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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

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CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

FARS News Agency – Iran
December 29, 2012

Lawmaker: Iran Resolved to Continue 20% Uranium Enrichment

TEHRAN (FNA) - A ranking member of the Iranian parliament said Tehran is determined to continue uranium enrichment to the purity level of 20% as an indispensable right of the Iranian nation and it would never exchange this right with the world powers' content.

The remarks were made by Member of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Mansour Haqiqatpour on Saturday.

"Irrespective of agreement or disagreement of the Group 5+1 (the US, Britain, France, Russia and China plus Germany), the Islamic Republic of Iran will not surrender its right to achieve nuclear technology and produce 20-percent enriched uranium, which is needed for radio medicines," he added.

In mid-September, Iranian nuclear experts, in an unprecedented move, utilized their utmost knowledge, endeavor and ambition to enrich the uranium to the purity level of 20% for the Tehran research reactor to defuse the Western sanctions against Tehran, said a senior Iranian nuclear official.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the 56th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and after a meeting with the IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano, Vice President and Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) Fereydoun Abbasi said when the country faced sanctions and failed to provide the 20 percent enriched uranium needed by the Tehran research reactor from the world market, through endeavors of Iranian technicians, it managed to change chains of centrifuges, thus doing 20 percent enrichment and providing necessary fuel for the Tehran reactor.

Abbasi said that Iran has gained significant nuclear achievements over the past one year and the achievements have been despite sanctions issued against Iran by a few western states on the false hope that they are crippling.

He said that the main part of Iran's enrichment is at the level of 3.5 percent and added that Iran will determine the amount of the enriched uranium based on its needs in the future.

Abbasi noted that the 20 percent enrichment in Iran is for production of radio medicine while certain people try to link it to non-peaceful goals.

Israel and its close ally the United States accuse Iran of seeking a nuclear weapon, while they have never presented any corroborative document to substantiate their allegations. Both Washington and Tel Aviv possess advanced weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear warheads.

Iran vehemently denies the charges, insisting that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only. Tehran stresses that the country has always pursued a civilian path to provide power to the growing number of Iranian population, whose fossil fuel would eventually run dry.

In the meantime, in September, Iran announced that it plans to synthesize 20 kinds of radiomedicine inside the country, stressing that its scientists are capable of supplying the 20%-enriched uranium needed for the production of such drugs.

"Iran has gained the necessary preparedness to produce 20 radiomedicines and we will provide the 20% (enriched) fuel needed for the production of these medicines this year," Deputy Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) for Planning, International and Parliamentary Affairs Massoud Akhavan-Fard told FNA in September.

In addition to the Tehran research reactor which has long been used by radioisotope production, Iran also plans to build four other research reactors in the other parts of the country, he added.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107131255>

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Washington Free Beacon

Iran to Citizens: Flee Isfahan

Iranian officials tell citizens to vacate city located near nuke site

By Adam Kredo

January 2, 2013

Iranian officials have instructed residents of Isfahan to leave the city, renewing concerns that a nearby nuclear site could be leaking radioactive material.

An edict issued Wednesday by Iranian authorities orders Isfahan's one-and-a-half million people to leave the city "because pollution has now reached emergency levels," the BBC reported.

However, outside observers suspect that the evacuation order may corroborate previous reports indicating that a uranium enrichment facility near Isfahan had been leaking radioactive material.

Tehran went to great lengths in December to deny these reports, telling state-run media outlets that "the rumors about leaking and contamination at Isfahan's [Uranium Conversion Facility] are not true at all."

November reports indicated that a radioactive leak might have poisoned several workers at the nuclear plant, which converts highly toxic yellowcake uranium into material that could be used in the core of a nuclear weapon.

The head of Iran's emergency services agency said at the time that residents have no reason to worry about possible contamination resulting from a possible leak.

Stories about the potential leak soon disappeared from state-run news websites, Trend reported in late November.

Iranian officials denied that a leak has occurred and blamed Western media outlets for creating "tumult" in the region.

Wednesday's evacuation order is now fueling concerns that Iranian officials are trying to hide something, including further fallout from a possible radioactive leak.

"Pollution in Isfahan is a problem but in the past, Iranian authorities respond by closing schools and the government to keep people at home and let the pollution dissipate, not by evacuating people," said Michael Rubin, a former Pentagon adviser on Iran and Iraq who has written about Isfahan's battle against pollution.

"Mass evacuations suggest a far more serious problem," Rubin explained. "There are two possibilities here: There is a radiation leak and the regime is lying or there is really bad pollution and no one believes the regime's explanations."

Rubin also pointed out that Iranian officials have a history of lying to both Western officials and their own citizens.

It remains unclear whether the technology has been properly inspected for safety because Iran has denied Western officials access to many of its nuclear sites.

The nuclear site at Isfahan has been targeted for attack in the past.

An unexplained explosion at the plant in 2011 is reported to have damaged the facility.

The nuclear plant also sits on an active fault line. The city of Isfahan has been destroyed at least six times from past earthquakes, a point of concern among regional experts.

"Given that Iran is on an earthquake zone and has lost tens of thousands of people with regularity suggests that a devastating nuclear accident is only a matter of time," said Rubin.

<http://freebeacon.com/iran-to-citizens-flee-isfahan/>

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Wall Street Journal
January 2, 2013

Iran Politics Steer Nuclear Stance

By FARNAZ FASSIHI
Page – A-14

BEIRUT—Domestic politics and a June election could make the difference in how Iran addresses its main dilemma of the coming year: whether to compromise on its nuclear program or maintain a policy of defiance.

Iran is slated to elect a new president amid deep political divisions and rivalries among conservative factions. The issues at the heart of Iran's standoff with the West—the country's economy, its isolation and security—will likely dominate the campaign.

The contest for power will pit candidates seen as loyal to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei against those associated with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The main reformist parties said they would boycott the elections.

The discord is on daily display in Iranian media, with prominent political figures blaming one another for an economy withering from international sanctions and years of mismanagement, with a plummeting currency and skyrocketing inflation.

For Iran, maintaining the status quo with the West could invite additional sanctions and a possible military strike by Israel to prevent the country from building a nuclear weapon. Iran says its nuclear program is solely for peaceful energy purposes.

Mr. Ahmadinejad's opponents say he and his administration have mismanaged the economy and challenged the will of Mr. Khamenei, who has the last word on all state matters. In November, Mr. Ahmadinejad ruffled some feathers when he said the nuclear impasse would be resolved only through direct negotiations with the U.S. Washington has said it was ready for such discussions.

In Iran, the idea is gaining momentum that talks between Iran and the U.S. must proceed in parallel to Iran's nuclear negotiations with the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany, analysts say. Both sides in those so-called P5+1 talks have indicated a timetable will be set to meet again in 2013, after talks stagnated in 2012.

Iran's goal, some analysts say, is a grand bargain that recognizes its right to enrich uranium, lays out steps toward relief of sanctions and addresses concerns such as a possible military strike by Israel, a stake in a post-Assad Syria and assurances that the U.S. isn't plotting for regime change in Tehran.

"In Iran, many people are realizing that nothing will move forward until Iran and the U.S. sit down and discuss their issues. Mr. Khamenei is not opposed to these talks in principle, but he needs reassurances that the U.S. won't meddle in Iran's internal affairs," said Seyed Hossein Mousavian, who was part of Iran's nuclear negotiating team until 2005 and is currently a visiting scholar at Princeton University.

On the other hand, Tehran has built a legacy of anti-Western rhetoric, and any concessions could diminish its stature at home and among its proxies abroad, specifically Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. Mr. Khamenei will consider a compromise only if he feels there is sufficient unity and stability inside the regime so that Iran doesn't look weak, analysts say.

To that end, the regime will be focused on getting through June's presidential elections with minimum turmoil, after the demonstrations that followed the 2009 election and the regional uprisings of the Arab Spring.

Mr. Ahmadinejad, who is ineligible to run for re-election, could be another obstacle to progress in nuclear negotiations: The regime, analysts say, is wary of giving the credit and legacy of a political breakthrough with the West to a controversial, lame duck president.



The president's conservative detractors hope to clip his wings out of fear that he aims to overstep Mr. Khamenei's powers. Mr. Ahmadinejad's allies have fought back with smear campaigns aimed at discrediting heavyweight pragmatic figures, such as former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who are trying to influence Mr. Khamenei to strike a nuclear deal.

"In some ways, Ahmadinejad's delusions of grandeur and insubordination are now an asset for U.S. policy. If he's not accommodated, he could sow divisions and crisis among Iran's senior political elite," making it difficult to compromise with the West, said Karim Sadjadpour, Iran expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323984704578205753652358748.html>

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FARS News Agency – Iran
Thursday, 03 January 2012

Top Negotiator: Iran Never Accepts US-Imposed Conditions

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran's top negotiator in talks with the world powers Saeed Jalili said that Tehran will not accept the conditions that the US aims to impose on the Iranian nation in the nuclear issue.

Jalili, who is in New Delhi on an official visit, said the US cannot impose its arbitrary "less rights and more obligations" model on the Iranian nation in the nuclear issue.

He said stated that to serve its interests not only does the US violate the rights of others, but also violates its claims about democracy and free trade by meddling in the internal affairs of other countries and the imposition of unilateral sanctions.

Jalili meantime underlined that Tehran welcomes the readiness of the six major world powers to hold constructive talks with Iran.

"Just as Iran feels obligated to act within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) regulations and in line with the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), it is adamant on asserting its rights within the same framework," he said on Wednesday.

The G5+1 (the US, Britain, Franc, Russia and China plus Germany) is preparing for new talks with Iran over its nuclear program most probably in January.

The talks would be the first high-level negotiations over Iran's nuclear program since June, offering at least the prospect of a thaw in a standoff that has grown increasingly tense in recent months.

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

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

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

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

Tehran has repeatedly said that it considers its nuclear case closed as it has come clean of IAEA's questions and suspicions about its past nuclear activities.



<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107132659>

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Daily Star – Lebanon

Iran Welcomes New Nuclear Negotiations: Official

January 04, 2013

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

NEW DELHI: Iran's top nuclear negotiator on Friday welcomed the return of leading world powers to talks over the country's disputed atomic programme, but urged them "not to repeat their past mistakes".

Talks stalled in June when Iran rejected a proposal to suspend part of its nuclear programme, asking for more substantial relief from sanctions.

Saeed Jalili, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said Friday that Iran had invited world powers to resolve the impasse six months ago, which had now been considered.

"There was a six-month delay but they recently announced they are ready to come back for talks," he told journalists at the Iranian embassy during a trip to New Delhi.

"We welcome their return to the talks. We hope that they will come to the talks with a constructive approach and (that) they will not repeat their past mistakes," he added, without elaborating.

The last round of talks between Iran and the so-called P5+1 powers -- the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain -- yielded no breakthrough in Moscow in June.

In late November the six powers engaging Iran over its nuclear programme said they were willing to hold a new round of negotiations with Tehran.

Western powers accuse Iran of seeking to acquire a weapons capability under the guise of its nuclear energy programme. Iran denies the charge, saying its work is for peaceful purposes only.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/Analysis/2013/Jan-04/200864-iran-says-talks-with-big-powers-to-be-held-in-january.ashx#axzz2H1VchKdu>

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AsiaOne News – Singapore

N. Korea Leader Urges Development of Bigger Rockets

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Saturday, December 22, 2012

SEOUL - North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un has ordered the development of bigger rockets, state media said Saturday, after Pyongyang sparked international condemnation with a long-range rocket launch.

He gave the order to scientists, technicians and others involved in this month's launch at a banquet on Friday, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported.

"You should develop and launch a variety of more working satellites, including communications satellite, and carrier rockets of bigger capacity," Kim was quoted as saying by KCNA.

"The launch... was a grand declaration that demonstrated the DPRK's (North Korea's) independent and legitimate right to use space for peaceful purposes before the world," he said.

He added that the rocket, the satellite and monitoring devices were "indigenously produced, 100 per cent".



Kim had already stressed the need to put more satellites into space two days after the December 12 launch, KCNA reported at the time.

North Korea says the launch put a satellite in orbit for peaceful research, but critics say it amounted to a banned ballistic missile test that marked a major advance for the communist state's nuclear weapons programme.

It sparked international condemnation, including from the United Nations, although the North's main ally China is said by diplomats to be resisting US-led efforts to order new sanctions against Pyongyang at the UN Security Council.

Pyongyang is already under international sanctions for conducting two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009, which both came after long-range rocket launches.

<http://news.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20121222-391171.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
December 23, 2012

Rocket Debris Reveals N. Korea's Intention to Test ICBM Technology

By Kim Eun-jung

SEOUL, Dec. 23 (Yonhap) -- After examining a piece of the debris from a long-range rocket launched by North Korea, South Korean experts have concluded that the communist country in fact had tested its inter-continental ballistic missile technology, the defense ministry said Sunday.

North Korea fired off a three-stage "Unha 3" rocket on Dec. 12, claiming that it was to put a satellite into orbit. The first stage of the rocket fell in the Yellow Sea off South Korea's west coast and the second stage in waters near the Philippines.

Two days after the lift-off, South Korea's Navy retrieved a large cylindrical container 7.6 meters long and 2.4 meters in diameter which is believed to be the upper part of the first-stage rocket that also included a fuel tank and a combustion chamber.

After examining the 3.2-ton wreckage with the sign "Unha" written in Korean on it, a team of 42 South Korean military, rocket and missile experts has concluded that the wreckage is an oxidizer container, which stored red fuming nitric acid, to fuel the rocket's first-stage propellant.

The storable oxidizer that contains highly toxic chemicals is rarely used by countries with advanced space technology, the defense ministry said, quoting the team's findings.

"Red fuming nitric acid was used in missiles developed by the Soviet Union," a team member said, asking that he remain anonymous. "Because it used red fuming nitric acid as an oxidizer, which can be stored for a long time at normal temperature, the team concluded that (the rocket) was intended for testing (the North's) ICBM technology, rather than developing a space launch vehicle."

The South Korean findings reinforced suspicions voiced by U.S. and other Western military experts that the North's rocket launch was in fact intended to test its inter-continental ballistic missile technology in violation of U.N. resolutions.

Following the launch, North Korea claimed that its satellite, called Kwangmyongsong-3, was functioning properly in orbit but Seoul officials believe Pyongyang has lost contact with it, apparently because it is in unstable condition.

The wreckage retrieved has four holes on the bottom, which are believed to be used to supply the oxidizer to the fuel tank, the South Korean investigation team said in a report.



Usually, the oxidizer is carried in a different tank and released in the proper proportion with the fuel when the rocket is fired, according to the report.

The analysis also revealed that the North had used Skud and Nodong missile technology to develop the rocket, which successfully separated at each stage.

"It used four Nodong missile engines for the first stage booster, while utilizing one Skud missile engine to make the second stage propellant in a bid to save time and cost," the expert said.

A simulation of the rocket, assuming the container stores about 48 tons of oxidizer, showed that the propellant is capable of carrying 500 kilograms of warhead and flying over 10,000 kilometers, a distance long enough to hit the western U.S., he said.

The rocket itself was made of a mixture of aluminum and magnesium, AlMg6, and was equipped with a camera tasked with monitoring engines, a propellant motor and fuel pipelines on its side, according to the report.

"While the North is believed to have produced the alloy, there is also possibility that it has imported it from overseas," it said.

Poor welding and uneven surface shows that North Korea seems to have no advanced technology in that area, the report said.

Some components, including a compression sensor and electric wires, were identified as imported, the report said, but there were no materials that have violated the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), a voluntary guideline shared by 34 members aimed at limiting exports of delivery systems and related technology for ballistic missiles, it said.

It was immediately unknown whether the rocket is able to make a re-entry to the Earth to hit a distant target, a key element of ICBM technology, because information on the second and third stages was not available, the report said.

The defense ministry earlier said it will not hand over the debris to Pyongyang because the North is an enemy state and the rocket launch violated U.N. resolutions.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/12/22/99/0401000000AEN20121222002300315F.HTML>

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Korea Herald
December 24, 2012

Iran Denies Missile Ties with N. Korea: Report

Iran's top defense official formally denied any missile cooperation with North Korea, a news report said Monday.

"Recent claims made by certain countries about missile cooperation between Iran and North Korea are merely speculations," Iranian Defense Minister Ahmad Vahidi was quoted as saying.

China's Xinhua news agency picked up his comments as reported by a local TV station.

There have been media reports that Iranian defense officials recently visited North Korea for bilateral missile cooperation.

The Iranian defense chief, however, said Teheran has never dispatched any official to Pyongyang for military cooperation, according to the report.

The U.S. and its allies have long suspected military ties between North Korea and Iran.

Shortly after North Korea's successful rocket launch earlier this month, a ranking Iranian military official sent a formal congratulatory message to Pyongyang.



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Masoud Jazayeri, deputy head of the Iranian Joint Chiefs of Staff, "warmly congratulated" the government and people of North Korea on their successful launch, Pyongyang's official news agency, KCNA, reported at the time.

"History shows that if independent countries make persistent efforts, standing unfazed by anyone's influence, they can rapidly advance toward the road of progress and independence in the field of science and technology with self-confidence," he was quoted as saying. "Hegemonic states like the United States are incapable of blocking the progress of independent states." (Yonhap News)

<http://nwww.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20121225000004>

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Korea Times – South Korea
December 25, 2012

NK Blasts US Intelligence Report on Pyongyang's Nuke Threat

North Korea on Tuesday blasted a recent report by the U.S. National Intelligence Council (NIC) that cited growing concerns surrounding Pyongyang's nuclear proliferation.

In an article carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), North Korea claimed allegations and concerns raised by the NIC were nothing more than sophistry and lies.

It said Washington is using a nonexistent threat to justify the deployment of its own nuclear arsenal and its so-called nuclear umbrella policy.

The NIC, which supports the director of national intelligence, released a 2030 Global Trend report on Dec. 10 that cited North Korea and Iran as key countries that can pose challenges to anti-nuclear proliferation efforts in the future.

The article said that North Korea, like other nuclear armed countries, has maintained a firm stance to guard against proliferation and has actively taken steps in this direction. The KCNA also said that Washington conducts nuclear attack exercises with South Korea every year and has played an integral role in helping Israel acquire nuclear weapons.

The media outlet said because of such a track record, it is the United States that has fueled nuclear proliferation. (Yonhap)

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/12/485_127631.html

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
December 27, 2012

N. Korean Leader to Purge more of the Old Guard in New Year: Expert

By Lee Chi-dong

WASHINGTON, Dec. 26 (Yonhap) -- As North Korean leader Kim Jong-un wraps up his first year in power, marked by the reckless purging of several old guard elites, he may replace the country's No. 2 leader, Kim Yong-nam, and some other top officials next year, according to a North Korea expert here.

"Who replaces Kim Yong-nam may tell us about the future direction of the restructuring of the political system," said Alexandre Mansourov, a specialist in Northeast Asian security. He now works as a visiting scholar at the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University.

He said Kim Yong-nam will likely "honorably retire," rather than being purged.

Mansourov raised four possible scenarios for the replacement of Kim Yong-nam as ceremonial head of state. Kim Jong-un could assume the position himself; choose Jang Song-thaek, his uncle, who is apparently at the center of the

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governing group; select another figure like Kang Sok-ju, a longtime confidant to late leader Kim Jong-il on foreign affairs, or appoint some dark horse.

The first case would add to speculation that the young leader is in full control of the regime, Mansourov said.

"The appointment of Jang Song-thaek as the nominal head of state will be an indicator of Jang's rising political and foreign policy influences and continued efforts to secure his grip on power beyond his wife, Kim Kyong-hui," the sister of Kim Jong-il, he added.

Mansourov said Kim, apparently emboldened by the successful rocket launch earlier this month, will continue "swift ruthlessness in eliminating his potential enemies inside the royal palace and military barracks."

Among the so-called "Gang of Seven," who walked alongside the hearse carrying Kim Jong-il's body a year ago, four have been dismissed, with two others also sidelined, he pointed out.

Jang Song-thaek is the only figure who remains in power.

"As for his uncle Jang, I believe the young marshal will use him for as long as he has to, but then he will surely cut him off, probably without much regret, just like his father purged his own uncle Kim Yong-ju when Kim Jong-il deemed him as a threat to his own power bid in the mid-1970s," Mansourov said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/12/27/39/0401000000AEN20121227000300315F.HTML>

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Friday, December 28, 2012

AP Exclusive: Photos Show NKorea Nuclear Readiness

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea has repaired flood damage at its nuclear test facility and could conduct a quick atomic explosion if it chose, though water streaming out of a test tunnel may cause problems, analysis of recent satellite photos indicates.

Washington and others are bracing for the possibility that if punished for a successful long-range rocket launch on Dec. 12 that the U.N. considers a cover for a banned ballistic missile test, North Korea's next step might be its third nuclear test.

Rocket and nuclear tests unnerve Washington and its allies because each new success puts North Korean scientists another step closer to perfecting a nuclear warhead small enough to put on a missile that could hit the mainland United States.

Another nuclear test, which North Korea's Foreign Ministry hinted at on the day of the rocket launch, would fit a pattern. Pyongyang conducted its first and second atomic explosions, in 2006 and 2009, weeks after receiving U.N. Security Council condemnation and sanctions for similar long-range rocket launches.

North Korea is thought to have enough plutonium for a handful of crude atomic bombs, and unveiled a uranium enrichment facility in 2010, but it must continue to conduct tests to master the miniaturization technology crucial for a true nuclear weapons program.

"With an additional nuclear test, North Korea could advance their ability to eventually deploy a nuclear weapon on a long-range missile," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the nongovernment Arms Control Association.

Analysts caution that only so much can be determined from satellite imagery, and it's very difficult to fully discern North Korea's plans. This is especially true for nuclear test preparations, which are often done deep within a mountain.

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North Korea, for instance, took many by surprise when it launched its rocket this month only several days after announcing technical problems.

Although there's no sign of an imminent nuclear test, U.S. and South Korean officials worry that Pyongyang could conduct one at any time.

Analysis of GeoEye and Digital Globe satellite photos from Dec. 13 and earlier, provided to The Associated Press by 38 North, the website for the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, said scientists are "determined to maintain a state of readiness" at the Punggye-ri Nuclear Test Facility after repairing flood damage.

The nuclear speculation comes as South Korea's conservative president-elect, Park Geun-hye, prepares to take office in February, and as young North Korean leader Kim Jong Un marks his one-year anniversary as supreme commander.

Kim has consolidated power since taking over after his father, Kim Jong Il, died Dec. 17, 2011, and the rocket launch is seen as a major internal political and popular boost for the 20-something leader.

Some analysts, however, question whether Kim will risk international, and especially Chinese, wrath and sure sanctions by quickly conducting a nuclear test.

The election of Park in South Korea and Barack Obama's re-election to a second term as U.S. president could "prompt North Korea to try more diplomacy than military options," said Chang Yong-seok, an analyst at the Institute for Peace Affairs, a private think tank in Seoul. "I think we'll see North Korea more focused on economic revival than on nuclear testing next year."

The 38 North analysis said the North "may be able to trigger a detonation in as little as two weeks, once a political decision is made to move forward." But the report by Jack Liu, Nick Hansen and Jeffrey Lewis also said it was unclear whether water seepage from a tunnel entrance at the site was under control. Water could hurt a nuclear device and the sensors needed to monitor a test.

The analysis also identified what it called a previously unidentified structure that could be meant to protect sensitive equipment from bad weather.

"We don't have a crystal ball that will tell us when the North will conduct its third nuclear test," said Joel Wit, a former U.S. State Department official and now editor of 38 North. "But events over the next few months, such as the U.N. reaction to Pyongyang's missile test and the North's unfolding policy toward the new South Korean government, may at least provide us with some clues."

Another unknown is how China, the North's only major ally, would respond to calls for tighter sanctions. Washington views more pressure from Beijing as pivotal if diplomatic pressure is going to force change in Pyongyang.

Even if Beijing signs on to U.N. punishment if the North conducts a test, there may be less hurt for Pyongyang than Washington wants.

The impact of tougher sanctions would be "a drop in the bucket compared with the tidal wave of China-North Korean trade" that has risen sharply since 2008, even as inter-Korean trade has remained flat, said John Park, a Korea expert at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Trade figures show North Korea's deepening dependence on China. Pyongyang's trade with Beijing surged more than 60 percent last year, reaching \$5.63 billion, according to South Korea's Statistics Korea. China accounted for 70 percent of North Korea's annual trade in 2011, up from 57 percent in 2010.

North Korea's 2006 nuclear test had an estimated explosive yield of 1 kiloton. The Los Alamos National Laboratory estimated in 2011 that the North's test on May 25, 2009, which followed U.N. condemnation of an April long-range rocket launch, had a minimum yield of 5.7 kilotons. The atomic bomb that hit Nagasaki at the end of World War II was about 21 kilotons.



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Both North Korean tests used plutonium for fissile material. Without at least one more successful plutonium test, it's unlikely that Pyongyang could have confidence in a miniaturized plutonium design, according to an August paper by Frank Pabian of Los Alamos and Siegfried Hecker of Stanford University.

North Korea's small plutonium stockpile is sufficient for four to eight bombs, they wrote, but it may be willing to sacrifice some if it can augment information from the previous tests. Pabian and Hecker predicted that Pyongyang may simultaneously test both plutonium and highly enriched uranium devices.

A uranium test would worry the international community even more, as it would confirm that North Korea, which would need months to restart its shuttered plutonium reactor, has an alternative source of fissile material based on uranium enrichment. North Korea unveiled a previously secret uranium enrichment plant in November 2010.

"Whether and when North Korea conducts another nuclear test will depend on how high a political cost Pyongyang is willing to bear," Pabian and Hecker wrote.

Another test would also undermine Pyongyang's assertion that its long-range rocket launches are for a peaceful space program and not what outsiders see as the development of ballistic missiles that could eventually deliver nuclear weapons.

On the same day as this month's rocket launch, an unidentified North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman told state media that a hostile U.S. response to a failed launch in April of this year had forced Pyongyang "to re-examine the nuclear issue as a whole."

The statement was a clear threat to detonate a nuclear device ahead of any U.N. Security Council action, said Baek Seung-joo, an analyst at the state-run Korea Institute for Defense Analyses in Seoul.

Pennington reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Hyung-jin Kim and Sam Kim contributed from Seoul.

<http://www.aic.com/ap/ap/aerospace/ap-exclusive-photos-show-nkorea-nuclear-readiness/nTgq8/>

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Japan Daily Press – Japan

No Plans to Revise Japan's Nuclear Weapons Principles, Says New Foreign Minister

By Adam Westlake

December 31, 2012

Japan's new Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida stated this weekend that the Cabinet of newly elected Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has no plans to make changes to the country's principles on nuclear weapons. The three rules prohibit the possession, manufacturing, or storage of any nuclear weapons on Japanese soil, something that even prevents U.S. ships carrying the restricted arms from docking at the nation's ports.

Speaking at an interview with the media, Kishida said that previous Cabinets have all valued the three non-nuclear principles, and the latest feels the same, with no discussions of a revision taking place. This comes as Prime Minister Abe has made it clear that he does plan to make changes to Japan's official statements regarding wartime apologies and the use of sexual slaves, along with the previous government's goal of phasing out nuclear power, even stating today that he wants to build new reactors. Kishida added to that sentiment, saying there would be no compromise with China on the topic of the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands, but the need to keep open communication between the countries remains a priority.

The new foreign minister made acknowledgement of the fact that Abe and his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) are seen as right-wing or hawkish, but there is another side as well. He explained that there are things Abe's Cabinet needs to

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accomplish in order to strengthen the nation, but there is also a sense of balance, referring to Japan's ideal of being a symbol against nuclear arms proliferation.

<http://japandailynews.com/no-plans-to-revise-japans-nuclear-weapons-principles-says-new-foreign-minister-3120691>

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Electronic Engineering (EE) Times

China Said to be Planning ASAT Test

By George Leopold

January 4, 2013

WASHINGTON – China may be preparing another anti-satellite (ASAT) weapon test, according to public interest group, but the type of test and target remain unclear.

The Union of Concerned Scientists said Friday (Jan. 4) that hints of Chinese ASAT test have been circulating for months. Two previous Chinese ASAT test in 2007 and 2010 both occurred on Jan. 11. While the science group said it has been unable to confirm reports originating from inside the Chinese government, a senior analyst said the group has been told by a senior U.S. military official that "the Obama administration was very concerned about an imminent Chinese ASAT test."

In a blog post, Gregory Kulacki also wrote: "Given these high-level administration concerns, and past Chinese practice, there seems to be a strong possibility China will conduct an ASAT test within the next few weeks. What kind of test and what the target might be is unclear."

A 2007 test targeted an aging Chinese weather satellite. An ASAT interceptor destroyed the 1-ton satellite in low Earth orbit. The 2010 Chinese test involved a missile defense system that destroyed an object not in Earth orbit, the group said.

The U.S. destroyed a malfunctioning U.S. spy satellite in 2008 using a ship-based Standard Missile.

Among the concerns raised by ASAT tests is that they can create large fields of space debris that could collide with and damage other satellites.

The science group said it remains unclear what if any diplomatic steps the Obama administration might take to prevent another Chinese ASAT test.

<http://www.eetimes.com/design/military-aerospace-design/4404169/China-said-to-be-planning-ASAT-test>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

January 4, 2013

N. Korean Newspaper Claims U.S. Threat to World Peace

SEOUL, Jan. 4 (Yonhap) -- North Korea's state-run newspaper claimed Friday that efforts by the United States to start a war on the Korean Peninsula is a threat to peace throughout the world.

The Rodong Sinmun, an organ of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, said Washington will use the invasion of North Korea as a springboard for its broader plan to conquer the world.

The article titled "The fight for Asian and global peace" argued that to ensure the world is not put at risk, the threat of war must be removed once and for all from the Korean Peninsula.

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The claim marks the first time that the communist country's media outlet attacked the United States in the new year, and can be seen as a detailed elaboration of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un's New Year message.

Kim said in the message broadcast early Tuesday that the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia remain hotbeds of tension. He then warned against plots by imperialistic powers to engage in a war of conquest.

Rodong Sinmun added that the U.S.'s plan to launch a second Korean War can be seen in the concentration of offensive forces in South Korea as well as in Okinawa, Japan; Hawaii, U.S. and other places around the Pacific region.

It, moreover, said U.S. presence in South Korea is the root source of all tension and the cause for the division of the Korean Peninsula, indirectly reiterating Pyongyang's long-held demands for the withdrawal of all American troops.

North Korea has consistently called for the withdrawal of U.S. forces from South Korea as a precondition to establishing a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/01/04/67/0401000000AEN20130104005900315F.HTML>

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Economic Times – India

Nuke Sub Chakra Facing Problems with Critical Components: Navy

By Press Trust of India (PTI)

December 23, 2012

NEW DELHI: India's only Russian-origin nuclear submarine INS Chakra is facing problems with its critical components affecting its operational readiness.

The 8,000-tonne submarine has been facing problems with its critical components and Russia has been asked to provide the parts for the vessel which need to be replaced, Navy sources told here.

However, they did not divulge the components which would have to be replaced but indicated they are critical for the operations of the submarine.

India had inducted the Akula-II Class 'Nerpa' nuclear submarine in its inventory in April this year at the Vishakhapatnam-based Eastern Naval Command. It was renamed 'Chakra' by the Indian Navy.

The Russian submarine had met with an accident in November 2008 when it was undergoing sea trials in the Sea of Japan in which around twenty sailors were killed and several others were left injured.

The submarine was launched in 1993-94 but its construction was held up since then due to lack of funds with the Russian Navy.

However, in 2004, the Russian side decided to build it after reaching a ten-year lease agreement for operation of the submarine with the Indian side.

With INS Chakra and the yet-to-be-inducted indigenously built INS Arihant, India is planning to have two nuclear submarines guarding its vast maritime boundary.

With a maximum speed of 30 knots, Chakra can go to a depth of 600 metres and has an endurance of 100 days with a crew of 73. However, as per the lease accord, it cannot carry nuclear warheads.

The vessel is armed with four 533mm and four 650mm torpedo tubes.

India had leased and operated a Charlie-class Russian nuclear submarine, also called 'Chakra', in 1988 for training its personnel on such submarines.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2012-12-23/news/35982830_1_personnel-on-such-submarines-ins-chakra-ins-arihant

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The Hindu Business Line – India
December 31, 2012

A Year of Big Take-Off for Missiles

By M. Somasekhar

Hyderabad, Dec. 31: It was an incredible year for India's missile scientists. The year 2012 was in a way a record of sorts, with the Defence scientists successfully demonstrating a wide range of missiles from the new, tactical missile, Shourya to the long range (above 5000 km) Agni-V.

It virtually rained missiles, going by nearly two dozen launches that the developer- Defence Research and Development Organisation, the user — armed forces and component provider — Indian industry, jointly test fired to showcase the strides achieved in securing India's Defence preparedness.

High point

The high point was the country breaking into the elite group of nations with long-range capability, with the launch of the Agni-V in April. The US, Russia, China, France, the UK and Israel have the knowhow to launch inter-continental ballistic missiles.

That Agni-V can also be launched from a mobile platform. With its ability to reach Beijing and Shanghai, the development was hailed as an answer to the growing clout of China in the region. Experts say that China has a capability to launch missiles of over 10,000 km.

The other big stride was the test firing of the submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) for the first time in July. The SLBM has been developed for the INS Arihant, the country's nuclear submarine. This again catapults India into the exclusive club of the US, Russia, China, the UK and France with this capability.

In all the DRDO and Strategic Forces Command of the Army tested Agni-I, Agni-III, Agni-IV, Agni-V, Shourya, Prithvi-II, Nag (anti-battle tank), BrahMos (supersonic cruise missile), Dhanush (naval version of Prithvi) and finally Astra (beyond visual range), as its launch sites in Wheeler Island and Chandipur at Sea had a busy year.

Agni, the big success story

Undoubtedly, the workhorse of India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (launched in 1983), the Agni (fire) series of ballistic missiles, was the star performer of 2012. The Agni-V was the toast as it proved maturity in technology, industry contribution and in a way was a 'game changer'.

The Agni missile has tested a variety of indigenous technologies such as rocket motor casings, on board inertial navigation systems with GPS, homing guidance, radio frequency seeks and ring laser gyros along with the light weight and robust composite material, which will stand the country's long-term programmes in good stead, according to Avinash Chander, Programme Director of Agni and Chief Controller R&D (missiles and strategic systems) of the DRDO.

The development cycle (drawing board to production) of missiles has also been reduced to 5-6 years now from the 10-12 years ago. This substantially cuts down costs and shows the confidence of the Defence scientists and the industry, he said.

The year also saw more tests of Agni-I (around 700 km) by the Army, which has been inducted into the services already. Similarly, a few more tests of Agni-III (Above 2,000 km) and Agni-IV (over 3,000 km) were also undertaken.

In the case of Prithvi (medium range missile), the most successful missile in terms of testing and induction, its advanced, Prithvi-II and naval version-Dhanush were test fired.

"We can now develop a missile of the required range according to the threat perception of the country," said V.K. Saraswat, Chief of the DRDO and Scientific Adviser to the Raksha Mantri.



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Missiles & Industry

The big successes of Defence scientists in a way reflected the growth in confidence levels and robustness of the domestic industry, which is a key supplier of components and systems that make the missile.

The public sector Bharat Dynamics Ltd landed with a huge order of over Rs 5,000 crore to manufacture Akash (surface to land missile) missile in big numbers. The public sector enterprise is scouting to set up new manufacturing units to cope with the huge demand. A lot of private companies are expected to get important roles and business from the missile market.

The BrahMos supersonic missile is a significant example of private-public partnership at a country to country level. Indian and Russian companies and research institutes have demonstrated the utility of collaborative work as the missile got inducted into the Army and getting orders from the Navy, said Sivathanu Pillai, Managing Director of the Indo-Russian company BrahMos Aerospace.

The visit of Russian Premier Vladimir Putin is expected to give a further boost not just to this venture but also other Indo-Russian initiatives in Defence cooperation and nuclear energy.

Ballistic Missile Defence

The country's ambitions to have its own ballistic missile Defence shield intended to protect its vital assets from the ballistic missiles of hostile neighbours got a shot in the arm with the success of its test on November 23. Since the launch of the project in 2006, this was the eight trial of which seven have been on target.

An interceptor missile homed in and destroyed an incoming, modified Prithvi missile at an altitude of around 15 km. The Chief of the DRDO V.K. Saraswat also declared after the success that a ballistic shield for the National Capital Region would be a reality by end of 2014. It would stop an incoming missile with a range of 2000 km.

The country's ambitious BMD consists of two tiered shield with a goal of intercepting incoming missiles from 5000 km. It consists of two interceptor missiles, the Prithvi Air Defence for high altitude and the Advanced Air Defence for low altitude.

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/science/a-year-of-big-takeoff-for-missiles/article4259436.ece>

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Xinhua News – China

India Exchange Nuke List with Pakistan

January 1, 2013

NEW DELHI, Jan. 1 (Xinhua) -- India Tuesday said that it has exchanged with Pakistan a list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations agreement between the two arch rivals.

"India and Pakistan today exchanged, through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear installations between India and Pakistan," the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in a release.

The annual list exchange has been taking place since 1992 under a bilateral pact between the two countries signed in 1988.

Both India and Pakistan are nuclear powers and have fought three major wars since 1947.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-01/01/c_132075613.htm

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India Today – India

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Set to Boost India's Second-Strike Capability, New Defence Projects Set for a Giant Leap this Year

By Gautam Datt, *Mail Today*
New Delhi, January 3, 2013

The beginning of the New Year is crucial for some key defence projects which promise to boost the country's second-strike capability significantly.

Lined up in the coming weeks are the final trial of underwater missile K-15, meant for nuclear submarine Arihant, maiden test of subsonic cruise missile Nirbhay and first flight of Limited Series Production (LSP-8) of Light Combat Aircraft Tejas.

Sources said the final test of K-15 is expected to take place in January. Once the trials are over, the missile would be integrated with Arihant, the nuclear-powered submarine being developed at home.

Defence scientists said the missile has performed well and its underwater launch capability is shaping up well. The last trial of the missile was conducted from a pontoon in the Bay of Bengal in December last year.

Sources said one more test is required for the final acceptance of the system. Its development is crucial for the success of the Arihant programme, which is expected to go for sea trials soon. The harbour trials of the submarine have been completed.

Navy Chief Admiral D.K. Joshi had said last month that the nation can expect some good news in the Arihant development process. The K-15 missile will be followed by K-4, which will have a longer range of around 3000 km.

Another missile that is lined up for test is the sub-sonic cruise missile Nirbhay. Sources said the first trial of the missile is expected to be held this month.

The missile has a range of 750 km and can be launched from land, sea and air. Its launch has already been delayed by three months as it was expected to take place in October 2012. The defence scientists are also hoping to fly Tejas LSP-8 this month. The Light Combat Aircraft would finally be handed over to the Indian Air force for trials.

Sources said the LSP-8 is under production and preparations are in full swing for its first flight, which is already delayed by at least a year.

The IAF is expected to fly Tejas during the Iron Fist exercise in February. Iron Fist will be first day and night exercise in which live firing will be practiced.

This is the first time that Tejas will form a part of an extensive IAF drill in the Rajasthan desert. The IAF is looking to raise two squadrons of Tejas to begin with. It is hoping that the aircraft will get the second Initial Operational Clearance sometime this year, said sources.

Another crucial system, the Astra Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air missile, was successfully tested in December under simulated environment. The missile would soon be fired from IAF's Su-30 MKI combat jet.

<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/defence-projects-underwater-missile-k-15-arihant-nirbhay/1/240541.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Bring Back Railroad-Based ICBM – Source

26 December 2012

MOSCOW, December 26 (RIA Novosti) – Russia will restart production of railway-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), with prototypes to be deployed by 2020, a senior Russian defense industry official said on Wednesday.

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Work has already begun on the prototypes, which will utilize exclusively domestically-made components, the official told RIA Novosti on condition of anonymity.

The new missiles will be half the weight of their decommissioned Soviet analogues, allowing them to fit into one railcar, the official added.

The Soviet military deployed its first missile train in 1987, and had 12 of them by 1991. But by 2005 they had all been destroyed under the START II arms reduction treaty with the United States.

However, the treaty's 2010 replacement, New START, does not prohibit the development of railway-based ICBMs.

The original railway-based system involved SS-24 Scalpel missiles that weighed 104 tons, required three locomotives to move, and were so heavy that they damaged railroad tracks. It was thought that missiles launched from the moving trains were harder to track than stationary launches.

However, prominent Russian military expert Alexander Konovalov said that this apparent return to the cumbersome Soviet technology, even in revamped form, was a "bad idea."

The return to missile trains is an apparent response to US plans to position elements of its missile defense system in Eastern Europe, said Konovalov, the president of the Institute for Strategic Assessment, a Moscow-based private think-tank.

Russia has claimed the US missile shield will affect its launches, but Konovalov said that the threat is exaggerated. He added that the missile trains were outdated technology.

"We're better off developing telecoms systems, unmanned drones and precision weapons, not these monsters," Konovalov told RIA Novosti, speaking about the missile trains.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121226/178413560.html

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

New Radar in S. Russia to Go on Combat Duty Early in 2013

28 December 2012

MOSCOW, December 28 (RIA Novosti) - A new-generation Voronezh-DM class anti-missile radar will enter combat duty near the town of Armavir in Russia's southern Krasnodar region in the beginning of 2013, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Friday.

"The radar will monitor the Russian airspace in the southern strategic vector," Putin said at a Kremlin meeting with newly-appointed and promoted high-ranking military officials.

The Armavir radar will replace the Gabala radar station, which Russia had leased from Azerbaijan for 10 years.

The lease, signed in 2002, expired on December 24, and Russia's Foreign Ministry confirmed that the Russian army will not renew it.

The anti-missile radar near Armavir is one of the four new-generation Voronezh-class radars that have been built in Russia in recent years.

Two Voronezh-M radars have been deployed in Lekhtusi near St. Petersburg and near the town of Usolye-Sibirskoe in Siberia's Irkutsk Region.

Another Voronezh-DM class radar stationed in the westernmost exclave of Kaliningrad was put on combat duty in November last year in what then-President Dmitry Medvedev said was part of Russia's response to U.S. and NATO European missile defense shield plans.

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Voronezh-DM class radars have a range of 6,000 kilometers. They can be more quickly deployed to a new site and require a smaller crew to operate it compared to previous generation stations.

Two sections of the Armavir radar that have been working in a testing mode have allowed monitoring the area from France and Spain in the west, to Algeria in the southwest, Sudan in the south, and Iran, Afghanistan and parts of India and Pakistan in the southeast, according to the Russian military.

The Defense Ministry has recently announced that Russia will start building two new radars in east Siberia's Krasnoyarsk Territory and in the south Siberian Altai Republic in 2013 as part of its missile defense network.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121228/178464136.html

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RT (Russia Today) – Russia

Silent Sub: Russian Noiseless Borei Class Nuclear Submarine Immersed

30 December 2012

Super-modern, powerful and almost noiseless Russian nuclear submarine Vladimir Monomakh has been put in water to become the third ship of the Borei project. The cruiser is about to begin sea trials and mooring to become fully operational in 2013.

Vladimir Monomakh was laid down at Russia's largest shipbuilding complex Sevmash, located on the shores of the White Sea in the town of Severodvinsk in northern Russia on March 19, 2006 – the 100th anniversary of the Russian submarine fleet.

It belongs to a class of missile strategic submarine cruisers with a new generation of nuclear reactor, which allows the submarine to dive to a depth of 480 meters. It can spend up to three months in autonomous navigation and, thanks to the latest achievements in the reduction of noise, it is almost silent compared to previous generations of submarines.

The submarine is armed with the new missile system, which has from 16 to 20 solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles Bulava (SS-NX-30 by NATO classification). The rocket is able to overcome any prospective missile defense system.

On August 27, 2011, the Russian Defense Ministry reported on a successful test of Bulava to investigate its maximum range. The missile was launched from the White Sea, flew 9,300km in just 33 minutes, and then fell in the specified area in the Pacific Ocean.

All Borei class submarines are equipped with a floating rescue chamber designed to fit in the whole crew.

The Borei family

The first and head submarine of Borei class, Yury Dolgoruky, has already completed the test program and is to be officially adopted by the Russian Navy on Sunday. Construction of the missile carrier is approximately estimated at around US\$770 million, while other Borei class submarines are believed to cost less.

"The hoisting of the flag and the signing of the acceptance act is to be adopted at the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk on Sunday, December 30," the Rubin design bureau that designed the submarine said in a statement on Saturday.

Another missile cruiser of this project, the Aleksandr Nevsky, is undergoing tests, according to Borisov. While a fourth, more advanced submarine, the Knyaz Vladimir, with enhanced technical characteristics and increased ammunition is currently being built.

Over the next eight years Russia plans to have built 10 Borei class submarines altogether, according to the state armaments program of 2011-2020. All Borei class submarines are believed to provide a basis of naval strategic nuclear forces of Russia in the coming decades.

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<http://rt.com/news/russian-noiseless-borei-submarine-106/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russian Navy to Get Over 50 New Warships by 2016

03 January 2013

MOSCOW, January 3 (RIA Novosti) – The Russian Navy will get over 50 new warships by 2016, including strategic nuclear submarines and special operations support vessels, the Defense Ministry reported on Thursday.

“By 2016, the combat strength of the Navy will be replenished with 18 surface warships of various ranks and designation, and also 30 special-purpose and counter-subversion vessels. It is also planned to put 6 multi-purpose and strategic submarines into operation,” the ministry said in a statement.

The quality of new generations of surface warships and submarines being built for the Russian Navy will improve with stronger state acceptance control at the shipyards involved in the Navy’s shipbuilding program, the statement said.

“The implementation of the shipbuilding program envisages serial construction along with the introduction of new technical and modernization solutions into each subsequently built warship,” the statement said.

Russia is currently in the middle of a huge rearmament program, with \$659 billion to be spent on arms procurement by 2020, according to the Defense Ministry.

Russia’s Defense Ministry announced on Wednesday unprecedented naval drills in the Mediterranean and Black Seas in late January with the involvement of warships from the Northern, Baltic, Black Sea and Pacific Fleets.

“The Russian Navy’s drills of this scope will be held for the first time over the past few decades and are designed to improve control, ensure and practice multiservice force interaction of the fleets in the far-off maritime zones,” the ministry’s press office said.

The drills will be held in line with the Russian Armed Forces’ 2013 combat training plan and will aim to “practice the issues of establishing a multiservice grouping of forces (troops) outside Russia, planning its use and conducting joint actions as part of a united naval grouping based on a common plan,” the press office said.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130103/178558846.html

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Journal of Turkish Weekly – Turkey

US Says Remains Open for Missile Defense Talks with Russia

Friday, 4 January 2013

RIA Novosti

WASHINGTON, January 4 (RIA Novosti) - The United States is still interested in missile defense cooperation with Russia, US State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said on Thursday.

“In late November - early December, we had discussions again between Acting Under Secretary Rose Gottemoeller and [Russian] Deputy Foreign Minister [Sergei] Ryabkov on the missile defense issues. We remain committed to cooperating with Russia on missile defense,” Nuland told journalists.

“We think this can be a win-win for both of us because we think we share the same threats. But it’s going to require Russia being willing to have a real conversation about how we can work together on this, and that’s been difficult,” she said.

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"So we remain open to working on this, and we remain open to collaboration, both bilaterally and in terms of the NATO-Russia track, but Russia has not been as open to that as we'd like them to be," the spokeswoman said.

Moscow has been irked by US plans to deploy missile defense elements in Europe. NATO and the United States insist that the shield would defend NATO members against missiles from North Korea and Iran and would not be directed at Russia.

Russia proposed a joint missile defense system, an idea that many experts both at home and abroad dismiss as unviable and unrealistic. Then it demanded "legally binding guarantees" that US/NATO missiles would not be targeted at Russia.

Since Moscow's proposal received a lukewarm response in the West, it has been warning of unspecified low-cost "asymmetric measures" to counter the future Western missile defense system.

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/146252/us-says-remains-open-for-missile-defense-talks-with-russia.html>

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Daily Star – Lebanon

Obama Signs Law against Iran Latin America Influence

December 29, 2012

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama enacted a law to counter Iran's alleged influence in Latin America, through a new diplomatic and political strategy to be designed by the State Department.

The Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act, passed by lawmakers earlier this year, calls for the State Department to develop a strategy within 180 days to "address Iran's growing hostile presence and activity" in the region.

Although the strategy is confidential and only accessible to lawmakers, it must contain a public summary.

The text also calls on the Department of Homeland Security to bolster surveillance at US borders with Canada and Mexico to "prevent operatives from Iran, the IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps), its Quds Force, Hezbollah or any other terrorist organization from entering the United States."

And within Latin American countries, the text provides for a multiagency action plan to provide security in those countries, along with a "counterterrorism and counter-radicalization plan" to isolate Iran and its allies.

Washington has repeatedly stated it is closely monitoring Tehran's activities in Latin America, though senior State Department and intelligence officials have indicated there is no apparent indication of illicit activities by Iran.

Iran, placed under a series of international sanctions because of its suspect nuclear program, has opened six new embassies in the region since 2005 -- bringing the total to 11 -- and 17 cultural centers.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has made regular visits to Latin America, though he only toured the region twice this year.

Tehran has particularly close ties with Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela, where it has strengthened its presence through investments.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-29/200309-obama-signs-law-against-irans-influence-in-latin-america.ashx#axzz2GjelJvCj>

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.



Iran Says U.S. 'Still Lives in Cold War Era' After New Law Enacted

Wednesday, 02 January 2013

By AL ARABIYA with Agencies

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said on Tuesday that the United States "still lives in the Cold War era". He was referring to a new law enacted by the U.S. president aimed at countering Tehran's alleged influence in Latin America.

Mehmanparast blasted U.S. President Barack Obama and said the "Countering Iran in the Western Hemisphere Act" was an overt play at intervention in the region.

The United States, he said, "still lives in the Cold War era and considers Latin America as its back yard", AFP news agency reported.

On Friday, Obama enacted the law which aims to counter Iran's alleged influence in Latin America via a new diplomatic and political strategy designed by the U.S. State Department.

The act, passed by lawmakers earlier in 2012, calls for the strategy to be developed within 180 days. The aim is to "address Iran's growing hostile presence and activity" in the region.

The text also calls on the Department of Homeland Security to bolster surveillance at U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico to "prevent operatives from Iran, the IRGC (Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps), its Quds Force, Hezbollah or any other terrorist organization from entering the United States".

However, senior State Department and intelligence officials have indicated there is no apparent indication of illicit activities by Iran.

"It is an overt intervention in Latin American affairs... that shows they are not familiar with new world relations," Mehmanparast said of the U.S.

"We recommend that they respect the nations' right in today's world... world public opinion does not accept such an interventionist move", he added.

Mehmanparast said Tehran's relations with all nations, in particular with Latin American countries, was "friendly" and based on "mutual respect and interest".

Iran, placed under a series of international sanctions because of its suspected nuclear program, has opened six new embassies in the Middle East region since 2005 - bringing the total to 11 - and 17 cultural centers.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2013/01/02/258214.html>

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Breitbart.com

Obama Signs Sweeping US Defense Spending Bill

January 3, 2013

President Barack Obama has signed into law a \$633 billion US defense spending bill that funds the war in Afghanistan and boosts security at US missions worldwide.

"I have approved this annual defense authorization legislation, as I have in previous years, because it authorizes essential support for service members and their families, renews vital national security programs, and helps ensure that the United States will continue to have the strongest military in the world," Obama said in a statement early Thursday after signing the measure.

Obama, who is vacationing in Hawaii, said that he signed the measure despite reservations.



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"In a time when all public servants recognize the need to eliminate wasteful or duplicative spending, various sections in the Act limit the Defense Department's ability to direct scarce resources towards the highest priorities for our national security," the president said.

"Even though I support the vast majority of the provisions contained in this Act... I do not agree with them all," he said in his statement, adding that he did not have the constitutional authority to approve piecemeal items within the sprawling bill.

"I am empowered either to sign the bill, or reject it, as a whole," he said.

The measure was hammered out by House and Senate conferees last month after each chamber voted to approve separate versions of the bill.

It includes \$527.4 billion for the base Pentagon budget; \$88.5 billion for overseas contingency operations including the war in Afghanistan; and \$17.8 billion for national security programs in the Energy Department and Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

The bill authorizes \$9.8 billion for missile defense, including funds for a Pentagon feasibility study on three possible missile defense sites on the US East Coast.

It also extends for one year the restriction on use of US funds to transfer Guantanamo inmates to other countries, a limitation critics say marks a setback for Obama's efforts to close the detention center.

<http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2013/01/03/Obama-signs-sweeping-US-defense-spending-bill>

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U.S. Department of State

U.S. Nuclear Weapons Stockpile Life Extension Programs

Fact Sheet

Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance

January 3, 2013

Key Point: The end of nuclear explosive testing has resulted in the development and application of advanced processes for extending the service life of the warheads in the United States' nuclear weapons stockpile. Extending the life of existing warheads helps to eliminate the need to build and test new weapons.

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), a semi-autonomous agency within the Department of Energy that has "cradle to grave" responsibility for the nuclear weapons stockpile, performs alterations and modifications to the stockpile in order to sustain the warheads that underpin the U.S. nuclear deterrent. It also conducts routine nuclear weapon maintenance operations. Over the last decade, the NNSA, through the Stockpile Stewardship Program (SSP), accomplished changes to the stockpile through Life Extension Programs (LEPs), with the goal of extending the service life of the current weapons in the stockpile. The NNSA will continue to conduct LEPs as outlined in the April 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, in order to maintain the existing stockpile. LEPs will use only nuclear components based on previously tested designs and will not support new military missions or provide for new military capabilities. The United States will not develop new nuclear warheads.

Prior to 1993, it was a routine practice for changes to warheads to be evaluated with underground nuclear explosive tests, in order to verify the relative effectiveness of these changes. Over the last two decades, the NNSA has completed several changes to nuclear warheads without performing underground nuclear explosive testing, due to improvements in computer simulation capabilities. Examples of NNSA's success in maintaining the stockpile without nuclear explosive testing include the LEPs for the W87 Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) warhead and B61-7/11 strategic bomb, and the current W76-1 Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) warhead LEP.

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The continued success of future changes to the stockpile (i.e., B61-12 strategic bomb and W78-1 ICBM warhead) relies on continued support for the SSP. SSP tools and investments in the future form the basis for our ability to maintain a safe, secure and effective U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear explosive testing.

<http://www.state.gov/t/avc/rls/202015.htm>

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National Journal

What the Fiscal-Cliff Deal Means for Russian Nukes

By Elaine M. Grossman

January 3, 2013

Buried inside legislation to avert the federal budget “fiscal cliff,” passed by the U.S. Senate and House on Tuesday, are two retroactive changes to wording on nuclear arms reductions found in a recently passed defense authorization conference bill.

The alterations pertain to a grand bipartisan compromise hashed out two years ago in which new strategic nuclear arms reductions agreed to by Russia and the United States could proceed as long as the Obama administration fully funded modernization of the aging U.S. nuclear arsenal and atomic weapons complex.

Pursuing Republican support for ratifying the New START arms control deal in late 2010, administration leaders pledged to allocate \$85 billion over 10 years for modernizing the nation's nuclear weapons complex.

Among a number of related requirements initiated by the Republican-dominated House regarding the continued implementation of New START was a fiscal 2013 defense authorization demand that the president “certify to the congressional defense committees that the Russian Federation is in compliance with its arms control obligations with the United States.”

According to Capitol Hill sources, the administration had requested that Congress modify this provision’s wording.

In signing the new defense authorization legislation into law on Wednesday, Obama issued a written statement saying he retained the latitude to interpret the bill’s New START implementation restrictions in a manner that would not interfere with his “constitutional authority to conduct diplomacy.”

However, the president also said he was “pleased” that the fiscal cliff legislation -- which he also signed into law via “autopen” while on travel later in the day -- amended the defense bill's problematic prose regarding Russian arms control compliance.

Specifically, the new changes will require the president, in annual New START certification, to state “whether” Moscow is complying with its treaty obligations, rather than “that” the Kremlin is complying. The diction adjustment appears aimed at eliminating a presumption of Russian compliance in the certification process.

Referring to the same sentence in the authorization bill, the executive branch also asked lawmakers to insert the word “strategic” before “arms control obligations.” This new construct would allow the White House to certify Russian adherence to New START strategic nuclear arms control treaty stipulations, even if Moscow is not complying with other treaties involving the United States.

The revised wording would give Russia a pass -- at least in terms of this narrow presidential certification -- for no longer meeting terms of the Conventional Forces in Europe pact, for instance. Russia in 2007 announced it would suspend implementation of the accord.

The Obama White House objects to a number of the New START implementation requirements imposed by Congress, including those that hold the administration’s feet to the fire in funding atomic weapons and infrastructure

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modernization programs into the future at specific budget levels, noted Jeffrey Lewis, a nuclear arms expert at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, Calif.

Administration officials are tacitly accepting most of the legislative provisions related to New START even if they are viewed as inappropriate or onerous. As the defense authorization text was initially written, though, the Russia certification provisions were “impossible to meet,” and thus required change, Lewis said.

Under New START, which entered into force in 2011, the United States and Russia each agreed to reduce their deployed strategic nuclear warheads to a 1,550 ceiling by February 2018. The accord also limits fielded nuclear delivery vehicles -- including bomber aircraft and missiles based on land and at sea -- to 700, with an additional 100 allowed in reserve.

“We worked with the administration to facilitate having it happen,” said Claude Chafin, a spokesman for the House Armed Services Committee, referring to the wording adjustment. Republicans on the panel, led by Representative Howard McKeon (Calif.), “didn’t object” to the Obama team’s request, he told *Global Security Newswire* on Wednesday.

A Defense Department spokeswoman, Lt. Col. Monica Matoush, on Thursday said the Pentagon “will not comment on the internal deliberation between the Department and Congress that led to the change in language.”

A spokesman for the White House Management and Budget Office similarly would not address indications that the wording modifications were discussed at high levels inside the administration. Declining to be named, he also would not say whether Obama would have vetoed the defense authorization legislation if the Russian compliance certification provision had remained unchanged.

“The fiscal cliff package amended a poorly written provision that would have allowed the Russians to dictate U.S. nuclear arsenal policy,” a Democratic congressional source said by e-mail on Wednesday, implying that any Russian treaty noncompliance should not be permitted to force any specific U.S. responses. “Both Republicans and Democrats agreed to the fix, and it was quickly made.”

Similarly, both the Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, Carl Levin (D-Mich.), and ranking member, John McCain (R-Ariz.), “agreed” to the alterations, said a Senate Democratic committee aide. Neither this staffer nor the congressional source was authorized to speak on the record.

Levin, for one, “supports these wording changes because they are consistent with what was originally intended by the conferees,” the Senate aide said.

“Congress’s use of sanctions and reporting requirements reflects the relatively limited tools available to the legislative [branch] on issues of national security and foreign policy,” Lewis said in a Wednesday phone interview. “The administration -- I think rightly -- wanted to restrict the reporting requirements to issues that were germane. If Russia is not in compliance with the Antarctic Treaty, for example, we’re not going to pull out of New START.”

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/nationalsecurity/what-the-fiscal-cliff-deal-means-for-russian-nukes-20130103>

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NBC News.com
January 3, 2013

Al-Jazeera Acquires Current TV

Arab television network Al-Jazeera said on Wednesday it will buy Current TV, the cable channel founded by Al Gore and business partner Joel Hyatt in 2005, for undisclosed terms.

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The acquisition could give Al-Jazeera access to a broader range of U.S. television viewers. Although its programming is available in some large metropolitan areas, the network's executives have long been frustrated in their efforts to secure carriage deals with TV distributors.

Current TV, which has battled low viewership, is available in 60 million U.S. homes.

"We are proud and pleased that Al Jazeera, the award-winning international news organization, has bought Current TV," said Gore and Hyatt in a statement sent to NBC News. "Current Media was built based on a few key goals: To give voice to those who are not typically heard; to speak truth to power; to provide independent and diverse points of view; and to tell the stories that no one else is telling. Al Jazeera, like Current, believes that facts and truth lead to a better understanding of the world around us."

News of the deal was earlier reported by The New York Times.

"They really want to be able to compete for American viewers, and they have to find some way to get on," Philip Seib, the director of the center on public diplomacy at the University of Southern California and the author of "The Al Jazeera Effect," told The New York Times.

Information from the Associated Press and Reuters was included in this report

<http://www.nbcnews.com/business/al-jazeera-acquires-current-tv-1C7805700#/business/al-jazeera-acquires-current-tv-1C7805700>

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Bloomberg View
OPINION/Editorial

Better Nuclear Bombs for a Safer World

By the Editors
December 25, 2012

Is the U.S. getting ready to wage the Cold War again? If one believes the critics, that's the aim behind a planned \$10 billion modernization of the B61 nuclear bomb, the backbone of the Pentagon's tactical nuclear arsenal.

Actually, there are some other reasons for the upgrade: to reinforce global deterrence, to provide options against a range of future threats, and to make the U.S. stronger and safer. Achieving those goals is worth the money.

As wonderful as the idea of a world without nuclear weapons is, it isn't going to be a reality any time soon. For now, the appropriate U.S. approach is to have the smallest arsenal possible, made up of weapons that will deter a weak rogue state-- think North Korea or Iran -- from developing a nuclear capability. Achieving this goal means working with Russia to get rid of as many intercontinental ballistic missiles as possible, while maintaining a small, but effective, core of tactical weapons that, with their limited fallout, could be used with great precision in combat.

The B61's utility in this regard comes from its so-called dial-a-yield technology, meaning its explosive power can be set at a range of less than a kiloton to several hundred kilotons. (The bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan, in 1945 had a yield of about 15 kilotons.) No other nuclear device comes close in terms of flexibility of reach, power and exactitude.

While actual data are classified, it is believed that the military has about 1,000 active B61s, many held at bases in Europe, of which 400 or so will be refurbished. The 11.5-foot, 700-pound armament can be carried by bombers, such as the B-1 and B-52, and fighters, such as the F-15, the F/A-18 Hornet, some NATO aircraft and (most likely) Lockheed Martin Corp. (LM)'s next-generation F-35.

What needs improving? One weapons manager told the Washington Post that the entire arsenal was built with less computational power than that of an iPhone. Engineers have resorted to scouring EBay to replace circuits and vacuum tubes to keep the bombs operational. The first stage of proposed modernization will be to give the bomb a new tail kit

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similar to that of up-to-date precision-guided missiles, for which Boeing Co. (BA) received a \$178 million contract in November. The entire upgrade -- in which the four current variations of the B61 will be morphed into a single, maximally flexible bomb -- will take three years.

Opponents of the program, mostly well-meaning but misguided arms-control advocates, have taken two lines of attack. One is to point out that most B61s are deployed in Europe -- even though the Soviet threat disappeared long ago. Two responses: First, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies' involvement in their own nuclear defense binds together a vital organization in an era of increasingly fragile ties. Second, geography isn't very relevant as the weapons can be moved around the globe quickly: A B61 in the bomb bay of a B-2 based in Missouri can quickly be a threat, and thus a deterrent, to North Korea and China.

Another criticism is that the program is a disingenuous workaround. Some say it's not really a retrofit, but the creation of an entirely new weapon, and therefore a cheat on official U.S. policy, which states that life-extension programs "will not support new military missions or provide for new military capabilities." Semantics can work both ways, we think: Yes, most of the components are newly designed and will help give the bomb new capabilities, but it is hardly an entirely new weapon.

And, while the price tag is high, the B61 project could make possible large-scale, money-saving reductions in high-yield warheads and intercontinental ballistic missiles. We think that strategic arsenal could quickly and easily be cut by more than half. In the universe of nuclear logic, the creation of a smaller, safer, less-powerful nuclear arsenal intended to stem the atomic ambitions of rogue nations, is pretty much the most sensible act of nonproliferation one could imagine.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-12-25/better-nuclear-bombs-for-a-safer-world.html>

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Valdai Discussion Club – Russia
OPINION/Commentary

Russia's Strategic Missile Force Guarantees National Security

Paradoxes of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Deterrence Forces

28 December 2012

By Viktor Litovkin

Recently, the Russian Strategic Missile Force, the only armed service, which has never seen any military action, celebrated its 53rd anniversary.

An official conference dealing with this event was held in Vlasikha near Moscow where the High Command of the Strategic Missile Force and its Central Command Center are located. The conference involved retired officers of the Force, off-duty officers and their wives, as well as representatives of regional and municipal authorities, the Russian Orthodox Church, which maintains particularly close relations with the Force, and numerous guests. Colonel General Sergei Karakayev, Commander of the Strategic Missile Force, was interviewed by journalists attending the event.

The conversion to the US-style reservist-training model requires substantial funding.

A scandal has flared up around the Oboronservice Company after a Defense Ministry system for monitoring budget expenditures was dismantled.

Two days before the celebrations, General Karakayev invited several journalists, including the author of this article, who write about military issues and the Strategic Missile Force, to his office for a chat. And I would like to share my impressions of many issues, which were discussed, with the readers.

First of all, General Karakayev told us that two missile divisions had been rearmed completely throughout 2012. RT-2PM2 Topol-M / SS-27 Sickle-B solid-propellant and single-warhead intercontinental ballistic missiles have been placed

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inside the silos of the Sixth Missile Regiment in the town of Tatishchevo near Saratov. The Strategic Missile Force, which has received all the required Topol-M ICBMs, will continue to deploy other missile systems.

The Teikovo Division of the Strategic Missile Force, which is deployed near Ivanovo, has also been rearmed completely in 2012. The Division's four regiments have received two Topol-M single-warhead ICBM systems and two RS-24 Yars / SS-29 ICBM systems with multiple independently targeted reentry vehicle warheads. Both ICBMs are, in fact, fifth-generation land-mobile missile systems. This year, two more missile divisions near Novosibirsk and Kozelsk in the Kaluga Region started receiving the RS-24 Yars missile system. The Kozelsk Division will deploy silo-based, rather than land-mobile, RS-24 Yars missiles, which will replace liquid-propellant UR-100NUTTKH (SS-19 Stiletto) ICBMs with six MIRV-ed warheads. These missiles have been deployed near the Optina Hermitage Monastery in the Kaluga Region for many decades, and they have already expended their service life.

The process of rearming missile divisions will continue. In 2012, two divisions received new missile systems, and a third division also started converting to new missiles. Three missile divisions are to be rearmed in 2013. The Kozelsk and Novosibirsk divisions are being rearmed. The First Missile Regiment of the Nizhny Tagil Missile Division has also started receiving new missiles. Preparations to rearm the Irkutsk and Yasny missile divisions have also been completed. All of them will receive the new RS-24 Yars solid-propellant ICBM system. Land-mobile and silo-based versions of this missile system will be deployed. General Karakayev says that land-mobile missile systems are better protected from a hypothetical enemy strike. Russia's partners know the coordinates of silo-based missile launchers in line with the START-I and START-III Treaties. At the same time, it is almost impossible to pinpoint the exact location of land-mobile missiles. This fall, the Strategic Missile Force held a special exercise to conceal the deployment routes of land-mobile missile systems. Special force units and reconnaissance satellites managed to locate missile mock-ups. At the same time, real missiles remained undetected.

Apart from solid-propellant missile systems, which are currently being deployed, Russia continues to develop a new heavy-duty liquid-propellant missile, due to replace the world's heaviest R-36M2 / RS-20V Voyevoda / SS-18 Satan ICBM with ten warheads, which was developed at the Yuzhnoye (Southern) Design Bureau in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine. No one is trying to conceal this R&D project. The Voyevoda missile has already expended its service life by 50%. Although designers say it will remain on combat duty for the next ten years, this missile should be scrapped by 2022. And a new SS-18 Satan-type missile is scheduled to be deployed by that time.

In reality, that missile will have a different name. It will weigh 110 metric tons, or twice as less as the Voyevoda ICBM. Nevertheless, experts say that it will have more than ten independently targeted warheads. And its range will also considerably exceed that of current ICBMs. Although its range remains classified, General Karakayev says it will be able to hit targets virtually all over the world. He was talking about the possibility of developing a highly accurate liquid-propellant strategic missile with a conventional warhead similar to the one now being developed by the United States. But it appears that a conventional warhead can be easily replaced with a nuclear warhead.

General Karakayev explained the need for a liquid-propellant missile by that irrepressible US striving to deploy a global missile-defense system and the European elements of that system. Currently, this system does not threaten European Russian strategic nuclear deterrence forces in any way. The Commander of the Strategic Missile Force says the situation might change only during the fourth stage of the European missile-defense system's adaptive deployment. Consequently, Moscow would have to deploy its missiles in remote Russian territories, where they cannot be hit by current and advanced missile-defense systems, as well as by other missile systems, including space weapons, if the United States decides to deploy the latter. Russia's territory is large enough to permit this. Moreover, Russia won't have to build any new missile silos, and it will only use available ones. As for a worst-case scenario, not a single missile-defense system will be able to deal with a Russian retaliatory strike.

About 12 years ago, the late Marshal Igor Sergeyev, the former Commander of the Strategic Missile Force and Defense Minister, noted that it would be possible to implement a military reform in any direction, provided that Russia retained a reliable Strategic Missile Force, and that this would not impair national security in any way. It appears that various paradoxes and contradictions of the national military reform can be explained by this factor.



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Viktor Litovkin, Executive Editor, Independent Military Review.

This article was originally published on www.ng.ru

<http://valdaiclub.com/defense/53300.html>

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/Letters
December 28, 2012

'Inalienable Right' to Nuclear Fuel

Page – A14

It is unfortunate that, parallel to new efforts to hold another round of talks between Iran and the Five Plus One group [the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany], attempts aimed at disrupting these efforts and spreading Iranophobia have gotten under way too.

The Dec. 18 op-ed "The Economic Costs of Nuclear Iran" by Charles Robb, Dennis Ross and Michael Makovsky is a case in point. The authors' mention of a "Saudi-Iran nuclear exchange" is appalling and a grotesque stretch of imagination. Iran and Saudi Arabia have normal neighborly relations, underpinned by many historic, cultural and religious affinities, and bolstered by a strong relationship between the two nations, leaving no room for such fictitious scenarios as the authors toy with.

In our view such attempts are intent of averting focus on the real threat in the region emanating from the Israelis' nuclear arsenal and their continued policy of appropriating Palestinian lands.

Such diversionary Iranophobic arguments mean to let Israel off the hook and press the wrong agenda for the U.S. government, which will only harm the U.S.'s own interests in case they are taken seriously.

Iran has always reiterated that her nuclear program is fully for peaceful purposes, and the intensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections have never revealed anything to the contrary. Last week, Iran and the IAEA made substantial progress on the "structured approach" for future cooperation. The negotiations will continue in mid-January. Iran, as other members of IAEA, enjoys an "inalienable right" to possess a civilian nuclear-fuel cycle under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

A more realistic and constructive approach by the U.S. toward the Iran-Five Plus One talks, based on U.S. national interests and Iran's efforts to establish the Middle East as a nuclear-weapon-free zone, would work toward peace and security in the Middle East and beyond.

Alireza Miryousefi

Head of Press Office
Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the U.N.
New York

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323277504578193654158574628.html>

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Dawn.com – Pakistan
OPINION/Commentary

Nuclear Weapons Competition

From the Newspaper
By Michael Krepon

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January 1, 2013

EVERY state possessing nuclear weapons has difficulty answering the question, 'How much is enough?' It's natural to think that more weapons will result in more security because nuclear weapons are so fearsome and because it's hard to know what hand the competition is holding.

If the competition responds in kind, feelings of insecurity usually grow. Refusal to compete can also result in greater insecurity. Improved relations and nuclear risk-reduction agreements, tacit or otherwise, can provide a way out of this dilemma.

The guardians of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal have achieved many successes, despite the efforts of the United States and export control regimes to prevent them. With an economy one-ninth the size of India, outside observers now believe that Pakistan is ahead of India in some nuclear weapon-related capabilities, including the size of its stockpile.

India is not, however, standing still. It, too, is increasing the size of its stockpile and flight-testing more advanced missiles. If New Delhi decides to pick up the pace of this competition, Pakistan will feel less secure as an unwanted arms race picks up steam.

Even if India chooses not to pick up the pace, Pakistan will become more insecure unless its economy and social cohesion improve. Nuclear weapons can help severe crises from becoming wars, and some kinds of added nuclear capabilities can strengthen deterrence.

But nuclear weapons cannot fix domestic ills, and if deterrence fails, the significant costs of acquiring nuclear weapons will become a mere down-payment to the extreme costs associated with their use.

The United States and the Soviet Union remain object lessons of how success can breed competition and insecurity. Both superpowers were guilty of wretched nuclear excess because their competition was always measured in relative, rather than absolute terms.

An adversary's gains were always bad news, no matter how many weapons the home team possessed. The successful acquisition of 'second strike' capabilities — the ability to withstand a surprise attack and respond with devastating effect — never did relieve Cold War anxieties because the competition never waned, even at very high numbers. This twisted superpower dynamic only subsided when the Soviet Union failed because its economy couldn't sustain the competition.

Three states with mid-sized nuclear arsenals — Great Britain, France and Israel — managed to avoid this dynamic because they didn't have a nuclear-armed adversary in their approximate weight class, and because all three could rely on Washington as a back-up.

One key decision point for all states with nuclear weapons is whether to seek the means to deliver them at short, as well as longer ranges. Mobile missiles with longer ranges are easier for the home team to control in a crisis and harder for an adversary to target.

Short-range capabilities are the hardest to control because, in order to have maximum deterrent effect, they need to be positioned close to where battle lines might be drawn. These lines can change and can be breached quickly, especially with the use of air power.

The United States and the Soviet Union were never able to figure out how to secure short-range nuclear capabilities and to maintain command and control over them in the fog of war.

Nonetheless, the superpowers handed thousands of battlefield nuclear weapons to soldiers who would become victims of fallout from friendly as well as enemy fire. The Soviet Union planned to carry out a ground offensive across Europe with tactical nuclear weapons, while the United States planned to stop tank offensives with them. With the benefit of hindsight, these plans now appear to have been pure folly.



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Huge Cold War arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons have shrunk considerably, but many still reside in Russian and US stockpiles. Success that leads to excess eventually results in reductions — long after it becomes clear that the risks associated with tactical nuclear weapons far exceed their military utility.

Pakistan and India won't compete as foolishly as the United States and the Soviet Union, but they are still entering uncharted territory. This territory is even harder to map because Chinese strategic capabilities figure in New Delhi's nuclear requirements, and because all three countries maintain secrecy over their holdings. A triangular competition makes it even harder to determine how much is enough.

As the conventional military balance tilts in India's favour, Pakistan has signalled a requirement for short-range nuclear capabilities to strengthen deterrence against the threat of Indian retaliation after dramatic attacks by violent extremists based in Pakistan.

New Delhi might also seek short-range nuclear capabilities, if it decides not to rely on longer-range missiles and airpower. Other new aspects of the competition are emerging with cruise missiles and sea-based nuclear capabilities. The question, 'How much is enough?' is being answered in ways that Pakistan and India are unlikely to find reassuring.

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<http://dawn.com/2013/01/01/nuclear-weapons-competition/>

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The Diplomat – Japan

OPINION/Blog

New Year, New Problem? Pakistan's Tactical Nukes

Pakistan is developing a new generation of smaller "tactical" nuclear weapons. The dangers and challenges such arms present are very real.

By Shashank Joshi

January 02, 2013

October of last year marked the fiftieth anniversary of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. Many Asian policymakers will read the lessons of that harrowing episode with some self-satisfaction.

When India and Pakistan conducted their nuclear weapon tests in 1998, foreign analysts repeatedly told them that, as poor countries with weak institutions, they could not be entrusted with such awesome weaponry. Nascent nuclear powers were simply less reliable stewards than their Cold War counterparts. Over a decade on, and multiple crises later — Kargil in 1999, a military standoff in 2001-2, and the Mumbai attacks of 2008 — India and Pakistan have experienced nothing quite as perilous as the Cuban scare.

U.S. officials claim that Pakistan readied nuclear weapons during the Kargil conflict without the knowledge of then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. But, even at the height of their crises neither India nor Pakistan have attempted, as the U.S. did in 1962, anything quite as foolish as depth-charging nuclear-armed submarines or scrambling aircraft equipped with nuclear air-to-air missiles towards hostile airspace. The dawn of Asia's nuclear age has been calmer than that of Europe, and far calmer than the nuclear alarmists predicted.

But, as Paul Bracken and others have warned, we should not get complacent. When India tested its Agni-V missile in April, I and others raised a number of potential issues: Indian scientists were making cavalier statements of nuclear posture best left to political leaders, and the development of multiple warheads for each missile (known as MIRVs) and missile defense technology could all be destabilizing if not handled extremely carefully. India has legitimate deterrence requirements vis-a-vis China, but it would be counterproductive for this to become an open-ended expansion.

Pakistan's nuclear trajectory is, however, altogether more worrying.

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This issue is usually framed in terms of numbers. Pakistan possesses what is thought to be the fastest-growing nuclear arsenal in the world and if present trends continue, could equal or surpass Britain's stockpile within a decade. So far, the Western world has viewed this expansion as a nonproliferation issue, not a security one. But, over the longer-term, that could change. As a recent report from the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium noted, "EU members might have military facilities within reach of Pakistani longer-range missiles ... or temporary bases and personnel" and, "in the case of a deterioration in Pakistan's relations with the West, this could be a subject of concern." Pakistan is free to dismiss European and American anxieties, but this will only reinforce the country's longer-term isolation.

There is also a second, more serious concern. Pakistan is developing a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) that target not Indian cities, but Indian military formations on the battlefield. The purpose of these, as former Pakistani Ambassador to the United States Maleeha Lodhi explained in November, is "to counterbalance India's move to bring conventional military offensives to a tactical level." The idea is that smaller nuclear weapons, used on Pakistani soil, would stop invading Indian forces in their tracks.

The rise of tactical nuclear weapons has been well documented over the past two years. What has received less scrutiny, however, is the doctrine on which this rise has been based. Pakistan's nuclear advocates make the case that their approach is no different than NATO's Cold War nuclear posture towards the Soviet Union, and like NATO is the inevitable result of a conventionally weaker country trying to negate its more powerful adversaries' conventional advantage. But the problem is that this comparison misses some key facts.

First, NATO never intended to physically block a Soviet invasion with tactical nuclear weapons. By the 1960s, it had become clear that NATO would still lose even if it unleashed nukes. This goes for Pakistan too. According to one calculation, it would take up to 436 Pakistani nuclear weapons just to halt a single Indian armored division — a clearly absurd number, that leaps higher still if one assumes lower yield weapons and more dispersed Indian formations. Moreover, as Michael Krepon recently wrote, "Pakistan lacks the real-time surveillance capabilities to destroy [moving] armored columns, except where they are funneling into bridge crossings of water barriers."

Second, NATO came to understand that tactical nuclear use would devastate the countries supposedly being defended. As the saying went, "the shorter the [nuclear] range, the deader the Germans." Substitute "Punjabis" for "Germans", and you have a clearer idea of the problem. The key insight is that NATO's focus was on using nuclear weapons to send political signals — namely, to signal resolve with actions short of a strategic nuclear exchange — not to win on the battlefield. This distinction tends to be lost in discussions of Pakistan.

Third, tactical nuclear weapons are understood to be especially credible precisely because their forward deployment makes them so vulnerable. NATO, aware of this "use them or lose them" dilemma, pre-delegated launch authority for at least some of its tactical nuclear weapons — specifically, atomic demolition munitions — in Germany in the late 1950s.

There is some evidence that Pakistan has or will soon follow suit. In 2005, for instance, Feroz Hassan Khan, a senior official in Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division (SPD), explained that "partial pre-delegation" of weapons would be an "operational necessity because dispersed nuclear forces as well as central command authority ... are vulnerable." The SPD is widely admired for its professionalism, but pre-delegation inevitably dilutes command and control of nuclear weapons, however competent officials might be.

The differences between NATO in the 1950s and Pakistan in the 2010s should be obvious. Despite Germany's Cold War problems with domestic terrorism, and occasionally questionable base security in NATO countries, it was hardly as if the Rhineland was wracked with jihadists. NATO's military officers were also unquestionably under the command of elected civilian leaders.

Fourth, and finally, NATO's reliance on tactical nuclear weapons was short-lived. After 1979, the Alliance withdrew more and more of these weapons from Europe. In fact, from 1980 to 1990 NATO removed a third of its nuclear weapons from Europe, much of this coming in the early part of the decade when the USSR was unveiling a new offensive military doctrine (ironically, elements of which are echoed in India's Cold Start army doctrine today). But



NATO felt able to do this because its conventional military capabilities were improving, thanks to Western technological superiority over the Russians.

Pakistan, by contrast, is conventionally falling behind in terms of military spending and technology. The gap between Indian and Pakistani military spending continues to grow. This suggests that Pakistan will continue to emphasize tactical nuclear weapons, which will entrench the risks laid out here. To be sure, India has also shown an interest in short-range nuclear-capable missiles (for instance, the *Prahaar*), but with nowhere near the same enthusiasm, and in a context in which Indian civilians are wary to entrusting the armed forces with such weapons in an operational context.

The Pakistani military argues that it needs to defend against India's Cold Start. But Cold Start — itself of questionable feasibility — is about shallow incursions, hardly comparable to nation-threatening Soviet thrusts to the Atlantic. As the nuclear historian George Perkovich recently wrote, "the willingness to risk a breakdown in nuclear deterrence would only be rational if the threat that is being countered or deterred is of an existential scale. To risk suicide to redress a threat that is not itself mortal would be irrational." A state cannot just choose to costlessly re-define all lesser threats as mortal ones. Simply reducing the nuclear threshold lower and lower is an unsustainable and unnecessary strategy, and can make it more rather than less likely that deterrence will fail in the event of a crisis.

Pakistan already has sufficient numbers and types of nuclear weapons to ensure its survival, and, like NATO before it, to send political signals through limited nuclear use even if a war does break out. Yet Pakistan's present course, premised on a series of misunderstandings of tactical nuclear weapons, will increase friction with those nations who count themselves allies of Pakistan and generate new risks quite out of proportion to anything the country might gain.

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<http://thediplomat.com/2013/01/02/pakistans-new-nuclear-problem/?all=true>

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/Opinion Asia
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Little Hope for Change in Pyongyang

Until the military gives up control, don't expect North Korea to reform.

By JOHN LEE

In the first public New Year's Day address by a North Korean supreme leader for 19 years, Kim Jong Eun declared that improving living standards and building the economy will be his top two priorities. He urged a "radical turn in the building of an economic giant with the same spirit and mettle as were displayed in conquering space."

How seriously should we take this pronouncement? The focus on economic growth rather than military might is certainly encouraging, and it follows on from a "Ten Year State Strategy Plan for Economic Development" announced last January.

However, it's telling that there were no details about what form reform will take. The role of the military in North Korean politics and economics has not changed significantly over the first year of Kim's rule. Until that happens, one should remain skeptical that change is coming.

It's worth recalling that North Korea was not always an economic basket case. When China began its reforms in 1978, North Koreans were better educated than their Chinese counterparts and had a similar GDP per capita to South Koreans. The country's economy was more open than China's when measured by international trade per capita.

Of course, some portion of the North's prosperity was due to subsidies from the Soviet Union. But after the death of Kim Il Sung, the turn toward even more radical autarkism in the form of the "military first" policy created calamity. Up to 3.5 million people out of a population of around 24 million people died of hunger from 1994-98.



To prevent mass starvation, Pyongyang now depends on foreign aid attained through a combination of bluster, threats and subsequent (always dishonored) promises to play by international rules. Its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs are closely linked with this extortionist strategy.

Since 1995, North Korea has received more than \$1 billion in aid from America and \$4 billion from South Korea. Although Beijing is opaque about its relations with the hermit kingdom, Chinese trade statistics suggest that Pyongyang has benefited from net transfers of approximately \$10 billion over the same period. To put all this in context, North Korea's GDP (measured by purchasing power parity) is around \$40 billion each year.

Despite all these transfers, the tragic joke about the North Korean economy is that it remains a planned economy without a plan. At the least, the drive for production is subordinated to the requirements of the regime whose first priority is to remain in power.

As in the most brutal dictatorships, the military enjoys too central a role. This is evident in an official military budget of about \$6 billion each year, with international analysts putting the figure closer to \$9 billion—at least one-third of government spending. At almost 1.2 million active personnel, the People's Army is the fourth largest in the world.

But the primary role of the military in the economy itself poses the most formidable barrier to reform. The People's Army is the largest, best funded and most capable institution in North Korea. For example, it supervises and controls the country's 3,000 cooperative farms. It reserves one quarter of the country's annual agricultural output for itself, sending out trucks periodically to carry away as much of the country's produce as it deems appropriate.

The military has also earned hundreds of millions of dollars selling missiles and other weapons to Iran, Pakistan and Syria. It now manages almost all of the country's major mines, with most of the magnesite, zinc, iron and tungsten going to China. The export of minerals to China has increased to around \$250 million today from \$15 million in 2003.

Reform, and a general uplift in living standards, would require the military to relinquish control of the country's agricultural and mineral resources. Even returning control over these resources to a planned economy with some room for citizens to engage in profitable commercial activity could yield growth and a substantial increase in living standards.

But with an enormous and hungry army to feed before its own people, and with the country's mineral reserves worth an estimated \$5.4 trillion at current prices, Kim will find it difficult to change the "military first" policy. It is also unlikely that North Korea can exploit its cheap and willing labor and pursue the East Asian export-dependent approach to development as long as the military uses lowly paid soldiers as workers and crowds out non-military enterprises. There is even emerging evidence that a designated percentage of all revenues from commercial activity goes straight to the military, possibly explaining the discrepancy between the official military budget and estimated spend by outside experts.

On balance, the military seems to have acquired even greater economic relevance since Kim Jong Eun's ascension in December 2011. So while there are glimmers of hope that the supreme leader means what he says about reform, such as activity in the special economic zones and the North-South joint venture Pyonghwa Motors, until we see signs that the economic role of the military is weakening, 2013 doesn't augur well for the North Korean people.

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<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323374504578217093212667844.html>

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OPINION/Editorial

Iranian Nuclear Talks Need to Come to a Close

By Editorial Board

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AS THE YEAR begins, the Obama administration and its diplomatic partners are expecting the renewal of negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program, after a six-month hiatus. But there is scant indication that a breakthrough is in store. The international coalition, composed of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany, intends to offer a slightly modified version of the deal Tehran rejected last June, with the faint hope that the pain of economic sanctions might have caused Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to soften. But there is no public sign of that: In fact, Iran has been slow to agree to a new meeting and, according to the New York Times, did not respond to a post-election feeler by the Obama administration on direct, bilateral talks.

The coalition proposal, portrayed as a confidence-building step, would address the most dangerous part of Iran's program by requiring a freeze in the enrichment of uranium to a level of 20 percent, which is a short step from bomb-grade, and by shutting down the underground facility known as Fordow, where that enrichment takes place. Iran would also be required to ship its current stockpile of medium-enriched uranium out of the country. In return, it would receive certain economic concessions, like spare airplane parts, and perhaps a partial relaxation of some sanctions.

As it made clear in June, however, Iran expects far more from any agreement. It wants the sanctions lifted entirely and for the Security Council to recognize its "right" to enrich uranium, despite multiple resolutions ordering it to cease. Iranian negotiators have also indicated they want to connect a nuclear accord to the civil war in Syria, where Iran is seeking to preserve its place as a privileged strategic ally.

Most of these demands are rightly unacceptable to the Obama administration: Syria's future relationship with Iran, for example, must be determined by Syrians following the removal of the Assad government, not by an international pact. But the willingness of the Khamenei regime to settle for less may be constrained by an ongoing power struggle between religious conservatives and nationalists, which could come to a head with the presidential election scheduled for June.

At the same time, the United States — and more so Israel — cannot easily wait many more months for a deal. If Iran continues to enrich uranium to 20 percent at its present rate, it may acquire enough to quickly make a bomb by the middle of this year, potentially giving it the "breakout capacity" that both President Obama and the Israeli government have vowed to prevent. Tehran would have crossed that line last fall had it not diverted a large part of its stockpile to fabricate fuel for a research reactor.

The administration can hope that Iran will continue to keep its uranium stockpile below the breakout threshold, or that it will reverse itself and accept some version of the proposed interim deal. But if negotiations remain stalled, Mr. Obama should consider making Iran a comprehensive offer that would permanently restrict its uranium enrichment and provide for intensive international monitoring in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. That would have the advantage of confronting the regime with a stark choice — and making clear whether a diplomatic solution exists.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/iranian-nuclear-talks-need-to-come-to-a-close/2013/01/02/974c8980-5501-11e2-8b9e-dd8773594efc_story.html

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