



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

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The Daily Star – Lebanon

Second Chemical Weapons Team Heading to Syria

October 9, 2013

Agencies

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THE HAGUE/BEIRUT: The chief of the global chemical weapons watchdog said Tuesday the organization was sending a second team of inspectors to Syria to expand its high-stakes, high-risk mission to rid Syria of its poison gas stockpile.

Ahmet Uzumcu, director-general of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, spoke to the group's 41-nation Executive Council at the beginning of a four-day meeting in The Hague.

The organization's inspectors are in Syria to verify and destroy the country's estimated 1,000 tons of chemical weapons, in the midst of a more than two-and-a-half-year civil war.

Uzumcu called initial Syrian cooperation with the team last week – providing more detail of the country's chemical weapons and beginning to destroy them and the facilities used to produce them – “a constructive beginning for what will nonetheless be a long and difficult process,” according to an OPCW statement.

Syria also highlighted the inspectors' work in a video broadcast on state TV late Monday showing their activity for the first time.

The inspectors were shown touring what appeared to be a chemical plant and a storage facility, inspecting containers and taking samples.

They could be seen taking photographs of the facility in the piece that aired during the Syrian official TV station's prime-time news program.

An advance team of 35 OPCW and U.N. staff originally traveled to Damascus last week. Some OPCW staff members have already returned to the organization's headquarters to report on their talks with officials from President Bashar Assad's regime in Damascus.

Uzumcu said he would soon sign an agreement between the OPCW and the U.N. to provide security and logistics to the inspection teams.

In Damascus, ruling Baath party lawmaker Walid al-Zoubi said the chemical weapons “have become a heavy burden on the state and are not a strategic defensive stock anymore” and the nation was ready to dispose of them. “Our defensive strategic reserve is much stronger than the chemicals,” Zoubi told the Associated Press. “For this reason, Syria now has to get rid of this chemical inventory.”

Uzumcu did not specify how many people would be in the second team, but in a letter to the U.N. Security Council obtained by AP, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recommended Monday that approximately 100 U.N. and OPCW staff eventually make up the mission.

He said the international community's aim of destroying Syria's chemical weapons program by mid-2014 would require “an operation the likes of which, quite simply, have never been tried before,” with greater operational and security risks because of the speed required.

Ban Tuesday praised the U.N. resolution ordering the destruction of the chemical arsenal as “a hopeful sign after more than two-and-a-half years of deadlock.”

The resolution was the first on the Syria conflict since fighting began in March 2011. The U.N. estimates more than 100,000 people have been killed since then.



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Ban also called for “action” over the dire humanitarian situation in conflict-torn Syria. “The Security Council has ... made a strong commitment to relieve the humanitarian situation to reach millions of desperate civilians. Now these commitments must be backed by action,” he told journalists in Budapest, where he opened a U.N. conference.

On the ground Tuesday, government warplanes bombed rebel positions near a strategic northern city, activists said.

The rebels captured Maaret al-Numan a year ago, after systematically seizing the army’s outposts in the city, along a major supply route linking the capital, Damascus, with the contested Idlib region and Syria’s largest city, Aleppo.

Fighting has flared up there in recent days, even as government forces and opposition fighters remain locked in a bloody, block-by-block fight for Aleppo since rebels launched an assault on it 15 months ago.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said fighter jets twice hit opposition-held areas Tuesday near the city, and heavy fighting then broke out at a nearby army base. The group added that there were casualties in the fighting.

Dramatic footage shot by AP showed a group of 45 young rebel fighters launching a surprise attack on the military base, and others deploying improvised cannons and makeshift mortars. Some are also seen firing anti-aircraft weapons at attacking government helicopters.

The Syrian army responded with airstrikes and shelling to block the rebel advance, killing at least one of the fighters Monday, opposition fighters told AP.

The fight for the base is part of the ongoing, broader struggle for control of northern Syria where the opposition controls large swathes of territory captured from Assad’s troops.

“We are ready to move on our military operation, in order to remove the enemy checkpoints and the army presence in the Wadi Deif area and army base,” one of the fighters said before heading into the battle. “God is great and He is the one who protects us.”

Most of the northern countryside is in the hands of anti-Assad fighters, while the government is holding out in isolated military bases and inside major cities.

In response to accusations from Assad that Ankara was tolerating the presence of Al-Qaeda-linked rebels on the long volatile border between the two countries, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu said Tuesday it had never allowed them to use its territory to launch attacks against the Damascus regime.

“Turkey is on the front line of countries fighting against terrorism in the most determined fashion,” Davutoglu said at a news conference in Ankara.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Oct-09/234046-second-chemical-weapons-team-heading-to-syria.ashx#axzz2hG61EwmU>

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The Jerusalem Post – Israel

Israel Dismisses Iran’s Nuclear Concessions as ‘Cosmetic’

Netanyahu to take argument against Tehran to European media following WSJ reports on Iran offers for nuclear talks.

By HERB KEINON

9 October 2013

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will flood the European media in coming days with interviews trying to sway public opinion against easing sanctions on Iran in return for what Jerusalem views as cosmetic concessions.

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Netanyahu's media blitz comes as *The Wall Street Journal* reported on Wednesday that Iran will come to talks in Geneva next week with the world powers – the US, Russia, China, Germany, France and Britain – willing to stop enriching uranium to 20-percent purity, which is close to weapons-grade capability.

According to the report, the Islamic Republic – in exchange for scaling back the sanctions – will also be willing to open up its nuclear facilities to more invasive international inspections, and is considering closing the underground uranium enrichment facility near Qom.

Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz, who met on Wednesday with the head of the French team to the negotiations with Iran, called what Iran was reportedly willing to bring to the table “laughable.”

“Closing the facility in Qom means that Iran will be able to produce in its first year of nuclearization five bombs instead of six,” he said. “Giving up on enriching to 20% is less significant at a time when Iran already has 20,000 centrifuges.”

Steinitz said that Israel was amenable to a “true and serious diplomatic solution” whereby Iran's nuclear capabilities would be similar to those of Canada or Mexico – it would be able to generate electricity from a reactor, but would need to buy the nuclear fuel to work the reactors from another country.

Netanyahu stressed at the UN last week and in numerous interviews afterward that Iran must do four things: stop all enrichment, remove from its control all its stockpiles of enriched uranium, close down the facility at Qom, and stop all work on the heavy water reactor at Arak aimed at producing a plutonium path toward a bomb.

Netanyahu, quoting from what Iranian President Hassan Rouhani himself said in 2005, explained that a country that can enrich uranium to 3.5% will also have the capability to enrich to weapons grade 90%, and that having the fuel cycle capability “virtually means” that a country possesses the capability to produce nuclear weapons.

For that reason, he said, Iran must not be left with any capacity to enrich uranium at any level.

An Israeli government official said that the Wall Street Journal report confirmed what Netanyahu said last week in New York: that the Iranians were angling for a deal that would relieve sanctions but keep the fundamentals of their program in place.

“This is the Iranian strategy that we have warned about all along,” he said. “Cosmetic concessions that leave the heart of their program in place and gives them breakout capacity to build a nuclear weapon at a time of their choosing.”

The official described “break-out capacity” as the Iranian's ability – when they desire – to produce the necessary amount of fissile material for a bomb. With the number and advanced nature of the centrifuges they have in place, the official said that if they were not barred from all enrichment, “they can go from low enrichment to high [weapons-grade] enrichment in a matter of weeks.”

The official said that Netanyahu's message to the Europeans in the five days that remain before the start of the talks will be that “no deal is better than a bad deal,” and that the deal that the Iranians will apparently propose is a bad one.”

<http://www.jpost.com/Iranian-Threat/News/Jlem-dismisses-reports-of-Iranian-willingness-to-end-high-grade-uranium-enrichment-as-cosmetic-concession-328313>

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Defense News.com

UN Inspectors Identify 20 Syrian Chemical Sites; Wary About Security

By PAUL McLEARY

October 9, 2013

WASHINGTON — United Nations-backed chemical weapons inspectors have identified 20 sites in Syria to inspect for chemical weapons stocks and precursor materials, but the ability of the teams to reach the sites is dependent on proper security, officials said Wednesday at The Hague.

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In a rare press conference, Ahmet Uzumcu, head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), told reporters that “if we can ensure some cooperation by all parties, and if some temporary cease-fires could be established to permit our experts to work in a permissive environment, I think our targets can be reached.”

According to the agreement hashed out between the United States and Russia and ratified by the UN, all of Syria’s chemical weapons production facilities must be identified and destroyed by Nov. 1, while the rest of the country’s chemical weapons stocks and precursor materials will have to be destroyed by mid-2014.

Asked if the November goal is too ambitious, the OPCW chief was guarded, saying “much depends on the situation of the ground.”

Of the 20 sites identified, only one has been visited so far, while a second site would be reached within hours of the press conference, Uzumcu said.

And as the OPCW announced this week, the group has begun destroying some of the materials it has found.

But security is the main concern. “At the moment, there are certain sites located in areas which are dangerous,” said the OPCW’s Malik Ellahi. “We haven’t started our inspection work in those sites yet, but soon we will be required to do so. At that point, it will be necessary for us to be assured that conditions on the ground are such that our teams can proceed to do their work in safety.”

So far, inspectors have found unfilled munitions, which were specifically designed to deliver chemical weapons and have begun destroying those. But the more difficult and time-consuming work will come when the actual stockpiles of chemical weapons will be destroyed.

When that begins, more inspectors will be needed to stay at the destruction sites 24 hours a day, monitoring the process and making certain it is done safely. OPCW spokesman Michael Luhan said that “when you get into destruction verification, our inspectors have to verify every moment of destruction activity. That consumes a lot of inspector days.”

An initial team of inspectors arrived in Damascus on Oct. 1, and another team is being trained to assist in the effort as soon as possible.

Given that weapons inspectors are entering a full-blown civil war with multiple factions fighting with the government and with each other, Uzumcu warned that “this is an extraordinary situation for OPCW. It’s unprecedented and we’re at the beginning of a difficult process. There are significant challenges.”

But he said he is confident that if Syria and other interested parties are able to cooperate, the UN’s timelines could be met.

<http://www.defensenews.com/article/20131009/DEFREG04/310090024/UN-Inspectors-Identify-20-Syrian-Chemical-Sites-Wary-About-Security>

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The Billings Gazette – Billings, MT

AP Interview: Iran Speaker Touts Surplus Uranium

By JOHN HEILPRIN, Associated Press

October 9, 2013

Iran has more enriched uranium than it needs for its research and would be willing to discuss the "surplus" with Western powers during nuclear talks next week, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani said Wednesday.

In an Associated Press interview, Larijani said Iran is open to discussions about what to do with the 20 percent enriched uranium that it doesn't need. Iran has reported to the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency that it has turned half of its 20 percent enriched uranium into a powder form that cannot easily be used to make weapons-grade fuel.

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"We have some surplus, you know, the amount that we don't need. But over that we can have some discussions," he said in Farsi, through his English translator.

A key concession sought by Western powers in negotiations is for Iran to stop enriching uranium to 20 percent. Larijani said Iran produced the enriched uranium itself because the IAEA would not provide it, and insisted it needs the material only for research and isotopes for medical treatments, not for nuclear weapons.

He indicated a willingness to negotiate on that, too.

"Through the process of negotiations, yes, things can be said and they can discuss this matter," he said, on the sidelines of a meeting of the world organization of parliaments.

The talks on Iran's nuclear program will be held next week with the five permanent U.N. Security Council members the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France plus Germany, collectively known as the P5+1.

The U.S. and its allies accuse Iran of using its civilian nuclear program as a cover to develop nuclear weapons, and the P5+1 want Tehran to stop enriching uranium to 20 percent, a grade that is only a technical step away from the level used to arm nuclear warheads. It then wants the 20-percent stockpile transferred out of the country.

The group also demands that Iran agree to shut down its bomb-resistant underground bunker known as Fordo, where it is enriching uranium to 20 percent, before discussing sanctions relief on Iranian oil and financial transactions.

Iran's nuclear chief, Ali Akbar Salehi, has not publicly specified what measures Tehran might take to ease Western concerns that its nuclear program could one day produce atomic weapons. The sanctions, which have imposed hardship on Iran's people, have done little to accomplish the aim of stopping Iran's expanding nuclear program.

President Barack Obama disclosed in an AP interview last Friday that U.S. intelligence agencies believe Iran continues to be a year or more away from building a nuclear weapon, in contrast to Israel's assessment that Tehran is much closer.

Obama and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani have spoken on the phone becoming the first U.S. and Iranian leaders to have direct contact in more than 30 years. Larijani acknowledged that has upset some hard-liners in Iran.

"They are a little bit pessimistic about it, suspicious. So, they have their own sway, and they put pressure, but we do support Mr. Rouhani. And God willing, he will have the parliament's support" in the nuclear talks, Larijani said.

Larijani, formerly Iran's top nuclear negotiator, said he believes there will be no progress next week unless the U.S. offers to curtail some of the West's crippling economic sanctions.

He said "it is too soon to pass any judgment" on whether U.S.-Iranian diplomatic ties might be restored. Switzerland now represents U.S. diplomatic interests in Iran.

The countries broke ties after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, when mobs stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. A total of 52 hostages were held for 444 days.

At a news conference Wednesday in Geneva, Larijani told reporters the upcoming nuclear negotiation "mostly concerns building confidence rather than a commercial give-and-take." They are a continuation of talks that began in 2003 between Iran and Britain, France and Germany, and later expanded to include the United States, Russia and China, but have failed so far to achieve any substantive progress.

"My feeling is that Iran wants to see a resolution to the matter through political negotiations," he said. "I look at the upcoming negotiations positively."

http://billingsgazette.com/news/world/europe/ap-interview-iran-speaker-touts-surplus-uranium/article_f9cb1043-a4d7-5d6c-bad4-c4facc5b287.html

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



9 October 2013

Iran Parliament Denies 'Uranium Surplus' Report

Iran's parliament has denied reports that the country has a surplus of enriched uranium and plans to use this as a bargaining tool at nuclear talks.

The Associated Press attributed the claims to Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani, in an interview ahead of high-level talks in Geneva.

But MPs said the claims were "false and fundamentally inaccurate".

The West suspects Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons. Iran says its programme is entirely peaceful.

Mr Larijani was interviewed by several Western news agencies ahead of the meeting with the five permanent UN Security Council members - the US, Russia, China, Britain, France - and Germany.

Iran has been negotiating with the P5+1 over the nuclear issue since 2006.

Mr Larijani said Iran enriched uranium because the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency would not provide it, according to the AP report.

"We have some surplus, you know, the amount that we don't need. But over that we can have some discussions," he was quoted as saying.

However, a statement carried by Iranian news agency ICANA said: "Parts of Dr Larijani's interview with Associated Press, where it had been emphasised that Iran had more enriched uranium than it needed and intended to use that as a winning card in next week's negotiations in Geneva, are false and fundamentally inaccurate."

In an interview with AFP news agency, Mr Larijani described the talks as "a window of opportunity".

The P5+1 have asked Iran to halt production and stockpiling of uranium enriched to 20% - a step away from achieving a nuclear weapons capability.

They also demanded Iran shut down the Fordo underground enrichment facility.

In return, they have offered to ease the sanctions that have severely affected Iran's economy.

New Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has said he wants to reach a deal on the nuclear dispute in three to six months.

But the US has said there will be no major concessions on sanctions until the Iranians take concrete steps to reassure the world they are not seeking nuclear weapons.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-24468676>

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FARS News Agency – Iran
Thursday, October 10, 2013

Senior MP: Uranium Enrichment Needed for Industries Iran's Redline

TEHRAN (FNA) - A senior Iranian legislator underlined that enriching uranium to the level needed for the country's industries is one of Tehran's redlines in the talks with the world powers.

"The Iranian nation's right to peaceful nuclear technology and uranium enrichment up to whatever level required by the country's nuclear industry are regarded as our redlines," Rapporteur of the parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Seyed Hossein Naqavi Hosseini said on Wednesday.

He said that no one is allowed to cross the redlines of the Islamic system.



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Iran and the world powers held a meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York in September and are due to meet again in Geneva on October 15-16.

On April 6, Iran and the six world powers wrapped up two days of intensive negotiations in Almaty.

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

Tehran stresses that the country has always pursued a civilian path to provide power to the growing number of Iranian population, whose fossil fuel would eventually run dry.

Despite the rules enshrined in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entitling every member state, including Iran, to the right of uranium enrichment, Tehran is now under four rounds of UN Security Council sanctions and the western embargos for turning down West's calls to give up its right of uranium enrichment.

Tehran has dismissed West's demands as politically tainted and illogical, stressing that sanctions and pressures merely consolidate Iranians' national resolve to continue the path.

Tehran has repeatedly said that it considers its nuclear case closed as it has come clean of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s questions and suspicions about its past nuclear activities.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920718000446>

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Ha'aretz Daily News – Israel

Tehran Relocating Nuke Research Site to Avoid Detection, Dissidents Say

Dissident National Council of Resistance of Iran, which exposed uranium enrichment facility at Natanz, says government moving to avoid detection ahead of negotiations with world powers.

By Reuters

October 10, 2013

An exiled Iranian opposition group said on Thursday it had information about what it said was a center for nuclear weaponisation research in Tehran that the government was moving to avoid detection ahead of negotiations with world powers.

The dissident National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI) exposed Iran's uranium enrichment facility at Natanz and a heavy water facility at Arak in 2002. But analysts say it has a mixed track record and a clear political agenda.

An accusation it made in July about a secret underground nuclear site under construction in Iran drew a cautious international response, while the United States expressed scepticism about another claim in 2010.

The NCRI's announcement comes days before Iran and six world powers are to meet in Geneva to try to end years of deadlock over the nuclear program, with hopes of a breakthrough raised by the election of a relatively moderate president in Iran, Hassan Rohani. Iran denies conducting any nuclear weapons work.

The Paris-based NCRI, citing information from sources inside Iran, said a nuclear weaponization research and planning center it called SPND was being moved to a large, secure site in a defence ministry complex in Tehran about 1.5 kilometer away from its former location.

It said the center employed about 100 researchers, engineers and experts and conducted small-scale experiments with radioactive material.

"There is a link between this transfer and the date of Geneva (talks) because the regime needed to avoid the risk of visits by (UN nuclear) inspectors," Mehdi Abrichamtchi, who compiled the NCRI report, told a news conference in Paris.

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The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN nuclear watchdog, declined to comment.

A Western nuclear expert, Mark Fitzpatrick, said he did not find the NCRI's allegation credible and that U.S. intelligence agencies continued to believe that Iran was "still keeping most of its weaponization efforts under ice."

"If the NCRI knows about a nuclear weaponisation research and planning centre in Iran, you can bet the CIA knows about it too, yet there has been no hint of it in public or leaked assessments," Fitzpatrick told Reuters in an emailed comment.

The SPND site was mentioned in an IAEA report in late 2011 that included intelligence information indicating past research in Iran that could be relevant for nuclear weapons. Iran dismissed the findings as baseless or forged.

The IAEA document said the information pointed to the existence of a concerted weapons programme that was halted in 2003 when Iran came under increased Western pressure. But it suggested that some activities may have resumed later.

The NCRI said such research had continued at several sites, including the SPND. The publication of the IAEA report in 2011 prompted Tehran to start planning for a transfer of its activities to a new site to avoid inspections, it said.

The NCRI, which seeks an end to Islamist theocratic rule in Iran, is the political wing of the People's Mujahideen Organisation of Iran (PMOI), which fought alongside Saddam Hussein's forces in the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. The United States last year removed it from its list of terrorist groups.

The NCRI said the SPND's activities had expanded over the past year and a half, under the direction of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, who was identified in the IAEA report as a key figure in suspected weapons-related work and is subject to UN sanctions.

Iranian media rarely mention Fakhrizadeh. Western nuclear experts have said he probably lives under tight security to shield him against assassins and keep him beyond the reach of UN inspectors.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/1.551758>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

S. Korea's Spy Agency Confirms N. Korea Restarted Yongbyon Reactor

October 8, 2013

SEOUL, Oct. 8 (Yonhap) -- South Korea's spy agency confirmed Tuesday that the North has restarted its Yongbyon reactor that had been mothballed since 2007.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) told lawmakers from the National Assembly's Intelligence Committee that the five megawatt graphite moderated reactor has been in operation since around August of this year.

The confirmation is the first to come out of the NIS, although independent foreign sources who analyzed commercial satellite images have speculated that the reactor could have been operating for some weeks.

The reactor, located 90 kilometers north of Pyongyang, has been cited for producing plutonium for the North's nuclear weapons program before it was shut down under a deal brokered at the six-party talks six years ago. The North had blown up the reactor's cooling tower in 2008 to show its seriousness about suspending operations.

Pyongyang, however, announced in early April of this year when tensions spiked on the Korean Peninsula that it would restart work on the small reactor, which does not generate any energy, and use it to strengthen the country's nuclear deterrence.

The move is seen by many in Seoul as an attempt by Pyongyang to pressure the United States to come to the negotiating table and resolve the decades-old standoff by pointing out that the North holds the upper hand and will



make more weapons. The North has insisted on no preconditions, while Washington has made clear that Pyongyang must first announce its willingness to abide by its denuclearization pledges.

The country's spy agency also claimed at Tuesday's closed door parliamentary session that the North conducted an engine test for a long range rocket at its Tongchang-ri launch site on the west coast, said Rep. Cho Won-jin, the leading member of the parliamentary committee for the ruling Saenuri Party.

The lawmaker said that the intelligence agency believes Pyongyang has bolstered its naval forces and increased its artillery presence in the form of long-range multiple rocket launcher systems (MRLS). He said the NIS indicated MRLS are facing the South Korean capital city region, Gangwon Province and the so-called five Seohae Islands that form the sea-boundary in the Yellow Sea.

There have been numerous clashes around these islands, including the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island in November of 2011 that left four people dead.

Cho then said the spy agency's chief Nam Jae-joon pointed out that the North was making large numbers of 122 millimeter and 240 millimeter MRLSs from factories in Nampho and Hamhung. He also said that the country even revised its war planning guidelines to say it will use force to unify with South Korea within three years.

On the controversial issue surrounding measures to reform the spy agency, Nam stressed that plans centered on building strong safeguards against any kind of intervention by agents in internal politics will strengthen the agency's counter-espionage and North Korean intelligence gathering capabilities. Merging operations aimed at detecting anti-South Korean organizations both inside and outside the country will also aid in this, he said. The plan may be forwarded for parliamentary review within the month.

The director general told lawmakers that he did not feel responsibility for allegations that agents posted comments on Internet portal sites leading up to last year's presidential election, which are said to have helped the ruling party candidate. The official added that because of this, he did not feel the need to resign from his post.

Nam has maintained that the deed was carried out under the previous Lee Myung-bak administration before President Park Geun-hye took office in late February. This view is shared by Park, who said that she did not benefit from the action carried out without her knowledge.

Aside from such claims, the official also said he was aware that 10 members of a North Korean performance group allegedly connected to a scandal involving the country's first lady Ri Sol-ju had been executed.

Foreign media first reported a possible scandal involving Ri before her marriage to leader Kim Jong-un and said those who know the truth were shot to death in order to put a lid on the embarrassing incident that could undermine Kim's leadership. He said that while he knew people were executed, he could not verify if they were connected in any way to Ri.

In addition, Nam said that the North Korean leader may be losing favor with the people by spending exorbitant amounts of money of various beautification projects, theme parks and sports facilities.

He speculated that money spent in these areas totaled US\$300 million, which is enough to buy 800,000 tons of corn that could feed the North for 2-3 months.

The spy agency, meanwhile, said that 44 percent of senior commanders above corps commander rank in the Korean People's Army have been changed since Kim took power after the sudden death of his father Kim Jong-il in late 2011. Such a move can be seen as the new leader's effort to consolidate his hold on the military. It said of 218 senior posts, Kim appointed 97 new officers.

The NIS head also touched on the recent scandal involving a progressive South Korean lawmaker who was recently arrested for plotting to overthrow the government in the event of a war breaking out with the North. He said he received reports that the lawmaker, Rep. Lee Seok-ki, kept 30 personal bodyguards, and that authorities had voice recordings of him calling on his followers to rise up when the call to arms is given.



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On the controversial 2007 summit meeting between late President Roh Moo-hyun and his North Korean counterpart Kim Jong-il, Nam verified that the NIS had the voice data recording of the talks, but admitted that it was not able to determine if the contents could be disclosed to the public at present.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/10/08/26/0301000000AEN20131008010253315F.html>

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People's Daily Online – China

DPRK Says Ready for Both Dialogue, Confrontation

(Xinhua)

October 09, 2013

PYONGYANG, Oct. 9 -- The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) condemned the U.S. Wednesday for a trilateral naval drill it said focused on military provocation rather than dialogue, the official KCNA news agency reported.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Washington was escalating tensions on the peninsula with the planned U.S.-Japan-South Korea drills involving an American aircraft carrier and a joint strategy against nuclear weapons.

The trilateral exercises, which Seoul and Washington claimed would enhance capabilities for search and rescue of private ships, were originally scheduled to be staged for three days from Tuesday, but was delayed for at least two days due to bad weather.

"The United States has refused our legitimate demand to hold talks and negotiations without preconditions to secure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, only focusing on military provocations," said the spokesman, adding Pyongyang was well prepared for both dialogue and confrontation.

The country's military spokesman said Tuesday all Korean People's Army troops were "highly alert to promptly foil provocations" of the joint military maneuvers. Meanwhile, a spokesman for the DPRK's National Defense Commission (NDC) warned Tuesday that Seoul should "seriously reflect on what they did and rectify it before groundlessly blaming someone."

The NDC on Friday denounced South Korean President "Park Geun-hye and her cohorts" for seeking ruthlessly to dismantle Pyongyang's nuclear program and subverting its regime under the pretext of causing changes in the DPRK, warning it would be equal to "digging its own grave."

South Korea's intelligence agency confirmed Tuesday the DPRK had restarted a 5-megawatt reactor in the Yongbyon nuclear complex.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/8420161.html>

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Global Post – Boston, MA

N. Korea Ready to Suspend Nuclear, Missile Tests if 6-Way Talks Resume

Kyodo News International

October 9, 2013

North Korea has expressed an intention to suspend testing of nuclear devices and long-range missiles if six-nation talks on its denuclearization resume, a former U.S. State Department official said Wednesday.

Ri Yong Ho, North Korea's vice foreign minister, presented the country's position in a meeting in Berlin last month, according to Joel Wit, who formerly handled North Korean issues in the State Department and attended the meeting.

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In the meeting with Stephen Bosworth, a former U.S. special representative for North Korean policy, Ri confirmed that the multilateral talks could take up the dismantlement of its nuclear weapons, according to Wit.

Ri served as North Korea's chief delegate to the long-stalled six-nation talks hosted by China that also involve Japan, South Korea and Russia.

Wit said he has notified the State Department of Pyongyang's position.

The North Korean official expressed reluctance to freeze the launch of rockets, which many other countries regard as a cover for testing ballistic missile launches.

The North Korean side repeated its call for an unconditional resumption of the six-nation talks, which last convened in 2008, in the meeting in Berlin.

The United States urged North Korea to take action and convince countries concerned that Pyongyang is still committed to past agreements reached in the multilateral dialogue to dismantle its nuclear programs.

Ri proposed breaking up the dialogue framework into four sections -- denuclearization, political, military and economic issues -- toward the goal of dismantling its nuclear arsenal and facilities related to nuclear weapons, according to Wit.

North Korea apparently envisions discussing the possibility of normalizing ties with the United States, converting the truce pact ending the Korean War into a peace treaty, and suspending joint exercises by the U.S. and South Korean militaries.

North Korea also apparently intends to take up the lifting of economic sanctions imposed by the United States over its nuclear programs.

A series of recent satellite images released by a U.S. website monitoring North Korea indicate Pyongyang has rebooted a nuclear reactor that can produce weapons-grade plutonium.

Neither country raised the facility in Yongbyon, the centerpiece of the country's nuclear program, according to Wit.

North Korea did not say whether it would accept a call to suspend its uranium enrichment program in the Berlin meeting.

Wit leads the 38 North website under Johns Hopkins University's U.S.-Korea Institute.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/131009/n-korea-ready-suspend-nuclear-missile-tests-if-6-way-t>

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The Chosun Ilbo – South Korea

October 10, 2013

N.Korean Regime Consolidating Personality Cult

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has been boasting to officials that he could reunify the Korean Peninsula by force within three years, the National Intelligence Service claimed Tuesday.

NIS chief Nam Jae-joon was quoted by lawmaker Cho Won-jin as telling the National Assembly's Intelligence Committee, "The North Korean regime is rebuilding and consolidating its monolithic rule."

According to the NIS, the regime revised wartime guidelines to make it clear that it will declare war on South Korea if there is a pro-North Korean uprising in the South and rebels ask it for help.

The Workers Party also recently revised its 10 founding principles to demand "absolute obedience" to Kim Jong-un.

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The regime apparently remains committed to reunification through communization of South Korea, as well as one-man dictatorship, nuclear weapons, and the songun or military-first doctrine.

In a bid to boost the personality cult, the regime has beautified the tomb of Kim's mother Ko Yong-hui and is forcing North Koreans to pay their respects there.

But more North Koreans are becoming cynical about Kim's leadership, the NIS says. Self-protection is the order of the day.

It cited the example of the regime last month ordering the children of diplomats home from their studies abroad, but backing down when the diplomats protested.

With regard to North Korea's nuclear program, the NIS said that to produce plutonium and highly-enriched uranium the regime restarted the 5 MW nuclear reactor at Yongbyon in August and conducted an engine test for long-range missiles at Tongchangri in North Pyongan Province.

Operation of the reactor stopped in 2007 under an agreement reached in six-party talks.

The North is also reinforcing artillery forces targeting the Seoul metropolitan area and five South Korean islands off its southwestern coast.

It deployed new 240 mm multiple rocket launchers north of Seoul and 122 mm MRLs on islands near Baeknyeong Island, the NIS added. The regime will likely deploy more of such artillery pieces along the east coast and in the frontline area in the future.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/10/10/2013101002043.html

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Global Post – Boston, MA

N. Korea Digs Silos for Missiles in Mt. Paektu Area: Report

Kyodo News International

October 10, 2013

North Korea has numerous underground missile silos around Mt. Paektu, a Seoul daily reported Thursday, citing South Korean government sources.

"Since there are many places where the silos have been constructed, it is unclear if all of them are launch-capable facilities or whether some are emergency facilities in case of attack," the JoongAng Daily quoted a source as saying.

"Based on the size and location of the facilities it appears that these silos are for launching mid-sized or larger missiles," the source reportedly said.

Several South Korean government sources confirmed Wednesday that North Korea has numerous underground missile launch facilities around 2,000 meters south of Mt. Paektu, an active volcano near the border with China.

The silos, they said, were constructed in the mid-2000s and were determined to have been completed recently, the report said.

If North Korea has deployed its intermediate-range ballistic missiles, with a reach of more than 3,000 kilometers, near Mt. Paektu, Japan's Okinawa, where a U.S. base is located, is within range, as is the Pacific island Guam where U.S. military bases are also located.

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/kyodo-news-international/131010/n-korea-digs-silos-missiles-mt-paektu-area-report>

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United Press International (UPI)

North Korea Producing, Testing WMD

October 11, 2013

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11 (UPI) -- North Korea is producing chemical weapons at more than a dozen facilities and is suspected of testing them on healthy human subjects, a U.S. research team said.

John Hopkins researchers, writing on their 38 North blog Thursday, said North Korea has the means to produce and deploy "significant quantities" of chemical weapons throughout the region and possibly worldwide.

"Just as ominous as these chemical weapons production and delivery capabilities is a growing body of evidence that indicates a [North Korean] history of proliferation of chemical capabilities to nations such as Syria, Iran and others," researchers said.

Johns Hopkins said there may be as many as 18 facilities in North Korea producing chemical weapons, including mustard gas and sarin. The nerve agent sarin was used as a weapon during the Syrian civil war in August.

The researchers said they believe North Korea has tested sarin and other chemical agents on healthy political prisoners inside the country. It said reports are "extremely difficult" to confirm but said there's been a steady string of reports suggesting North Korea has a policy of "low-level lethal testing of chemical agents on unwilling human subjects."

North Korean concerns have focused on its nuclear weapons program. An explosion of a nuclear device underground in February was the country's third such test.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2013/10/11/North-Korea-producing-testing-WMD/UPI-40461381503636/?spt=rln&or=1

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Times of India – India

Prithvi-II Tested Again

Tamil News Network (TNN)

October 9, 2013

BHUBANESWAR: India on Tuesday test-fired another modified version of surface-to-surface missile Prithvi-II from the launch complex 3 of Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur off the Odisha coast, repeating the feat after a similar user trial the previous day.

A spokesperson said a missile unit of the elite Strategic Forces Command (SFC) launched the second consecutive Prithvi missile as part of its scenario-based live salvo launch training exercise. It was flawless and achieved all its targeting and technical parameters, he added.

While it was test-fired for a range of 300 km on Monday, it was launched for 325 km on Tuesday. "Both the launches were conducted as a culmination to a strategic training exercise," the spokesperson said, adding it aimed at ensuring launches in contingencies under varied conditions.

Defence sources said the modified version (20) was launched at 12.18 pm on Tuesday, late by two and a half hours due to bad weather. The missile trajectory was tracked by the DRDO radars, electro-optical tracking systems and telemetry stations located along the coast. The downrange teams aboard a ship deployed near the designated impact point in the Bay of Bengal monitored the terminal events and splashdown. On Monday, the SFC had test-fired modified version (12) of Prithvi-II.

Prithvi missiles are indigenously produced and equipped with improved high accuracy navigation and manoeuvring system. Inducted into India's Strategic Forces Command in 2003, Prithvi-II is the first missile to have been developed

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under India's prestigious Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) and strengthens India's nuclear deterrence.

Sources said scientists randomly pick a missile from production stock and put it on test. The missile is capable of carrying 500 kg to 1000 kg of warheads.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/bhubaneswar/Prithvi-II-tested-again/articleshow/23790282.cms>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia's New Nuclear Submarine Completes White Sea Trials

8 October 2013

MOSCOW, October 8 (RIA Novosti) – Russia's new-generation nuclear-powered submarine has successfully completed the first round of sea trials in the White Sea, the manufacturer said Tuesday.

The Vladimir Monomakh, a Project 955 Borey-class submarine, spent 25 days at sea, testing all of its systems and equipment, the Sevmash shipyard said in a statement. It added that the submarine would soon conduct a final series of sea trials to be completed by year-end.

Sevmash chief Mikhail Budnichenko said in July that the Vladimir Monomakh would join the navy in mid-December. But the submarine, to be armed with the Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), had its trials put on hold earlier this month following an unsuccessful Bulava launch. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu also ordered five additional launches of the troubled SLBM, a ministry spokesman said.

With the September 6 failure, eight of 19 or 20 test launches of the Bulava have been officially declared unsuccessful. However, some analysts suggest that in reality the number of failures is considerably higher. Despite several previous failures officially blamed on manufacturing faults, the Russian military has insisted that there is no alternative to the Bulava.

A total of eight Borey-class submarines are to be built for the Russian Navy by 2020. Russia's fleet received its first such submarine, the Yury Dolgoruky, in January. Borey-class submarines are to become the mainstay of the navy's strategic nuclear deterrent, replacing the aging Project 941 (NATO: Typhoon-class) and Project 667 class (Delta-3 and Delta-4) boats.

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20131008/184005275/Russias-New-Nuclear-Submarine-Completes-White-Sea-Trials.html

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Global Times – China

Russia to Increase Spending on Nuclear Arsenals by 50 pct in Three Years

Xinhua, October 9, 2013

By Agencies

Russia would increase spending on its nuclear arsenals by 50 percent in the next three years, a parliamentary defense committee said Tuesday.

According to the committee's report, submitted for federal budget discussions, Russia intends to spend more than 46 billion rubles (1.4 billion US dollars) on nuclear weapons building and maintenance in 2014-2016.

Though the federal budget for 2014 is expected to be tight, it envisages defense spending will increase from 2.1 trillion rubles (65.6 billion dollars) in 2013 to 3.38 trillion rubles (105.6 billion dollars) in 2016, or by 60 percent.

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Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said in September the planned budget deficit would result in no cuts in military procurement plans until 2020.

Also last month, President Vladimir Putin voiced his dissatisfaction with the slow pace of the nation's military rearmament, warning outdated military equipment threatened to hurt the efficiency of the entire army.

He urged military industrialists to stay on the cutting edge of arms development, demanding new military equipment be delivered to the armed forces starting from 2014.

Earlier this year, Putin said nuclear weapons remained the most important guarantee of Russia's sovereignty and integrity.

Russia plans to upgrade some 85 percent of its strategic nuclear weapons by 2020. The government has earmarked 20 trillion rubles (about 600 billion dollars) for the massive rearmament program until 2020.

http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/816436.shtml#_UIXHroAo5Dw

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The Morning Journal – Cleveland, OH

Russian Warheads Fueling Half of U.S. Nuclear Power

By Staff, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

October 9, 2013

Uranium fuel from 20,000 disarmed Russian warheads is now generating about half of U.S. nuclear power in a spinoff from a landmark disarmament accord, a top U.S. official said Wednesday.

Rose Gottemoeller, U.S. under-secretary of state for arms control, told a UN committee a 1993 accord between the two former Cold War rivals was one of a growing list of disarmament successes.

The final uranium delivery that the United States is buying from Russia is due to leave St. Petersburg in November, Gottemoeller told the UN disarmament committee.

She hailed the accord as a "significant non-proliferation accomplishment" and said 500 tonnes of weapons-grade uranium has now been processed in Russia.

Low-enriched uranium left from the downgrading "is delivered to the United States, fabricated into nuclear fuel and used by nearly all U.S. nuclear power plants to generate half of the nuclear energy in the United States," she said.

"Approximately 20,000 nuclear warheads have been eliminated under this unique government-industry partnership," Gottemoeller told the UN committee.

Over the past 15 years the Russian uranium fuel has accounted for about 10 percent of electricity produced in United States, she added.

U.S. officials will go to St Petersburg in November to mark the loading of the final containers which should arrive in the United States in December, Gottemoeller said.

"We look forward to celebrating this historic achievement," she said.

<http://www.morningjournal.com/general-news/20131009/russian-warheads-fueling-half-of-us-nuclear-power>

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Space Daily.com

Russia Test-Fires Nuclear-Capable Missile

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By Staff Writers

Moscow, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

October 10, 2013

Russia said Thursday it had successfully test-fired an upgraded version of a nuclear-capable missile that entered into service in the Soviet era and had been due to be scrapped.

A defence ministry spokesman said the RS-12M Topol had hit its target at a test range that Russia leases from Kazakhstan after it was fired from the Kapustin Yar military site near the Caspian Sea.

"The exercise head of the rocket hit the hypothetical target on the Sary-Shagan test site in Kazakhstan," spokesman Igor Yegorov told the Interfax news agency.

Russia is the only country in the world to still test-launch intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Most of the launches are performed to either ensure the safety of Russia's ageing arsenal or to test new rockets that could penetrate a missile defence system now gradually being deployed by NATO in Europe.

Yegorov said the launch was designed to test improvements meant to keep the RS-12M Topol -- a three-stage ballistic missile that has provided the backbone of Russian defences since Soviet times -- in service for years to come.

"The purpose of this launch was to confirm the stability of the main flight parameters of this class of rocket during extended service," Yegorov said.

Yegorov said the first RS-12M Topol entered into service 25 years ago.

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Russia_test-fires_nuclear-capable_missile_999.html

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Reuters – U.S.

Western Powers Talk Nuclear Disarmament, Upgrade What's Left

By Fredrik Dahl, Reuters

Thursday, October 10, 2013

VIENNA (Reuters) - The world's stockpile of nuclear weapons is a quarter of the size it was at its Cold War peak in the 1980s - but the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain are all considering or taking steps to modernize their arms systems.

The number of nuclear warheads globally is about 17,000, estimates the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), down roughly 75 percent over the last thirty years largely because of cuts by the United States and Russia.

U.S. President Barack Obama gave new impetus to the often halting process of disarmament in 2009 when he set out a vision of a world without nuclear weapons in a speech, three months into his presidency, which earned him the Nobel Peace Prize.

However, Obama's aim has produced mixed results so far, not least because of a plan by the United States and NATO to build an anti-missile shield around Western Europe that has been seen by Russia to undermine his intent.

Last June the U.S. president proposed further cutting nuclear arsenals by a third but Russia responded that the shield, intended to protect against attack from Iran and North Korea, would require Moscow to hold more missiles or lose its deterrent capability. Russia fears the system's interceptors could shoot down its long-range nuclear missiles.

Meanwhile, the United States is modifying existing warheads under so-called life extension programs, Russia is deploying more warheads on each of its missiles, and China is introducing new mobile missiles for its nuclear weapons, according to the Federation of American Scientists (FAS) think-tank.

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Such activities led Angela Kane, U.N. high representative for disarmament affairs, to comment in September: "Robust nuclear weapon modernization programs... raise legitimate questions over whether these steps are heading toward global zero, or instead to a permanently nuclear-armed world."

Adds Henry Sokolski of the U.S. Nonproliferation Policy Education Center: "In theory everyone can say the ideal number is zero but in practice no one is willing to take that risk."

The Obama administration used the U.N. nuclear agency's annual member state gathering in September to underline its commitment to "pursuing the peace and security" of a world without nuclear weapons, saying it had taken significant steps toward that goal.

The hope now is that the U.S. and other Western nuclear powers can persuade Iran to curb sensitive uranium enrichment after years of tough sanctions failed to do the job. New Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's overtures towards the West, while insisting on Tehran's nuclear "rights", have raised hopes of a negotiated settlement to the decade-old dispute ahead of talks between the two sides on October 15-16 in Geneva.

The Islamic state denies Western accusations that it is seeking the capability to make nuclear weapons.

NON-PROLIFERATION

The fact that more countries are not nuclear armed is widely credited to the central bargain of the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that nations without atomic bombs pledged not to seek them and nuclear weapon states agreed to pursue disarmament negotiations.

Compared with U.S. predictions in the early 1960s that the nuclear weapons club could increase to 25 states within a few decades, just nine countries are now estimated to have atomic bombs, including India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

The latter four states are outside the 189-nation NPT. Israel is widely assumed to be the Middle East's only nuclear-armed power, drawing frequent Iranian and Arab condemnation.

The longer nuclear weapon states hold on to their bombs, the greater the likelihood of tempting other countries to look into the possibility of developing such arms, analysts say.

India and Pakistan, which came close to war in 2001-02, both publicly said they had tested nuclear weapons in 1998. North Korea carried out its third nuclear test in February this year. Israel has neither confirmed nor denied it has nuclear arms.

The International Institute for Strategic Studies has warned that a South Asia arms race and Pakistan's development of tactical "battlefield" atomic weapons were increasing the risk of any conflict there becoming a nuclear war.

"Without complete disarmament, we will stand to lose the fight against proliferation in the long run," Austria's ambassador to the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Christine Stix-Hackl, said in a speech last month.

The Federation of American Scientists says U.S. and Russian warheads account for more than 90 percent of the world's total stockpile. Britain, France and China have between 200-300 each. India has 110, Pakistan 120 and Israel 80, it said.

Both the FAS and SIPRI say the total number of deployed warheads - those placed on missiles or located on bases with operational forces - amount to around 4,400, of which the vast majority are U.S. and Russian.

If "nations conclude that the U.S. and Russia have no intention of ever eliminating their obsolete Cold War arsenals, they will hedge their bets and at least explore developing their own nuclear forces," said Joseph Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund, a global security foundation.

Editing by Sophie Walker.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/10/us-nuclear-powers-disarmament-idUSBRE9990LE20131010>

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Albuquerque Journal – Albuquerque, NM

Sandia, LANL Prepare for Furloughs

By James Monteleone, Journal Staff Writer

October 9, 2013

Sandia and Los Alamos national laboratories are preparing to halt operations by Oct. 21 and furlough most of their 18,000 New Mexico employees if the federal government shutdown is not resolved before then, lab officials confirmed Tuesday.

The dramatic order to prepare for lab shutdowns later this month was a directive of the National Nuclear Security Administration, Sandia president Paul Hommert told Sandia employees in an open letter Tuesday obtained by the **Journal** and other media.

The NNSA, a branch of the U.S. Department of Energy, oversees the work at both of New Mexico's national labs.

"If a shutdown is needed, programmatic work will not be conducted. Those functions that NNSA directs us to continue will be extremely limited," Hommert said in the letter.

Sandia spokeswoman Heather Clark declined to say how many employees would be furloughed if the Albuquerque-based lab shuts down. Clark also declined to confirm what date a lab shutdown might occur.

At Los Alamos, employees had not yet been notified about how the NNSA-directed shutdown would be carried out. However, Los Alamos already has begun furloughing contract workers, according to a lab official.

A lab statement responding to media questions said: "LANL has now reached the point where we need to begin standing down certain operations where there is no longer funding available to maintain full operations. Protecting special nuclear material, national security information, workers, the public and the environment remains an essential function."

At least 290 Los Alamos subcontractors, including workers who process transuranic nuclear waste shipments or work on environmental monitoring projects, were directed by Los Alamos to halt that work, the lab official said. Other Los Alamos employees have been directed to report to work as usual.

As a result of the subcontractor furloughs, shipments of nuclear waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad will stop, the official said.

If a lab shutdown were to take effect at Los Alamos after Oct. 21, an estimated 9,400 of the lab's nearly 10,000 employees would be furloughed, the official said.

The remaining 600 workers would be assigned to protect nuclear material at the lab, manage the lab's computer systems or be prepared to respond to an emergency situation.

In his letter to Sandia employees, Hommert acknowledged "it is conceivable that the congressional impasse will be resolved in the coming days. I recognize the uncertainty and hardship this places on you and your families, and my hope is that, should we experience a shutdown, it is short."

Sandia held an "all-hands" meeting with employees Tuesday afternoon and provided an online address to which employees could submit questions.

News of the planned halt of operations at the New Mexico labs came as House Speaker John Boehner and President Barack Obama dug in their heels deeper in a budget dispute resulting in a federal government shutdown that began Oct. 1.



Although the House adopted a measure on Saturday to ensure government workers who are furloughed can receive back pay, that protection likely would not extend to lab employees who are considered federal contract workers of the labs' independent operators.

Democratic members of New Mexico's congressional delegation, in a letter to Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz on Tuesday, requested that Sandia and Los Alamos lab employees get a special consideration to qualify for back pay if furloughed.

"Due to the tremendous economic uncertainty currently faced by the laboratories' workforce, we urge you to certify as soon as possible that back pay will be allowable upon the restoration of government functions," the letter said. "The employees of our nation's national laboratories deserve to know that they will be fully compensated for their service to our nation."

The letter was signed by Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, and Reps. Michelle Lujan Grisham and Ben Ray Luján.

<http://www.abqjournal.com/277959/news/sandia-lanl-prepare-to-close.html>

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Omaha World-Herald – Omaha, NE

StratCom Deputy Chief Fired as Nation's No. 2 Nuclear Commander

By Steve Liewer, World-Herald staff writer

Thursday, October 10, 2013

President Barack Obama has fired the deputy commander of the Bellevue-based U.S. Strategic Command from his duties after accusations that he passed counterfeit poker chips at a Council Bluffs casino last June, Pentagon officials said Wednesday.

Vice Adm. Timothy Giardina has been reassigned to Navy staff at the Pentagon and will move to Washington, D.C., within the next three weeks, said Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Navy's top spokesman.

Under military rules, the reassignment also means Giardina is being demoted from three-star rank to two.

His attorney, Brian Rhoten, didn't immediately return a call seeking comment.

As StratCom's deputy, Giardina had been the No. 2-ranked official in charge of the Pentagon's nuclear forces since December 2011.

In June, Giardina is believed to have used at least \$1,500 in fake gambling chips while playing poker at the Horseshoe Casino, said Pottawattamie County Attorney Matt Wilber.

Casino employees discovered the counterfeit chips and alerted the Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation.

A month later, the Iowa agency notified StratCom. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service began its own investigation. Iowa wrapped up its probe in late August and decided against filing charges, deferring any criminal action to the military. NCIS investigators are still continuing their work, Kirby said.

Giardina's boss, Gen. C. Robert Kehler, suspended him from oversight of nuclear weapons or any other responsibilities involving classified material Sept. 3 and recommended his dismissal from the position, said Navy Capt. Pamela Kunze, a StratCom spokeswoman. The decision wasn't made public until Sept. 28, in response to a World-Herald query.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel forwarded Kehler's recommendation to the President, who approved it late last week. It took until yesterday to clear administrative hurdles. His new duties haven't been determined yet.

"It's the Navy's (decision) now," said Col. Steve Warren, a Pentagon spokesman. "They'll decide what to do."



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Giardina, 57, is a 1979 graduate of the Naval Academy and career submarine officer. He was deputy commander and chief of staff at the U.S. Pacific Fleet in Honolulu before assuming his duties at StratCom in December 2011. His tour was scheduled to end this year.

The removal of such a high-ranking officer for misconduct is uncommon.

"I know of no other case ever of a deputy commander who was relieved for cause," retired Air Force Gen. Eugene Habiger, who led StratCom from 1996-98, told the Associated Press.

A senior defense official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the dismissal shows the seriousness of the case.

"We hold flag and general officers to a very high standard of conduct and behavior," the official said. "Gen. Kehler clearly decided he had lost confidence in (Giardina's) ability."

<http://www.omaha.com/article/20131009/NEWS/131008617>

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Air Force Global Strike Command – Barksdale, LA

20th Air Force Commander Relieved of Command

By Air Force Global Strike Command Public Affairs

October 11, 2013

10/11/2013 - BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, La. -- Lt. Gen. James Kowalski, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command, relieved Maj. Gen. Michael Carey from command of 20th Air Force today due to a loss of trust and confidence in his leadership and judgment.

Kowalski made his decision based on information from an Inspector General investigation into Carey's behavior during a temporary duty assignment. The allegations are not related to operational readiness or the inspection results of any 20th AF unit, nor do they involve sexual misconduct.

"20th AF continues to execute its mission of around-the-clock nuclear deterrence in a safe, secure and effective manner," Kowalski said. "It's unfortunate that I've had to relieve an officer who's had an otherwise distinctive career spanning 35 years of commendable service."

AFGSC vice commander Maj. Gen. Jack Weinstein has been named the interim 20th AF commander.

Headquartered at F. E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo., 20th AF is responsible for the nation's three intercontinental ballistic missile wings. It has dual responsibilities to AFGSC and U.S. Strategic Command. As the missile Numbered Air Force for AFGSC, 20th AF maintains and operates the nation's ICBM force. Designated as STRATCOM's Task Force 214, the command provides on-alert, combat ready ICBMs to the President.

<http://www.afgsc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123366812>

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World Politics Review

OPINION/Briefing

As Hopes for Nuclear Deal Rise, Iran's Missiles Still Pose Problems

By Bruno Tertrais

09 October 2013

Iran's missile program does not make headlines as often as its nuclear efforts. But the missile program is tied to the nuclear program in two different ways: technically, because Iran has been keen to develop rockets that could carry a nuclear warhead; and legally, because United Nations sanctions against Iran target the missile program almost as much

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as the nuclear one. What would happen to Iran's missiles in the event that a deal can be struck with Tehran regarding its nuclear program remains a largely unexplored issue.

Iran has one of the largest and most diverse active missile programs in the world, developed in cooperation with North Korea and experts from Russia, among other countries. In the past decade, Tehran has experimented with many different technologies, allowing the country to make great strides on the path toward a modern missile capacity. In the early 2000s, it tested the Shahab-III missile with a triconic or baby-bottle top, the ideal shape to carry a nuclear weapon. In the late-2000s, Iran gained mastery of solid propulsion, which makes missiles more reliable and less vulnerable, and of stage separation, a quantum leap that allows for longer-range missiles. If it overcomes technical difficulties, Tehran could develop an intercontinental ballistic missile based on space launch technology perhaps as early as 2015, according to U.S. intelligence, although most observers put the date later.

Iran's ballistic missiles serve several purposes. First comes deterrence and war-fighting. Informed by its experience of the Iran-Iraq War of the mid-1980s, during which the Iranian population paid a high price, and due to its limited conventional means, Iran sought to develop an asymmetric capability to threaten enemy cities and military bases, notably in the Persian Gulf. Second, ballistic missiles are an indispensable component of an efficient nuclear weapons program, hence their inclusion in U.N. sanctions. Third, missile technology can give Iran access to space and the prestige of modernity. The Iranian investment in long-range rockets was recently confirmed by a report according to which Tehran is building a third facility for long-range rocket launchers. Finally there is influence: Iranian short-range missiles and nonballistic rockets are an asset in its assistance to Hezbollah and a means of threatening Israel.

Iran's inventory comprises the older liquid-fueled Shahab series, based on Soviet Scud technology, with the regional-range Shahab-III being the current flagship of Tehran's arsenal. The coming generation of solid-fueled missiles includes the short-range Fateh-110 and the medium-range Sejil, which could reach Israel and Europe. Iran also has Safir and Simorgh space launch vehicles that could be the basis of an intercontinental missile. In all, Iran's arsenal comprises several hundred missiles.

An accord that solved the nuclear issue while leaving Iran's ballistic missile program intact would alleviate many of the international community's concerns but would not put an end to the Iranian military threat.

First, it would leave Iran with the ability to continue to directly threaten Israel's territory and population with short-range missiles and rockets launched from South Lebanon and the Gaza Strip.

Second, both Israel and the Arab Persian Gulf states would also remain vulnerable to Iran's cruise missiles. (Cruise missiles are of lesser nuclear proliferation concern, because they need a very small nuclear warhead, which Iran might not be able to develop on its own.)

Third, such an accord would very likely leave Iran as a virtual nuclear country with medium- and long-range strike capability. Very few countries have both space launchers and a fissile materials production capability but no nuclear weapons. Only two come to mind: Brazil and Japan. It is not a coincidence that both are considered potential nuclear-capable nations. Space rockets and civilian enrichment plants, both of which can be reconfigured for military usage, comprise two of the three components needed for a nuclear weapons program. The third, building a nuclear weapon, would then require an appropriate blueprint, know-how and experimental apparatus. Whether the international community would be content with a Japan-like Iran would depend on its level of confidence in the peaceful nature of Tehran's program.

Even without a nuclear weapons capability, the prospect of an Iran armed only with ballistic missiles is far from reassuring. A recent study demonstrated that "a state armed with ballistic missiles is significantly more likely to initiate an interstate crisis against another state, and that states armed with ballistic missiles are significantly less likely to be the target in an international crisis." It is also not certain that the U.S. Congress would be satisfied with a deal that could leave Iran with the capability to threaten the American homeland, even with nonnuclear means.

There is no easy solution to the Iranian missile problem, and it is doubtful that the international community would press for a strict ban on Iranian missiles if it appeared that an accord on the nuclear program itself was feasible, though it



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would probably insist that Tehran adhere to the Missile Technology Control Regime. Meanwhile, the ballistic missile problem is a reminder that, for all the current excitement about the possibility of an agreement on the nuclear front, Western countries and their allies would still have many reasons to worry about the Iranian regime.

Dr. Bruno Tertrais is a senior research fellow at the Paris-based Fondation pour la Recherche Strategique (Foundation for Strategic Research). He was a member of the 2007 and 2012 presidential commissions on the White Paper on Defense and National Security, as well as the 2008 ministerial commission on the White Paper on Foreign and European Policy.

<http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/articles/13284/as-hopes-for-nuclear-deal-rise-iran-s-missiles-still-pose-problems>

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Al Jazeera America
OPINION/Article

Iran's Nuclear Program: Cause for Concern, but Not Alarm

By Ali Vaez

October 9, 2013

The last time President Hassan Rouhani was in charge of his country's nuclear dossier, Iran struggled to assemble 164 uranium-enrichment centrifuges. That was when Rouhani served as Tehran's chief nuclear negotiator between 2003 and 2005.

Today — despite a decade of sanctions and diplomatic pressure — Iran has more than 18,000 centrifuges. Even so, a nuclear-armed Iran is neither imminent nor inevitable.

Four issues are at the core of international concerns over Tehran's nuclear activities:

Concern 1: Uranium enrichment

Iran's enrichment process is based on using centrifugal force to purify the active isotope in natural uranium. Depending on the level of purity to which it is enriched, the resulting fissile material could either fuel nuclear reactors, be used medically or serve as bomb material. Iran has two main enrichment facilities and refines uranium to two levels. Less than 5 percent is used for reactors to create electricity, and 20 percent used in research reactors to produce medical isotopes.

The country has one nuclear power plant in Bushehr and one research reactor in Tehran. Given that fuel for Bushehr is provided by Russia and the fact that Iran has already enriched enough fuel for the Tehran research reactor, many suspect that Iran's enrichment activities may not have exclusively innocent goals. The absence of a viable economic rationale for domestic enrichment — and the scarcity of uranium in Iran — exacerbates suspicions.

But Iranian leaders contend that eventual expansion of the country's peaceful nuclear program necessitates indigenous nuclear fuel production. If Iran were denied access to nuclear fuel on which it was dependent, it would lose at least \$200 million per year for each idled reactor. Iran's enrichment activities are monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which also safeguards all the nuclear material in the country.

Iran's main enrichment facility is located in Natanz and houses around 15,000 centrifuges. The majority of centrifuges Iran has installed there are the so-called first generation IR-1s. These are based on a 1970's design and are prone to regular mechanical breakdowns. Consequently, Iran has been working on developing more advanced centrifuges.

According to the most recent report from the IAEA, Iran had 1,008 IR-2m installed by Aug. 28, 2013, and planned to install another 2,000 in the next few months. These machines are not yet enriching uranium, but are estimated to be at least three-times more efficient. Iran's second enrichment facility, Fordow, is located under a mountain near the holy city of Qom and is believed to be impervious to an Israeli airstrike. Iran has installed nearly 3,000 IR-1 machines there, but is currently operating only one-third of them.

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Concern 2: Fissile material stockpile

Accumulation of enriched uranium in Iranian facilities is another source of concern, as such material could more rapidly be further refined to reach weapons-grade (above 80 percent). As of Aug. 28, 2013, Iran had 6,774 kilograms of 3.5 percent and 185 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium.

With further enrichment — if Iran expelled inspectors — that stockpile could be turned into material for five nuclear weapons in six months to a year. Iran's accumulation of uranium enriched to 20 percent is particularly worrisome, as that level of enrichment reduces by more than 90 percent the time it would take to turn natural uranium into bomb material.

Tehran, however, has thus far kept the size of its 20 percent stockpile below the red line set last year by Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, which is around 250 kilograms (enough for one bomb if re-enriched). It has done this by oxidizing enriched uranium and converting it into fuel rods for reactors, a process that renders weaponization far more difficult.

Concern 3: Heavy-water reactor

Iran is constructing a heavy-water research reactor in the city of Arak. The reactor uses natural uranium as fuel, but once operational it will produce about 9 kilograms of plutonium every year, which is sufficient for 1.5 bombs. This can open a second path — followed by most nuclear proliferators — towards nuclear weapons.

Separating plutonium from a reactor's spent fuel rods, however, requires a reprocessing facility that Iran neither currently has, nor has demonstrated any intention of building. But this might not matter to Israel, which twice before has attacked suspected reactors in regional countries — in Iraq in 1981 and in Syria in 2007 — before their completion, since striking an operational reactor would prompt an environmental catastrophe.

Concern 4: Past activities

Iran's uranium enrichment program was born in secret through the acquisition of technical drawings, manufacturing instructions and samples of components for centrifuges from the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb and infamous proliferator, AQ Khan.

Iran's construction of undeclared nuclear enrichment and heavy-water facilities was exposed in 2002 by an exiled opposition group, triggering an international crisis.

Nine years later, the IAEA also detailed charges that Tehran had before 2003 experimented with technologies critical for the development of nuclear warheads, warning that some such research work may still be ongoing.

While the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entitles Iran to enrich and stockpile uranium and construct a heavy-water reactor for civilian purposes, at issue is whether Tehran is in compliance with all its responsibilities under Article II of the treaty, which requires to refrain from seeking, or receiving any assistance in, the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Six U.N. Security Council resolutions have demanded that Iran suspend these activities until international confidence is restored in the purely peaceful nature of its program, and a decade of negotiations between Iran and Western powers has thus far failed to resolve the nuclear standoff. So how close is Iran to being able to build nuclear weapons — assuming that is its intention?

Guessing Iran's timeline for attaining nuclear-weapons status has been a popular pastime of analysts, pundits and politicians for almost two decades. But most of these estimates are based on misplaced alarmism, for three main reasons:

Reason 1: International inspections

No state has built nuclear weapons while under scrutiny of in-country IAEA inspectors. In fact, out of the five countries that developed nuclear weapons in the past four decades, four (Pakistan, India, South Africa and Israel) were not



signatories of the NPT and therefore were never under IAEA inspection, while North Korea had expelled the inspectors before testing its nuclear device.

IAEA inspectors visit Iran's nuclear facilities on an almost weekly basis. And time favours the inspectors. Alarmist warnings about Iran reaching "breakout capability — the ability to process low-enriched uranium into weapons grade fissile material — omits the simple fact that if Iran decided to produce weapons-grade uranium, it would have to reconfigure its centrifuge cascades.

That process usually takes between one to two weeks, and will undoubtedly be detected by the IAEA. It is extremely unlikely that Iran could even buy time by delaying the inspectors visit based on fabricated pretexts, given that such action is likely to prompt an international opprobrium and even serve as a *casus belli*.

Iran can't begin producing bomb material without triggering a trip wire that would give the international community several weeks to react before it had created fissile material for a single bomb; and turning such material into a deliverable warhead would take at least a year.

Reason 2: The cost-benefit rationale

A country reaches the military nuclear threshold when it possesses the capacity to manufacture one or more nuclear weapons within weeks. But it defies strategic logic for a country to accept risks of a military confrontation with more powerful adversaries simply in order to develop a single crude nuclear device.

To acquire real nuclear deterrence, Iran would need a deployable nuclear arsenal, not just enough material for one bomb. It would need to test a nuclear device and marry it with an appropriate delivery vehicle. And it is nearly impossible that Iran could reach such a capability in less than a year, without being detected and stopped by the U.S. or Israel.

All previous Iranian efforts to conceal nuclear activities were exposed in their nascent stages. Likewise, it is useful to remember that given America's significant standing capabilities in the region, it would take less than 24 hours for the U.S. to launch military strikes in response to any such Iranian undertaking.

Reason 3: The lack of a political decision

Iranian leaders have pledged to never make nuclear weapons, which they consider a violation of Islam. But more importantly, according to James Clapper, the Director of the U.S. National Intelligence, Iran's leaders have not yet decided to build nuclear weapons. Both the U.S. and Israeli intelligence communities are reasonably confident of their ability to detect such a decision.

In contrast to lack of evidence of any political decision Iran to cross the Nuclear Rubicon, the Iranian government has provided plenty of evidence that it wants a nuclear deal. Besides verbal declarations by its leadership, a number of Iranian decisions in managing nuclear work have been read as signalling a desire to avoid provoking confrontation. For example, Tehran has converted approximately 60 percent of its 20 percent enriched uranium stockpile to uranium oxide, which is less prone to proliferation as its further enrichment requires weeks of chemical processing detectable by the IAEA.

Tehran could also double its enrichment at Fordow by turning on nearly 2,000 centrifuges that it has installed at the facility, but which are not yet operating. The same applies to the IR-2m machines. Iran has also delayed the previously announced completion date (the first quarter of 2014) of the Arak reactor.

Analysts see these moves as signs that Tehran is preparing bargaining chips to negotiate relief from the Western sanctions that have debilitated its economy. As DNI Clapper has assessed, "Iran's nuclear decision-making is guided by a cost-benefit approach, which offers the international community opportunities to influence Tehran."

With 17 declared nuclear facilities and nearly five-decades in the making, Iran's nuclear program is quite extensive. It has also been expensive given the cost of harsh sanctions that the program has incurred. Yet, it has also become a point of national pride as Iran has developed indigenous nuclear know-how.



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That fact alone means that Iran's nuclear program cannot be wished away or bombed away. U.S. military and intelligence chiefs have made clear that the only sustainable solution is one in which Tehran chooses to refrain from building nuclear weapons, under an accord that thickens the barrier between civilian and military nuclear activity in Iran. Such an accord would limit the scale and scope of Iran's nuclear work, enhance the IAEA's monitoring capabilities, and allow Iran to re-join the international community.

Ali Vaez is the senior Iran analyst at the International Crisis Group, having previously headed the Iran project of the Federation of American Scientists in Washington, D.C., focusing on Iran's nuclear and missile programs.

<http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2013/10/9/iran-nuclear-programprimer.html>

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Asia Times Online – Hong Kong, China
OPINION/Speaking Feely

Sarin a Credible Terrorism Risk

By Weimeng Yeo
October 10, 2013

Reports accusing the Assad regime of using sarin gas against rebel forces in Syria have once again raised the concern that chemical weapons can potentially fall into the hands of a terrorist group. This commentary will assess whether such a risk is credible.

Syria's chemical arsenal

Since the civil war in Syria, the Assad regime's chemical weapons program has been the subject of much speculation. While it is still unclear how significant is Syrian's chemical arsenal, many security analysts alleged it is the world's most potent and largest. According to a declassified French intelligence report released in September 2013, the Syrian chemical weapons stockpile is believed to include more than 1,000 tons of agents and precursor chemicals. The report describes Syria's chemical arsenal as "particularly massive and diverse". Included in Syrian's chemical arsenal were large quantities of sulfur mustard, VX toxin as well as several hundreds of tons of sarin, representing the bulk of the Assad's chemical weapons.

Sarin is a colorless and odorless nerve agent that disrupts the nervous system by over-stimulating muscles and vital organs. It is a highly toxic chemical agent that can be inhaled as a gas or absorbed through the skin. In large doses, sarin gas suffocates its victims by paralyzing the muscles around their lungs.

The effectiveness of chemical weapons lies in their ability to cause major terror and disruption. A likely chemical attack would involve the use of a chemical agent such as sarin gas against a major metropolitan area such as a central business district or places with high population density such as a subway system, sports area, or airport. It is most lethal in a closed environment where exposure is the highest. As opposed to biological agents, a chemical attack is more identifiable and immediate steps can be taken to limit the exposure to the deadly agent and mitigate its consequence.

Terrorist groups and CBRN weapons

Terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda and its affiliates have long shown an interest in using such weapons. Many of these groups have attempted to acquire such chemical weapons as part of their chemical, biological, nuclear, and radiological (CBRN) arsenal. Apart from the statements these groups have made about their intention to use such weapons, there is also enough credible information in the last decade to show that al-Qaeda and its affiliates have tried to build their own CBRN development program.

Evidence of al-Qaeda research into chemical agents includes videotapes of tests of nerve gases on dogs and formulae for sarin gas recovered in Afghanistan. Fortunately, most of their research and development effort were lost when the US military forces destroyed al-Qaeda's Afghanistan headquarters and training camps in late 2001.

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Chemical weapons appeal more to religious terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda than to other types of terrorist groups. The logic behind this is that while more "secular" terrorist groups might hesitate to execute a mass casualty attack for fear of alienating their support network, religious terrorist organizations regard such violence as not only morally justified but as expedient to their goals.

The most successful chemical attack to date by a non-state actor was the Tokyo subway sarin attack perpetrated by the Japanese doomsday cult, Aum Shinrikyo on March 20, 1995. The members of Aum Shinrikyo carried six packages of sarin gas on to Tokyo subway trains and punctured the packages with umbrella tips. The attack killed 12 people and injured more than 5,500, many of whom were first responders that had arrive on the scene to assist the injured.

Terrorism risk scenario

Though producing and dispersing large quantities of chemical agent such as sarin is complex and expensive, a determined terrorist organization can obtain such weapons. In Syria, there are two likely situations through which such agents can be acquired. The first is the pilfering of chemical agents from an ammunition depot by Syrian rebels, which include terrorist groups within their fold. Second is the supplying of chemical agents to Hezbollah, a Shiite militant group who are strong allies of the Assad government.

While such scenarios cannot be discounted, such risk stills need to put into perspective. Even with the chemical agents easily available, the technological hurdle involved in perpetrating a mass chemical attack remains significant. Obtaining the chemical agent is merely the first step in the development of a chemical weapon.

A terrorist group still requires the technical expertise in order to "weaponize" and deploy the agent to its target. Information discerned from various jihadist publication posted online clearly illustrate that such groups are still very weak in technical acumen when it comes down to actually assemble and construct such chemical weapons. Instead, these publications merely focus on simple poisons and the possibilities of terrorist attacks on industrial infrastructure that may cause a chemical or radiological contamination.

Supplying chemical weapons to a terrorist group by a state entity, as is in the case of providing a chemical weapon to Hezbollah, would be of greater concern and risk. However, it is unlikely that national governments would supply chemical weapons to such terrorist groups, as the government would not have complete control over the terrorists' use of such potent weapons. While Hezbollah enjoys significant autonomy, it operates firmly within the strategic influence of their Iranian patrons. In addition, giving a terrorist group a chemical agent to orchestrate a mass casualty attack exposes the donor state to a massive retaliation once the operation is executed. Similarly, just as states will not provide CBRN agents to any terrorist organization, they are highly unlikely to sell them either.

In conclusion, the threat of Assad's chemical arsenal falling into the hands of a terrorist group is a cause of concern, but the risk remains limited due to the complexity of implementing and using such weapons, and the unwillingness of countries to supply them to terrorist groups.

Weimeng Yeo is a lead modeler on the Model Development team at Risk Management Solutions (RMS), and is a key member of the team responsible for the development of RMS' terrorism modeling solutions. Prior to his tenure at RMS, Weimeng worked at the International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research at the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies in Singapore. He received his bachelor's degree in Political Science from Colby College in Maine and a Master's degree in International Affairs from Georgetown University in Washington DC at the School of Foreign Service.

http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/MID-01-101013.html

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