



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1093, 06 December 2013

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Press TV – Iran

Dismantling Nuclear Facilities Red Line for Iran: Rouhani

Saturday, November 30, 2013

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says Tehran is using its nuclear energy program solely for peaceful purposes and dismantling the country's nuclear facilities is "100%" a red line.

"Nuclear activities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as has been repeatedly said, will be purely for peaceful purposes," Rouhani said in an interview with *The Financial Times* published on Friday, adding, "our [defense] doctrine has no room for weapons of mass destruction."

Asked whether dismantling Iran's nuclear facilities was a "red line" for the Islamic republic, Rouhani replied, "100 percent."

The president's remarks came after a historic deal between Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council - Russia, China, France, Britain and the US - plus Germany in the Swiss city of Geneva to lay the groundwork for the full resolution of the West's decade-old dispute with Iran over its nuclear energy program.

In exchange for Iran's confidence-building bid to limit certain aspects of its nuclear activities, the six world powers agreed to lift some of the existing sanctions against the Islamic Republic. The deal does not call for dismantling Iran's nuclear facilities.

Rouhani said Iran's nuclear energy program has been "under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency" and its "nuclear sites are being constantly inspected with IAEA cameras."

Rouhani downplayed the impact of US-led sanctions on Iran's economy, saying that under the existing sanctions his government has managed to lower the inflation rate and foresee a positive economic growth for the next Iranian year.

Commenting on Iran's relations with the United States, the president said, "Iran-US problems are very complicated and cannot be resolved over a short period of time. Despite the complications, there has been an opening over the past 100 days, which can later widen."

"The problems created over 35 years cannot be resolved over a limited time. The best test to see whether we are capable of building trust or not is this nuclear issue," Rouhani added.

He also noted that some steps have been taken by Iran and the UK to move toward better relations.

The Iranian president expressed concern about the presence of terrorist groups in Syria, saying the continuation of the bloodshed and civil war in Syria is against the region's stability and should worry all countries.

"I am currently in negotiations with regional and western countries over the future of Syria. We are doing our best to help put an end to the civil war in Syria and for all terrorists to leave Syria," he added.

Rouhani rejected the claim that Iran is secretly involved in negotiations with the US over Syria, but he said if Tehran attends the upcoming Geneva II talks on the Syrian crisis, "it will naturally talk to all members who will be present there."

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2013/11/30/337493/dismantling-nfacilities-red-line-for-iran/>

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France 24.com

Iran Has Final Say on Nuclear Enrichment, says Zarif

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

30 November 2013

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AFP - Iran will decide the level of uranium enrichment in its nuclear programme based on its energy and other civilian needs, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in remarks reported Saturday.

His remarks appeared to conflict with the landmark nuclear deal struck with world powers in Geneva last weekend, which states that the enrichment level must be mutually defined and agreed upon by both sides in further negotiations.

"Iran will decide the level of enrichment according to its needs for different purposes," Zarif said late Friday night, according to the official IRNA news agency.

"Only details of the enrichment activities are negotiable," he said, referring to a final accord with the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany -- known as the P5+1 group -- that the parties hope to negotiate within a year.

The interim agreement reached in Geneva set out trust-building measures by both sides to be implemented in a six-month period, during which negotiations over the final accord must begin.

Iran agreed to freeze expansion of its nuclear activities -- which Western powers and Israel suspect mask military objectives despite repeated Iranian denials -- and to cap enrichment of above low-level purity, including 20 percent.

Israel and Western powers hope the final accord will drastically scale back Iran's enrichment programme, which is currently producing the low-enriched uranium required for electricity and medical isotopes but could be ramped up to produce the highly enriched uranium which is a key element of a nuclear weapon.

Iran has repeatedly said it will not seek nuclear weapons while insisting it has the "right" to enrich uranium under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"We have always said we will not allow anyone to determine our needs," Zarif was quoted as saying by the Fars news agency. "But we are prepared to negotiate about it."

According to the interim deal, the final accord must "involve a mutually defined enrichment programme with mutually agreed parameters consistent with practical needs."

But it also calls for 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."

<http://www.france24.com/en/20131130-iran-has-final-say-nuclear-enrichment-says-zarif>

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Asharq Al-Awsat – London, U.K.

US Offers to Destroy Syrian Chemical Weapons

US government to contribute "full operational support and financing to neutralize" weapons offshore, OPCW director-general said

Posted by: Asharq Al-Awsat

Saturday, 30 November 2013

Amsterdam, Associated Press—The United States has stepped forward to help destroy some of the most lethal parts of Syria's chemical weapons stockpile at an offshore facility, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said Saturday.

The international organization's director-general, Ahmet Uzumcu, said the US government will contribute "a destruction technology, full operational support and financing to neutralize" the weapons offshore, most likely on a ship in the Mediterranean Sea. The weapons are to be removed from Syria by Dec. 31.

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The OPCW also wants nearly 800 tons of chemicals, many of which are industrial chemicals regularly destroyed at civilian facilities all over the world, to be destroyed by private companies as part of the organization's ambitious plan to completely eradicate Syria's chemical weapons program by mid-2014.

Uzumcu said 35 private companies have applied so far and are at an early stage of being vetted. He also called on governments of the 190 countries that belong to the OPCW to contribute funds to the effort, or by contracting directly with companies to help destroy chemicals.

The OPCW was charged with overseeing the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal under an agreement reached between the US and Syrian ally Russia on Sept. 14. The US then shelved plans for a military strike on Syria's government as punishment for a chemical weapons attack on Damascus on Aug. 21 that killed more than a thousand civilians. Syria's government acknowledged it possessed chemical weapons and committed to giving them up.

Since then OPCW is scrambling to meet ambitious deadlines for disarming and destroying Syria's estimated 1,300-ton arsenal, which includes mustard gas. Syria's production capacity was destroyed or rendered inoperable by the end of October, the OPCW said, and now it is tackling the tougher problem of how to deal with its existing weapons and hazardous chemicals.

An initial plan to destroy the weapons on land was rejected after no country was willing to accept the hazardous waste. The possibility of destroying it in Syria itself was rejected as unworkable amid the country's civil war. In Saturday's statement, the OPCW said a suitable US naval vessel "is undergoing modifications to support the operations and to accommodate verification activities by the OPCW."

The Associated Press reported on Thursday that the ship in question is likely the MV Cape Ray, which would destroy chemical materials using a process developed by the Pentagon but never employed in an actual operation.

Citing several officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to identify themselves, the AP reported the US plans to use what it calls a mobile Field Deployable Hydrolysis System to neutralize the chemical material, making it unusable as weapons. The system was developed by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, which is an arm of the Pentagon. Its titanium reactor uses heated water and chemicals to render hazardous material inert.

According to the officials, two of the hydrolysis units would be mounted on the Cape Ray under the current plan.

The OPCW's executive council met Friday night and a general meeting of member states begins Monday.

<http://www.aawsat.net/2013/11/article55324046>

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FARS News – Iran

Sunday, December 01, 2013

President: Iran to Build 2nd N. Power Plant in Bushehr

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran has plans to generate more electricity through the nuclear energy in the coming years by building a second nuclear power plant in the Southern province of Bushehr, President Hassan Rouhani announced.

"Our first nuclear power plant is active in the (Bushehr) province which will develop, God willing," Rouhani said, addressing provincial managers and officials of Bushehr province on Saturday night.

The Islamic Republic signed the Bushehr contract with Russia in 1995 and the nuclear power plant reached its full capacity by August 2012. It is located about 18 kilometers South of the provincial capital.

"Based on our estimates, the second nuclear power plant will be built in the same province and I hope that we can use the facilities of this province," Rouhani added.

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In relevant remarks in November, Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Ali Akbar Salehi said most of Iran's new power plants will be built near the country's coasts in the South and the North.

Salehi said a majority of Iran's new nuclear facilities will be on the Southern coasts of the Persian Gulf and Northern coasts of the Caspian Sea while another part would be in Central Iran.

"The power plants should have access to a huge source of water. The new power plants will be supported by desalinations, mainly located in Southern parts of the country," the top Iranian nuclear official pointed out.

"We are not obliged to introduce to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) the nuclear facilities that we are to build in the future and only 180 days before entry of nuclear substances there, we will inform the IAEA of them," Salehi said.

Also in October, Salehi announced that Iran has plans to generate more electricity through the nuclear energy in the coming years.

"We are considering construction of power plants along the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea as well as the Central parts of Iran, but priority is given to the Persian Gulf coasts because we want to pave the way for (construction of) water desalination facilities to supply drinking water for the Southern provinces of Iran," Salehi told reporters at the time.

Iranian officials say the Persian Gulf country needs enough atomic reactors to generate a total of 20,000 megawatts of electricity by 2020.

Deputy Head of AEOI Mohammad Ahmadian announced in mid-September 2012 that Iran has identified 34 potential sites for building additional nuclear power plants.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920910000312>

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FARS News Agency – Iran
Sunday, December 01, 2013

US President Willing to Visit Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) - A Kuwaiti newspaper said that US President Barack Obama is waiting to receive an invitation from his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani to visit Iran.

The Arabic-language Kuwaiti newspaper, Al-Jarida, added President Obama is willing to be the first American president who would visit Iran since the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in that country, the Islamic republic news agency reported.

Al-Jarida was quoting a US diplomatic source.

The source said that President Obama is willing to visit Iran by mid-2014.

Late in September, the Iranian and the US presidents talked over phone before President Rouhani's departure from New York.

The two presidents talked over the phone as President Rouhani was in a car and heading towards the New York International Airport.

President Rouhani and President Obama discussed different issues during their phone conversation.

The Iranian and US presidents underlined the need for a political will for expediting resolution of West's standoff with Iran over the latter's nuclear program.

President Rouhani and President Obama stressed the necessity for mutual cooperation on different regional issues.



On Friday, President Rouhani underscored that Iran and the US have to begin confidence-building measures before they could repair their damaged ties.

Speaking in an interview with The Financial Times published on Friday, the Iranian president said that the ongoing nuclear negotiations are allowing the two sides to “test” whether they are capable of having a different relationship.

“Problems of 35 years cannot be resolved in a short period of time. We need to decrease tensions at this stage and create mutual trust step by step,” President Rouhani underlined. “If the steps taken in (the interim nuclear deal agreed in) Geneva are implemented carefully and precisely, it would mean that we have taken one step forward towards trust,” he added.

“I found him (US President Barack Obama) to be someone with very polite and smart language,” said the Iranian president, adding, “The problems with the US are very complicated ... but despite the complexities there has been an opening over the past 100 days which can later widen.”

The United States and Iran broke diplomatic relations in April 1980, after Iranian students seized the United States' espionage center at its embassy in Tehran. The two countries have had tense relations ever since, but have shown willingness to attend talks to help resolve regional issues, including security in Iraq. Yet, the two countries have avoided talks on bilateral issues for the last thirty years.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920910000460>

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The Jerusalem Post – Israel

Report: Netanyahu Orders Mossad to Find Proof Iran Violating Nuclear Accord

'Sunday Times' quotes Israeli defense sources as saying Jerusalem wants to discredit Geneva deal by finding evidence of Iranian duplicity.

By JPOST.COM STAFF

01 December 2013

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has ordered both the Mossad and Military Intelligence to search for evidence that Iran is continuing nuclear activities forbidden under the Geneva accord signed with world powers last week, *The Sunday Times* quoted Israeli defense sources as saying.

Proof that Iran was violating the terms of the six-month interim deal would complicate US President Barack Obama's push to delay the passage of new congressional sanctions against Iran while a long-term deal with Iran is being negotiated.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has repeatedly said, both before and after the signing of the deal in Geneva, that the agreement does not sufficiently curb Iran's ability to obtain nuclear weapons and prematurely offers the Islamic Republic sanctions relief.

“Everyone has his own view regarding the Geneva agreement,” the *Times* quoted an Israeli intelligence source as saying. “But it is clear that if a smoking gun is produced, it will tumble like a house of cards.”

The *Times* quoted Israeli defense sources as saying that Israeli intelligence was seeking to uncover clandestine activity in three areas of Iran's nuclear program - hidden uranium enrichment sites, ballistic missiles and bomb design.

“Iran would not have invested such a fortune [estimated at \$200 billion] if in the end it does not produce nuclear weapons and turn Iran into a regional superpower,” the paper quoted an Israeli official as saying.

<http://www.jpost.com/Iranian-Threat/News/Report-Netanyahu-orders-Mossad-to-find-proof-Iran-violating-nuclear-accord-333586>



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The Journal of Turkish Weekly – Ankara, Turkey

Arak Nuclear Site Continues to Operate, says Iranian FM

Anadolu Agency

4 December 2013

Arak nuclear site has not ceased its operations, Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif said Tuesday, presenting a source of concern for Western powers after they inked a temporary deal to curb the Middle East country's nuclear program.

Zarif addressed students in a panel on nuclear negotiations held at University of Tehran, where he said Iran's right to nuclear enrichment has been recognized in last month's deal.

Zarif said the nuclear ambitions of his country would be advanced, even if they are somewhat subdued under the deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister said the move to limit its enrichment to 5 per cent was not irreversible, and it would take his government no more than 24 hours to switch back currently enrichment levels of 20%, considered dangerous by the Western powers who fear Iran is seeking nuclear weapons.

Zarif reiterated that Iran did not want and need nuclear weapons but said its needs were not up to other countries to decide.

Iran and world powers reached an agreement on November 24 that asks the Islamic Republic to roll back its nuclear program in return for a mild easing of sanctions which are taking a toll on its economy.

The agreement, temporary in nature and spanning a period of six months, requires Iran to stop enriching uranium beyond 5 percent during this period, eliminate its stock enriched beyond this level, and open its nuclear sites to broader inspection.

The nuclear plant in Arak, still under construction, is one of the sticking points of the agreement. Western powers fear it may be used to produce plutonium for an atomic bomb, which Iran denies.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) says Iran has 196 kg of 20 percent enriched uranium, and 15,240 new generation centrifuges which are active in nuclear sites across the country.

Zarif earlier said the construction would go ahead despite the deal.

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/159279/arak-nuclear-site-continues-to-operate-says-iranian-fm.html>

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The Jerusalem Post – Israel

White House: Final Deal with Iran could Include Uranium Enrichment

US willing to negotiate strictly limited enrichment program if Tehran agreed to monitoring and limits on level, scope, capacity, stockpiles.

By JTA, Reuters

4 December 2013

WASHINGTON — A final deal with Iran could include a capacity for uranium enrichment, a White House spokesman said on Tuesday, seeking to clarify some of the terms of the interim deal signed between Tehran and world powers.

The United States does not recognize that Iran has a right to enrich, but "we are prepared to negotiate a strictly limited enrichment program in the end state," said Bernadette Meehan, a spokeswoman with the White House National Security Council.

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This is because the Iranians have indicated for the first time that they are prepared to accept "rigorous monitoring and limits on level, scope, capacity and stockpiles," she said in response to a query arising from a story first reported by the *Washington Free Beacon*.

It has been reported for months that the Obama administration and Western powers were prepared to tolerate low level enrichment as part of a permanent deal; Meehan's statements Tuesday were the first on-the-record confirmation.

Israel opposes any permanent enrichment capacity, saying that at even low levels, the infrastructure required for such enrichment leaves Iran perilously close to the ability to manufacture a weapon.

"If we can reach an understanding on all of these strict constraints, then we can have an arrangement that includes a very modest amount of enrichment that is tied to Iran's actual needs and that eliminates any near-term breakout capability," Meehan said. "If we can't, then we'll be right back to insisting on no enrichment."

Meehan cast the statement in response to persistent claims that the interim six-month deal agreed to last month by the major powers and Iran implies recognition of an Iranian "right" to enrich.

"Since the P5+1 would have to agree to the contours of a possible enrichment program, it is by definition not a 'right'," she said, using the acronym for the six powers – the United States, China, Russia, Germany, France and Britain – dealing with Iran.

"It is also important to note that Iran has acknowledged that issues raised in the UN Security Council resolutions have to be addressed and brought to a satisfactory conclusion before we agree to enrichment in the end state," Meehan said, an apparent allusion to complaints by Israel and congressional lawmakers that the interim agreement does not dismantle Iran's nuclear program, as required by the resolutions.

White House opposes new sanctions effort in Senate

The White House also said on Tuesday it opposes a fresh effort by some members of the US Senate to impose new sanctions against Iran, even if the new restrictions would not take effect for months.

Some senators have been discussing the idea of imposing new sanctions on Iran that would kick in after six months or if Iran violated terms of an interim deal reached 10 days ago that attempts to contain its nuclear program.

"If we pass sanctions now, even with a deferred trigger which has been discussed, the Iranians, and likely our international partners, will see us as having negotiated in bad faith," White House spokesman Jay Carney told reporters.

A recent survey conducted by Hart Research for the advocacy group Americans United for Change found that the majority of Americans want Congress to refrain from imposing new economic sanctions on Iran over the next six months.

Sixty-seven percent said they would prefer giving the interim deal signed in Geneva between Tehran and world powers a chance, while 25% disagreed, according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

The poll also found 34% of respondents supported the interim deal, while 22% opposed and 41% had no opinion. After a sample group was read a description of the deal, 63% favored it and only 24% were opposed.

Administration officials have been pushing lawmakers not to move ahead with a sanctions package, saying doing so risked alienating Tehran and other countries engaged in the talks by making Washington seem to be acting in bad faith.

But many lawmakers are skeptical about the agreement reached in Geneva between negotiators for Iran and the P5+1 and insist Washington should increase the pressure on Tehran by adding to sanctions.

Wendy Sherman, the US undersecretary of state for political affairs, who led the US negotiating team in Geneva, was scheduled to hold a classified briefing on Iran for the entire House of Representatives on Wednesday morning.



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The White House says a six-month window without new sanctions would allow negotiators to work on a comprehensive agreement to resolve the decade-old dispute over Iran's nuclear program, which has stirred fears of a new Middle East war.

But lawmakers believe it was tough sanctions pushed by Congress - not the White House - that brought Tehran to the table and see no reason not to spell out tough consequences if Iran does not comply with the interim deal.

"That way we're not negotiating in what-ifs," a Senate aide said.

Members of Congress, including many of President Obama's fellow Democrats, are generally more hawkish on Iran than the administration, and influential pro-Israel lobbyists have been pressing lawmakers to keep to a tough line.

Carney said there are concerns in the Obama administration that any new sanctions imposed by Congress would serve to undermine the core architecture of the sanctions program.

"Passing any new sanctions right now would undermine a peaceful resolution to this issue," he said.

Iran rejects allegations that it has sought covertly to develop the capacity to produce nuclear weapons, saying it is enriching uranium solely for civilian purposes.

Congressional aides said it was too early to know whether an Iran sanctions package would be introduced as standalone legislation or as an amendment to a measure such as a defense authorization bill being considered by the Senate.

It also was not clear how far any legislation would go in the Senate, where Obama's fellow Democrats control a majority of votes.

JPost.com staff contributed to this report.

<http://www.jpost.com/Iranian-Threat/News/White-House-Final-deal-with-Iran-could-include-uranium-enrichment-333908>

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The New York Times

Iran Acting to Allow Closer Monitoring of Nuclear Programme

By REUTERS

December 5, 2013

VIENNA — U.N. inspectors are to visit an Iranian plant on Sunday linked to a planned heavy-water reactor that could yield nuclear bomb fuel, taking up an initial gesture by Iran to open its disputed nuclear programme up to greater scrutiny.

The increased transparency is one of the various spin-offs from a dramatic diplomatic rapprochement over the past month highlighted by a deal Iran struck with six world powers to curb its nuclear programme in return for some easing of sanctions.

It will be the first time in more than two years that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is allowed to go to the Arak heavy-water production plant, which is designed to supply a research reactor under construction nearby.

The improved access will enable the Vienna-based U.N. nuclear watchdog to better "understand" the activities there, IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano said last week when he announced that Iran had invited his experts to come on December 8.

Iran's atomic energy organisation said this underlined the country's "goodwill to remove ambiguities about the peaceful nature of its nuclear energy programme", Press TV, Iran's English-language state television, reported on Wednesday.

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But Western diplomats and nuclear experts stress that Iran must do much more in order to fully address suspicions that it has been trying to develop the capability to assemble nuclear weapons, a charge the Islamic Republic denies.

Iran's heavy water-related work is of great concern for the West: plutonium, a nuclear bomb ingredient, can be extracted from the spent fuel of a reactor that is powered by natural uranium and uses heavy water as a coolant and moderator.

Iran, which says the reactor will make medical isotopes, promised last month to stop installation work there for six months as part of its breakthrough pact with global powers.

Tehran also pledged in the November 24 Geneva interim accord to halt its most sensitive uranium enrichment, activity which it says is for peaceful energy only but which could also be applied to creating the fissile core of atomic bombs.

Iran has moved quickly since Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate, became president in August on a pledge to allay international concern about its nuclear programme in exchange for relief from sanctions battering its oil-dependent economy.

After years of sharpening confrontation that raised fears of a new Middle East war, Rouhani's election created a rare diplomatic opportunity to smooth Iran's troubled relations with Western states and end its isolation.

In the course of a few weeks of intensive diplomacy, Iran struck two separate but still closely linked nuclear accords: one on November 11 with the IAEA on more transparency and a broader diplomatic pact with the United States, France, Germany, China, Russia and Britain in Geneva 13 days later.

Both are seen as important first steps towards ending a decade-old standoff over Tehran's atomic activities. But diplomats say many difficult hurdles remain to be overcome to reach a final settlement of the dispute, including differences over the scope and capacity of Iran's nuclear programme.

PARCHIN ACCESS?

The IAEA regularly goes to Iran's uranium enrichment plants at Natanz and Fordow and other nuclear sites, but it wants wider inspection powers to make sure there are no hidden atomic activities and no diversion of atomic material.

The Arak visit is the first of six concrete steps that Iran agreed to implement under its cooperation pact with the IAEA, which is investigating allegations that Iran has been studying how to make nuclear bombs. Iran denies any nuclear weapons aim.

The other measures Iran committed to take within three months include allowing the IAEA to see a uranium mine, Gchine, as well as furnishing information about more enrichment plants and reactors that it has previously said it plans to build.

The IAEA needs such access and data to gain a more complete picture of the Iranian nuclear programme, experts say.

Western diplomats have described the six steps as relatively easy for Iran to carry out - "low-hanging fruit" in the words of one envoy - and they say future action sought by the IAEA would probably be more difficult.

For example, the IAEA has made it clear it still wants to visit the Parchin military base southeast of Tehran where the U.N. agency believes nuclear weapons-relevant explosives tests were conducted, possibly a decade ago.

Last month's IAEA-Iran deal signalled a change in tactics after almost two years of fruitless negotiations focused on Parchin and other sensitive issues as part of the U.N. agency's investigation into suspected atomic bomb research by Tehran.

"This new approach starts with less controversial transparency issues but in subsequent phases...it will address the main IAEA concerns over the possible military dimensions to Iran's nuclear programme," the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), a U.S. think-tank, said.

The six initial measures "remain far from being enough to satisfy" U.N. inspectors' concerns, it added in an analysis.



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The existence of the Arak heavy-water plant, which has the capacity to produce 16 tonnes per year, was first revealed by an exiled Iranian dissident group 11 years ago.

Since its last visit in August 2011, the IAEA has been monitoring the site southwest of Tehran via satellite imagery. It said in August the plant appeared to still be in operation.

Editing by Mark Heinrich

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2013/12/05/world/middleeast/05reuters-iran-nuclear-arak.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

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Space Daily.com

N.Korea Resumes Missile Site Construction: US Institute

By Staff Writers

Seoul, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

November 30, 2013

North Korea has resumed construction work on a missile launch site on its northeast coast after a months-long hiatus, part of a renewed push for its nuclear and missile programmes, according to a US think-tank.

Recent satellite imagery shows work has resumed on new facilities at the North's Tonghae launch site, the US-Korea Institute of Johns Hopkins University posted on its 38 North website.

The facilities appear designed to test future generations of larger, more capable rockets, it said.

The restart of work at Tonghae indicates that North Korea is still committed to maintaining two launch sites along with the Sohae site on the west coast.

But the institute said there were no signs of an imminent long-range rocket test at either site.

The US-Korea Institute said in October that North Korea has undertaken major construction work at Sohae, possibly to cater to larger and more mobile weapons.

The Sohae site was used for the launch in December of the North's Unha-3 carrier, which successfully placed a satellite in orbit.

Construction at Tonhae had appeared to be on hold since early 2013.

But images taken between September 16 and November 18 show work resumed on the new launch control center and the assembly building, the US-Korea Institute said.

There is no sign of further construction yet at the new launch pad or on an access road, it said.

The North's rocket launch in December was condemned by most in the international community as a disguised ballistic missile test that violated UN sanctions on Pyongyang.

North Korea insisted it was a purely scientific mission and vowed to push ahead with similar launches in the future.

North Korea is pushing for a resumption of six-party talks on its nuclear programme, but the United States says it must first demonstrate a commitment to denuclearisation.

Another long-range rocket launch would be taken as a step in the opposite direction and almost certainly result in fresh sanctions.

The US-Korea Institute said in early November that the North was making progress on an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of delivering a first-generation nuclear warhead to the continental United States.

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Missile delivery has often been cited as the main weakness of the North's nuclear weapons programme which, after three tests, is believed to be close to mastering the key technology of warhead miniaturisation.

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/NKorea_resumes_missile_site_construction_US_institute_999.html

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

North Korean Leader's Uncle Removed from Power: Spy Agency

December 3, 2013

SEOUL, Dec. 3 (Yonhap) -- North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's uncle Jang Song-thaek has been removed from power, South Korea's spy agency said Tuesday.

The National Intelligence Service (NIS) made the assessment based on information provided by multiple reliable sources that claimed two of Jang's closest confidants were executed in public in late November.

It said that those accused were cited for corruption and activities that countered the stance of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea (WPK).

The agency speculated that it is still trying to determine the scope of the latest purge, although this is difficult since it seems to be an ongoing process.

The NIS said that after the executions, Jang has not been seen in public.

"Such signs are an indication that Jang has been dismissed from all posts, although it is not known why he fell out of favor," said the NIS source, who declined to be identified.

He added that the North's military establishment has been informed of the executions and speculated that the North Korean leader has given consent to such a move.

"It is likely that security agencies and the WPK's leadership is deeply involved, which means the leader gave consent," the source said.

Jang is the husband of Kim Kyong-hui, who is the aunt of the North Korean leader. He held the position of vice chairman of the powerful National Defense Commission and was widely regarded as the most influential figure in North Korea after the leader. He is credited with playing a role in Kim securing power after the sudden death of his father Kim Jong-il in late 2011.

The spy agency, meanwhile, said that Pyongyang seems to be trying to minimize the fallout from the executions and Jang's fall from power.

It said they did not know where Jang was or if the purge affected Kim Kyong-hui. Jang is reported to have had frosty relations with his wife.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/12/03/5/0401000000AEN20131203008500315F.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

N. Korea Defends Nuclear Weapons as 'Self-Defensive'

December 3, 2013

BEIJING, Dec. 3 (Yonhap) -- A North Korean official said Tuesday that his country's nuclear weapons are for self-defense, accusing the United States of taking what he calls a "hostile policy" toward the North.

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In a rare explanation of North Korea's nuclear weapons at a security forum in Beijing, Nam Jong-chol, senior researcher at the North's foreign ministry-affiliated Institute for Disarmament and Peace, also warned of a nuclear war in case of a military conflict on the Korean Peninsula.

"The U.S.' hostile policy against the DPRK (North Korea) has compelled us to possess self-defensive nuclear weapons," said Nam.

The researcher made the comments during the forum organized by the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific.

"If there is any military conflict on the Korean Peninsula, it will surely ignite a nuclear war," Nam said.

Nam said that North Korea has strengthened its nuclear capability.

"The U.S.' stance is a main reason for the DPRK to take measures to strengthen its nuclear deterrence in quality and in quantity," Nam said.

The six-party talks, which involved the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan, have been dormant since late 2008. Since conducting its third nuclear test in February, North Korea has repeatedly expressed its willingness to rejoin the six-party process "without preconditions."

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

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/12/03/92/0301000000AEN20131203008400315F.html>

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The Korea Herald – South Korea

67% of Americans View N.K. Nuke as Threat to the U.S., Poll Shows

December 4, 2013

Two out of three American people regard North Korea's nuclear weapons drive as a major threat to the well-being of the United States, according to poll results released Tuesday.

The survey of 2,003 adults nationwide showed 7 percent of them view North Korea as representing the greatest danger to the U.S., an identical percentage with Iraq.

The top threats were viewed as Iran and China, tied at 16 percent.

The poll was conducted by the Pew Research Center from Oct. 30 to Nov. 6. The margin of error is 2.5 percentage points.

Regarding views of long-standing global threats, 67 percent cited North Korea's nuclear program. In the previous poll in 2009, 69 percent said the communist nation's nuclear ambitions pose a major challenge. In a survey conducted shortly after the North agreed to abandon all of its nuclear program in September 2005, 66 percent considered its nuclear weapons development as a global threat.

"Iran's nuclear program continues to be one of the top global threats to the United States in the public's view," the research institute said, adding nearly seven in 10 Americans (68%) said that Iran's nuclear program is a major threat.

The survey, meanwhile, found that views of U.S. global importance and power have passed a key milestone, the institute said.

For the first time in surveys dating back nearly 40 years, a majority (53%) said the U.S. plays a less important and powerful role as a world leader than it did a decade earlier.

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"The share saying the U.S. is less powerful has increased 12 points since 2009 and has more than doubled -- from just 20% -- since 2004," it said. (Yonhap News)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20131204000265>

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The Korea Times – South Korea

Biden Tells NK to Drop Nuke Programs

December 6, 2013

By Nam Hyun-woo

U.S. Vice President Joe Biden on Friday sent a strong message to North Korea to drop its nuclear program, saying that the U.S. won't accept a permanent division of the two Koreas.

"The U.S. will not tolerate or accept nuclear-armed North Korea," Biden said during a speech at Yonsei University in Seoul. He said that North Korea should know that it cannot pursue prosperity unless it abandons its nuclear program.

During the speech he stressed, "There is one issue that many countries agree with. North Korea's nuclear program is a clear and present danger... Let there be no doubt, the U.S. is committed to do anything what it takes to defend our allies and ourselves against North Korean aggression."

He also warned that the reclusive regime cannot pursue prosperity unless it abandons such a weapons program.

Biden addressed variety of issues, including the significance of Korea-U.S. partnership, improvement of Korea-Japan relations and economic growth.

"The entire region will be more stable and more secure if the leading democracies -- Japan, South Korea and the United States -- are able to improve their relations and cooperation with one another," he said. He called for better relations between Korea and Japan to improve stability in the North East Asian region.

Biden said that Korea and the U.S. have shared a "journey," which was successful and prosperous due to "our parents' sacrifice," during the past 60 years.

"It's a fact, we, the U.S., could not have any better partner than South Korea to share that journey," he said.

Biden also appraised Korea's recent decision to join a U.S.-led regional trade pact, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, saying that he "welcomes" this.

Regarding China's unilateral announcement of its new air defense identification zone (ADIZ), he reiterated that he delivered "serious concerns" to China and that the U.S. does not recognize it.

Biden arrived in Korea on Thursday night on the final leg of his week-long Asia trip. He flew in from China after an earlier stop in Japan. He is scheduled to spend three days in Korea.

Before his speech, he visited Cheong Wa Dae and met President Park Geun-hye.

"It's never been a good bet to bet against America, and America will continue to place its bet on South Korea," said Biden during the meeting. "President Obama's decision to bring rebalance to the Pacific Basin is not in question. The United States never says anything it does not do," he added.

At his earlier stop in Tokyo, Biden has said that the U.S. is "deeply concerned" about China's move.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2013/12/116_147540.html

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The Bangkok Post – Thailand

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US Think Tank Sees More N. Korea Nuclear Activity

Agence France-Presse (AFP)
December 06, 2013

SATELLITE imagery shows that North Korea is stepping up nuclear activity in line with the regime's vows to expand its weapons program.

The Institute for Science and International Security, a private Washington-based research group opposed to nuclear proliferation, said an image taken on Tuesday of North Korea's main Yongbyon nuclear site showed steam at its fuel fabrication complex.

The steam could indicate that the building had gone into operation to produce additional fuel for the ageing plutonium reactor, although it could also just come from heating during North Korea's bitterly cold winter.

However, the think tank said it saw clear signs of further progress at Yongbyon, including construction of what looked like a pool near the centrifuge plant, although the exact purpose of the new structure was unclear.

"Recent commercial satellite imagery shows that North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear centre appears to be increasingly active," the think tank said in a report.

The findings are in line with a stream of indications that North Korea has been stepping up its nuclear program. In October, South Korea's spy agency confirmed that the communist state had restarted its five-megawatt plutonium reactor.

The UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, also reported steam on November 28. The IAEA relies on satellite imagery as North Korea kicked out inspectors in 2009.

North Korea has carried out three nuclear weapons tests, most recently in February, and has vowed to boost what it says is a deterrent to hostility from the US.

North Korea has recently also appealed for a resumption of talks, but US President Barack Obama's administration has refused talks without indications that Kim Jong-un's regime is ready to scale down its nuclear program.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/383486/us-think-tank-sees-more-n-korea-nuclear-activity>

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The Times of India – India

Prithvi-II Missile Successfully Test-Fired

Press Trust of India (PTI)
December 3, 2013

BALASORE (Odisha): India on Tuesday successfully test-fired indigenously developed nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile with a strike range of 350 km from a test range at Chandipur in Odisha as part of a user trial by defence forces.

The surface-to-surface missile was test-fired at around 10:05am from a mobile launcher in salvo mode from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range, about 15 km from here, defence sources said.

Describing the launch of the sophisticated missile as a complete success, ITR Director MVKV Prasad said all the mission parameters were met during the trial.

"The missile was randomly chosen from the production stock and the launch activities were carried out by the specially formed Strategic Force Command (SFC) and monitored by scientists of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as part of training exercise," the sources said.



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"The missile trajectory was tracked by DRDO radars, electro-optical tracking systems and telemetry stations located along the coast of Odisha," they said.

"The downrange teams onboard a ship deployed near the designated impact point in Bay of Bengal monitored the terminal events and splashdown," they said.

Inducted into India's Strategic Forces Command in 2003, Prithvi, the first missile developed by DRDO under India's prestigious IGMDP (Integrated Guided Missile Development Program), is now a proven technology, said a defence official.

"The launch was part of a regular training exercise of SFC and was monitored by DRDO scientists," he said.

Such training launches clearly indicate India's operational readiness to meet any eventuality and also establishes the reliability of this deterrent component of India's strategic arsenal, the official said.

Prithvi is capable of carrying 500 kg to 1,000 kg of warheads and is thrusted by liquid propulsion twin engines. It uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory.

The last user trial of Prithvi-II missile was successfully carried out from the same base on October 7.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Prithvi-II-missile-successfully-test-fired/articleshow/26777253.cms?>

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The Hindu – India

Agni V's Next Trial will be Canister-Based

Y. Mallikarjun

December 4, 2013

HYDERABAD -- In a crucial technological accomplishment, a simulated canister-based launch of a dummy missile weighing 50 tonnes was successfully carried out by scientists of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) recently.

With the success of the "Missile Ejection Test" (MET), DRDO missile technologists are gearing up to conduct the first canister-based test-firing of 5,000-plus km range nuclear weapons-capable Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) Agni-V in March-April, 2014.

"We were able to launch canister launch system for the first time", a top DRDO scientist told *The Hindu*. All parameters were achieved and the hardware and software applications for the simulated launch were tested. They included the launcher, canister interfacing with other elements. An important aspect was to keep the sealing intact between the missile and gas generator when the latter provided the thrust and ejected the system at high temperatures.

Missile exit velocity, inter-locking of instruments, sensors functioning and the subsequent sequencing of events were some of the crucial objectives that were met successfully. As the missile got ejected from the canister, sensors gave the signal to the computer to commence commands for subsequent events such as igniting the missile's first stage.

Another top missile technologist, who is closely involved with Agni-V mission, described the MET success as a "very important milestone and a prelude to the main launch." It laid the foundation and provided core competence to the DRDO for the canister launch system.

India joined an elite club of nations that possess the ICBM launch capability when the maiden test-firing of Agni-V was successfully conducted on April 19, 2012. Soon after the resounding success of the second Agni V mission on September 15 this year, Avinash Chander, DRDO Director General and Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister, and Director General (Missiles and Strategic Systems) V.G. Sekaran had announced that the next trial would be canister based.

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Mr. Avinash had also stated that Agni-V would become a quick reaction stop-and-launch system once provided with the canister-thrust capability. It will also impart high operational flexibility to the user.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/agni-vs-next-trial-will-be-canisterbased/article5422469.ece>

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The Economic Times – India

India's First N-Sub to Head for Sea Trials in Feb-March

By Rajat Pandit, Tamil News Network (TNN)

4 December 2013

NEW DELHI: India's first indigenous nuclear submarine INS Arihant will finally head for the open seas for extensive trials, which will include firing of its nuclear-tipped K-15 ballistic missiles, around February-March next year.

Though long in the making, considering that India's first thought of building a nuclear submarine started way back in 1970, the sea trials of INS Arihant will mark a critical milestone towards giving some much-needed credible teeth to the country's strategic deterrence posture.

Navy chief Admiral D K Joshi on Tuesday said INS Arihant's nuclear reactor, which went "critical" on August 10, was currently undergoing a series of graduated "activities" towards attaining 100% power at Visakhapatnam. "This will be completed over the next few weeks...thereafter the submarine will go for sea trials. It has already completed harbour-acceptance trials," he said.

The Navy as well as other agencies like the Department of Atomic Energy (DEA), Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and DRDO have not been in any tearing hurry to "fully load" the 83 MW pressurized light-water reactor on board the 6,000-tonne submarine.

"This is the first time the country has built a nuclear-powered vessel. With the reactor power being raised by 5-10% at a time, the tests are being conducted in a deliberate, meticulous manner," said another top officer.

Though India has the land-based Agni missiles and fighters like Mirage-2000s to deliver nuclear weapons, its nuclear weapons triad will be completed only when INS Arihant successfully completes its sea trials spread over at least 12 months.

The K-15 missiles, with a strike range of 750-km, have only been fired from submerged pontoons till now. They will have to pass muster during INS Arihant's trials, even as DRDO develops the 3,500-km K-4 missiles.

But the Navy seems quite confident. "Let me assure you that when INS Arihant is commissioned, it will not be toothless. She will have whatever she is supposed to have," said Admiral Joshi, speaking ahead of the Navy Day on Wednesday.

As reported earlier, India is also negotiating the lease of a second nuclear-powered submarine from Russia, at a cost of about \$1.5 billion, to bolster its ageing underwater combat arm. The Navy has been running INS Chakra, the Akula-II class nuclear submarine called "K-152 Nerpa", since April 2012 after paying Russia almost \$1 billion for a 10-year lease. Though these submarines are nuclear-propelled, they cannot be armed with nuclear missiles due to international treaties.

Nuclear-powered submarines, armed with long-range nuclear missiles, are considered to be the most effective and difficult-to-detect leg of the nuclear triad. The US leads the pack, with around 70 such submarines. While Russia has around 30, China, the UK and France have 8-12 each.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/indias-first-n-sub-to-head-for-sea-trials-in-feb-march/articleshow/26837962.cms>

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The London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

India 'Expanding its Uranium Enrichment Programme'

Satellite photographs obtained by Institute for Science and International Security suggest India is expanding its uranium enrichment programme

By Dean Nelson, New Delhi

05 December 2013

India is expanding its uranium enrichment programme which could allow it to double the size of its nuclear arsenal, a leading US think tank has claimed.

The allegation will intensify fears of nuclear arms race in Asia between India, its neighbouring enemy Pakistan and regional rival China. It will also raise eyebrows ahead of next week's talks in Vienna to finalise an agreement to curb Iran's uranium enrichment programme.

But while Tehran's nuclear ambitions are being reined in, India's capability is undergoing an expansion, the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) has claimed.

Based on satellite photographs, the American think tank said it believes India is stepping up its production of gas centrifuges to enrich uranium to nuclear weapon grade.

The photographs, which were taken in April, show that a building at its secret Rare Metals Plant near Mysore in Karnataka has been extended, it said.

"Commercial satellite imagery shows that the construction is finishing of what appears to be a second gas centrifuge facility at the Rare Materials Plant (RMP), near Mysore. This new facility could significantly increase India's ability to produce highly enriched uranium for military purposes, including more powerful nuclear weapons," the report by David Albright and Serena Kelleher-Vergantini stated.

ISIS has been a long term critic of India's nuclear programme, which it believes was established with "illegal purchases of goods and technology abroad" in defiance of international sanctions.

Its researchers have based their claims on a comparison of satellite images from 2010 which appeared to show a new plant under construction to develop gas centrifuges and pictures from earlier this year which indicate that construction is now close to completion.

The report said it was unclear however if the new plant marked an expansion of capacity or a replacement of an ageing facility.

Indian analysts said the report could damage India's hopes of buying uranium from foreign suppliers following its 2009 civil nuclear agreement with the United States. The deal was aimed at helping India ease its power generation crisis while assuring the international community of its responsible stewardship. It provides for inspection 14 of its 22 nuclear plants and calls for its civil and military programmes to be kept separate.

According to analyst Deba Mohanty, ISIS's claims are biased against India but could delay its hopes of reaching uranium supply agreements with countries like Australia.

"If the report is proven as ISIS puts it, then it could prevent the prospective trade between India and Non-Proliferation Treaty countries. It could harm the acquisition of uranium for India's civil nuclear programme," he said.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/india/10497930/India-expanding-its-uranium-enrichment-programme.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency – Russia

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Russia Speeds Up Development of New Strategic Bomber

28 November 2013

SOCHI, November 28 (RIA Novosti) – Russia will begin the full-scale R&D work on its future strategic bomber in 2014, a senior aircraft-manufacturing industry official said Thursday.

The project, known as PAK-DA (an acronym meaning “future long-range aircraft”), has been in the works for several years but was given the formal go-ahead by the Russian leadership last year.

“A decision was made this year to expedite the development of the PAK-DA aircraft,” Mikhail Pogosyan, head of Russia’s United Aircraft Corporation, said at a meeting on the future of the Russian air force chaired by President Vladimir Putin.

“We finished coordinating the project with the Defense Ministry in September and at present we are getting ready to start full-scale work on research and development of these aircraft next year,” Pogosyan said.

According to Russian media reports citing defense ministry sources, the Tupolev design bureau has won the PAK-DA development tender with its concept for a subsonic aircraft with a “flying wing” shape that provides superior “stealth capabilities.”

The Defense Ministry insisted that the PAK-DA should be equipped with advanced electronic warfare systems and armed with new nuclear-capable long-range cruise missiles in addition to a variety of high-precision conventional weapons.

The new bomber is expected to go into production by 2020 and will most likely be built at a new aircraft assembly line at Russia’s Kazan plant (KAPO), according to defense ministry officials.

The PAK-DA is due to replace Russia’s aging fleet of 63 Tupolev Tu-95MS Bear and 13 Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bombers in the next decade.

Pogosyan said Thursday that the preliminary tests of the modernized Tu-160 and Tu-95 bombers have been completed and they will now undergo a series of inspections by a state acceptance commission.

He did not specify the number of modernized aircraft to be inspected.

According to aircraft industry officials, the modernized bombers feature new weaponry, improved electronics and avionics that double their combat effectiveness.

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20131128/185110769/Russia-Speeds-Up-Development-of-New-Strategic-Bomber.html

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency – Russia

Russia Begins Deployment of Aerospace Defenses in Arctic

28 November 2013

MOSCOW, November 28 (RIA Novosti) – Russia has started the deployment of aerospace defense units in the Arctic and construction of an early missile warning radar in the country’s extreme north, the commander of Aerospace Defense Forces said Thursday.

“The expansion of [missile early warning] radar coverage is one of the key areas of our work, especially when it comes to [Russia’s] extreme north – we have already started the deployment of electronic warfare units in the Arctic,” Maj. Gen. Alexander Golovko said.

Golovko also said construction of an advanced early missile warning radar site has started near the town of Vorkuta, situated just north of the Arctic Circle.



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Russia is planning to complete its comprehensive missile early warning network by 2018. Four Voronezh-class radar stations that can easily be relocated are already part of this network.

A Voronezh-DM radar is on combat duty in the Krasnodar Territory and a Voronezh-M radar is in the Leningrad region. The Voronezh-DM radars in the Kaliningrad and Irkutsk regions are in the testing stage of operation.

In addition to the Vorkuta radar, the preparations for construction of new-generation radars are underway in the Krasnoyarsk and the Altai territories, as well as in central Russia (the Orenburg Region), Golovko said.

Voronezh-class radars have an operational range of 6,000 kilometers (3,700 miles). They are more energy-efficient, can be quickly redeployed to a new site and require a smaller crew to operate, compared to previous generation stations.

President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that Russia will put on combat duty seven Voronezh-class radars in the next five years.

The new radars will eventually replace the outdated Dnepr- and Daryal-class radars and close all gaps in radar coverage on Russia's borders.

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20131128/185114113/Russia-Begins-Deployment-of-Aerospace-Defenses-in-Arctic.html

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Xinhua News – China

Russia to Deploy S-500 Anti-Missiles in Two Years

November 29, 2013

MOSCOW, Nov. 29 (Xinhua) -- Russia will deploy its newest S-500 anti-missile systems in response to the deployment of Western anti-missile shield in Europe, a senior military officer said Friday.

"We'll be able to organize anti-missile defense ... This is our response to the U.S. anti-missile defense," said Kirill Makarov, deputy commander of Russia's airspace defense forces, in an interview with the state-run Russia-24 TV channel.

The S-500 systems are designed to destroy enemy's aircraft, middle-range and strategic missiles.

Makarov said that 10 S-500 systems will be put into service within two years. This is a more advanced version of the S-400 systems currently in service.

On Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia would deploy three new regiments equipped with the S-400 surface-to-air missile systems next year, with more advanced radar stations to be launched.

Currently, Russia has five S-400 regiments, two of which deployed around Moscow and the other three in the far eastern Primorye Territory, Baltic enclave of Kaliningrad and the Southern Military District, RIA Novosti news agency said.

The sixth regiment will join the two near Moscow by the end of 2013, and Russia plans to deploy 28 S-400 regiments by 2020.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-11/29/c_132929684.htm

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Defense One.com

Putin Eyeing Precision Conventional Weapons as Nuclear Substitutes

By Diane Barnes, Global Security Newswire

December 3, 2013

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Advanced conventional weapons are emerging as an "equal" to atomic arms in their capacity to ward off aggression, underlining a need for Moscow to bolster its focus on their development, Russian President Vladimir Putin told senior officials in comments released last week.

Putin's remarks -- issued to a Kremlin gathering on the preparation of "long-range high-precision weapons" -- might partly refer to conventional "hypersonic" arms under development in Russia as a response to a "prompt global strike" capability sought by the United States. However, the government-released transcript does not specifically identify which weapons he believes are in need of "an added boost" in development efforts by Moscow.

"High-precision weapons are becoming an increasingly important factor in non-nuclear deterrence, and perhaps even one of the most decisive factors," Putin said in a meeting transcript published last Friday.

"The degree of precision and power of today's high-precision weapons makes them essentially an alternative to nuclear weapons," he continued. "In some of their parameters they are quite simply equal to nuclear weapons in their effectiveness."

A future long-range, rapid-strike capability has been seen by some in the United States as a partial alternative to nuclear weapons for hitting important time-sensitive targets. The capability sought by Washington could allow U.S. forces to conduct a non-nuclear strike against any location in the world in one hour or less.

In July, a deputy Russian defense minister suggested that his nation's military would not begin to receive hypersonic delivery systems -- a possible analogue to the U.S. prompt global strike technology -- until 2018 at the earliest.

In Friday's transcript, though, Putin said his nation had already started supplying its military with the "high-precision weapons" under discussion.

Friday's exchange came on the heels of transcripts released earlier in the week from Kremlin meetings that addressed land, sea and air-based elements of the Russian nuclear deterrent.

<http://www.defenseone.com/threats/2013/12/putin-eyeing-precision-conventional-weapons-nuclear-substitutes/74819/?oref=d-channelriver?oref=d-interstitial-continue>

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Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) – Kuwait

Lavrov: After Deal with Iran No Need for Missile System for Europe

Gulf News

December 4, 2013

BRUSSELS, Dec 4 (KUNA) -- Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov Wednesday stated that NATO does not need a new missile defence shield after the interim agreement between Iran and the 5+1 Group in Geneva.

Speaking at a press conference at NATO headquarters after a meeting with NATO foreign ministers, he said that "some of the colleagues expressed their content and appreciation with the progress and even a breakthrough in terms of the Iran nuclear programme." "We noted that if the arrangement is implemented fully, if the Iranian nuclear programme will be closed completely and if the Iranian nuclear programme will be under strict control by the IAEA then there will be no reasons for creating missile defence system in Europe," he added.

Lavrov was speaking in Russian with English interpretation.

He said the NATO-Russia Council today discussed cooperation between the two sides, common threats and challenges, terrorism, Afghanistan, piracy.

He said we need to understand the tasks, goals and mandate of the new NATO mission in Afghanistan after 2014. "They should be working on strict basis on the form of the Security Council resolution," he added.

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<http://www.kuna.net.kw/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=2348451&language=en>

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Air Force Times.com

Rep. Hunter: U.S. should Use Tactical Nukes on Iran if Strikes become Necessary

By John T. Bennett, Staff writer

December 4, 2013

WASHINGTON — A hawkish House Republican says the United States should use tactical nuclear weapons to destroy Iranian nuclear facilities if war with the Islamic republic becomes necessary.

House Armed Services Committee member Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., threw down that bold gauntlet Wednesday morning during a C-SPAN interview in which he also suggested Middle East “culture” fosters dishonest negotiators.

Asked if war with Iran is inevitable, Hunter replied: “I sure as Hell hope not.”

But if push came to shove and US officials deemed strikes necessary, Hunter turned hawkish.

He said any American strike would be a “massive aerial bombing campaign,” adding that such a mission should not feature any “boots on ground.” Then, Hunter said the US should use its “tactical nuclear weapons” on Iranian targets.

A Congressional Research Service states the US possesses “a wide variety of systems that could carry nuclear warheads,” including “short-, medium-, and long-range ballistic missiles; cruise missiles; and gravity bombs.”

“The United States [has] deployed these weapons with its troops in the field, aboard aircraft, on surface ships, on submarines, and in fixed, land-based launchers,” according to CRS. “The United States articulated a complex strategy, and developed detailed operational plans, that would guide the use of these weapons in the event of a conflict.”

Notably, Sheldon Adelson, the top political donor to Republican candidates, also recently called for the US to nuke Iran.

Kingston Reif of the Center for Arms Control and Non-proliferation told Defense News that “the preventative, first-use of nuclear weapons against Iran would have a devastating impact on US national security and dismember US power and standing in the world.”

“That a senior Republican member of the House Armed Services Committee is even suggesting such a possible course of action is the height of reckless irresponsibility and so far out of bounds it is astonishing,” Reif said. “The first use of nuclear weapons against Iran would guarantee a mad Iranian dash to acquire nuclear weapons to deter future such US attacks, likely convince other potential US adversaries in the region and around the world to acquire their own nuclear weapons to ward off a potential future US attack.”

Hunter also slammed the recent preliminary pact between Tehran and the UN Security Council, under which Iran has agreed to cease some nuclear activities in return for sanctions relief and facility inspections.

“Iran has to do nothing,” Hunter said, saying the Obama administration intends to merely “pray Iran will act differently” than its various leaders have “for the last 40 years.”

Echoing other congressional Republicans and conservative pundits, Hunter said the White House and other Security Council nations erred in inking a preliminary Iran deal that allows Tehran to enrich any uranium. Hunter said Iranian officials are “not trustworthy,” then said all Middle Easterners — due to their “culture” — cannot be trusted at the negotiating table.

“It is part of the Middle East culture” to “do anything you can ... to get the best deal,” Hunter said.

Asked by a C-SPAN host if he believes all Middle Easterners are liars, Hunter did not directly discount the notion.

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The conservative HASC member also accused, citing the Iran deal, the Obama administration of “making friends with our former enemies” while purposely distancing America from longtime allies in the region like Saudi Arabia.

When a caller suggested Hunter and other GOP lawmakers are unwilling to “give peace a chance” with Iran, he suggested again that Iran is not a rational, honest negotiator.

Hunter also criticized the administration for negotiating with Iran when it has “invaded other nations by proxy,” pointing to its alleged support of terrorist organizations in Syria, Iraq and beyond.

To be sure, Washington Republicans are in lockstep against the preliminary Iran nuclear deal.

GOP members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee are expected to hammer Secretary of State John Kerry next Tuesday when he testifies on the preliminary pact.

In a preview of that House hearing, Danielle Pletka, an analyst at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, told Defense News on Tuesday that the text of the preliminary deal with Iran should have clearly stated that the US considers Tehran “a state sponsor of terror.”

Pletka bristled at the notion that Iran would have little incentive to agree to any deal that included such text.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/article/20131204/NEWS05/312040013/Rep-Hunter-U-S-should-use-tactical-nukes-Iran-strikes-become-necessary>

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

Bloomberg News

U.S. Bomber Planes at \$81 Billion Seen 47% More Than Plan

By Tony Capaccio
December 5, 2013

The U.S. Air Force’s new long-range bomber may cost as much as \$81 billion for the 100 planes planned, 47 percent more than the \$55 billion sticker price the service has listed.

The Air Force based its estimate of \$550 million per plane on the value of the dollar in 2010, and it represents only the production costs for an aircraft that won’t be deployed for at least 10 years. Including research and development, the bomber would cost as much as \$810 million apiece in this year’s dollars, according to calculations by three defense analysts.

The cost of the new bomber will draw close scrutiny in an era of declining defense budgets, as the Pentagon faces \$500 billion in reductions over nine years under the budget process called sequestration. The Air Force’s track record also is being questioned after soaring costs for the aging B-2 stealth bomber the new plane would replace and the F-35 fighter jet, the most expensive U.S. weapons system, that’s now being built.

“The Air Force has zero credibility on start-of-program cost estimates unless and until it ponies up real details about the bomber and its acquisition plan,” Winslow Wheeler, a former Government Accountability Office defense analyst now with the Project on Government Oversight in Washington, said in an e-mail. “It is a fool’s errand, or worse, to pretend the cost stated now is anything but a bait-and-switch buy-in gambit.”

B-2, F-35

The B-2 was planned as 132 planes for about \$571 million each in 1991 dollars before the first Bush administration cut the fleet to 20 planes in the early 1990s. That resulted in a price of about \$2.2 billion per bomber, a fourfold increase, in a program that remained highly classified during its development.

The F-35 program has a current price tag of \$391.2 billion for 2,443 aircraft, a 68 percent increase from the projection in 2001, as measured in current dollars, for 409 fewer planes than originally planned.

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Whatever its ultimate cost, the new bomber would mean billions for the defense contractor chosen to build it. Lockheed Martin Corp. (LMT) of Bethesda, Maryland, and Chicago-based Boeing Co. (BA), the No. 1 and No. 2 U.S. defense contractors, said in October that they'll bid for the project as a team. They may end up competing against Northrop Grumman Corp. (NOC) of Falls Church, Virginia, the prime contractor for the B-2, which hasn't yet announced an intention to bid.

The Air Force has requested \$379 million in funding for development this year, increasing to more than \$1 billion in fiscal 2015 and \$2.8 billion in fiscal 2018, according to data released by the service.

Through 2023

The Air Force hasn't provided its rationale for the increased spending. The Congressional Budget Office said the Air Force plans to request \$32.1 billion through 2023.

The \$550 million per plane projection for the new bomber is "the only cost estimate approved for public release at this time," Air Force spokesman Ed Gulick said in a statement.

Gulick said the estimate is a "target that helps balance capabilities and cost" and is being used in "rigidly containing the design" of the bomber.

The more complete "program acquisition unit cost" will be derived later by adding research and development, as well as estimating "inflation up to the year you purchase aircraft," Gulick said.

The Air Force's cost estimate "seems rather ambitious," said Todd Harrison, a defense budget analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, a Washington-based policy group. He calculated a price of \$810 million a plane in fiscal 2014 dollars, or \$81 billion for 100, based on \$20 billion in projected research and development costs.

Historical Increases

"Aircraft programs, and stealth aircraft in particular, have gone far over their initial cost estimates," Harrison said. "If you factor in historical cost growth, the total program cost could easily top \$100 billion."

Russell Rumbaugh, a defense analyst with the Stimson Center, also a policy group in Washington, said his comparable estimate is \$682 million per plane. Kevin Brancato, a defense analyst with Bloomberg Government, projected \$784 million per plane in this year's dollars.

"The incentives in the budget system almost force the services to low-ball their cost estimates," said Gordon Adams, a professor at American University in Washington who oversaw the national security budget for the White House under President Bill Clinton. "Otherwise they do not get the program in the budget. It grows later."

The Air Force now operates a fleet of 159 long-range bombers, including 63 swing-wing B-1Bs developed in the 1980s by Rockwell International, which is now part of Boeing, and the 20 B-2s from the 1990s.

Aging B-2s

The new bomber is needed because the "B-2 is an older airplane that's getting expensive" to maintain and "it's not as stealthy as we're now capable of making aircraft," Deputy Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said in an interview before he left office Dec. 4.

As the Air Force anticipates its needs 10 or 20 years from now, "expecting those aircraft to perform reliably at such advanced ages may prove to be overly optimistic," said Mark Gunzinger, an airpower analyst with the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

The Air Force is still flying 76 B-52 bombers from the H series that entered service in May 1961. They remain capable of launching conventional and nuclear bombs and cruise missiles.

Top Projects



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The Air Force has identified the new long-range bomber as one of its top three weapons projects, along with the F-35 from Lockheed and the KC-46 aerial refueling tanker made by Boeing.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has said the bomber will support the U.S. strategy of rebalancing toward Asia. Pentagon officials have said they'll do as much as they can to shelter such priority weapons systems from the automatic budget cuts.

An Air Force summary of the bomber describes a stealth aircraft able to deliver both nuclear and conventional weapons. While the "baseline aircraft" would be piloted, the bomber would be designed to "enable future unmanned capability," according to the service.

Beyond that, the Air Force, which has said the bomber would incorporate "proven technologies," has said little about its classified plans for the new plane.

"It would be a mistake to view this aircraft as simply another bomber," said Retired Lieutenant General David Deptula, the Air Force's former chief of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

'Cloaked in Secrecy'

It may take off on a bombing run, using intelligence and surveillance sensors provided from other platforms and on-board jammers to degrade ground radar, he said in an e-mail. The bomber crew also could use its radar and sensors to direct land-and sea-based strikes, as well as collect intelligence on the return flight, according to Deptula, who helped plan the air campaign in the 1991 Gulf War.

"The operational characteristics are going to be cloaked in secrecy for a while, and I think that makes perfect sense," Air Force Chief of Staff General Mark Welsh told reporters in November.

Welsh said capabilities would be carefully weighed against the \$550 million-a-plane target.

"What we don't want to do is try to reach into some level of technology that's impractical." That's when "prices start to get out of control and your requirements start to drift," Welsh said. "We are not going to go there."

Adams cited the B-2's cost escalation, as well as plans for a medium-range bomber that Defense Secretary Robert Gates canceled as too costly in 2009. Gates supports the new bomber.

"How many times are we going to go down this overpriced bomber road?" said Adams said. "It's like Lucy with the football. We never get to kick an affordable aircraft through the goalpost."

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-12-06/u-s-bombers-seen-costing-81-billion-47-more-than-plan.html>

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Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS) – India
OPINION/IPCS Debate (Special Commentary) #4202

India-Pakistan and Tactical Nuclear Weapons: A Step closer to the Abyss

By Vice Admiral (ret) Vijay Shankar
November 30, 2013

The Futility of TNWs

In March 2013 a workshop was conducted under the aegis of the Naval Post Graduate School Monterey. It sought to examine the escalation dynamics in a South Asian crisis under a nuclear overhang. A scrutiny of the scenario suggested that a vertical escalatory spiral was central to the paradigm and therefore intrinsic to its anatomy was an inexorable traction to extremes. First blood had been drawn by a Pakistan State sponsored terror attack, it targeted leadership at a very large public gathering leading to extensive casualties; in most strategic lexicons this is an act of war. The demands

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of the Indian side, unfortunately, were given short shrift. Had some movement been made towards apprehending and handing over the terrorists, the situation could have been defused.

Accordingly, a swift punitive military thrust was launched by Indian forces across the LOC and a Maritime Exclusion Zone was decreed. Forces primarily used were the less intrusive Air and Sea arms. This in turn escalated to action that was not restricted to the LOC. The introduction of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) into the battle area attained inevitability. To Indian Leadership the question posed was how would offensive Indian forces respond? In the event a deliberate decision was made to search out and strike the nuclear tipped Nasr batteries as with other tactical artillery pieces without discrimination; and should a nuclear Nasr launch occur on Indian Forces it would be regarded as a First Strike and India would reserve the right to launch massive retaliatory strikes to the dictates of her Nuclear Doctrine. The adversary balked from deploying TNWs.

What is it All About? The Essence of Stability

Marshall Ferdinand Foch, one of the lesser of the meat grinding generals of the First World War when faced with the bewildering nature of the larger strategic situation is said to have countered with a fundamental question, *De quoi s'agit-il?* – What is it all about? Indeed this poser if understood and answered in the context of nuclear stability would bring us to the complexities that face nations with the coming of a weapon that can obliterate the very purpose of warfare; in the circumstance the separation of the conventional from the nuclear is a logical severance. A major divergence from the Two-Bloc-Nuclear-Face-Off of the past is nuclear multilateralism. In this altered plurality the true enemy is the dynamic that rocks the equilibrium.

The essence of stability is to find agreement on three foundational truths. Firstly, technology, while it provides for modernization it invites covertness whereas its impact demands transparency. Secondly, that the army in Pakistan is the real power centre, and therefore for India to engage an enfeebled civilian leadership is self defeating. Thirdly, TNWs make for a dangerously unconvincing deterrent correlation.

Why would a nation turn its back on the prudence of the past six decades and deliberately reduce the nuclear threshold through the introduction of TNWs and in a situation of mortal internal collapse, invite the increasing probability of the breakdown of nuclear deterrence? After all it was the Pak foreign Minister Mr. Aga Shahi in dialogue with the American Secretary of State in 1979 who suggested that the “value of nuclear weapons lies in its possession and not in its use”. TNWs are marked by several features that prop up the illusion of control and the misguided belief that the adversary would, for some reason, abjure the opportunity to escalate response. Its deployment will attract pre-emptive suppressive action and doctrine for employment follows conventional field axioms with the risk of accidental, unauthorized or mistaken use. It therefore promotes only one cause and that is the Pakistani military establishment's hold on that hapless state. Recognizing the politics of the South Asian region and the emasculated nature of civilian leadership in Pakistan; the dangers of adding nuclear violence to military perfidy, as recent proliferatory history and Jihadist terror acts have shown, is more than just a reality.

The NATO Paradigm

Pakistan in defense of TNWs often cites the NATO analogy. However, by the 1980s NATO was doctrinally imbued with the idea of the irrelevance of nuclear weapons against less than existential threats. With this conviction, both Britain and France perceived the use of nuclear weapons (of any yield) as a failure of deterrence and therefore not a realistic alternative to conventional forces. Employment of TNWs through the doctrine of ‘flexible response’ did not provide the lever to control the escalatory ladder. The strategy, even in concept lacked conviction for limited nuclear war is a contradiction in terms.

The Burden of God's Gift

The South Asian nuclear imbroglio is evolving under circumstances that are unique. A shared antagonistic history; geographic contiguity; a political and structural contradiction between a centralized de facto military leadership and a democratic dispensation; a yawning economic gap; and, awkwardly a self-ordained military that (mis)perceives in antagonism an existential peril and a reason for self-perpetuation. India also views the complicity of China in the



Pakistan nuclear weapons programme as suggestive of doctrinal links that permit a 'Janus' faced approach to the latter's no first use posture.

Pakistan contends that the articulation of a nuclear doctrine is unnecessary for the purpose of establishing deterrence. Unfortunately, a nation that announced its nuclear weapon status and views it as "God's gift" must also realize that a deterrent relationship is essentially about mutual knowledge of purpose. Ambiguities, deception and carousing with non state actors can only serve to obfuscate.

The Challenge: Contending with Pakistan's Perspective

The impending introduction of a sea-based deterrent into the Indian arsenal, rather than being seen as an element of stability that will enhance credibility of the second strike, is perceived through a curious logic as an asymmetric trend that somehow adversely impacts crisis stability. Given the opacity of Pakistan's strategic nuclear underpinnings, descent to TNWs and duplicity of policies, it has become increasingly prickly for India to either understand nuclear thinking in Islamabad or to find coherence between a mania for parity, the rush for stockpiling fissile material and the loosening of controls over nuclear weapons.

More puzzling is the strategic notion that the perceived conventional imbalance between the two countries may be countered by Pakistan exercising one of two options: firstly, secure an assured second-strike capability; secondly, place the arsenal on 'hair trigger alert' and then the argument goes, introduce TNWs as "another layer of deterrence" designed to apply brakes on India's military doctrine of Cold Start (ala NATO's discredited formulation). As Feroz Khan posits, "Pakistan's flight-testing of the short-range, nuclear-capable rocket system Hatf-9 (Nasr), was introduced to add 'deterrence value' to Pakistan's force posture." The author in a bizarre contradictory temper adds "due to the proximity of targets, short flight times and the technical challenges of assuring information accuracy, the likelihood of inadvertence is high." He further holds that "...central command and control will become untenable and the 'Nasr' with its marked footprint will attract punishing pre-emptive conventional attack. Thus, battlefield nuclear weapons such as Hatf-9 will pose a 'use it or lose it' choice, precipitating a nuclear exchange that may not be intended." The unbiased political examiner is left bewildered that if such be the imbalances in the power matrix, then why does Pakistan not seek rapprochement as a priority of their military, economic and political policies? The answer perhaps lies in asking, "Who stands to gain in this power play?"

Conclusion: The Quest for a Response

Pakistan espouses an opaque deterrent under military control steered by a doctrine obscure in form, seeped in ambiguity and guided by a military strategy that finds unity with non-state actors. The introduction of TNWs exacerbates credibility of control. It does not take a great deal of intellectual exertions to declare whose case lowering of the nuclear threshold promotes. Two options present themselves to the Indian planner; firstly to generate specialised forces that continuously track and mark TNWs and incorporates an airborne conventional capability to neutralise them. The second option is a soft one that aims at dispelling the veil of opacity that surrounds the nuclear deterrent. What may have impact is a combination of the two.

Nietzsche astutely warned that "And if thou gaze long into an abyss, the abyss will also gaze into thee". Thus far nuclear relations in the region have been bedeviled by a persistent effort to combat the monsters that the shroud of covertness has cast; it has left us the unenviable task of out staring an abyss. Nietzsche in the circumstance would have advised an assault on the first causes – dispel opacity and engage the military through dialogue and from a position of total preparedness.

Vice Admiral (ret'd) Vijay Shankar is the former Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Forces Command of India & Distinguished Fellow, IPCS.

<http://www.ipcs.org/article/indo-pak/ipcs-debate-special-commentary-india-pakistan-and-tactical-nuclear-weapons-4202.html>

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FARS News Agency – Iran
OPINION/Commentary
Saturday, November 30, 2013

12 Positive Outcomes of Geneva Nuclear Deal for Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) - After the end of four days of breathtaking diplomatic marathon in the Swiss city of Geneva, Iran, on the one hand, and the six world powers, on the other hand, finally came up with a joint plan of action according to which they are going to move toward a comprehensive solution [for Iran's nuclear issue] within the forthcoming year.

“Win-win outcome” is probably the best description for this agreement. The P5+1 group of world powers just wanted to make sure that Iran will not gain the capability to build nuclear weapons and in doing so, it could not suffice to frequent rejection of such allegations by Iran. On the other hand, Iran also wanted its rights to be recognized as per the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including the Islamic Republic’s right to enrich uranium on its soil.

Regardless of different analyses, which have been offered these days on what every party has won or lost, I hereby aim to focus on twelve achievements that the agreement will have for Iran. Without a doubt, the number of the achievements that the opposite parties have gained through the agreement with Iran is no less, which materializes the true meaning of “negotiations aimed at reaching a result other than a zero-sum game.”

1. Recognizing Iran’s uranium enrichment right: It is true that nowhere in the text of the agreement the two words, “right” and “enrichment,” have been used together. However, the way in which the “enrichment” process has been mentioned in two parts of the text, actually dispels any suspicions that may exist about recognition by Iran’s negotiating partners of the fact that the Islamic Republic can enrich uranium on its soil. The preamble to the “Joint Plan of Action” reads as such: “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.”

Once again, in the part of the plan of action, which pertains to “Elements of the final step of a comprehensive solution,” it says the final step would “involve a mutually defined enrichment programme with mutually agreed parameters.”

2. Changing structure of anti-Iran sanctions: During the past years, perhaps a few days have passed without escalation or intensification of (international or unilateral) sanctions (against the Islamic Republic of Iran). The Geneva plan of action has presaged three major developments in the area of sanctions. Firstly, paragraph 3 of the plan has clearly stated that during the period of the first step, which has duration of six months, the United Nations Security Council, the United States and the European Union will avoid imposing new sanctions against Iran. Secondly, part of the previously imposed sanctions which include bans on trade of petrochemicals and precious stones by Iran and a certain portion of financial sanctions against the country will be lifted. Thirdly, in two places, the text of the plan has noted that the main goal of the final step of a comprehensive solution is to put in place a reciprocal and step by step process, which would “comprehensively lift UN Security Council, multilateral and national nuclear-related sanctions.” This issue has been mentioned first in the preamble and the second time in the part entitled “Elements of the final step of a comprehensive solution.”

3. Introducing a supervisory mechanism for the implementation of the plan: The important point about the mechanism (known as the Joint Commission) foreseen to supervise the implementation of medium-term measures and discussing future issues is the equal presence of the Islamic Republic of Iran alongside six major world powers. This membership will certainly give birth to a more balanced framework for the resolution of problems and misunderstandings and will thwart acts of obstructionism and possible political gimmicks. In the meantime, the emphasis put on the responsibility of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the “verification of nuclear-related measures” and Joint Commission’s cooperation with the IAEA will further highlight the legal and technical aspects of the nuclear issue which has been a goal sought by Iran all along the way.



4. Enriched uranium stays in Iran: According to the agreement, Iran has accepted, as a confidence-building and voluntary measure, to convert half of the uranium it has already enriched to 20-percent level for use as fuel by Tehran Research Reactor, to 20-percent uranium oxide for storage. Tehran will also dilute the remaining 20-percent uranium to below that level. However, the fact that even one gram of the Iranian enriched uranium will not be taken out of the country is, per se, a major breakthrough for Iran. As a result, the need of Iran's medical and agricultural sectors to enriched uranium will be met for the next six months and this effectively reduces the possibility that Iran will become dependent on other countries for the nuclear fuel.

5. Iran's nuclear activities will continue unabated: The commitment of the P5+1 member states to accept continuation of the 5-percent uranium enrichment in Iran actually means that the country's nuclear activities will go on. Meanwhile, although strict measures have been considered in the part of the agreement which is entitled "Elements of a first step," for a period of six months, nowhere in the text, Iran has been asked to stop its nuclear activities. This is very different from the commitment that Iran had accepted many years ago to prove its goodwill by voluntarily suspending all kinds of nuclear activities for about two years. In return for that voluntary suspension, Iran was not given any worthwhile quid pro quo which could have been a good answer to its voluntary suspension of nuclear activities.

6. Nuclear research and development (R&D) will continue in Iran: The stipulation in the first part of the deal, dubbed "Elements of a first step" to the effect that "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" is clear evidence that Iran's inalienable right to continue nuclear research has been accepted as per Article 4 of the NPT. This will guarantee further progress of Iran's scientific advances in the area of nuclear energy.

7. No more pressure on current customers of Iran oil: A review of the trend in buying Iran's crude oil by a number of Asian countries will show that during the past two years, they have had to frequently reduce the amount of oil they purchased from Iran under mounting pressures or incentives provided to them by the United States. At the same time, another major problem was the issue of providing insurance coverage for tanker ships carrying Iranian oil, (which had been made very difficult under US sanctions). As a result, the transportation of even small amounts of oil that Asian countries bought from Iran had become very difficult. The first paragraph in the section of the agreement which is related to voluntary measure to be undertaken by the member states of the P5+1 group (also known as EU3/EU+3) will relieve customers of Iranian crude oil from such pressures. Continuation of the past situation would have inevitably forced the customers of the Iranian oil to gradually find alternative sources of energy instead of Iran. This process will stop now.

8. Suspension of sanctions on Iran's petrochemical exports, auto industry, and precious metals trade: A point here, which is more important than the mere removal of sanctions, is the removal of "sanctions on associated services". This phrase has been repeated at the end of every sentence related to removal of sanctions against every one of the aforesaid sectors. This means that Iran's insurance, shipping, and air transportation industries, which had come to an almost total halt in recent months, will resume their activities even though at a low early pace.

9. Lessening humanitarian consequences of sanctions: To establish a financial channel for the resumption of trade in humanitarian areas will certainly dispel many concerns on the part of human rights activists who have been worried about untoward side effects of anti-Iran sanctions. Those areas include the procurement of foodstuff and agricultural products as well as necessary medications, and medical and hospital equipment from abroad. Let's not forget that the permission given to foreign nongovernmental organizations and charities by the US Treasury Department to send humanitarian aid to victims of earthquake in northern Iranian provinces was of such a high importance that it rapidly hit the headlines in the mainstream international media.

10. Giving Iran more maneuvering room to boost trade with Europe: The last paragraph of the agreement just before the section on the "Elements of the final step of a comprehensive solution," reads as such: "Increase the EU authorization thresholds for transactions for non-sanctioned trade to an agreed amount." Although this paragraph is somehow ambiguous, part of that ambiguity was dissipated after the French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius made remarks on November 25 about possible trade openings between Iran and the European Union starting from December



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2013. There is no doubt that resumption of all kinds of bilateral and multilateral trade between Iran and the member states of the European Union will be a clear and more efficient interpretation of what (Iranian President) Mr. (Hassan) Rouhani described as “cracks in the structure of (anti-Iran) sanctions.”

11. Iran proved self-confidence by allowing more extensive inspections of its nuclear sites: Although an extensive amount of inspections as well as confidence building measures have been considered for Iran in the “Joint Plan of Action,” it can also provide Iran with a good opportunity to once again prove the peaceful nature of its nuclear energy program on which the country has insisted all through the past years. Iran’s presence at the Joint Commission which is to oversee the implementation of the action plan becomes more important in the light of this reality as it can give Iran more latitude to prove the authenticity of its peaceful intentions.

12. Doing away with threat of war and escalating sanctions: The agreement has, at least for a period of six months, taken Iran and the entire region away from the prevailing atmosphere of war threat and the senseless allegation that “all options are on the table.” That atmosphere could have many negative consequences for the whole region from daily tension and promotion of Iranophobia all the way to extravagant military purchases by the regional countries in a bid to avert the imaginary Iran threat.

On the whole, the benefits of this agreement are actually “divided benefits” and not necessarily “common benefits.” Both sides had demands and they managed to meet part of those demands through breathtaking negotiations. However, one may daresay that the most important of all is the revival of a sense of understanding, cooperation and common understanding between Iran and the West after many years during which the wall of distrust and suspicion was growing between the two sides. Also, an age-old taboo about direct contacts between Iran and the United States was finally shattered through the latest round of negotiations in Geneva where both countries had good exercises in bilateral negotiations with respect for each other’s positions. Under such circumstances, even efforts made by the United States to assuage the concerns of Israel and Saudi Arabia over nuclear deal with Iran did not end up in their benefit, but only served to prove how insignificant is the rationality and how high is the concern about changing political structures in the region among leaders in both Tel Aviv and Riyadh.

The plan of action is, in fact, a first step on a very long path; a long path along which any untoward incident may happen in the future. However, one reality cannot be denied: Iran and the P5+1 group have found the best way to negotiate with each other and this will prove to be a very important and efficient achievement, which will facilitate resolution of any possible future problem.

The two sides have clearly accepted that in spite of the requirements emanating from the UN Security Council resolutions – which require Iran to totally suspend its nuclear energy program and also impose sanctions against the country – the Islamic Republic can still continue to enrich uranium to 5 percent purity during the next six months. This is an explicit admission of the continuation of enrichment on Iran’s soil as a result of which the two sides will be finally able to render the impact of Security Council’s resolutions ineffective in due time.

By Mahmoud Reza Golshanpazhooh

This article has originally appeared on Euro Asia review

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920909000126>

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Breaking Defense.com
OPINION/Air, Strategy & Policy

Congress, Obama Admin ‘Duck & Cover’ On Nuclear Modernization

By Bob Butterworth
December 02, 2013

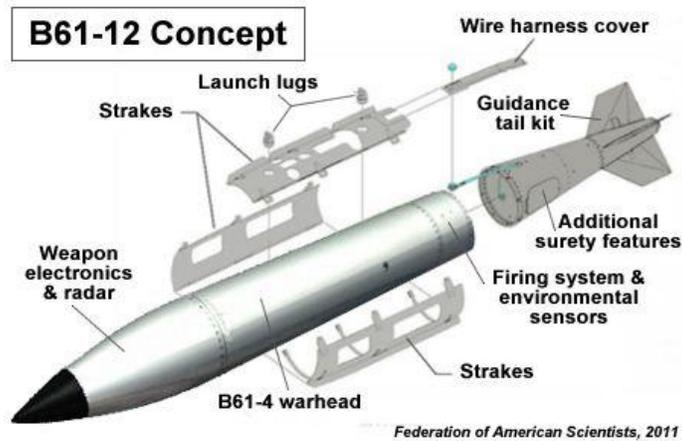
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When talking about nuclear policies and programs, defense leaders often emphasize that “the Cold War is over.” But given a chance to explain what is strategically different and how policies and programs need to be changed, they duck and cover.

Take, for example, a recent congressional hearing on the B61 nuclear bomb. The Defense and Energy Departments want Congress to approve plans for rebuilding the weapon, principally to replace its four remaining variants with a single new model, called the B61-12.



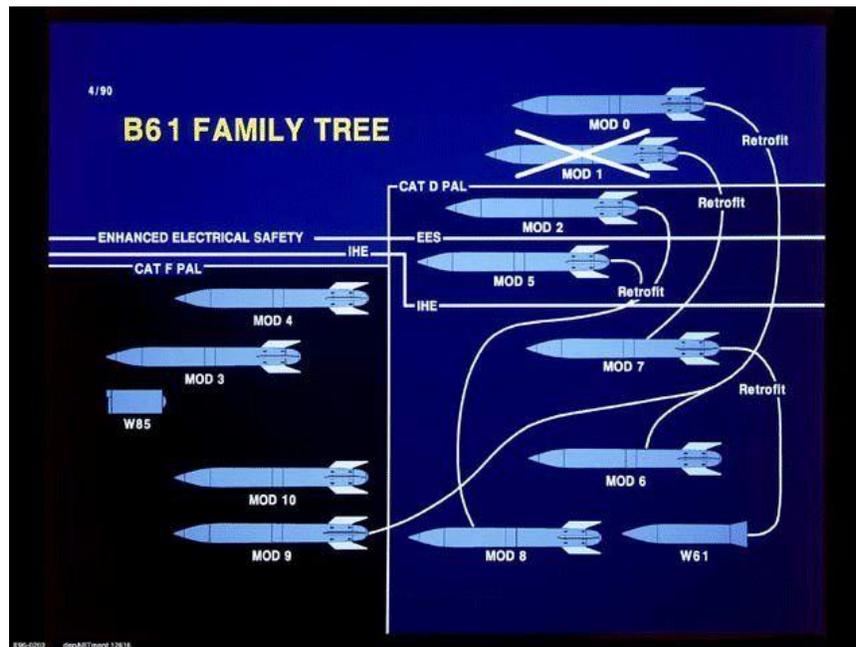
If deployed with the addition of a tail kit assembly from the Air Force, the new version should be more accurate and have a “modest” standoff capability. There has been no official statement of anticipated yield, but observers anticipate a variable yield similar to that of the B61-4 (.3 to 50 kilotons).

The B61 is made to order as a case study of in-depth deliberations about post-Cold War nuclear policies and programs. Since entering the inventory in 1966, the weapon has been modified into several versions, most of which are capable of being dropped from several types of fighter and bomber aircraft. The different weapons deliver yields reportedly ranging from .3 kilotons to about 340 kilotons. B61 has been the material embodiment of the US nuclear commitment to NATO. During the Cold War it was intended to be used both to blunt a large conventional attack by the Warsaw Pact and to trigger escalation to intercontinental nuclear war. Since the Cold War it has remained in Europe, in reduced numbers, perhaps due more to alliance politics than requirements of deterrence.

As the only nuclear weapon of any nation currently publicly declared to be deployed on foreign soil, the B61 compels attention particularly to issues of extended deterrence; regional conflict management; allied autonomy; regional targets we might want to hit with nuclear weapons; and how our nuclear forces should be postured for what we might want to do vis-à-vis much smaller nuclear enemies, such as North Korea, Iran, or some non-state entity without entangling larger nuclear powers.

But in testimony before a supportive congressional subcommittee, the witnesses steered clear of exploring those issues, making only a few brief references to the bomb being part of the American deterrent and an option that some future president might use. The testimony focused instead on supporting a particular option for B61 modernization, emphasizing that the rebuild was key to reducing the variety and total number of weapons in the stockpile and that their preferred approach would save money in the long run. A follow-up letter from the Secretaries of Defense and Energy followed the same line, although a careful reading does suggest how much has to happen before the purported savings and arms reductions come into view.

Perhaps the testifiers and letter-signers knew that the committee was only interested in hearing support for one modernization option. Or maybe they thought the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review provided all the strategic rationale that was needed. Whatever the case, it seems short-sighted to pass up a chance to expand the strategic dialog. Most B61 variants are “non-strategic” but the reasons for them should not be: there are many more decisions to be made and revisited before the future US nuclear posture is settled.



Why will the B61 be important to future US national security? Three reasons come to mind: credibility, demonstrability and repeatability.

Credibility: The B61 probably will be the only actively deployed weapon suitable for use in a regional conflict where there are targets requiring nuclear attack for at least several years. While target requirements for yield and delivery options depend on circumstances, the gravity bomb's combination of lower yield and higher accuracy promise lower collateral damage than would result from using missile-delivered nuclear warheads.

Demonstrability: Because it can be forward deployed by different aircraft, the B61 is well suited for compellence operations, efforts to get adversaries to stop doing something or to undo something already done. Particularly for crisis management, compellence operations are central to maintaining US "extended deterrence" relations.

Repeatability: US nuclear weapons are legacies of the Cold War. They comprise warheads that were not designed for, and are not particularly appropriate to, scenarios and targets expected in war against small nuclear powers. US policies have been understood to constrain work to design weapons that might better address new requirements. Success with the B61-12 might encourage other modernization efforts that could make part of the legacy stockpile less inappropriate.

Each of these presumed advantages, of course, needs to be considered within a broader strategic framework. It took time and effort to understand the role we wanted nuclear weapons to play in our Cold War strategy; we face a similar challenge now, and we should not miss opportunities to advance the dialog. Simply changing some legacy procedures and chasing further reductions in numbers of weapons will not do the job. As Kissinger saw in 1957, "in the absence of a generally understood doctrine, we will of necessity act haphazardly . . . Each problem, as it arises, will seem novel, and energies will be absorbed in analyzing its nature rather than in seeking solutions."

Bob Butterworth is a consultant and expert on nuclear issues and intelligence. The president of Aries Analytics, Butterworth was former senior advisor to the head of Space Command and was a staffer on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, as well as on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

<http://breakingdefense.com/2013/12/congress-obama-admin-duck-cover-on-nuclear-modernization/>

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OPINION/Up Front

Would an Iran Deal Obviate Missile Defense in Europe?

By Steven Pifer
December 2, 2013

The day after P5+1 (the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany, along with the European Union) and Iranian negotiators reached an interim agreement regarding Iran's nuclear program, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told the press that implementation of the agreement would make the planned deployment of U.S. SM-3 missile interceptors in Romania and Poland unnecessary.

Perhaps — the SM-3 deployments are to be made as part of the European phased adaptive approach (EPAA) to missile defense. But the United States and NATO would need time, considerable time, before making a decision along the lines that Mr. Lavrov suggests.

The Russian foreign minister based his remark on the fact that NATO's primary justification for the EPAA has been the threat of Iranian ballistic missiles. Iran has ballistic missiles that can hit targets 1600 kilometers away, including Turkey. It has also tested, but not yet deployed, a ballistic missile with a range of 2200 kilometers, capable of reaching into southeastern Europe.

NATO worries in particular about Iran's future potential to combine a nuclear warhead with a ballistic missile. Under phase 1 of the EPAA, shipboard SM-3 missile interceptors in the eastern Mediterranean Sea provide a capability to defend against current Iranian ballistic missiles. The planned deployments in Romania in 2015 (phase 2) and Poland in 2018 (phase 3) envisage more capable SM-3 interceptors, including with the ability to engage longer-range Iranian missiles.

The first and obvious response to Mr. Lavrov is that no one yet knows for certain whether the P5+1 and Iran will succeed in reaching a final settlement regarding Iran's nuclear program. The November 24 agreement was a very positive step. It was only an interim step, however, and the negotiators still face tough issues amidst a considerable degree of mistrust.

In the end, an agreement acceptable to Tehran would almost certainly leave Iran with some uranium enrichment capacity, albeit tightly constrained and under close monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency. That would leave a latent nuclear weapons breakout capability. The shorter the time it would take for Iran to exercise a breakout scenario, the more likely that NATO would see missile defense as a useful hedge. The longer the time, the less necessary a missile defense capability against Iran might be.

The P5+1 dialogue with Iran does not address ballistic missiles. If, as part of a settlement of broader differences with Tehran, the Iranians were to cease developing longer-range missiles, that also could undermine the Iran argument for EPAA phases 2 and 3.

This question would only be considered at some point down the road. But if there is a significant walk-back of Iran's nuclear program (and of its ballistic missile program), questions will naturally arise about the logic for phases 2 and 3. The fact is that, other than Iran, no state near NATO poses a ballistic missile threat to the Alliance — with the exception of Russia. But the SM-3 interceptors to be deployed in phases 2 and 3 will be capable of engaging only medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, which Russia has given up under the terms of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.

To be sure, Iran might continue its ballistic missile program, arming the missiles with conventional warheads. Those, however, would be of far less concern to NATO if the Iranian nuclear program were reliably limited.

So, an Iran settlement could lead to questioning the rationale for going forward with the EPAA. After all, the phased *adaptive* approach from the beginning implicitly included the notion that the level of missile defense effort could be adjusted downward as well as upward, depending on the assessment of the threat. If there is no serious threat, it makes

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little sense for the United States and NATO to spend precious defense dollars to deploy SM-3 interceptor missiles in Europe that would have no targets. But it is not yet the slam-dunk call that Mr. Lavrov suggested.

Were Washington and NATO to consider this, they would have to weigh one very important political angle: the need to assure allies — particularly allies in Central Europe who feel more exposed — of the continuing U.S. security commitment to the Alliance.

This would be a particularly tricky question for the Obama administration. While its September 2009 decision to reconfigure missile defense in Europe to the EPAA was correct in substance, the administration terribly mismanaged the rollout, providing no real advance consultations with allies. Understandably, the allies were not amused.

The administration handled the March 2013 decision to cancel phase 4 of the EPAA better. It nevertheless left some allies wondering whether Washington was making decisions regarding their security without taking account of their views.

If developments with and in Iran create the possibility to reconsider the EPAA — still a big if — Washington would want to engage allies early in a consultative process. In that case, Poland and Romania might seek some other U.S. deployment if phases 2 and/or 3 were to be scrubbed. Neither seems to worry about an Iranian missile attack; what interests them most is the presence of the small U.S. military detachments that would deploy to their territory to operate the SM-3s.

Washington would in that case be wise to carefully consider whether and how it might replace the SM-3 deployments. Some limited U.S. conventional capabilities (and U.S. troops) could play the assurance role. They might even contribute to reducing the need that Central European allies now see for keeping U.S. non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe.

What could the U.S. military deploy to Poland and Romania? That would have to be worked out. The Polish military is interested in Patriot air defense missiles, and the U.S. Army has deployed a training battery to Poland for exercises. That kind of capability would be small, clearly defensive and very likely of interest to both Poland and Romania. It could smooth any decision to alter the EPAA and provide visible assurance of the U.S. security commitment.

The irony is that if things played out this way, it would mean cancelling the deployment of SM-3 missile interceptors, which are too slow to engage Russian strategic ballistic missiles, and deploying in their place U.S. Patriot batteries that would put some very credible air defense capability in Central Europe. Mr. Lavrov might want to think about what he wishes for.

Steven Pifer is director of the Brookings Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Initiative and a senior fellow with the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence and the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings. A former ambassador to Ukraine, Pifer's career as a foreign service officer centered on Europe, the former Soviet Union and arms control.

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/12/02-iran-deal-obviate-missile-defense-europe-pifer>

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Foreign Policy
OPINION/The Cable

U.S. Shoots Down Russia's Push to Scrap Missile Shield

Posted By John Hudson
Thursday, December 5, 2013

For years, the U.S. government has insisted that a planned missile defense system in Europe served to protect America's allies against attacks from Iran. Now that the nuclear threat from Iran may be receding, Russia, which has always seen the system as a menace to its own security, has suggested scrapping the program. But the White House on Thursday said the missile shield, otherwise known as the European phased adaptive approach (EPAA), isn't going anywhere.



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"Our plans regarding missile defense in Europe and our commitment to EPAA as the U.S. contribution to NATO missile defense remain unchanged," National Security Council spokeswoman Laura Lucas Magnuson told *The Cable*.

The idea of scaling back NATO's missile defense system was floated by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Wednesday following a meeting with Russian and NATO counterparts. "If the Iranian nuclear program is placed under the complete and tight control of the IAEA, the reasons that are now given for the creation of the European segment of the missile defense system will become invalid," said Lavrov.

Of course, placing Iran's nuclear program under tight U.N. control would require a comprehensive deal between Iran and six world powers, the so-called P5+1. Negotiators still have half a year to hammer out the details of a final agreement, which could implode at any moment -- a point the White House acknowledged. "There is still much work to be done as we negotiate the contours of a comprehensive solution over the next six months," said Lucas Magnuson.

Regardless, the decision to stay firm on the missile shield has sparked rare agreement between the White House and Republican hawks in Congress. "We absolutely must continue to put in place an effective and affordable missile defense system in Europe," Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) told *The Cable*.

That's not to say all Republicans are relieved. Moscow's prominent seat at the P5+1 has some U.S. lawmakers worried that Russia could engineer side-deals involving the NATO missile shield.

"I fear that missile defense and our alliances are just a negotiating chit to the administration when it comes to maintaining the fiction of a cooperative relationship with Putin," Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL), told *The Cable*.

The White House did not forecast whether it might change its mind about the defense shield in the future, but for some Republicans, the idea of scrapping the plans under any scenario is a non-starter. "Even if a deal were to work out in the next six months, Iran will retain the ability to enrich nuclear materials to assemble a nuclear weapon in the future, and would be able to field it in far less time than it would take for the U.S. and NATO to deploy a missile defense system in Europe," said Inhofe. "Furthermore, an effective missile defense system is an important hedge against other nations that might choose to follow in the dangerous footsteps of Iran and North Korea and has an important nonproliferation effect."

As it stands, the Obama administration has plans to build up NATO's defense shield in Europe with the deployment of shorter-and medium-range interceptors in three stages. (The administration plans to install medium-range interceptors in Redzikowo, Poland by 2018.) Back in March, the administration announced that it was abandoning the final phase of the defense shield, which would've included long-range missiles. As the Brookings Institution's Steven Pifer noted this week, the rollout of that announcement did not go so well with U.S. partners in Europe, leaving some "wondering whether Washington was making decisions regarding their security without taking account of their views."

"If developments with and in Iran create the possibility to reconsider the [defense shield] - still a big if - Washington would want to engage allies early in a consultative process," said Pifer.

While Pifer argues that European allies could be reassured with the right amount of consultation, it's hard to picture Republicans being similarly assuaged. "Any Russian attempts to leverage a deal with Iran to undermine the NATO Alliance and the establishment of a missile defense system would be reprehensible and we should not succumb to blackmail," said Inhofe.

The Cable goes inside the foreign policy machine, from Foggy Bottom to Turtle Bay, the White House to Embassy Row.

http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/12/05/us_shoots_down_russia_s_push_to_scrap_missile_shield

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The National Interest.org
OPINION/Commentary

The Future of America's Nuclear Deterrent

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By Evan Braden Montgomery
December 6, 2013

America's strategic nuclear deterrent is nearing a crossroads. On one hand, the size, shape and purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal are all up for debate. For over two decades Washington has been shedding excess weapons that were a legacy of the Cold War. Senior officials today are also much more concerned with proliferation and the possibility of nuclear terrorism than great-power brinkmanship or the prospect of a massive nuclear exchange. The confluence of declining defense budgets and looming recapitalization costs has made nuclear programs a potential target for funding cuts.

On the other hand, the Obama administration is currently committed to a number of nuclear modernization efforts, from developing a new penetrating bomber that will eventually supplant the B-2, to procuring new ballistic-missile submarines (SSBNs) that will replace *Ohio*-class boats, to exploring follow-on options for the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). These seemingly divergent trends raise a number of questions: Can the United States continue to implement nuclear reductions and still deter rivals, dissuade competitors, and discourage proliferation? Should it retain the strategic triad of bombers, SSBNs and ICBMs? Must it replace its aging nuclear forces?

Proponents of deeper nuclear cuts generally advocate three distinct (but not mutually exclusive) measures: decreasing the size of the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal through reductions in deployed and reserve warheads; divesting force structure by eliminating delivery systems; and deferring, scaling back, or abandoning planned nuclear modernization programs. Yet these arguments are problematic for several reasons.

For instance, the case for further cuts in the American arsenal reflects an outdated and potentially counterproductive emphasis on the U.S.-Russia nuclear balance. According to this perspective, because the size of the arsenal was originally driven by the need to deter a Soviet attack, and because Washington and Moscow are no longer adversaries, it should be possible to preserve strategic stability with far fewer weapons. Thus the two sides should continue to cap or reduce warhead numbers in tandem.

In the past, when the American and Soviet (and later Russian) arsenals dwarfed the arsenals of other nuclear powers by orders of magnitude, this view made sense. As Washington's quantitative margin of advantage declines, however, some friendly nations might lose confidence in its extended-deterrence commitments (giving them an incentive to develop their own nuclear weapons), while potential competitors might build toward parity with the United States for strategic or symbolic reasons (taking advantage of a window of opportunity). Eventually, this dynamic could lead to a multipolar world with three or more nearly equal nuclear-armed nations—a potentially unstable environment where shifting coalitions could quickly upend the nuclear balance.

At the same time, arguments that the United States should reduce its nuclear force structure while preserving warhead numbers often focus on arsenal size at the expense of arsenal composition. Yet arsenal size is only one metric that can be used to judge the adequacy of U.S. nuclear forces, and it may not be the most appropriate one. Put simply, cutting force structure would make it increasingly difficult to achieve a balance between survivability, promptness, flexibility, lethality and visibility—some of the many weapons attributes that enable the United States to deter a variety of potential adversaries across a range of plausible scenarios.

Finally, by claiming that existing U.S. nuclear forces will remain adequate in the decades ahead, critics of planned modernization programs implicitly assume that the future security environment will not differ greatly from the present. Yet the conditions that have enabled the United States to make due with fewer nuclear weapons and avoid serious modernization efforts over the past two decades—including the absence of a hostile peer competitor and conventional military superiority over potential rivals—might not last indefinitely.

Ultimately, the United States still needs a nuclear arsenal that is large enough to dissuade other nations from pursuing parity, diverse enough to deter nuclear use across a wide range of contingencies, and viable long into the future. For the time being, therefore, it should avoid significant reductions in the size of its arsenal below the ceilings established in the

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New START Treaty, forgo substantial cuts in nuclear force structure, and implement planned nuclear modernization programs across all three legs of the triad.

Specifically, SSBNs will continue to be the most important element of the United States' strategic nuclear deterrent. Not only are bombers at their bases and ICBMs in their silos more vulnerable to a disarming first strike, but the former cannot retaliate immediately in the event of an attack, while the latter offer comparatively limited targeting options given their high yield warheads (as well as launch trajectories that would carry them over Russian territory to targets at risk in East Asia and the Middle East). Nevertheless, the need to modernize the existing but aging undersea fleet has generated controversy, largely because of the costs associated with designing and building a replacement for the current *Ohio*-class SSBNs.

What critics of this program often fail to appreciate, however, is that forgoing the development of a new ballistic-missile submarine would force the United States to rely on less-stealthy alternatives, whether a modified *Virginia*-class attack submarine or newly-built *Ohio*-class SSBNs. Moreover, reducing the total number of SSBNs the United States plans to purchase could create pressure to consolidate remaining boats, which are currently divided between two bases. Yet this would also leave them bound to a single ocean. Either scenario would reduce the survivability of the undersea deterrent—its most important attribute.

By contrast, the bomber force (which includes penetrating systems like the B-2 that can release gravity bombs directly over enemy targets as well as standoff systems like the B-52 that can release cruise missiles from beyond the range of enemy air defenses) has arguably been the least important leg of the triad since the deployment of ballistic missiles in the 1960s. Nevertheless, bombers are likely to become far more relevant in the future, particularly if conventional precision-strike systems and nuclear weapons proliferate more widely.

For instance, despite their function as nuclear-delivery systems, stealthy aircraft like the B-2 and the planned long-range strike bomber (LRS-B) will have the increasingly important role of providing conventional military options in highly contested environments. In fact, this will arguably be their primary role. Because the spread of extended-range guided weapons could threaten the United States' ability to conduct expeditionary military operations by holding forward bases and nonstealthy aircraft at risk, platforms that can operate from range and penetrate defended airspace will become more critical for conventional deterrence, crisis stability, and power-projection.

Both the penetrating and standoff components will also be tasked with providing limited nuclear options if necessary. Because the United States has no plans to build new nuclear warheads, bombers will remain the only strategic delivery systems capable of employing the only low-yield weapons that will remain in the U.S. stockpile. Importantly, these weapons might be the most credible deterrent to a limited nuclear attack by a minor nuclear power. Of course, this will also require the United States to refurbish its aging nuclear gravity bombs and replace its nuclear-armed cruise missiles before they are retired.

Lastly, the importance of ICBMs has undoubtedly declined since the end of the Cold War. Yet significant cuts to this leg of the triad could introduce a source of instability in the future. In particular, the role of ICBMs as a "missile sink" (that is, a force-in-being that maximizes the number of aim points an adversary would have to target in a first strike on U.S. nuclear forces) still has value, because no opponent can seriously degrade the U.S. ICBM force without expending a disproportionate share of its own arsenal. The United States should, therefore, continue to extend the life of its Minuteman III ICBMs, which would enable it to defer embarking on a wholesale replacement program.

In the end, there are credible reasons for the United States to forgo deep reductions in the size of its nuclear arsenal, avoid significant cuts in its nuclear force structure, and move ahead with planned nuclear modernization programs. By shrinking the arsenal and divesting force structure, Washington could find it increasingly difficult to simultaneously preserve strategic stability with a nuclear peer, deter nuclear use by hostile regional powers, and dissuade other nations from building nuclear weapons. Moreover, abandoning modernization efforts would be tantamount to major nuclear cuts given the age of existing warheads and delivery systems, the long timelines associated with developing new capabilities, and the fact that the United States no longer has the infrastructure or personnel in place to quickly begin producing nuclear weapons if necessary—a situation that will only grow worse over time.

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<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/the-future-americas-nuclear-deterrent-9512>

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