



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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Articles & Other Documents:

Featured Article: [U.S. Knew Russia Violated Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty](#)

1. [Rouhani, Khamenei Hail Deal, Say Tehran "Will Never Seek Atomic Weapons"](#)
2. [Iran Nuclear Agreement a 'Historic Mistake,' Netanyahu says](#)
3. [Iran Agrees to Curb Nuclear Activity at Geneva Talks](#)
4. [Ottawa 'Deeply Skeptical' about Iran Nuclear Agreement](#)
5. [Kerry: 'Verification is the Key' in Iran Nuclear Deal](#)
6. [AEOI Chief: Structure of Iran's N. Program Unaffected by Geneva Deal](#)
7. [Poll: 75 Percent of Israelis Believe Iran is still after Nuclear Weapon](#)
8. [Iran Strongly Rejects Text of Geneva Agreement Released by White House](#)
9. [Speaker: Success of Geneva Agreement Depends on Removal of All Oppressive Sanctions](#)
10. [Riyadh: Deal First Step to End Iranian Nuclear Plan](#)
11. [Speaker: No Need to West's Permission, Iran Continues Enrichment](#)
12. [Kerry to Congress: If Nuclear Deal Sours, Iran will 'Quickly' Face Heightened Sanctions](#)
13. [N. Korea Slams U.S. for laying out 'Absurd Preconditions' for Nuclear Talks Resumption](#)
14. [Iran, North Korea Secretly Developing New Long-Range Rocket Booster for ICBMs](#)
15. [China Prefers Stability than Denuclearization of N. Korea: Expert](#)
16. [U.S. Sends B-52s on Mission to Challenge Chinese Claims](#)
17. [Nuclear-Capable Dhanush Missile Successfully Test-Fired](#)
18. [Lavrov: No Need for European Missile Defense Shield if Iran Deal a Success](#)
19. [Russia Denies Plans to Place Strategic Bombers in Kyrgyzstan](#)
20. [Pentagon Makes Costly Foray into Biodefense Drug Business](#)
21. [A Test for U.S. Nuclear Weapons: Can They Beat the Sequester?](#)
22. [U.S. Knew Russia Violated Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty](#)
23. [Pentagon: No Decision yet on ICBM Future](#)
24. [Iran's Nuclear Triumph](#)
25. [SPALDING: Maintaining a Credible Nuclear Deterrence](#)
26. [Editorial: China Should Stop its Provocative Acts](#)
27. [Nonproliferation Treaty's Flaws are Evident in Iran Dispute](#)

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Issue No.1092, 27 November 2013

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Al Bawaba – Amman, Jordan

Rouhani, Khamenei Hail Deal, Say Tehran "Will Never Seek Atomic Weapons"

Via SyndiGate.info

November 24th, 2013

Iranian President Rouhani has said that the deal reached between Tehran and world powers on Sunday seals Tehran's "nuclear rights."

The remarks come just hours after Iranian envoys and world powers reached a first-step accord in Geneva aimed at easing Western concerns that Tehran could one day seek nuclear weapons.

Speaking at a nationally broadcast news conference, Rouhani added that the success of talks so far was due to "guidelines offered" by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and added that talks on a comprehensive agreement will start immediately.

Meanwhile, Khamenei has hailed the nuclear deal, according to Agence France-Presse.

Rouhani reiterated his statement that Iran would "never" seek atomic weapons, something the West and Israel accuse Iran of gearing its nuclear program towards.

His statements were made after Iran and six world powers reached a deal which will curb Tehran's nuclear program in exchange for limited sanctions relief.

The landmark deal sees Iran committed to halt uranium enrichment above purities of five percent in exchange for some \$7 billion in sanctions relief.

"It is a good step forward exemplifying a win-win situation for both sides," said Dr. Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, author of "On the Arab Revolts and the Iranian Revolution: Power and resistance today" and director of the London-based Center for Iranian Studies.

"The United States and its allies managed to limit Iran's sensitive enrichment activity and enhance access to the country's sprawling nuclear infrastructure. Iran, on the other side, will benefit from sanctions relief, in particular with regard to its petrochemical and car industry," Adib-Moghaddam told Al Arabiya News.

"Several factors played role in reaching this deal," added Majid Rafizadeh, president of the International American Council, to Al Arabiya News.

Firstly, "the Obama administration's political anxiety, apprehension and reluctance to consider the alternatives, including a tougher position on Iran with a military option before Iran becomes a nuclear power possibly within the year."

Coupled with Iran's staggering economy, a deal was ripe for the picking, according to Rafizadeh.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said Sunday: "This is a bad agreement that gives Iran what it wanted: The partial lifting of sanctions while maintaining an essential part of its nuclear program," according to AFP.

"Iran is threatening Israel and Israel has the right to defend itself," added Israel's Economy Minister Naftali Bennet to a military radio station, in comments carried by AFP.

"Israeli leaders believe that the deal has granted the Iranian authorities the required time to achieve the nuclear breakaway capacity and bomb-grade nuclear materials," commented Rafizadeh.

"It is also believed that Iranian leaders will view this deal as a free hand and green light to pursue their hegemonic agenda and ambitions in the region as well as to consolidate their power and influence in Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, and be further capable of militarily and economically funding their proxies including Hezbollah," he added.

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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"This first step, I want to emphasize, actually rolls back the program from where it is today, enlarges the breakout time, which would not have occurred unless this agreement existed. It will make our partners in the region safer. It will make our ally Israel safer," Kerry was quoted as saying by AFP.

Kerry also said Netanyahu - "a friend of mine" - had been kept well-informed of the talks, which kicked off on Wednesday.

"I talk to him several times a week," he said. "I talked to him in the last day about this very issue."

Any differences between the United States and Israel on the issue were simply a matter of "judgment" and "calculation," Kerry insisted.

"There is no difference whatsoever between the US and Israel of what the end goal is - that Iran will not have a nuclear weapon," he added.

The possibility of Iran acquiring such a capability forms the basis of Israeli concern on Tehran's nuclear program.

Israel has long insisted on the need for a convincing military threat and setting clear lines beyond which Iran's nuclear activity should not advance.

In July, Netanyahu said: "I think it's important to note that we (Israel) can't allow it to happen. Our clocks are ticking at a different pace. We're closer than the United States, we're more vulnerable, and therefore we'll have to address this question of whether to stop Iran before the United States does," in comments carried by Reuters.

"Since its inception in 1948, the idea of Israel has been heavily imbued with Angst and a sense of insecurity," said Adib-Moghaddam, referring to Israel's sour response to the news of the deal.

"Iran is merely a chapter in this long history of regional confrontation."

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/iran-nuclear-535846>

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

The Times of Israel – Israel

Iran Nuclear Agreement a 'Historic Mistake,' Netanyahu says

Prime minister promises that Israel will stop nuclear weapons program; President Peres says pact to be judged by results, not words; ministers lambaste agreement

By Lazar Berman

November 24, 2013

The nuclear deal reached between Iran and six world powers early Sunday morning was "a historic mistake," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday, excoriating the agreement and vowing to keep Tehran from getting a nuclear weapon.

"What was accomplished last night in Geneva is not a historic agreement; it's a historic mistake," Netanyahu said at the start of Sunday morning's weekly cabinet meeting. "Today the world has become much more dangerous, because the most dangerous regime in the world took a meaningful step toward acquiring the most dangerous weapon in the world."

Netanyahu's remarks came just hours after Iranian delegates and world powers reached a first-step accord in Geneva aimed at easing Western concerns that Tehran could one day attain nuclear weapons.

"For the first time the world's leading powers agreed to the enrichment of uranium in Iran, while ignoring the Security Council resolutions that they themselves championed," the prime minister said. "These sanctions have been removed for cosmetic Iranian concessions that can be canceled in weeks. This agreement and what it means threaten many countries, and including, of course, Israel. Israel is not bound by this agreement. The regime in Iran is committed to Israel's destruction and Israel has the right and responsibility to defend itself, by itself, against any threat."

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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He added that Israel would not allow Iran to develop nuclear weapons.

Netanyahu was expected to speak by phone with US President Barack Obama later in the day, Reuters reported.

Netanyahu has been vocal on the world stage in his criticism of a deal with Iran.

In his UN General Assembly speech in September, Netanyahu blasted Iranian President Hassan Rouhani as a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” and warned the US against mistaking a change in Iran’s tone with an actual change in nuclear ambitions. The Israeli leader subsequently denounced the potential nuclear agreement as the “deal of the century” for Iran.

President Shimon Peres released a less fiery statement Sunday saying that Israel prefers diplomacy but the deal “will be judged by results, not by words.”

Addressing the Iranian people, Peres said, “You are not our enemies and we are not yours. There is a possibility to solve this issue diplomatically. It is in your hands. Reject terrorism. Stop the nuclear program. Stop the development of long-range missiles. Israel like others in the international community prefers a diplomatic solution.”

“The international community will not tolerate a nuclear Iran,” Peres concluded. “And if the diplomatic path fails, the nuclear option will be prevented by other means. The alternative is far worse.”

The deal limits continued Iranian enrichment of uranium to 5 percent in exchange for eased sanctions.

A White House official said the deal included an agreement that Iran would halt progress on its nuclear program, including a plutonium reactor at the Arak facility. The deal also calls on Iran to neutralize its 20-percent-enriched uranium stockpiles. Tehran has also agreed to intrusive inspections under the terms of the deal.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, who joined the final negotiations along with the foreign ministers of Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany, said the pact will make US allies in the Middle East, including Israel, safer by reducing the threat of war.

Netanyahu’s words came after a morning which saw a bevy of Israeli ministers criticize the deal, with only a handful of lawmakers backing it.

Foreign Minister Avigdor Liberman said the agreement had created a “new reality in the whole Middle East, including the Saudis.”

When asked if this would lead to an Israeli military strike on Iran, Liberman said Israel “would need to make different decisions.”

Home Front Command Minister Gilad Erdan told Army Radio that it would now be more difficult for Israel to act for the duration of the six-month agreement.

Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz, who is responsible for monitoring Iran’s nuclear program, said there was no reason for the world to be celebrating. He said the deal, reached in Geneva early Sunday, is based on “Iranian deception and [Western] self-delusion.”

“Just like the failed deal with North Korea, the current deal can actually bring Iran closer to the bomb,” Steinitz said. “Israel cannot take part in the international celebrations based on Iranian deception and self-delusion.”

MK Reuven Rivlin (Likud) wrote on Facebook that American attempts to calm Israel would only worry him more.

“There is no doubt that the agreement exposes differences, not just tactical but also strategic, between us and between the West and the US.”

Economics Minister Naftali Bennett called the deal “bad, very bad.”



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"If a nuclear suitcase blows up five years from now in New York or Madrid, it will be because of the deal that was signed this morning," he said on Facebook. "There is still a long campaign ahead of us. We will continue to act in every possible way."

Finance Minister Yair Lapid panned the interim agreement and said Israel would have to work to make sure a final deal had better terms.

"This is a bad deal that does not bring even one centrifuge to a halt. I am worried not only over the deal, but that we have lost the world's attention."

"Those that support this agreement only say one good thing about it, and that's that we win time en route to a final agreement," Deputy Foreign Minister Zeev Elkin told Channel 2 TV. "Our main activity is now directed at a very clear destination — what will be in the final agreement."

Labor MK Omer Bar-Lev was one of the few Israeli voices to back the deal, saying it entails significant impediments to Tehran's race to nuclear weapons and is far preferable to a military confrontation.

"Considering the achievements such as the dismantling of [Iran's] stockpile of uranium enriched to 20 percent, reducing the number of centrifuges, halting construction of the heavy water facility [in Arak], all the while sanctions of Iranian oil and banking industries continue, compared to the alternative of a military strike at this point it is clear that the agreement reached is far superior," he said.

Times of Israel staff and AP contributed to this report.

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-nuclear-agreement-a-historic-mistake-prime-minister-says/>

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

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

24 November 2013

Iran Agrees to Curb Nuclear Activity at Geneva Talks

Iran has agreed to curb some of its nuclear activities in return for about \$7bn (£4.3bn) in sanctions relief, after days of intense talks in Geneva.

The deal will last for six months, while a permanent agreement is sought.

US President Barack Obama welcomed the deal, saying it would "help prevent Iran from building a nuclear weapon".

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Iran's right to uranium enrichment had been recognised. Israel, however, said the agreement was a "historic mistake".

World powers suspect Iran's nuclear programme is secretly aiming at developing a nuclear bomb - a charge Iran has consistently denied.

In a nationwide broadcast on Sunday, President Rouhani repeated that his country would never seek a nuclear weapon. He hailed the deal, saying it met one of Iran's fundamental principles.

"No matter what interpretations are given, Iran's right to enrichment has been recognised," he said.

Iran agreed to halt enrichment to medium-grade (20%) purity, which can be further enriched to weapons-grade level relatively easily, and give better access to UN inspectors.

Tehran insists it must be allowed to enrich uranium to use in power stations.

The deal comes just months after Iran elected Mr Rouhani - regarded as a relative moderate - as its new president, succeeding the hardline Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.



It has also been backed by Iran's Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has the final say in nuclear matters.

After four days of negotiations, representatives of the so-called P5+1 group of nations - the US, the UK, Russia, China, France and Germany - reached the agreement with Iran in the early hours of Sunday.

Key points of the deal have been released by the White House:

- Iran will stop enriching uranium beyond 5%, and "neutralise" its stockpile of uranium enriched beyond this point
- Iran will give greater access to inspectors including daily access at Natanz and Fordo nuclear sites
- There will be no further development of the Arak plant which it is believed could produce plutonium
- In return, there will be no new nuclear-related sanctions for six months if Iran sticks by the accord
- Iran will also receive sanctions relief worth about \$7bn (£4.3bn) on sectors including precious metals

US Secretary of State John Kerry said the agreement would make the region safer for its allies, including Israel.

But the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told his cabinet it was a "historic mistake" and that his country reserved the right to defend itself.

"Today the world became a much more dangerous place because the most dangerous regime in the world made a significant step in obtaining the most dangerous weapons in the world," he said.

At a later news conference, Mr Netanyahu said Israel would not be bound by the agreement.

"We cannot and will not allow a regime that calls for the destruction of Israel to obtain the means to achieve this goal.

"Israel has many friends and allies, but when they're mistaken, it's my duty to speak out."

Secret talks

The Israeli comments came as it was revealed that the US and Iran had held a series of face-to-face talks in recent months that paved the way for the agreement but were kept secret even from their allies.

At least five meetings, involving Deputy Secretary of State William Burns, Vice President Joe Biden's senior foreign policy adviser Jake Sullivan and Iranian officials, began in March at undisclosed locations, including the Gulf state of Oman, according to the Associated Press news agency.

The final four meetings were held after President Rouhani was elected in August. The talks were personally authorised by President Obama, AP reports quoting senior US administration officials.

The officials told AP they were "convinced that the outreach had the blessing of Ayatollah Khamenei".

Oman's Sultan Qaboos played a key role after offering himself as a mediator, according to AP.

'Enrichment continues'

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the agreement was an opportunity for the "removal of any doubts about the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme".

But he insisted that Iran had not given up its right to enrich uranium.

"We believe that the current agreement, the current plan of action as we call it, in two distinct places has a very clear reference to the fact that Iranian enrichment programme will continue and will be a part of any agreement, now and in the future," he said.

The US denied any such right had been conceded, while UK Foreign Secretary William Hague said the agreement was "good news for the whole world".

But Mr Obama warned that if Iran fail to keep its commitments, "we will turn off the relief and ratchet up the pressure".



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This deal may be the most significant agreement between the world powers and Iran for a decade, says the BBC's James Reynolds in Geneva.

In this latest round of talks, negotiators had been working since Wednesday to reach an agreement that was acceptable to both sides.

It became clear that a breakthrough had been made in Geneva shortly before 03:00 local time (02:00 GMT) on Sunday.

In further reaction, President Vladimir Putin of Russia said he looked forward to a more comprehensive agreement.

"What is done is a breakthrough but it is merely the first step on a long and difficult road," he said in a statement.

"In conjunction with our partners we are ready to continue the patient search for a mutually-acceptable, broader and comprehensive solution that upholds Iran's inalienable right to develop a peaceful nuclear programme."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-25074729>

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

The Toronto Star – Toronto, Canada

Ottawa 'Deeply Skeptical' about Iran Nuclear Agreement

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird appeared to take a stronger stance on the newly brokered deal than the United States and other allies, saying Canada would be watching Iran closely over the coming weeks and months.

The Canadian Press

Sunday, November 24, 2013

OTTAWA—The Canadian government was "deeply skeptical" on Sunday of Iran's agreement to temporarily freeze its nuclear program, saying Ottawa's sanctions against the regime would remain firmly in place until the new deal's words turned into actions.

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird appeared to take a stronger stance on the newly brokered deal than the United States and other allies, saying Canada would be watching Iran closely over the coming weeks and months.

"We have made-in-Canada foreign policy," he told reporters on Sunday.

"We think past actions best predict future actions. And Iran has defied the United Nations Security Council, it has defied the International Atomic Energy Agency. Simply put Iran has not earned the right to have the benefit of the doubt."

The agreement reached in Geneva during talks between Iran, the U.S. and five other world powers commits Tehran to curb its nuclear activities in exchange for limited and gradual relief from crippling economic sanctions.

The U.S. said the deal was key to preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear threat, with President Barack Obama saying the agreement "cut off Iran's most likely paths to a bomb." Israel, however, condemned the agreement as a "historic mistake."

In Ottawa, Baird took a guarded approach.

"We're deeply skeptical of Iran and its ability to honour its obligations," he said.

Baird added that Canada believes "every diplomatic measure" should be taken to ensure that Iran never obtains a nuclear weapon.

"A nuclear Iran is not just a threat to Canada, or its allies," he said. "It would also seriously damage the integrity of decades of work for nuclear non-proliferation. It would provoke other neighbouring states to develop their own nuclear deterrent."

While Baird commended those who negotiated the deal with Iran, he emphasized that Canadian sanctions remained firmly in place.

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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"Effective sanctions have brought the regime to present a more moderate front and open the door to negotiations," he said. "The Iranian people deserve the freedom and prosperity that they have been denied for all too long by the regime's nuclear ambitions. Until then Canadian sanctions will remain tough and will remain in full force."

Sunday's agreement is the first stage of what is hoped to bring about a final deal ensuring that Iran does not develop a nuclear weapon.

Under the deal, Iran will curb many of its nuclear activities for six months in exchange for limited relief from economic sanctions. The six-month period will give diplomats time to negotiate a more sweeping agreement.

The deal includes freezing Iran's ability to enrich uranium at a maximum five per cent level, which is well below the threshold for weapons-grade material and is aimed at easing Western concerns that Tehran could one day seek nuclear arms. International monitors will oversee Iran's compliance.

A White House statement said "key oil, banking, and financial sanctions architecture" against Iran remains in place. And it warned that any sanctions relief will be revoked and new penalties enacted if Iran fails to meet its commitments.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry had joined forces with foreign ministers of the nations negotiating with Iran to push the deal through early Sunday, as the talks entered their fifth day. Kerry said the first-step deal will make Israel — an arch enemy of Iran — safer.

But Israeli Intelligence Minister Yuval Steinitz, who is responsible for monitoring Iran's nuclear program, said there is no reason for the world to be celebrating. He said the deal reached in Geneva is based on "Iranian deception and self-delusion."

http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2013/11/24/ottawa_deeply_skeptical_about_iran_nuclear_agreement.html

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

USA TODAY.com

Kerry: 'Verification is the Key' in Iran Nuclear Deal

Congressional critics have expressed skepticism about Iran's trustworthiness

By David Jackson, USA TODAY

November 24, 2013

A final nuclear deal with Iran is "not a question of trust," Secretary of State John Kerry said Sunday, but of verification that the Iranians are giving up on the prospect of nuclear weapons.

Kerry spoke as the negotiators who crafted a six-month deal with Iran over the weekend exulted while Israel, Persian Gulf states and members of Congress criticized the accord for giving Iran too much.

Kerry hit Sunday morning talk shows across the dial Sunday, telling audiences that without verification, there can be no real deal. Appearing on CNN's *State of the Union*, Kerry said, "Verification is the key," adding that the United States enters into more negotiations with Iran "with eyes absolutely wide open. We have no illusions."

Said Kerry: "We're trying to set up a process by which we can verify, know what we're doing, restraining the program while we negotiate the comprehensive deal."

Six world powers reached an interim agreement late Saturday night with Iran on its disputed nuclear program after four days of talks in Geneva.

In the six-month interim deal, Iran agreed to limit nuclear activities in return for relief of up to \$7 billion in sanctions that have hurt its economy.

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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"Israel and the United States absolutely share the same goal here," Kerry said on ABC's *This Week*. "There is no daylight between us with respect to what we want to achieve, at this point. We both want to make it certain Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon. And Iran cannot be in a place where they can break out and suddenly get that nuclear weapon."

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denounced the agreement, calling it "a historic mistake."

"Today the world became a much more dangerous place because the most dangerous regime in the world made a significant step in obtaining the most dangerous weapons in the world," Netanyahu said.

President Obama called Netanyahu Sunday afternoon and reassured him the United States would keep Israel up to date with developments. "Consistent with our commitment to consult closely with our Israeli friends, the President told the Prime Minister that he wants the United States and Israel to begin consultations immediately regarding our efforts to negotiate a comprehensive solution," a White House announcement on the call said.

Both Kerry and Obama have called on Congress to forgo additional sanctions on Iran, saying they could kill the interim agreement — but some lawmakers have indicated they will push forward anyway, expressing skepticism about Iran's trustworthiness.

One prominent Democrat — Sen. Charles Schumer of New York — said the deal "does not seem proportional" because "Iran simply freezes its nuclear capabilities while we reduce the sanctions."

The "disproportionality" of the deal "makes it more likely that Democrats and Republicans will join together and pass additional sanctions when we return in December," Schumer said.

Obama, however, can veto any additional sanctions if they pass Congress.

Republicans like Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina have also criticized the agreement.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said the agreement should be given a chance to work, saying that "the initial six-month framework gives us a chance to test Iranian intentions before reaching a more comprehensive agreement to prevent a nuclear Iran."

Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., issued a brief statement: "It is a choice between a pause or imminent war. I choose a verifiable pause."

Over in the House, Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the interim agreement should have forced Iran to give up nuclear enrichment now. He called the agreement "disappointing" during an appearance on CNN.

"I do think sanctions should always be hanging there, because that's what brought Iran to the table in the first place," Engel said. "And I don't think you make them bargain a good faith by going squishy."

Rep. Ed Royce, R-Calif., the committee chairman, denounced the agreement, telling CNN's *State of the Union* that Iran is "a state sponsor of terrorism trying to get a bomb."

Iran says its enrichment program is designed to generate energy for peaceful domestic purposes.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2013/11/24/iran-nuclear-deal-kerry/3691009/>

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

FARS News Agency – Iran
Monday, November 25, 2013

AEOI Chief: Structure of Iran's N. Program Unaffected by Geneva Deal

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TEHRAN (FNA) - Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi stressed that the recent deal signed by Iran and the six world powers in Geneva has not harmed the structure or system of Tehran's nuclear program, but cracked the structure of the US-led western sanctions imposed against Iran.

"The organization and structure of our nuclear program has remained unaffected and the structure of the sanction cracked in the recent talks," Salehi said on Monday.

"We are due to avoid 20-percent uranium enrichment in the coming six months, but our five percent grade uranium enrichment will not be lowered and will rather grow," said Salehi, a former foreign minister.

The AEOI chief underlined that the Group 5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) countries bowed to Iran in the Geneva 3 talks. "They came to the conclusion that confronting Iran is of no use and they should interact with this country."

Salehi stressed that the agreement reached in Geneva is a beginning to an end.

"We have not lost anything, but we have only taken up to stop 20 percent uranium enrichment," the AEOI chief said, adding, "It is like a tap that we turn off and if they do not fulfill their undertakings, we will turn it on again."

Earlier today, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif underlined that Tehran will keep its eyes wide-open to see if the Group 5+1 complies with the terms of the agreement the two sides signed in Geneva on Sunday.

Addressing a ceremony in the AEOI in Tehran on Monday, Zarif pointed to the success of the country's negotiating team in the Geneva talks with the six world powers (the US, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany), and said, "Negotiations do not mean blind trust and we will do our best to reach a final solution because we shouldn't lose this opportunity."

The Iranian foreign minister pointed to Israel's animosity with Iran and fury of the Israeli leader over the victory of Iran's diplomacy in Geneva talks, and said, "In these negotiations we want to build the trust of the world in the fact that we are not after nuclear weapons; so why have the enemies been terrified in such a way and why are they crying out?"

Iran and the G5+1 reached a final deal on Sunday morning after days of hard work and intensive negotiations.

After endorsing the agreement with the world powers, Zarif underlined that the six world powers have recognized Iran's enrichment program.

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva on Sunday morning, the Iranian foreign minister pointed to the agreement reached between Iran and the G5+1, and said, "Today's agreement deals with several sectors, the most important of which is that Iran's enrichment program has been recognized, and this program will continue."

Zarif underlined that the Iranian nation wants the opposite side to show respect for its rights, and said, "We need to remove the historical lack of confidence and the West should also be able to win the Iranian nation's confidence."

Zarif called on the West to discard its catch-phrase "the military option is on the table", and said, "The right to own nuclear energy is among the rights of all countries and the international rules approve of this right. Governments cannot threaten other countries only on the basis of their own decisions."

"Iran is entitled to make use of its rights, and other countries should not threaten it because of its pursuit of its rights."

He reiterated that other countries should avoid threatening Iran only because is demanding its rights, and said, "We respect our rights and the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) members should know that they should not exert pressure on Iran and this agreement that has just been signed mentions that Iran is fully entitled to the right of enrichment and it will never quit its rights in the future."

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920904001574>

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



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Al Bawaba – Amman, Jordan

Poll: 75 Percent of Israelis Believe Iran is still after Nuclear Weapon

Via SyndiGate.info

November 25th, 2013

More than three-quarters of Israeli Jews believe Iran will continue working towards a nuclear weapon despite Sunday's deal made in Geneva between Tehran and world powers that will curb its atomic activities, a poll published Monday said.

Some 76.4 percent of respondents answered "no" to the question "do you think Iran will now stop its nuclear program?" with the remainder unsure or replying "yes," according to Agence France Presse.

The survey, conducted by daily Israel Hayom, took answers from 500 people but excluded Arab Israelis who make up some 20 percent of the population, AFP reported.

According to the poll, nearly 58 percent of those polled said that by making a deal with Tehran, Washington had "harmed Israeli interests," AFP said.

On Sunday, Iran agreed to curb its nuclear program for the next six months in exchange for some of the strict sanctions placed on the Islamic by the West being lifted. The agreement was made after intensive talks were held in Geneva between the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.

In addition, the Israel Hayom poll indicated that there is public division over whether Israel should carry out preemptive military action against Iran - 45.8 percent answered that the Knesset should act, whilst 37.9 percent did not back the action.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday reiterated that Israel reserved the right to strike Iran by itself to prevent it gaining nuclear weapons capability, AFP reported.

The poll's error margin was 4.4 percent.

<http://www.albawaba.com/news/israel-iran-nuclear-weapons-536144>

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

FARS News Agency - Iran

Tuesday, November 26, 2013

Iran Strongly Rejects Text of Geneva Agreement Released by White House

TEHRAN (FNA) - The Iranian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday called invalid a press release by the White House alleged to be the text of the nuclear agreement struck by Iran and the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany) in Geneva on Sunday.

"What has been released by the website of the White House as a fact sheet is a one-sided interpretation of the agreed text in Geneva and some of the explanations and words in the sheet contradict the text of the Joint Plan of Action (the title of the Iran-powers deal), and this fact sheet has unfortunately been translated and released in the name of the Geneva agreement by certain media, which is not true," Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Marziyeh Afkham said on Tuesday.

She said that the four-page text under the name of the Joint Plan of Action (which has been released by the Iranian foreign ministry) was the result of the agreement reached during the Geneva talks and all of its sentences and words were chosen based on the considerations of all parties to the talks. In fact one of the reasons why negotiations between Iran and the G5+1 took so long pertained to the accuracy which was needed for choosing the words for the text of the

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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agreement, Afkham said, explaining that the Iranian delegation was much rigid and laid much emphasis on the need for this accuracy.

Afkham said that the text of the Joint Plan of Action was provided to the media a few hours after the two sides agreed on it.

After the White House released a modified version of the deal struck by Iran and the six world powers in Geneva early Sunday morning, the Iranian Foreign Ministry released the text of the agreement.

The full text of the deal is as follows:

Geneva, 24 November 2013

Joint Plan of Action

Preamble

The goal for these negotiations is to reach a mutually-agreed long-term comprehensive solution that would ensure Iran's nuclear programme will be exclusively peaceful. Iran reaffirms that under no circumstances will Iran ever seek or develop any nuclear weapons. This comprehensive solution would build on these initial measures and result in a final step for a period to be agreed upon and the resolution of concerns. This comprehensive solution would enable Iran to fully enjoy its right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes under the relevant articles of the NPT in conformity with its obligations therein. This comprehensive solution would involve a mutually defined enrichment programme with practical limits and transparency measures to ensure the peaceful nature of the programme. This comprehensive solution would constitute an integrated whole where nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. This comprehensive solution would involve a reciprocal, step-by-step process, and would produce the comprehensive lifting of all UN Security Council sanctions, as well as multilateral and national sanctions related to Iran's nuclear programme.

There would be additional steps in between the initial measures and the final step, including, among other things, addressing the UN Security Council resolutions, with a view toward bringing to a satisfactory conclusion the UN Security Council's consideration of this matter. The E3+3 and Iran will be responsible for conclusion and implementation of mutual near-term measures and the comprehensive solution in good faith. A Joint Commission of E3/EU+3 and Iran will be established to monitor the implementation of the near-term measures and address issues that may arise, with the IAEA responsible for verification of nuclear-related measures. The Joint Commission will work with the IAEA to facilitate resolution of past and present issues of concern.

Elements of a first step The first step would be time-bound, with a duration of 6 months, and renewable by mutual consent, during which all parties will work to maintain a constructive atmosphere for negotiations in good faith. Iran would undertake the following voluntary measures:

- From the existing uranium enriched to 20%, retain half as working stock of 20% oxide for fabrication of fuel for the TRR. Dilute the remaining 20% UF₆ to no more than 5%. No reconversion line.
- Iran announces that it will not enrich uranium over 5% for the duration of the 6 months.
- Iran announces that it will not make any further advances of its activities at the Natanz Fuel Enrichment Plant¹, Fordow², or the Arak reactor³, designated by the IAEA as IR-40.
- Beginning when the line for conversion of UF₆ enriched up to 5% to UO₂ is ready, Iran has decided to convert to oxide UF₆ newly enriched up to 5% during the 6 month period, as provided in the operational schedule of the conversion plant declared to the IAEA.
- No new locations for the enrichment.
- Iran will continue its safeguarded R&D practices, including its current enrichment R&D practices, which are not designed for accumulation of the enriched uranium.



- No reprocessing or construction of a facility capable of reprocessing.
- Enhanced monitoring:
 - o Provision of specified information to the IAEA, including information on Iran's plans for nuclear facilities, a description of each building on each nuclear site, a description of the scale of operations for each location engaged in specified nuclear activities, information on uranium mines and mills, and information on source material. This information would be provided within three months of the adoption of these measures.
 - o Submission of an updated DIQ for the reactor at Arak, designated by the IAEA as the IR-40, to the IAEA.
 - o Steps to agree with the IAEA on conclusion of the Safeguards Approach for the reactor at Arak, designated by the IAEA as the IR-40.
 - o Daily IAEA inspector access when inspectors are not present for the purpose of Design Information Verification, Interim Inventory Verification, Physical Inventory Verification, and unannounced inspections, for the purpose of access to offline surveillance records, at Fordow and Natanz.
 - o IAEA inspector managed access to:
 - centrifuge assembly workshops⁴; centrifuge rotor production workshops and storage facilities; and, uranium mines and mills.

Footnotes:

1 Namely, during the 6 months, Iran will not feed UF₆ into the centrifuges installed but not enriching uranium. Not install additional centrifuges. Iran announces that during the first 6 months, it will replace existing centrifuges with centrifuges of the same type.

2 At Fordow, no further enrichment over 5% at 4 cascades now enriching uranium, and not increase enrichment capacity. Not feed UF₆ into the other 12 cascades, which would remain in a non-operative state. No interconnections between cascades.

Iran announces that during the first 6 months, it will replace existing centrifuges with centrifuges of the same type.

3 Iran announces on concerns related to the construction of the reactor at Arak that for 6 months it will not commission the reactor or transfer fuel or heavy water to the reactor site and will not test additional fuel or produce more fuel for the reactor or install remaining components.

4 Consistent with its plans, Iran's centrifuge production during the 6 months will be dedicated to replace damaged machines.

In return, the E3/EU+3 would undertake the following voluntary measures:

- Pause efforts to further reduce Iran's crude oil sales, enabling Iran's current customers to purchase their current average amounts of crude oil. Enable the repatriation of an agreed amount of revenue held abroad. For such oil sales, suspend the EU and U.S. sanctions on associated insurance and transportation services.
- Suspend U.S. and EU sanctions on:
 - o Iran's petrochemical exports, as well as sanctions on associated services.⁵
 - o Gold and precious metals, as well as sanctions on associated services.
- Suspend U.S. sanctions on Iran's auto industry, as well as sanctions on associated services.
- License the supply and installation in Iran of spare parts for safety of flight for Iranian civil aviation and associated services. License safety related inspections and repairs in Iran as well as associated services.⁶



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- No new nuclear-related UN Security Council sanctions.
- No new EU nuclear-related sanctions.
- The U.S. Administration, acting consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Congress, will refrain from imposing new nuclear-related sanctions.
- Establish a financial channel to facilitate humanitarian trade for Iran's domestic needs using Iranian oil revenues held abroad. Humanitarian trade would be defined as transactions involving food and agricultural products, medicine, medical devices, and medical expenses incurred abroad. This channel would involve specified foreign banks and non-designated Iranian banks to be defined when establishing the channel.
 - o This channel could also enable:
 - transactions required to pay Iran's UN obligations; and, direct tuition payments to universities and colleges for Iranian students studying abroad, up to an agreed amount for the six month period.
- Increase the EU authorisation thresholds for transactions for non-sanctioned trade to an agreed amount.

Footnotes

5 "Sanctions on associated services" means any service, such as insurance, transportation, or financial, subject to the underlying U.S. or EU sanctions applicable, insofar as each service is related to the underlying sanction and required to facilitate the desired transactions. These services could involve any non-designated Iranian entities.

6 Sanctions relief could involve any non-designated Iranian airlines as well as Iran Air.

Elements of the final step of a comprehensive solution*

The final step of a comprehensive solution, which the parties aim to conclude negotiating and commence implementing no more than one year after the adoption of this document, would:

- Have a specified long-term duration to be agreed upon.
- Reflect the rights and obligations of parties to the NPT and IAEA Safeguards Agreements.
- Comprehensively lift UN Security Council, multilateral and national nuclear-related sanctions, including steps on access in areas of trade, technology, finance, and energy, on a schedule to be agreed upon.
- Involve a mutually defined enrichment programme with mutually agreed parameters consistent with practical needs, with agreed limits on scope and level of enrichment activities, capacity, where it is carried out, and stocks of enriched uranium, for a period to be agreed upon.
- Fully resolve concerns related to the reactor at Arak, designated by the IAEA as the IR-40.

No reprocessing or construction of a facility capable of reprocessing.

- Fully implement the agreed transparency measures and enhanced monitoring. Ratify and implement the Additional Protocol, consistent with the respective roles of the President and the Majlis (Iranian parliament).
- Include international civil nuclear cooperation, including among others, on acquiring modern light water power and research reactors and associated equipment, and the supply of modern nuclear fuel as well as agreed R&D practices.

Following successful implementation of the final step of the comprehensive solution for its full duration, the Iranian nuclear programme will be treated in the same manner as that of any non-nuclear weapon state party to the NPT.

* With respect to the final step and any steps in between, the standard principle that "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" applies.



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<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920905001087>

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

FARS News Agency – Iran

Tuesday, November 26, 2013

Speaker: Success of Geneva Agreement Depends on Removal of All Oppressive Sanctions

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani underlined that the agreement reached between Iran and the Group 5+1 (the five permanent UN Security Council members plus Germany) will bear its fruit only if the western countries remove all the sanctions imposed against Iran.

"The main outcome of the first step taken in the recent talks (in Geneva) is clearly the continuation of the same move in the next step, this means lifting the oppressive sanctions as mentioned in the outlook for the final step of the document and this is very important," Larijani said on Tuesday.

He reiterated that all member countries of the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) are entitled to uranium enrichment and said this is a right and does not need the approval of the western countries.

The speaker expressed the hope that the Iranian foreign ministry would make more efforts under the auspices of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei, to protect the Iranian nation's rights.

On Monday, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi stressed that the recent deal signed by Iran and the six world powers in Geneva has not harmed the structure or system of Tehran's nuclear program, but cracked the structure of the US-led western sanctions imposed against Iran.

"The organization and structure of our nuclear program has remained unaffected and the structure of the sanction cracked in the recent talks," Salehi said yesterday.

"We are due to avoid 20-percent uranium enrichment in the coming six months, but our five percent grade uranium enrichment will not be lowered and will rather grow," said Salehi, a former foreign minister.

The AEOI chief underlined that the Group 5+1 countries bowed to Iran in the Geneva 3 talks. "They came to the conclusion that confronting Iran is of no use and they should interact with this country."

Salehi stressed that the agreement reached in Geneva is a beginning to an end.

"We have not lost anything, but we have only taken up to stop 20 percent uranium enrichment," the AEOI chief said, adding, "It is like a tap that we turn off and if they do not fulfill their undertakings, we will turn it on again."

Also on Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif underlined that Tehran will keep its eyes wide-open to see if the Group 5+1 complies with the terms of the agreement the two sides signed in Geneva on Sunday.

Addressing a ceremony in the AEOI in Tehran, Zarif pointed to the success of the country's negotiating team in the Geneva talks with the six world powers (the US, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany), and said, "Negotiations do not mean blind trust and we will do our best to reach a final solution because we shouldn't lose this opportunity."

The Iranian foreign minister pointed to Israel's animosity with Iran and fury of the Israeli leader over the victory of Iran's diplomacy in Geneva talks, and said, "In these negotiations we want to build the trust of the world in the fact that we are not after nuclear weapons; so why have the enemies been terrified in such a way and why are they crying out?"

Iran and the G5+1 reached a final deal on Sunday morning after days of hard work and intensive negotiations.

After endorsing the agreement with the world powers, Zarif underlined that the six world powers have recognized Iran's enrichment program.

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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Speaking at a press conference in Geneva on Sunday morning, the Iranian foreign minister pointed to the agreement reached between Iran and the G5+1, and said, "Today's agreement deals with several sectors, the most important of which is that Iran's enrichment program has been recognized, and this program will continue."

Zarif underlined that the Iranian nation wants the opposite side to show respect for its rights, and said, "We need to remove the historical lack of confidence and the West should also be able to win the Iranian nation's confidence."

Zarif called on the West to discard its catch-phrase "the military option is on the table", and said, "The right to own nuclear energy is among the rights of all countries and the international rules approve of this right. Governments cannot threaten other countries only on the basis of their own decisions."

"Iran is entitled to make use of its rights, and other countries should not threaten it because of its pursuit of its rights."

He reiterated that other countries should avoid threatening Iran only because is demanding its rights, and said, "We respect our rights and the non-proliferation treaty (NPT) members should know that they should not exert pressure on Iran and this agreement that has just been signed mentions that Iran is fully entitled to the right of enrichment and it will never quit its rights in the future."

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920905000492>

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

Arab News – Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Riyadh: Deal First Step to End Iranian Nuclear Plan

JEDDAH: ARAB NEWS

Tuesday 26 November 2013

Saudi Arabia on Monday cautiously welcomed the Geneva deal reached between Western powers and Iran, describing it as a possible initial step toward reaching a comprehensive solution to Tehran's controversial nuclear program.

"If there is goodwill, then this agreement could be an initial step toward reaching a comprehensive solution to Iran's nuclear program," the Cabinet said, expressing hope that the accord would also lead to the removal of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, from the Middle East and Arab Gulf region.

It was Saudi Arabia's first official reaction to Sunday's deal. GCC countries had previously expressed unease about the US outreach to Iran, as they generally view any normalizing of ties between Tehran and the West as a direct threat to their own stability.

In a statement issued after the Cabinet meeting, which was chaired by Crown Prince Salman, Saudi Arabia also hoped that the accord would lead to "important steps" that ensure the rights of all countries in the region to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

The Arab League expressed hope that the pact would encourage the international community to take effective steps for making the Middle East free of nuclear and mass destruction weapons. "The international community, especially the permanent members of the UN Security Council should deal with Israeli nuclear arms with the same concern to prevent spread of such weapons," the league said.

Kuwait's Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Khaled Al-Jarallah said he hoped the agreement "would pave the way for a permanent accord that would defuse tension and preserve the stability and security of the region," state news agency KUNA reported.

<http://www.arabnews.com/news/483321>

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

FARS News Agency – Iran

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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Wednesday, November 27, 2013

Speaker: No Need to West's Permission, Iran Continues Enrichment

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani underlined Tehran's right of using peaceful nuclear technology, and said the country is a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and doesn't need the western states' permission to enrich uranium.

"We don't need their (the westerners') permission for enriching uranium because Iran has accepted the NPT's rules and enjoys the rights (stated) in it," Larijani said on Wednesday in an open session of the parliament which hosted Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to brief the lawmakers on the Geneva agreement between Tehran and the Group 5+1 (the US, Russia, China, Britain and France plus Germany).

He referred to the Geneva deal upon which Iran and the G5+1 are due to make certain concessions to settle the long-time standoff over Tehran's nuclear program, and said, "The framework and the structure of Iran's nuclear technology should be fully protected."

On Sunday, Iran and the G5+1 reached a final deal after days of hard work and intensive negotiations.

After endorsing the agreement with the world powers, Zarif underlined that the six world powers have recognized Iran's enrichment program.

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva on Sunday morning, the Iranian foreign minister pointed to the agreement reached between Iran and the G5+1, and said, "Today's agreement deals with several sectors, the most important of which is that Iran's enrichment program has been recognized, and this program will continue."

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920906000868>

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

Jerusalem Post – Israel

Kerry to Congress: If Nuclear Deal Sours, Iran will 'Quickly' Face Heightened Sanctions

US secretary of state delivers video message on interim Iran agreement to American legislators.

By JPOST.COM STAFF

27 November 2013

US Secretary of State John Kerry Tuesday stressed that the effectiveness of the recently-struck deal between Iran and world powers relied on the Islamic Republic's ability to prove its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

Following his diplomatic push in Geneva, Kerry addressed the US Congress in a video message delivered Tuesday about the interim agreement reached over the weekend in Geneva.

"In the end it's really up to Iran to prove that its nuclear program is peaceful," Kerry said in his broadcast. "The whole world has an interest in making sure this is a peaceful program," he added.

While Kerry had firmly reiterated the White House's plea to US legislators against imposing new sanctions on Tehran amid negotiations, he touted the diplomatic route that lead to an initial deal, but warned in his video "We all know that if the agreement falls apart, Iran is going to quickly face even tougher sanctions".

In a nearly eight-minute video outlining the recently-brokered deal on Iran's nuclear program, Kerry explained the details of the agreement, including its omissions, and addressed the science behind the process of creating nuclear weapons.

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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He assured US lawmakers that the historic agreement, aiming to end a decade-old standoff, "doesn't lift the current the architecture of our sanction, our sanctions are basically banking and oil sanctions, and those sanctions will stay in place".

Kerry, in a bid for congressional support of the Iran accord, looked ahead to negotiations over a final agreement restating the Obama administrations' stance that Iran "cannot and will not acquire a nuclear weapon".

<http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Kerry-to-Congress-If-nuclear-deal-sours-Iran-will-quickly-face-heightened-sanctions-333161>

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

The Korea Herald – South Korea

N. Korea Slams U.S. for laying out 'Absurd Preconditions' for Nuclear Talks Resumption

November 26, 2013

North Korea on Tuesday blasted the United States for laying out "absurd preconditions" for the resumption of long-stalled nuclear disarmament talks, saying it will never accept them.

In an interview with the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the spokesman for the North's foreign ministry accused Glyn Davies, the U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, of unreasonably demanding Pyongyang meet its commitments to denuclearize before the six-party talks can resume, while Washington itself had failed to fulfill its obligations.

Visiting South Korea last week as part of his Asian swing, Davies told reporters that the U.S. won't return to the six-party forum without "concrete indications that North Korea is ready to give up its nuclear weapons because that is the primary purpose of the six-party process."

Davies also said, "We are looking for those signs, those strong indications that North Korea is ready to move forward... but so far they are absent."

The North Korean foreign ministry spokesman said Davies' comments proved "that the U.S. remains unchanged in its attitude set to check the resumption of the six-party talks while persisting in absurd preconditions."

"This clearly proved once again that the U.S. has had no interest in the resumption of the six-party talks from the beginning," the spokesman was quoted as saying in the KCNA's English-language report. "The U.S. has not fulfilled the commitments it made at the six-party talks in the past and now rejects the talks by raising the brigandish demand for (North Korea's) unilateral concession first."

The talks, involving the two Koreas, the U.S., Japan, Russia and China, have been dormant since late 2008. The countries have struggled to narrow their differences on preconditions to restart the talks aimed at persuading Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

North Korea has repeatedly rejected the U.S. call to display its commitment to denuclearize.

The foreign ministry spokesman on Tuesday also charged that the U.S. was trying to "shift the blame" to the North for the stalled six-party talks and said the U.S. should "create an atmosphere for denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula by withdrawing its hostile policy toward Pyongyang.

"We want a negotiated settlement of the issue but will never accede to unreasonable preconditions raised by the U.S.," the spokesman added. "(North Korea) remains unchanged in its goal for the denuclearization of the whole of the Korean Peninsula, but it will be compelled to steadily bolster deterrence as long as the U.S. becomes all the more undisguised in pursuing hostile moves and increasing nuclear threats." (Yonhap News)

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131126001082>

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

The Washington Free Beacon – Washington, D.C.

Iran, North Korea Secretly Developing New Long-Range Rocket Booster for ICBMs

Iranian missile group delegation visited Pyongyang as Geneva nuclear talks were underway

By Bill Gertz

November 26, 2013

Iranian missile technicians secretly visited North Korea as part of joint development of a new rocket booster for long-range missiles or space launchers at the same time nuclear talks took place in Geneva, according to U.S. officials.

Several groups of technicians from the Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group (SHIG), a unit in charge of building Iran's liquid-fueled missiles, traveled to Pyongyang during the past several months, including as recently as late October, to work on the new, 80-ton rocket booster being developed by the North Koreans, according to officials familiar with intelligence reports.

The booster is believed by U.S. intelligence agencies to be intended for a new long-range missile or space launch vehicle that could be used to carry nuclear warheads, and could be exported to Iran in the future.

Recent U.S. intelligence assessments have said that both North Korea and Iran are expected to have missiles capable of hitting the United States with a nuclear warhead in the next two years.

The Iranian cooperation reveals that the nuclear framework agreement concluded Sunday in Geneva has not slowed Tehran's drive for missiles that can deliver a nuclear warhead to intercontinental range.

One official described the new booster as a thruster for a "super ICBM" or a heavy-lift space launcher.

"It is completely new from what they have done so far," the official said.

The official said the missile cooperation was disseminated in multiple intelligence reports over the past several months. The official suggested the reports were suppressed within the government by the Obama administration to avoid upsetting the talks in Geneva.

"Why does the administration want so much to negotiate a nuclear agreement with Iran if they know full well that that country is building nuclear delivery vehicles?" the official asked.

State Department and White House National Security Council spokeswomen had no immediate comment. A Defense Intelligence Agency spokeswoman declined to comment.

Additional intelligence reports based on satellite imagery reveal that North Korea is developing a larger missile or space launcher than its previously known rockets. The indications include a launch tower at one facility that is substantially taller than other known towers spotted at North Korean launch sites.

The blog 38 North, part of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, disclosed last month that satellite photos showed an expansion at a North Korean launch site for a larger rocket.

Both North Korea and Iran are believed to be hiding their long-range missile programs, part of space-launcher development, as a way to avoid international sanctions.

Meanwhile, the State Department's special envoy for North Korean nuclear affairs Glyn Davies said in Tokyo on Monday that Pyongyang could be hit with additional sanctions if the regime fails to show a willingness to give up its arms program.

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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"If we do not see signs of North Korean sincerity, if they do not act, demonstrate that they understand they must fulfill their obligations, give up their nuclear weapons, then there's more pressure that will be brought to bear on them," Davies told reporters, Kyodo reported.

The reports of a new North Korean rocket booster coincide with the emergence of a key official within the North Korean regime last September. The official, Pak To Chun, surfaced in public after a mysterious four-month absence from the public eye. Pak is a member of the powerful National Defense Commission and a key official in charge of North Korea's long-range missile and space launcher programs.

North Korea and Iran announced plans to develop closer relations, including defense, science and technology ties, in September 2012 when Kim Yong Nam, a senior North Korean official, visited Tehran. Kim met with Iran's supreme leader Sayed Ali Khameni. Both sides said at the time that they would cooperate against the United States.

The Iranian company SHIG, part of the Aerospace Industries Organization of Iran, has developed all of Iran's liquid-fueled missiles, including the Shahab series that is based on North Korea's Nodong medium-range missiles. The company was sanctioned by the United Nations for its role in illicit missile transfers in 2006. The U.S. government has also sanctioned it for illicit missile exports.

SHIG experts were known to have visited North Korea previously in 2009 to take part in a missile test launch that year of a Taepodong-2 (TD-2) missile.

A report published in July by the National Air and Space Intelligence Center stated North Korea is continuing to build TD-2 long-range missiles and space launchers.

"Continued efforts to develop the TD-2 and the newly unveiled [mobile] ICBM show the determination of North Korea to achieve long-range ballistic missile and space launch capabilities," the report said.

The report also said Iran has carried out several launches of a two-stage Safir space launch vehicle and in 2010 unveiled a new larger launcher called the Simorgh.

"Iran will likely continue to pursue longer range ballistic missiles and more capable [space-launch vehicle], which could lead to the development of an ICBM system," the report said, noting that "Iran could develop and test an ICBM capable of reaching the United States by 2015."

Disclosure of the Iran-North Korean missile cooperation could upset China's efforts to restart the stalled six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program.

The United States and South Korea are opposing a resumption of the nuclear talks until North Korea demonstrates that it is willing to dismantle its nuclear facilities.

A State Department cable from 2009 made public by W___leaks stated that North Korea's Amroggang Development Bank worked with the Korea Mining Development Corporation (KOMID) in the past in selling missiles and technology to SHIG.

Another cable on Iran's Ballistic Missile program from 2009 states that "Iran has the largest and most active missile program in the Middle East."

"Iran has accelerated its work toward developing a domestic space program," the report said.

The Safir space launcher "has demonstrated several capabilities necessary for longer-range ballistic missiles: staging, clustered engines in the second stage (although these were small), and gimbaled engines for control of the second stage, a more advanced technique than the jet vanes used in the first stage," the report said.

"Iran currently appears focused on increasing the capability and range of its ballistic missiles," the report said.

"Although Iran is unlikely to deploy the Safir SLV as a ballistic missile, the Safir, and the development and test of the two-stage Sajjil [medium-range ballistic missile], has provided Iran with much of the technology and experience necessary to develop and produce longer-range ballistic missiles, including ICBMs."



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"Tehran could attempt to develop and test much of this technology under the guise of an SLV program."

<http://freebeacon.com/iran-north-korea-secretly-developing-new-long-range-rocket-booster-for-icbms/>

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

China Prefers Stability than Denuclearization of N. Korea: Expert

November 27, 2013

BEIJING, Nov. 27 (Yonhap) -- The top priority of China's policy on the Korean Peninsula is aimed at maintaining stability, not necessarily denuclearizing North Korea, a Russian expert said Wednesday, voicing pessimism on prospects of Beijing's continued and sufficient push to end the North's nuclear weapons program.

"For China, stability and division (of the Korean Peninsula) are more important than denuclearization," Andrei Lankov, the Russian expert on North Korea, said during a meeting of foreign journalists in Beijing.

Although China, North Korea's last-remaining ally and key economic benefactor, is not supportive of the North's nuclear program, there is no reason to believe that Beijing will exert sufficient pressure on Pyongyang to denuclearize, Lankov said.

Lankov said China "is likely to be tough" in implementing international sanctions against the North, but "will never push hard" for denuclearizing the reclusive regime, because excessive pressure on Pyongyang would jeopardize stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Asked about the level of risk of another nuclear test by North Korea, Lankov replied, "High." But he said there is no indication that another test is imminent.

Diplomatic efforts to resume the long-stalled talks on North Korea's nuclear program appear to have been failing to gain traction as the North has rejected preconditions set by South Korea and the United States to reconvene the six-party talks.

The talks, which involved the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan, have been dormant since late 2008.

Since conducting its third and most powerful nuclear test in February, North Korea has repeatedly expressed its willingness to reopen the six-party process "without preconditions."

South Korea and the U.S. have been demanding North Korea show its sincerity first by taking steps to denuclearize itself. China has been more accommodating toward North Korea, urging South Korea and the U.S. to lower their bar for Pyongyang to sit down at the negotiating table.

North Korea's young leader Kim Jong-un took power in late 2011, when his father Kim Jong-il died. While Kim appears to have consolidated his grip on power, he has shown no intention of giving up nuclear weapons.

Lankov said he sees not even a "slight chance" that North Korea will abandon its nuclear weapons, because the nuclear program is the only "political success" for the Kim dynasty.

"As long as the Kim family stays on power," Lankov warned, "Do not expect that they will go denuclearized."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/11/27/57/0301000000AEN20131127008900315F.html>

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

The Wall Street Journal

U.S. Sends B-52s on Mission to Challenge Chinese Claims

By Julian E. Barnes in Washington and Jeremy Page in Beijing

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
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November 27, 2013

The U.S. moved forcefully to try to counter China's bid for influence over increasingly jittery Asian neighbors by sending a pair of B-52 bombers over disputed islands in the East China Sea, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

The B-52s took off from Andersen Air Force Base in Guam and flew more than 1,500 miles northwest, crossing into what China has declared as its new air-defense identification zone, at about 7 p.m. ET Monday. The U.S. deliberately violated rules set by China by refusing to inform Beijing about the flight, officials said.

China had warned of military action against aircraft entering the zone without notification, but didn't respond to the B-52s, which weren't armed and were part of a long-planned military exercise. A U.S. official said there was no attempt by the Chinese military to contact the B-52s. "The flight was without incident," a U.S. official said.

Wednesday morning, in Beijing's first public comment on the flight, the Ministry of National Defense said in a faxed response to The Wall Street Journal that the Chinese military monitored and identified the U.S. aircraft. It also said that China would identify all aircraft entering the zone and has the capability to exercise "effective control" of the zone.

The ministry said the U.S. military aircraft had flown on the eastern edge of the new Chinese zone, about 120 miles from the disputed islands.

By challenging a direct military warning, the U.S. flight risked a potentially destabilizing response by the Chinese. But the move also may have calmed tensions in the region by reassuring U.S. allies and keeping tempers in check in Japan, South Korea or other countries, Pentagon officials and defense analysts said.

The U.S. test was the outgrowth of months of growing tension in which China and its smaller neighbors have been jostling for control of waters with plentiful fishing stocks and potentially rich hydrocarbon reserves in the East China Sea and South China Sea.

Beijing and Tokyo have competing claims to a group of islands in the East China Sea, and China moved over the weekend to solidify its standing by declaring the air-defense zone, which encompasses the disputed islands, requiring aircraft to report in before entering the zone.

The U.S. and key Asian allies, including Japan and South Korea, criticized the requirements as a power grab by Beijing, and the Pentagon vowed to show it wouldn't be bound by them.

That demonstration came when the B-52s flew over the area without the required notification to Beijing.

U.S. officials stressed that both the exercise and flight path were long planned. A senior defense official said that Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, who was briefed on the exercise, had made clear over the weekend that the U.S. should continue to fly over the islands.

There was little debate in the Pentagon about canceling the exercise or adjusting its flight path. Changing the exercise, the official said, would make it appear that Mr. Hagel was backing down and that the U.S. was acquiescing to the new zone.

U.S. defense officials said there would be further military exercises in the area, and acknowledged it is possible that China could attempt to contact or intercept the aircraft involved in future flights.

Officials said the military's Pacific Command routinely prepares for contingencies, but that planners didn't think it was likely that China would attempt to challenge the flight.

U.S. military planes often ignore the air-defense zones of non-allied countries, and frequently respond to any radio hail by asserting the right to operate in an international air space.

In Japan, commercial air carriers were caught in the middle, with Tokyo pressuring them to ignore China's request for cooperation. Japan's aviation authorities Tuesday ordered the national airline association to disregard a Chinese request for the flight plans of all flights that pass over the area in dispute.



Japan's move shows that Tokyo is determined to take a tough line in the territorial dispute.

"China's measures have no validity in our country," said Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga at a news conference Tuesday evening. "We can't accept a step that imposes unfair obligations on airplanes that fly in the zone set by China."

Earlier Tuesday in Beijing, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said that China's new zone wouldn't affect regular international civilian flights, according to a transcript on the Foreign Ministry website.

Asked if China would take military action against aircraft that didn't comply with its demands in the zone, the spokesman, Qin Gang, said: "It was written very clearly in the announcement. With regard to the question you've asked, the Chinese side will make an appropriate response according to the different circumstances and the threat level that it might face."

China's Defense Ministry said Saturday that the Chinese military would take "defensive emergency measures" against aircraft that didn't obey the rules in the new zone. It didn't specify what those measures would be.

The establishment of the new zone was certain to have been approved by Xi Jinping, China's new leader, who became military chief at the same time as taking over as head of the Communist Party in November last year, analysts and diplomats said.

But some analysts now believe that China might have overplayed its hand by angering not just Japan and the U.S., but South Korea and Taiwan—both of which have air-defense zones that overlap China's—and several other countries that have territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea.

They see the move as part of a long-term strategy by China to try to gradually change the status quo in the East China Sea, and make it increasingly costly for Japan to enforce its claims, without crossing the lines that might provoke military conflict.

There have been inadvertent collisions between U.S. surveillance ships and planes and Chinese forces. In 2001, a Chinese fighter collided with a Navy EP-3 surveillance plane, forcing the American plane down on Hainan Island in the South China Sea.

American officials worried that without a U.S. challenge of the zone, Tokyo might feel it necessary to mount a more direct challenge to increased Chinese presence around the disputed islands.

"The U.S. has been measured in its response to the island dispute, but very clear that the U.S. recognizes that Japan has administrative control of the islands," said Nicholas Consonery of the Eurasia Group, a research and consulting firm. "There is a perception that because we have more engagement that the geopolitical risk is increasing. While there is a new risk element surrounding the question on how China will enforce the air-defense zone, the broader story is how the U.S. presence will be a mitigating variable."

The U.S. has stepped up exercises with B-52s in the region this year, largely to reassure allies. In March, the U.S. conducted an exercise in South Korea using the B-52s, and later followed up with a flight of B-2 bombers.

The flight of the B-52s, based at Andersen Air Force Base in Guam, was part of a long-planned exercise called Coral Lightning. The bombers weren't accompanied by escort planes.

Officials said the training exercise wasn't specifically related to the defense of the disputed islands, but was instead a more generalized defensive exercise.

The U.S. notified Japan of the flight. The B-52s entered Japan's long-established air-defense identification zone as part of the flight, and the U.S. was in contact with the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, officials said.

U.S. officials said they believe they had to challenge the air-defense zone to make clear they don't consider its establishment appropriate or in the interest of regional stability.



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The White House said Tuesday that the territorial dispute between China and Japan should be solved diplomatically. "The policy announced by the Chinese over the weekend is unnecessarily inflammatory," White House spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters in California, where President Barack Obama was traveling.

China's official Xinhua news agency announced earlier Tuesday that the country's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, was making its maiden voyage to the South China Sea, where China is also embroiled in territorial disputes with its neighbors.

The Liaoning left its homeport of Qingdao in eastern China on Tuesday and was being escorted by two destroyers and two frigates to the South China Sea where it would conduct training exercises, Xinhua said.

A Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman said Saturday that China was planning to establish more ADIZs, and many analysts expect one of them to be over the South China Sea, where China's claims overlap with those of Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

China had made some progress in easing tensions over the South China Sea in recent months with a charm offensive in Southeast Asia that was helped by President Obama's failure to attend a regional summit in Brunei in October because of the U.S. government shutdown.

That was seen by many Asian governments as a sign of declining U.S. influence, despite its pledge to refocus military and other resources on the region as part of a so-called "pivot" toward Asia.

Beijing's progress was undermined in the eyes of many, however, when it initially announced a donation of just \$100,000 to help victims of a devastating typhoon in the Philippines, while the U.S. sent an aircraft carrier to spearhead the relief effort.

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702303281504579221993719005178>

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

The Times of India – India

Nuclear-Capable Dhanush Missile Successfully Test-Fired

Press Trust of India (PTI)

Saturday, November 23, 2013

BALASORE (Odisha): India successfully test-fired its nuclear-capable Dhanush ballistic missile from a naval ship off Odisha coast on Saturday.

"Strategic Forces Command (SFC) successfully tested the Dhanush missile today from a naval ship," said MV K V Prasad, Director of the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur near Balasore.

The surface-to-surface Dhanush, a naval variant of India's indigenously developed 'Prithvi' missile, was test fired at around 11.10am from a location at Bay of Bengal by the SFC of the defence force.

The single-stage, liquid propelled Dhanush has already been inducted into the armed services and is one of the five missiles developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), defence sources said.

"The trial was conducted by the SFC of the Indian defence force in co-operation with DRDO," a defence official said.

Dhanush missile is capable of carrying conventional as well as nuclear payload of 500 to 1,000 kg and hit both land and sea-based targets.

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-11-23/india/44389007_1_dhanush-prithvi-missile-chandipur

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

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RT (Russia Today) – Russia

Lavrov: No Need for European Missile Defense Shield if Iran Deal a Success

November 25, 2013

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says the US will no longer have a reason to build the long-touted missile defense shield in Europe, if Iran fulfills its obligations in the recently-signed nuclear program deal.

"If the Iran deal is put into practice, the stated reason for the construction of the defense shield will no longer apply," Lavrov told journalists in Rome.

NATO is currently rolling out its new Europe-wide missile defense shield, which will include two interceptor bases close to the Russian border in Romania and Poland, with the first of the first ground missiles becoming operational in 2015. The bases will be able to shoot down short and medium-range ballistic missiles.

Russia has long protested at the placement of such bases on its borders, but during both, the Bush era and Obama's terms, Washington has insisted that the bases are primarily directed against a potential threat from Iran, and are too close to Russia to stop any of its nuclear warheads.

On Sunday, Iran agreed to curtail its nuclear program in exchange for a loosening of substantial EU and US sanctions that have crippled its economy.

The initial term of the deal is six months, though both sides hope this will lead to a permanent rapprochement after a stand-off that lasted a decade, during which the West accused Iran of attempting to acquire a nuclear weapon, while Iran denied this, insisting that it was entitled to enrich uranium.

US Secretary of State John Kerry, while visiting Europe earlier this month, said that the deployment of the missile shield was not likely to be contingent on improving relations with Iran.

"Nothing has changed at this point and I don't foresee it changing," he said.

NATO has also confirmed that it regards the missile defense to be a deterrent against any threats to Europe, not just one coming from one country.

The current European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) missile defense system was adopted by the White House in 2009. It generally uses more established technologies than President George W. Bush's expensive and ambitious system that first aroused Russia's ire over five years ago. The most ambitious phase of the program, initially scheduled to begin next decade, was also canceled earlier this year.

Nonetheless, negotiations about Moscow's potential involvement in the defense shield have broken down over a lack of trust, and the recent groundbreaking ceremony at NATO's base in Romania was swiftly followed by an unannounced test of Russia's newest ballistic missiles as well as international patrols by its strategic bombers.

Lavrov recently called missile defense a *"burning issue"* in Moscow-Washington relations, and said that Russia will soften its stance on the Eastern European bases only if NATO provides written assurances that they will never be used to shoot down Russian missiles, a request it has repeatedly rejected.

<http://rt.com/news/lavrov-missile-shield-iran-265/>

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

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Denies Plans to Place Strategic Bombers in Kyrgyzstan

26 November 2013

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MOSCOW, November 26 (RIA Novosti) – Russian defense officials denied Tuesday that they plan to deploy strategic bombers at an air base in Kyrgyzstan, addressing speculation over what military analysts had seen as an effort by Moscow to project its geopolitical influence across the region.

Some media outlets had speculated that a Russian air base in Kant, some 20 kilometers (12 miles) outside the capital Bishkek, could be used as a forward airfield for refueling and emergency maintenance of Russian Tu-95MS strategic bombers.

A pair of Tu-95 bombers flew over the airfield in Kant on October 27 as part of celebrations marking the 10th anniversary of the base.

“Those bombers were taking part in the aerial parade ... They simply flew over the Kant air base without landing,” said Yaroslav Roshchupkin, a spokesman for Russia’s Central Military District.

“There are no plans whatsoever to place Tu-95 aircraft at the Kant base,” Roshchupkin said.

The Kant air base operates in the interests of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a regional security body.

The air base was established in October 2003, and currently hosts about 400 service personnel, as well as several Su-25 Frogfoot attack aircraft, two Mi-8 combat transport helicopters and several L-39 combat trainers.

Viktor Sevostyanov, commander of the air force and air defense units of the Central Military District, was quoted by Russian media as saying in October that the number of combat aircraft at the base would almost double by the end of the year. Work on the enlargement of an airstrip at the base to accommodate heavy transport planes is ongoing.

Moscow and Bishkek signed an agreement in September last year to extend the use of the Kant air base and other Russian military facilities in Kyrgyzstan until at least 2032, with possible five-year extensions.

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20131126/185030685/Russia-Denies-Plans-to-Place-Strategic-Bombers-in-Kyrgyzstan.html

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

The Los Angeles Times

Pentagon Makes Costly Foray into Biodefense Drug Business

The initiative defies the advice of experts, duplicates another agency's work and shifts money away from gear for troops.

By David Willman

November 23, 2013,

WASHINGTON — Despite intense pressure to hold down federal spending, the Defense Department is launching a high-priced effort to create its own production pipeline for vaccines and biodefense drugs — an initiative that defies the advice of government-hired experts and duplicates what another agency is doing.

Construction began in late October on a plant in north Florida that will produce flu vaccine and specialized medicines for the Pentagon to protect military personnel against germ warfare agents.

To begin paying for the initiative, the Obama administration has quietly shifted millions of dollars that had been budgeted for better masks, boots, early-warning sensors and other equipment for troops at risk of exposure to chemical or biological weapons, according to government documents and defense specialists.

The Department of Health and Human Services, meanwhile, is on track to spend billions of dollars to produce the same types of medicines in collaboration with private drug companies and university researchers.

The overlapping efforts are precisely what some policymakers have warned against. The Defense Department program also flies in the face of an analysis, commissioned by the White House, that examined ways the government could bolster production of vaccines and biodefense drugs.

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The 2009 analysis recommended against establishing a government-controlled facility, akin to what the Pentagon is doing, saying that contracting with private manufacturers would produce new drugs more quickly and at a lower cost.

The 112-page report has not been shared with Congress or previously publicized. A copy of the document was obtained by the Los Angeles Times.

The Pentagon initiative has been championed by Assistant Secretary of Defense Andrew C. Weber, a presidential appointee. The Times' request for comment from Weber was referred to a top aide, James B. Petro.

In an interview, Petro said the Florida facility was needed to make medicines that the military could not rely on Health and Human Services or others to provide. The goal, he said, was to do "a more efficient and effective job" of acquiring the products.

"It's about making sure that our men and women in uniform have the protection that they need against these threats," said Petro, adding that Weber was aware of the 2009 analysis and that it had informed his staff's "strategic thinking."

Shifting funds from protective gear to help pay for the manufacturing effort was a "portfolio management decision" intended to "achieve balance in yielding both medical and physical defense equipment," Petro said.

For decades, the government has contracted with outside companies for nearly all the medicines intended to protect the public and military personnel against infectious diseases. But the Defense Department has long sought to create its own medical manufacturing arm.

After the 1991 Persian Gulf War, the Pentagon spent hundreds of millions of dollars trying to develop vaccines against more than a dozen exotic pathogens, such as plague and the Ebola virus. The efforts ultimately fell short or were abandoned because of the costs and steep scientific challenges.

"This is a really, really hard thing to do," said David L. Danley, a biologist and retired Army colonel who supervised the Pentagon's vaccine-acquisition program. "The numbers — the costs — just didn't make sense."

The Defense Department has protected its battlefield personnel against the highest-profile biological threats — anthrax and smallpox — by securing access to Health and Human Services' stockpile of vaccines purchased from private pharmaceutical companies.

After the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and the mailings of anthrax-laced letters that fall, the idea that the military needed defenses against a broader range of threats gained renewed momentum.

The Pentagon contracted with DynPort Vaccine Co. to develop biodefense vaccines, and by 2006 had paid the firm about \$700 million. The work has not resulted in a product approved for use by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

In 2008, a report by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center recommended that the Pentagon oversee the construction and operation of at least two plants for making biodefense medicines, saying that existing arrangements with private vaccine makers had yielded "limited success."

Army Maj. Gen. Stephen V. Reeves, then in charge of the military's defenses against biological and chemical warfare, publicly disagreed.

Appearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense on April 24, 2008, Reeves noted that by purchasing the anthrax and smallpox vaccines from the Health and Human Services stockpile — instead of buying from manufacturers or trying to produce the products in-house — the Pentagon paid much less per dose.

In looking to develop new biodefense drugs, Reeves said that the Defense and Health departments were "closely coordinating our research and development programs.... The focus is on eliminating unnecessary duplication of effort."

Before deciding whether to establish its own medical manufacturing capacity, he said, the Pentagon should conduct "an analysis of alternatives" to identify the most cost-effective approach.



The White House, under President George W. Bush, asked the Defense and Health departments to pay for the analysis, which was conducted by the Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development in Boston and its research affiliate, Quantic Group Ltd.

The analysis focused on three ways to provide greater protection against infectious agents for both civilians and military personnel.

One alternative, called "Buy All," would continue the government's contracting for biodefense medicines. The second, "Enhanced Buy All," called for hiring more contractors. The third option, "Make All," was to build a government-controlled facility to make virtually all of the military's medicines.

The analysis, completed in June 2009, recommended the "Enhanced Buy All" approach, saying that "contract manufacturing is less costly and timelier than constructing and operating a dedicated facility."

It ranked the "Make All" option "the least viable."

Defense and Health officials shelved the document after summarizing it for their superiors, those with knowledge of the matter said.

Worries about the nation's biodefenses burst into the open again in January 2010, when a bipartisan commission gave the Obama administration and Congress an F grade for failing to enhance "the nation's capabilities for rapid response to prevent biological attacks from inflicting mass casualties."

"Especially troubling is the lack of priority given to the development of medical countermeasures — the vaccines and medicines that would be required to mitigate the consequences of an attack," the commission said.

In his State of the Union address the next evening, President Obama announced "a new initiative that will give us the capacity to respond faster and more effectively to bioterrorism or an infectious disease."

He provided no details — which left it to rival bureaucracies, Health and Human Services and the Defense Department, to translate his words into action.

Throughout much of 2010, senior officials from the two departments met at the White House to discuss how to secure speedier and more reliable manufacturing of vaccines and other medicines.

Health officials envisioned three manufacturing facilities, to be operated under contract by nongovernmental entities.

"We started off talking about doing this together," said one of the Health and Human Services participants, who like other officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

But by late 2010 it was apparent to participants that Weber wanted the Defense Department to go its own way. According to senior officials who were involved, Weber was frustrated by the pace at which his Health and Human Services counterparts were moving, and did not want his department's control of medical manufacturing to be subordinate to that of Health and Human Services' Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

The Defense Department "wanted to be in charge of their own fate," said another health official.

A Defense official gave a similar account: Health and Human Services "was going to build all three facilities. Weber said, 'I want one of my own.'"

On Dec. 29, 2010, Weber won crucial backing from the White House when John Brennan, then Obama's top counterterrorism advisor, signed a memorandum saying the Defense Department should "establish agile and flexible advanced development and manufacturing capabilities."

In March 2011, health officials solicited proposals to operate the three plants that would make both flu vaccine and biodefense medicines. The federal government would pay 75% of the cost to upgrade or expand existing facilities — and the operators could use as much as half of the plants' capacity to make other products.



The same month, as the Defense Department advanced Weber's plan for an independent supply line, the Government Accountability Office warned about the costs of duplicative programs. The department, the GAO said, could save \$280 million to \$460 million within its medical command alone.

In September 2011, the Senate Appropriations Committee, citing "duplication with other government programs," proposed stripping the entire \$151.6 million requested by Obama and the House to start the Defense Department's manufacturing initiative.

But three months later, a Senate-House conference committee compromised on \$101.7 million. The conferees nevertheless said they remained concerned that "the government is creating slightly distinct yet largely redundant capabilities."

The Defense Department is funding its initiative in part with money originally committed to better protecting service personnel against a chemical or biological attack, according to internal Pentagon documents and interviews with military specialists.

Some of the money had been intended to buy or upgrade early-warning sensors for the battlefield, along with suits, boots, gloves and decontamination equipment.

The improved, laser-based sensors that had been under development were expected to be able to warn of a chemical attack from as far as 5 kilometers away in all directions — compared with the existing technology's limits of 2.5 kilometers, with a greatly reduced "field of view."

The Defense Department is also slowing its planned acquisition of lighter, more protective masks.

The original M40 models — bought in 1990 for the Persian Gulf War — remain in stock despite a 17-year shelf life. Their older plastic and rubber components are at risk of deteriorating, and some may have leaks due to improper storage.

A confidential document circulated Sept. 17 by the Pentagon's Joint Program Executive Office cited these and more than 20 other "capability needs" that had been stalled or killed to help pay for the medical-manufacturing initiative.

All of the canceled acquisitions had been validated as necessary by a Pentagon council representing each of the armed services, according to internal documents and Defense specialists.

Petro, the Pentagon aide, said the equipment available for use performs adequately.

In June 2012, Health and Human Services awarded three contracts providing startup funding for medical manufacturing.

A \$60-million contract went to Novartis to expand the Swiss company's flu vaccine plant in Holly Springs, N.C. Another, for \$163 million, was awarded to Emergent BioSolutions Inc., a Maryland company that makes the FDA-approved anthrax vaccine. Emergent is being paid to retrofit its facility in Baltimore to make flu vaccine and other products.

The third contract, for \$176 million, went to Texas A&M University, where Dr. Brett Giroir, a former Pentagon official, has raised an additional \$109 million from the state and commercial drug makers to launch a research, development and manufacturing complex.

On March 20 of this year, the Defense Department awarded its initial manufacturing-facility contract, worth as much as \$358.9 million, to Nanotherapeutics Inc. of Alachua, Fla., about 20 miles north of Gainesville.

Though the 165,000-square-foot plant is to be built and owned by Nanotherapeutics, it will be used exclusively for Pentagon-directed manufacturing.

Petro, the Defense official, said the department expected to spend \$40 million in each of the next five years on plant operations, which might last 25 years or longer. Additional spending would be required to buy any product made there, he said.

The overlapping efforts of the Defense and Health departments were illuminated at a House Armed Services subcommittee hearing Oct. 11.



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Giroir testified that his Health and Human Services-funded facility would be "fully capable of performing the advanced development and manufacturing" for medicines sought by both Health officials and the military.

Asked about the separate initiatives, Dr. Philip K. Russell, a retired major general who once headed the Army's Medical Research and Development Command, cited "an enormous amount of wasted effort."

"In our government, everybody is in favor of coordination — but nobody wants to be coordinated," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/na-biodefense-spending-20131124,0,4270364,full.story>

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

National Defense Magazine.com

A Test for U.S. Nuclear Weapons: Can They Beat the Sequester?

By Sandra I. Erwin

November 24, 2013

As far as nuclear weapons are concerned, politics trumps the Budget Control Act.

While the U.S. military faces budget cuts of nearly \$500 billion over the next decade, spending on nuclear weapons and delivery systems is expected to soar, according to analysts.

Even though the United States plans to reduce the number of deployed nuclear warheads, as per the terms of the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, it intends to modernize land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, and build new submarines and long-range bombers to deliver nuclear weapons. The Obama administration also is seeking funds to update existing warheads and modernize tactical nuclear weapons that currently are stored in Europe.

These programs collectively could cost hundreds of billions of dollars, and although Congress appears to be standing firm on sequester — across the board spending cuts for all federal agencies — nuclear weapons are likely to be spared, experts said.

"It's not a budget issue, it's a political issue," said Jack Mayer, executive vice president of Booz Allen Hamilton. "Nuclear forces are in the political realm more than anything else," he said at a Brookings Institution forum. Because the size of the nuclear arsenal is governed by treaties, he said, these weapons are more sequester-proof than conventional military systems.

"The growing cost to sustain the nuclear mission will force increasingly difficult tradeoffs between nuclear and conventional capabilities," said Kingston Reif, nuclear weapons expert at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation.

Reif estimated that it will cost nearly \$300 billion over the next 25 years to modernize U.S. nuclear weapon delivery systems which are known as the nuclear "triad" — ballistic missile submarines, long-range bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles — and extend the life of five different warheads.

"While spending on nuclear weapons is slated to skyrocket, the military budget is scheduled to come crashing back to Earth," he said. The Congressional Budget Office calculated the Defense Department could save \$48 billion in the coming decade by reducing the number of ballistic missile submarines in the fleet from 12 to eight and delaying the long-range strike bomber program until the mid-2020s. "Pursuing either or both of these options would still leave the United States with a devastating nuclear deterrent," Reif said. "It is not at all clear that such questions are even being asked within the national security establishment, let alone debated."

A study by the Cato Institute suggested a smaller arsenal deployed entirely on submarines would save roughly \$20 billion annually while deterring attacks on the United States and its allies. A two-legged deterrence, as opposed to the current triad, Cato analysts contend, would make more sense financially but it is politically a tough sell. The triad, the study noted, grew from internal competition within the U.S. military services to meet the Soviet threat.

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It remains to be seen whether the austerity measures that are bearing on every government agency will strike a blow on nuclear weapons programs. Fiscal hawks on Capitol Hill have insisted that the sequester stay in place for federal civilian and military programs, but they have drawn the line when it comes to nuclear weapons. The House version of the National Defense Authorization Act prohibits elimination of the nuclear triad and limits availability of funds for nuclear reductions. The bill also protects funding for the B61 tactical nuclear bomb life extension program, which is estimated to cost \$11 billion.

Billions of Defense and Energy department dollars, and thousands of jobs are at stake in many states that are home to the nation's 450 ICBM silos. A Senate amendment to the NDAA — by lawmakers from states that are home to Air Force ICBM bases — would restrict the administration from shutting down any ICBM sites.

The new START Treaty, signed in 2010 by the United States and Russia, reduces the U.S. arsenal from 1,688 to 1,550 deployed warheads by 2017. During the Cold War, the United States deployed 10,000 warheads.

The conservative Heritage Foundation frequently blasts the administration for short-changing nuclear weapons programs. "Budget cuts undermine 21st-Century bomber, threaten nuclear triad," blared a recent op-ed. "While the administration promised to increase the funding for the U.S. decrepit nuclear weapons infrastructure, it has not followed through. ... The U.S. nuclear triad continues to age. The United States is currently the only nuclear weapons state without a substantive nuclear weapons modernization program," said a Heritage paper. "The HASC NDAA takes prudent steps to halt this trend."

Supporters of nuclear modernization argue that delaying upgrades only add to future costs. "The cost of modernization can be carefully laid out and done in sequence," said Peter Huessy, president of GeoStrategic Analysis. "One of the reasons the entire triad and its supporting infrastructure needs to be refurbished now is that the so-called arms control community made every effort to block, delay and otherwise make more difficult and costly the very modernization programs for our strategic nuclear triad they are now so concerned with."

Among the staunchest critics of the administration's plan to modernize nuclear forces is Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

"Since nuclear forces are larger than needed for current military missions, it is time to think more creatively about how to maintain a much smaller nuclear deterrent at an affordable cost," she said Nov. 13 at a conference on Capitol Hill.

Feinstein said she supports the president's proposed path to further reduce the deployed strategic stockpile to about 1,000 weapons. "However, these efforts are not designed to reduce the total size of the stockpile," she said. "Thousands of weapons remain part of the 'hedge.' For every deployed weapon, there will soon be four in the hedge, which means if 1,000 warheads are deployed, 4,000 will be available in a reserve capacity."

This year, the National Nuclear Security Administration rolled out an ambitious effort known as "3+2" — a 25-year plan to reduce warhead types from seven to five. "While I support reductions to the stockpile and the savings that come with it, the 3+2 plan requires spending tens of billions of dollars more on life extension programs as well as increasing technical risks such as design changes," Feinstein said. "The promise of the 3+2 plan was to provide a smaller stockpile in exchange for a larger investment. However, when the plan is examined, there is no decrease in the number of warheads," she said. "In addition, sequestration, shrinking budgets and NNSA's long history of cost overruns and schedule delays raise serious concerns about the agency's ability to execute this mission."

Work on life extension programs, she said, "could crowd out all other investments needed to assess the safety, security and reliability of the current stockpile and address aging infrastructure."

Feinstein said she is alarmed by the rising cost of the life extension of the B61 gravity bomb. "The program is unaffordable at \$10 billion," she said. "The administration has said it is serious about making 'bold reductions' to our tactical nuclear weapons in Europe. That would mean reductions of the B61."



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The administration proposed increased spending on the B61 program from \$369 million in fiscal year 2013 to \$537 million in 2014. The 2013 sequester sliced about \$30 million, which will delay the program by six months. As a result, the overall cost is estimated to rise by \$230 million.

"It's important that our elected officials realize the extent to which the costs of this program have spiraled out of control and that its current deployment to Europe represents an outdated Cold War strategy," said a report by the Project on Government Oversight, a watchdog group. "At the very least, our allies in Europe should be paying their fair share if they even want to keep these bombs at all."

But the odds that European nations will pick up the tab are slim to none, said Guy Roberts, former deputy assistant secretary general for weapons of mass destruction at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "Europeans don't see a security threat," he said Nov. 21 at a Heritage Foundation forum. "It's part of the reason NATO defense budgets are in freefall," he said. U.S. concerns about Iran's nuclear weapons, he said, "don't reverberate much in Europe."

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh said future decisions on nuclear weapons spending should be part of a larger debate about deterrence and U.S. strategy. "If warheads come down, we'll have to take a serious look at the force structure of the triad. ... Maybe it does not make as much sense anymore," Welsh told reporters last week at a breakfast meeting in Washington.

"The whole nuclear deterrence strategy always evolves," Welsh said. "We need a clear picture of where the nation is going."

Welsh said he is a "believer" in the triad. All three legs, he said, "give us flexibility of response." But the cost of modernizing the infrastructure is "not small," he said. Future investments should be part of the policy discussion in the next round of arms-control talks, said Welsh. "It's a fair debate. ... And costs will be a factor whether we have sequester or not."

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=1347>

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

The Daily Beast.com

U.S. Knew Russia Violated Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty

The Kremlin cheated on a nuclear pact it signed with the United States, the U.S. government believes—and Secretary Kerry was briefed on the violations almost a year ago.

By Josh Rogin

November 26th 2013

Congressional leaders are acting to force the Obama administration to confront Russia on its violations of a nuclear treaty that U.S. officials have acknowledged since 2012.

On November 27 of that year, two top Obama administration officials held a closed-door hearing with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Sen. John Kerry, who only months later would become President Obama's secretary of state. Inside the top-secret hearing, acting Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller and Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs Madelyn Creedon told lawmakers that Russia had violated the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), according to two U.S. officials who attended the classified meeting.

Inside the meeting, Kerry expressed anger and frustration about the Russian cheating and warned that if the violations became widely known, future efforts to convince the Senate to ratify arms control treaties would be harmed.

"If we're going to have treaties with people, we've got to adhere to them," Kerry said, according to two U.S. officials who read the classified transcript of the hearing. "We're not going to pass another treaty in the U.S. Senate if our colleagues are sitting up here knowing somebody is cheating."

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Kerry was a major proponent of the New START treaty with Russia, which the Senate ratified after a long debate in December 2010. As secretary of state, he has supported negotiating a follow-on treaty with Russia that could place further limits on the two countries' stockpiles of strategic and tactical deployed nuclear weapons.

But Kerry knew last year that Russia was in violation of the INF Treaty. That pact, signed by President Reagan, bars development, testing, or deployment of missiles or delivery systems with a range of between 500 and 5,500 kilometers.

"If we're going to try to reduce more weapons or we're going to try to have further limits...I can't look you in the eye, I can't look anybody in the eye here and say, 'Hey, vote for this, we haven't followed through and kept the promises with the prior ones, with the foundations that we've built here,'" Kerry said inside the hearing.

The exact manner of the Russian cheating remains unclear and highly classified, although there have been several reports that Russia has tested and plans to continue testing two missiles in ways that could violate the terms of the treaty: the SS-25 road mobile intercontinental ballistic missile and the newer RS-26 ICBM, which Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin has called "the missile defense killer," a reference to U.S. plans to expand ballistic missile defense in Europe.

The State Department declined to confirm or deny that it believes Russia is in violation of the treaty and declined to comment on the 2012 briefing with Kerry.

"The administration's been candid with Congress about a range of countries where we have ongoing treaty compliance issues and are seeking to address them, and that includes concerns we have raised with Russia," an administration official said. "Determinations about non-compliance are made after a careful process, but Congress is in the loop."

Some experts say the Obama administration's failure to acknowledge the treaty violations publicly or confront the Russians about them openly indicates the administration can't be trusted to take on potential violations by other bad actors with whom it has struck deals, such as the Iranian government and Bashar al-Assad's regime in Syria.

"If it's true that the Obama administration has not been candid about—or worse, actively suppressed—information that Russia has violated the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, then how are congressional lawmakers and the American public supposed to trust that the administration won't do the same if the Assad regime violates the agreement to remove chemical weapons from Syria or if Iran cheats on the Geneva pact on its nuclear program?" said former congressional staffer Robert Zarate, now policy director of the Foreign Policy Initiative.

Other congressional aides said the Obama administration has briefed certain European allies about the Russian treaty violations but has not informed the entire North Atlantic Council, the political branch of the 27-member North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

"The INF Treaty is the backbone of protecting Europe from nuclear threats," said a senior GOP Senate aide. "The fact that the administration will not brief NATO on this issue is a clear indication they place a higher priority on their relationship with Russia than with actual allies in Europe."

Not all experts agree that the violations are of grave importance. Joe Cirincione, president of the Ploughshares Fund, said treaty violations can be dealt with on a bilateral basis.

"There are real concerns about developments in Russian nuclear strategy," he said. "But issues of compliance by both nations with arms control treaties are common, and we have reliable methods for resolving these issues. We have to make sure that a compliance problem is not used as an excuse to blow up a threat reduction mechanism that provides real security benefits for the United States."

But 10 Republican senators disagree and have proposed an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), obtained by The Daily Beast, that would force the administration to send Congress "a report on information and intelligence sharing with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and NATO countries on compliance issues related to the INF Treaty."



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The lead senator on the amendment, Sen. James Risch (R-ID), has been furious about the administration's handling of Russia's INF Treaty violations for several months.

Risch confronted Kerry about the cheating at Kerry's January confirmation hearing, although the senator didn't say exactly what he was talking about due to the classified nature of the information.

"You and I have sat through some classified briefings, and I don't want to get into details that we shouldn't get into, but I'd like your thoughts on where we are at the present time regarding compliance and verification in a general fashion," Risch said.

Risch also wanted Kerry to promise that any future arms reduction treaties would be sent to the Senate for ratification, considering the past violations, rather than being simply agreed to by the two governments.

"I don't want to be commenting in some prophylactic way one side or the other without the specific situation in front of me. But I'm confident the president is committed to upholding the Constitution," Kerry responded, defending the administration's right to sign agreements without congressional consent.

Risch is one of multiple senators holding up Gottemoeller's confirmation as undersecretary of state, which has been stalled for months. Sources also said Gottemoeller is being considered to replace Michael McFaul next year as U.S. ambassador to Russia.

Concerns about Russia's violations of the INF Treaty have been expressed repeatedly by members of the Senate Intelligence Committee and leading House members, including House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Mike Rogers.

"Since October, we have written to you twice with our concerns about a massive Russian violation and circumvention of an arms control obligation to the United States of great significance to this nation and to its NATO allies," McKeon and Rogers wrote in an April letter to Obama. "Briefings provided by your administration have agreed with your assessment that Russian actions are serious and troubling, but have failed to offer any assurance of any concrete action to address these Russian actions."

Russian officials have denied they are violating the INF Treaty but at the same time have signaled that at some point the country intends to withdraw from the treaty and pursue development of the currently banned weapons.

Sergei Ivanov, head of the office of President Vladimir Putin, told a Russian TV channel in June that Russia was looking for a way out of the agreement.

"Why is it that everyone and anyone can have this class of weapons and we and the United States cannot?" Ivanov said. "The question arises. On the one hand, we signed the Soviet-American agreement. We perform, but it cannot go on for infinity."

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/11/26/u-s-knew-russia-violated-intermediate-range-nuclear-forces-treaty.html?url=/articles/2013/11/26/u-s-knew-russia-violated-intermediate-range-nuclear-forces-treaty.html>

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

Great Falls Tribune – Great Falls, MT

Pentagon: No Decision yet on ICBM Future

DOD: Assessment is needed for timely options

By Jenn Rowell, Tribune Staff Writer

November 26, 2013

Discussions regarding nuclear reductions to meet the limits required by the New START treaty are ongoing, but no decisions have yet been made.

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Last week, the Senate debated the 2014 National Defense Authorization Act before recessing until Dec. 9. There were more than 500 proposed amendments to the defense bill.

Several of those amendments would prevent the Department of Defense from using funds provided in the legislation to reduce nuclear weapons below levels required by New START and to require the DOD to maintain all existing intercontinental ballistic weapon silos, including the 150 at Malmstrom Air Force Base, in at least “a warm status” for the fiscal year.

Warm status means the silos remain fully functional and able to be made fully operational with a missile.

Last week a circulated Air Force timeline, which was also sent to the Great Falls Tribune from a House Republican staffer, indicated an environmental assessment would begin in December to determine which ICBM squadron would be eliminated under New START. The timeline indicated the Air Force would begin pulling missiles from silos in December 2014 and start to eliminate those silos in March 2016.

The Pentagon has not confirmed the timeline or that eliminating an ICBM squadron is the preferred option. And if the Senate also passes a version of the NDAA that includes the same language prohibiting the DOD from using funding to conduct the environmental assessment, then it’s unlikely the DOD would be able to start the study in December, which is estimated to take nine months to consider the squadron elimination option.

“No final decision has yet been made regarding what force reductions will be implemented to comply with the New START Treaty,” said Cynthia O. Smith, DOD spokeswoman. “An environmental assessment would be required to timely implement options under consideration. For this reason, the USAF remains prepared to do so when directed.”

The amendments on the defense bill would only apply to fiscal year 2014, which ends Sept. 30, and Congress would have to pass the same legislation next year to continue to prevent the DOD from moving toward nuclear reductions as required by New START.

The treaty, ratified by the Senate in 2010, limits both the United States and Russia to no more than 1,550 deployed warheads; 800 deployed and nondeployed ICBM launchers; submarine-launched ballistic missile launchers and heavy bombers; and to have reduced their deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear armaments to no more than 700.

According to data from the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance at the State Department, the U.S. has 809 deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers; Russia has 473. The U.S. has 1,688 warheads on deployed ICBMs, SLBMs and nuclear warheads counted for deployed heavy bombers; Russia has 1,400. The U.S. has 1,015 deployed and nondeployed launchers of ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers; Russia has 894. The deadline to reach those limits is February 2018.

A number of congressmen have advocated maintaining all 450 ICBM silos and putting 20 to 50 in “reserve status.” Those silos, however, would still be counted under New START. The treaty requires that the silos being reduced under New START be eliminated or destroyed, though there is a provision allowing either country to use another method to disable the silo from being able to launch an ICBM.

The House of Representatives already passed a version of the defense bill that included a requirement to maintain all 450 ICBM silos for the remainder of the fiscal year, an amendment supported by Rep. Steve Daines. Another amendment prohibited the DOD from using funds to conduct an environmental study related to the reduction of ICBMs. The Senate Armed Services Committee passed a similar amendment earlier this year, with support from Sens. Jon Tester and Max Baucus.

The Air Force has repeatedly said its baseline plan is to reduce ICBM launchers to 420, and several congressmen, including Tester and Baucus, have indicated they would prefer pulling 10 silos from each of the three ICBM bases. Malmstrom is one, along with Minot AFB in North Dakota and F.E. Warren in Wyoming.



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According to a Congressional Research Service report, the U.S. could maintain 420 ICBM silos, or possibly all 450, if it cut more heavy bombers and converted Trident submarines to only carry 20 launchers.

In 2001, the George W. Bush administration said the U.S would reduce its strategic nuclear forces to 1,700 to 2,200 "operationally deployed warheads" and codified that with the 2002 Moscow Treaty.

That required Congress to lift an eight-year restriction on reducing strategic nuclear delivery vehicles below those required under START I, according to the Congressional Research Service.

In 2005, the Bush administration announced further reductions, including the elimination of 50 ICBMs at Malmstrom that are now in the process of being destroyed so that they don't count in the New START limits.

<http://www.greatfallsribune.com/article/20131126/NEWS01/311260006/Pentagon-No-decision-yet-ICBM-future>

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

The Wall Street Journal
OPINION/ Review & Outlook

Iran's Nuclear Triumph

Tehran can continue to enrich uranium at 10,000 working centrifuges.

November 24, 2013

President Obama is hailing a weekend accord that he says has "halted the progress of the Iranian nuclear program," and we devoutly wish this were true. The reality is that the agreement in Geneva with five Western nations takes Iran a giant step closer to becoming a de facto nuclear power.

Start with the fact that this "interim" accord fails to meet the terms of several United Nations resolutions, which specify no sanctions relief until Iran suspends all uranium enrichment. Under this deal Iran gets sanctions relief, but it does not have to give up its centrifuges that enrich uranium, does not have to stop enriching, does not have to transfer control of its enrichment stockpiles, and does not have to shut down its plutonium reactor at Arak.

Mr. Obama's weekend statement glossed over these canyon-sized holes. He said Iran "cannot install or start up new centrifuges," but it already has about 10,000 operational centrifuges that it can continue to spin for at least another six months. Why does Tehran need so many centrifuges if not to make a bomb at the time it pleases?

The President also said that "Iran has committed to halting certain levels of enrichment and neutralizing part of its stockpiles." He is referring to an Iranian pledge to oxidize its 20% enriched uranium stockpile. But this too is less than reassuring because the process can be reversed and Iran retains a capability to enrich to 5%, which used to be a threshold we didn't accept because it can easily be reconverted to 20%.

Mr. Obama said "Iran will halt work at its plutonium reactor," but Iran has only promised not to fuel the reactor even as it can continue other work at the site. That is far from dismantling what is nothing more than a bomb factory. North Korea made similar promises in a similar deal with Condoleezza Rice during the final Bush years, but it quickly returned to bomb-making.

As for inspections, Mr. Obama hailed "extensive access" that will "allow the international community to verify whether Iran is keeping its commitments." One problem is that Iran hasn't ratified the additional protocol to its International Atomic Energy Agency agreement that would allow inspections on demand at such sites as Parchin, which remain off limits. Iran can also oust U.N. inspectors at any time, much as North Korea did.

Then there is the sanctions relief, which Mr. Obama says is only "modest" but which reverses years of U.S. diplomacy to tighten and enforce them. The message is that the sanctions era is over. The loosening of the oil regime is especially pernicious, inviting China, India and Germany to get back to business with Iran.

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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We are told that all of these issues will be negotiated as part of a "final" accord in the next six months, but that is not how arms control works. It is far more likely that this accord will set a precedent for a series of temporary deals in which the West will gradually ease more sanctions in return for fewer Iranian concessions.

Iran will threaten to walk away from the talks without new concessions, and Mr. Obama will not want to acknowledge that his diplomatic achievement wasn't real. The history of arms control is that once it is underway the process dominates over substance, and a Western leader who calls a halt is denounced for risking war. The negotiating advantage lies with the dictatorship that can ignore domestic opinion.

Mr. Obama all but admitted this himself by noting that "only diplomacy can bring about a durable solution to the challenge posed by Iran's nuclear program." He added that "I have a profound responsibility to try to resolve our differences peacefully, rather than rush towards conflict." Rush to conflict? Iran's covert nuclear program was uncovered a decade ago, and the West has been desperately trying to avoid military action.

The best that can be said is that the weekend deal slows for a few weeks Iran's rapid progress to a nuclear breakout. But the price is that at best it sets a standard that will allow Iran to become a nuclear-capable regime that stops just short of exploding a bomb. At worst, it will allow Iran to continue to cheat and explode a bomb whenever it is strategically convenient to serve its goal of dominating the Middle East.

This seems to be the conclusion in Tehran, where Foreign Minister Javad Zarif boasted that the deal recognizes Iran's right to enrich uranium while taking the threat of Western military action off the table. Grand Ayatollah Ali Khomeini also vouchsafed his approval, only days after he denounced the U.S. and called Jews "rabid dogs."

Israel has a different view of the deal, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calling it a "historic mistake." He and his cabinet will now have to make their own calculations about the risks of unilateral military action. Far from having Israel's back, as Mr. Obama likes to say, the U.S. and Europe are moving to a strategy of trying to contain Israel rather than containing Iran. The French also fell into line as we feared they would under U.S. and media pressure.

Mr. Obama seems determined to press ahead with an Iran deal regardless of the details or damage. He views it as a legacy project. A President has enormous leeway on foreign policy, but Congress can signal its bipartisan unhappiness by moving ahead as soon as possible to strengthen sanctions. Mr. Obama warned Congress not to do so in his weekend remarks, but it is the only way now to stop the President from accommodating a nuclear Iran.

<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304465604579217981168000434>

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

The Washington Times – Washington, D.C.

OPINION/Commentary

SPALDING: Maintaining a Credible Nuclear Deterrence

Just as nuclear bombers need refurbishing, their bombs do, too

By Robert S. Spalding III

Monday, November 25, 2013

Over the years, I have flown literally thousands of practice bomb runs. Each time, I concentrated on the tactics, techniques and procedures of delivering the bomb on time and on target. While I may have been concerned about threats, communications, navigation or a myriad number of things that may cause my run to be less than perfect, there was one thing I never worried about: the weapon.

The credibility of the United States' nuclear deterrence hangs in the balance as the country decides whether or not to extend the life of the B61 nuclear bomb. As Gen. C. Robert Kehler so eloquently put it during recent congressional

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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testimony, “deterrence statements are backed with credible military forces — that includes reliable weapons, that includes trained people, [and] plans to use them.”

The B61 weapon is more than 40 years old, and its reliability is declining. Nevertheless, there are those that think we can make do with what we have. Philip Coyle, a co-author of the recent Union of Concerned Scientists report on the nuclear enterprise, even went so far as to say that “[National Nuclear Security Administration’s] plan [to refurbish the B61] violates the spirit if not the letter of the administration’s pledge to not develop new nuclear weapons. It sends the wrong message to the rest of the world.”

Let’s use the nuclear bomber inventory as an example to examine the argument. The B-52H is currently undergoing modifications to enhance communication and avionics. Nobody is claiming that at the end of the modification contract the Air Force will have a new bomber. They will still be B-52s.

Some question why we cannot use the B83 instead (a newer weapon), and do away with the B61. As Gen. Kehler mentioned in his congressional testimony of Oct. 29, the B83 is not certified for all of the bombers and fighters required. In addition, the B83 would have to enter a similar life-extension plan entailing more costs in the future.

In order to understand why the B61 must be refurbished, it is helpful to understand the life cycle of weapon systems in the U.S. Air Force inventory. As weapon systems age, their components become obsolete. Original manufacturers sometimes go out of business. In some cases, military contract officers are forced to look for new sources to replicate the original manufacturing or repair process. Over time, this becomes increasingly expensive. Imagine paying 10 times the original cost for a part that is obsolete just so you can keep your 40-plus-year-old car running. Eventually, the cost and lack of new replacement parts makes the weapon system cost-prohibitive and unsustainable.

The B-2, the primary aircraft for the B61, also faces these same challenges, as do other weapon systems in the U.S. nuclear forces inventory. In essence, we can no longer refurbish the parts needed to repair it, so new parts must be designed and produced. Often these new parts carry with them new capability. For example, the original computers in the B-2 are less powerful than today’s smartphones. Fortunately, these computers are in the process of being replaced, and the increased computing power will, in essence, make the B-2 more capable, safe and reliable, as well as less expensive to operate.

The plans and training that go into a credible nuclear deterrent is wasted if the equipment is neither cost-effective to operate nor reliable. Since the 1950s, the United States has invested decades of effort and billions of dollars to develop a nuclear force that is credible. The time, effort and resources required to create the equipment, training and plans that make a credible nuclear deterrent represent an investment in our future security. For the most part, this capability is bought and paid for. Yet, it does require continued diligence to ensure the nuclear deterrent remains credible into the future.

Thus, refurbishing the B61 may seem to be overwhelming in this budget environment, but the alternative is a nuclear weapon of declining reliability. All of the hours spent training and the best plans in the world cannot compensate for this fact. Perhaps more damaging to U.S. foreign policy, however, is the diminished credibility of our nuclear deterrent.

Robert S. Spalding III is a military fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official position of the U.S. government, Department of Defense, U.S. Air Force or Air University.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/nov/25/spalding-maintaining-a-credible-nuclear-deterrence/>

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

Mainichi Daily News – Mainichi, Japan
OPINION/Editorial

Editorial: China Should Stop its Provocative Acts

November 26, 2013

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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The Chinese Defense Ministry has established an air defense identification zone over most areas of the East China Sea, and has warned that it will scramble fighters if aircraft flying in the zone fail to abide by rules set by the ministry.

Such an act is extremely outrageous and dangerous. Over more than half a century, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have maintained their own air defense identification zones over the East China Sea, thereby maintaining peace and order in the region. These are long established practices although there is no clause in international law that provides for establishment of air defense identification zones.

However, China has declared that it will unilaterally occupy the airspace over the area by force, which is a provocative act that poses a threat to security in Asia.

The East China Sea is close to U.S. bases in Okinawa Prefecture. Should a missile crisis occur in North Korea, Japanese and U.S. fighters and warning planes would fly over the sea. In such cases, would China scramble fighters to expel Japanese and U.S. planes from its zone? Chinese leaders, who are excited over their country's increased wealth and strengthened military power, should calm down and recognize how dangerous a military conflict with the United States would be.

It is only natural that Washington is wary of China's latest move. At a bilateral summit meeting in June, U.S. President Barack Obama and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping confirmed that the two countries have a "new type of great power relationship." Washington also agreed to allow the Chinese Navy to operate in the Pacific Ocean. Still, that does not mean that China has been granted the exclusive right to operate in the western Pacific. The agreement is based on the premise that Chinese forces, which are not used to abiding by international rules and tend to display dangerous and self-righteous behavior, will act decently.

For a Chinese fleet of military vessels to operate on the high seas, warning, escort and anti-submarine aircraft must fly over them. China apparently wants command of the air over the East China Sea and the South China Sea to not only prevent overseas forces from approaching the Chinese Continent but also so China can advance onto the high seas.

It appears as though Chinese forces desire a confrontation with the United States on the Pacific Ocean. As such, the United States should clearly warn China over its provocative acts.

The Japanese government has demanded that the Chinese government retracts its establishment of an air defense identification zone over the East China Sea. Such a zone is different from territorial sovereignty, but the Senkaku Islands in Okinawa Prefecture, which are part of Japan's territory, are situated within the zone recently established by China. If Chinese military planes are to fly over the islands, it would constitute infringement on Japan's sovereignty. Such an act would also be inconsistent with Beijing's insistence that the dispute on sovereignty over the islands should be shelved.

China should retract its air defense identification zone and seek consultations over the issue with other countries that have earlier established such zones. A lack of a Japan-China military dialogue, like one between the United States and China, also poses a risk. Since the United States has established an alliance with Japan and South Korea, Washington could get involved in Tokyo's military friction with Beijing.

The Chinese government led by President Xi has been absorbed in the "Chinese Dream" of surpassing the United States in all aspects. However, China has been enjoying rapid economic growth thanks to peace and order in Asia. China's provocative acts that threaten the region's peace and order could give the international community the impression that China is dreaming of another violent cultural revolution.

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/perspectives/news/20131126p2a00m0na019000c.html>

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

The Boston Globe
OPINION/Editorial

Nonproliferation Treaty's Flaws are Evident in Iran Dispute

Issue No. 1092, 27 November 2013

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Editorial

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IN 1968, as the world celebrated a landmark treaty aimed at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons, State Department policy planners delivered a somber warning: The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty has a fundamental flaw. It allows countries that forswear nuclear weapons to have access to peaceful nuclear technology, but it doesn't define what "peaceful" means. Enriching uranium and stockpiling separated plutonium — which could be used either for nuclear power or building a bomb — are allowed, as long as the work is overseen by international inspectors and its declared purpose is peaceful. "It is therefore possible for a nation to proceed a considerable distance towards a bomb capability to achieve an advanced state of nuclear pregnancy while remaining within the strictures" of the treaty, the policy planners wrote. Such nations, they predicted, could withdraw from the treaty and have a bomb within a year. Even worse, the treaty never spells out what the consequences of withdrawal are.

These flaws were probably unavoidable. Few countries would have signed onto the treaty if it meant giving up key steps to nuclear power, which was seen as a panacea for the world's energy problems at the time. Indeed, the treaty specifically states that nothing in its pages removes the "inalienable right" to research, produce, and use nuclear energy.

But today, the treaty's vague language has become a serious problem. Iran interprets the treaty broadly; it believes almost anything short of inserting fissile material into a warhead is allowed. Iran also demands recognition of its "inalienable right" to enrich uranium. The United States disagrees, arguing that the capacity to enrich is not necessary for nuclear power — obtaining fuel from reputable international sources is generally much cheaper — and that rights under the treaty are only guaranteed to countries with a clean bill of health from weapons inspectors.

The treaty ought to be updated to reflect what the world now knows about peaceful nuclear activities. Instead of guaranteeing ambiguous rights, it should guarantee access to enriched-uranium fuel banks. But since changing the treaty is difficult, the United Nations Security Council should pass a resolution that expands the powers of weapons inspectors in countries deemed to be out of compliance and spells out dire consequences for countries that withdraw.

Iran is not the only country that experts deem "nuclear-pregnant." Argentina, Brazil, Japan, Germany, and the Netherlands all enrich uranium on their own soil. According to Robert Zarate, of the Foreign Policy Initiative, "Iranians want to be like Japan — a screwdriver's turn away from the bomb."

While the preoccupation with Iran is warranted, the world almost must also deal with the rise of this new class of "virtual nuclear powers." Fixing the serious gaps in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty should be the focus of policy planners today.

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/editorials/2013/11/27/fix-nuclear-nonproliferation-treaty/nfxVTTqymKehc4fRr579CM/story.html>

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

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