuclear weapons programme, but the requisite nuclear triad remained shortlegged and incomplete in the absence of a viable land-based component. With Agni-V this deficiency can be considered to have been made up.

There has been speculation about Surya, as a follow-on to Agni-V, a super missile in the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) category with a range of 10,000 kms and more. Given the country's proven scientific and technological capabilities, India is quite capable of developing such a missile, though indigenous production, especially in the area of quality control, still seems to be somewhat of an Achilles' heel, especially in government facilities in which large funds have been invested. However, the strategic decision-making infrastructure to match the country's geopolitical ambitions still remains inadequate.

Is the Agni-V adequate for the short/middle term future envisaged for the country? Or does Surya still remain the next logical step?

India's geographic neighbourhood and geopolitical environment, including the contiguous Indian Ocean Region, remains in an almost permanent state of semi-equilibrium, an uneasy, edgy environment through which run the critical lines of commerce and communications sustaining the world's economy, particularly the supertanker traffic connecting the energy sources of West Asian and Gulf countries to the consumer and industrial economies of the rest of the world.

Critical tanker traffic between the Gulf states and the rest of the world maintains the bulk of oil supply. The presence and intermittent transit of nuclear-propelled warships, both surface and submarine, under various flags through these waters has not helped matters because their armed status as possible nuclear weapons carriers has never been acknowledged or clarified. Though efforts have been made by littoral countries to declare the Indian Ocean as a nuclear-free "Zone of Peace", these have not been particularly successful because the countries of the region do not possess the capability to enforce such decisions. India (at very long last) now possesses a missile capability long sought-after, and the scales between China and India are now more evenly balanced, even if only marginally so, because numbers and capabilities still tilt markedly towards China.

However, in the first flush of euphoria, India and its public opinion must not lose sight of the fact that it is early days yet, and still a long haul before India owns a credible ICBM force. It is to India's good fortune that its missile and nuclear establishments are amongst the more efficient of the country's systems.

The successful test of the Agni-V missile has naturally invoked a feeling of immense satisfaction and national pride, which will undoubtedly feed into the public environment building up prior to the general elections due in India in 2014. All estimates of the public mood (insofar it can ever be estimated) point to the likelihood of a very bitterly contested election. Political handlers and minders, as well as electoral officials and state administrations, will have their work cut out to prevent deterioration of the situation into crudely jingoistic rhetoric by ill-informed and often ill-educated political campaign workers as seen in Muzaffarnagar. Against these approaching political storm clouds, the success of Agni-V holds its own political significance, if it can be soberly projected as an encouraging step forward on a long road, with distances yet to be covered.

The almost simultaneous successful launch near Goa on May 13 of the highly manoeuvrable Brahmos supersonic cruise missile, a result of Indian-Russian cooperation, did not attract as much attention. Brahmos, handy both as a "carrier-buster", as also a land attack missile, is a completely different tool but for an interlinked job. Both Agni-V and Brahmos are technologically on par — the former a true strategic weapon, the latter a dual-purpose tactical weapons — and both are capable of carrying a variety of "end products", nuclear as well as conventional. Mating Agni-V with a conventional warhead would obviously be laughable, but the same may not hold true in reverse. Brahmos is primarily designed as a conventional weapon, is nuclear capable, and requires a custom-designed nuclear warhead for its various configurations. It is hoped that this is in hand.

Advanced weapons like Agni-II, Agni-V and now Brahmos, as also nuclear powered submarines of the Arihant class with matching payloads of nuclear capable, submarine launched missiles like the Dhanush K-15, are now realities in the weapons inventories of all three services. While public interest is focused on strategic weapons, not much interest is shown in the matching command and control structures for their employment. The Strategic Forces Command is not a



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fully matured system yet and periodically emerges for debate like a low lying rock during ebb tide, to disappear again below the high-water mark as the tide comes in.

India is in the big boys club now, and must carry its own big stick.

The writer is a former Chief of Army Staff and a former member of Parliament

<http://www.asianage.com/columnists/nuclear-realities-600>

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

Issue No. 1082, 01 October 2013

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