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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

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Articles & Other Documents:

Featured Article: [U.S. Should Pursue Nuclear EMP Weapon: Ex-Lab Head](#)

1. [Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei Denies Wanting to Develop Nuclear Weapons](#)
2. [Iran Will Never Shut Down Underground Enrichment Facilities: Lawmaker](#)
3. [Iran Nuke Unlikely to Start Mideast Arms Race: U.S. Report](#)
4. [Iran Starts Upgrade of Nuclear Site: Diplomats](#)
5. [Risk of Military Strike Wanes as Iran Talks Resume](#)
6. [N. Korea Tested Long-Range Missile Engine before Nuke Blast: Sources](#)
7. ['US Nuke Umbrella Not Enough'](#)
8. [N. Korea May Need Several Weeks to Prepare for Additional Nuke Tests: Observers](#)
9. [DPRK Says Nuclear Test "Self-Defense" Measure against U.S. Threat](#)
10. [NK Nuke was Bought and Paid for By a Key End-User: Iran](#)
11. [North Korea Unable to Create Nuclear Arms - Russian Top-Level Official](#)
12. [Spy Agencies Scrounge for Details on North Korean Nuclear Test](#)
13. [N. Korea Says Giving up Nukes Will Lead to 'Tragic Consequences'](#)
14. [Photographs Show New Activity at North Korea Nuclear Site](#)
15. [No Breakthroughs on Nuclear Arms Reduction](#)
16. [Later Borey Class Subs to Carry Only 16 Missiles – Source](#)
17. [U.S. Should Pursue Nuclear EMP Weapon: Ex-Lab Head](#)
18. [Computer Security Firm Blames Cyber Spying on Chinese Military](#)
19. [Chinese Military Never Supports Cyberattacks](#)
20. [Portrait of Accused China Cyberspy Unit Emerges](#)
21. [US Sees Russian Cyberthreat as China Grabs Headlines](#)
22. [Studies of H5N1 Bird Flu to Require Strict Reviews](#)
23. [Analysis: North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions Can only Be Stopped By China](#)
24. [Commentary: Hacking Allegations against China Both Baseless and Revealing](#)
25. [Why America Reserves the Right to Nuke You First](#)
26. [World-Herald Editorial: Prudence Needed in New Nuke Debate](#)
27. [Obama Renews Arms-Control Push](#)
28. [Nuclear Weapons Critics Suffer Cold War Brain Freeze; Deterrence Works, Argues Top Air Force Official](#)
29. [Nuclear Deference](#)
30. [\(Yonhap Interview\) Former U.S. Commander Says N. Korea Could Build ICBM in 5-7 Years](#)

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Issue No.1046, 22 February 2013

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The London Guardian – U.K.

Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei Denies Wanting to Develop Nuclear Weapons

Supreme leader warns that no state has right to stop Tehran building nuclear arms if it chose to do so

By Staff and agencies

Saturday, 16 February 2013

Iran's supreme leader has said the Islamic republic is not seeking to develop nuclear weapons but warned that no world power could stop the regime from building them if it chose to do so.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Saturday that his country backs the elimination of nuclear weapons.

"We believe that nuclear weapons must be eliminated. We don't want to build atomic weapons. But if we didn't believe so and intended to possess nuclear weapons, no power could stop us," Khamenei said in comments posted on his website, khamenei.ir.

The US, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany are due to meet Iran for talks in Kazakhstan on 26 February to tackle a decade-old row that has already produced four rounds of UN sanctions against Iran.

Separate talks between Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog agency this week failed to produce a deal on reviving an investigation into Iranian research that could be used to produce nuclear weapons.

Tehran's leaders have remained defiant against six UN security council resolutions calling on them to halt enrichment of uranium and they have refused to co-operate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency over their nuclear programme.

Iran recently said it had begun installing a new generation of centrifuges at its main uranium enrichment facility in Natanz, a move that will allow it to vastly increase its pace of uranium enrichment in defiance of UN calls to halt such activities.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/feb/16/iran-ayatollah-khamenei-nuclear-weapons>

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

Xinhua News – China

Iran Will Never Shut Down Underground Enrichment Facilities: Lawmaker

February 17, 2013

TEHRAN, Feb. 17 (Xinhua) -- Senior Iranian lawmaker, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, said Sunday the Islamic republic will never shut down its underground bunker of Fordow uranium enrichment facilities and will not halt its "peaceful" nuclear activities.

Alluding to recent media reports about world powers' decision to ease gold sanctions on Iran in exchange for the closure of Fordow, Boroujerdi, the head of Iran's Majlis' (parliament) National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, said that "Fordow site will never be shut down," the semi-official ISNA news agency reported.

Western media reported Saturday that the P5+1 (Britain, China, France, Russia, the United States plus Germany) are working on a proposal to be offered in the nuclear talks with Iran to ease sanctions on gold and other precious metals trade with Iran in return for shutting down Fordow uranium enrichment plant.

According to the reports, the offer will be presented in the upcoming talks between Iran and the P5+1 slated for Feb. 26 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

Boroujerdi told ISNA that Iran has built the Fordow site to defend its nuclear facilities in the face threats from Israel.

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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The Fordow nuclear plant, located near the Iranian central Shiite holy city of Qom, is used for producing enriched uranium with a purity of up to 20 percent.

Also, Boroujerdi stressed Sunday that "If the Americans think that they can halt Iran's peaceful (nuclear) activities by mounting pressures, they are beating the air," local Press TV reported.

"Iran will continue developing its peaceful nuclear energy program based on the regulations of the (International Atomic Energy) Agency and within the framework of peaceful objectives," Boroujerdi was quoted as saying.

Meanwhile, Iran's Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said U.S. officials are broadcasting "propaganda" through proposing direct talks with Iran over the country's nuclear program, Tehran Times daily reported Sunday.

On Feb. 2, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden said the United States is prepared to hold direct talks with Iran over the country's nuclear program when the Iranian leadership is "serious."

The U.S. proposal of direct talks with the Islamic republic is "propaganda," said Larijani, adding that the United States is seeking to influence the Iranian people's determination by bringing up such issues.

Those who "fall in the trap" of believing such rhetoric may provide opportunities for the enemies, he added.

Also, Iranian lawmaker Ebrahim Aqa-Mohammadi said the United States must renounce its policy of "threats and sanctions" against Iran before Tehran considers entering talks with Washington, Press TV reported Sunday.

"The United States must give up its threats and sanctions and (then) announce that it would hold negotiations with Iran under equal footing and based on international laws," Aqa-Mohammadi, a member of Iran's Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission, was quoted as saying.

"If the United States is not willing to recognize Iran's right with regard to the nuclear energy issue and keeps its forces behind Iran's doors for an attack, the issue of negotiations does not make any sense," he added.

The United States and its Western allies suspect that Iran's uranium enrichment may be meant for moving closer to the ability to make nuclear weapons. However, Iran insists that its nuclear program is only for peaceful use.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-02/17/c_132174400.htm

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

Daily Star – Lebanon

Iran Nuke Unlikely to Start Mideast Arms Race: U.S. Report

February 20, 2013

By Angus McDowall, Reuters

RIYADH: Fears that an Iranian nuclear weapon might trigger an atomic arms race across the Middle East are overplayed, a U.S. security thinktank said on Tuesday, arguing that countries like Saudi Arabia face big disincentives against getting the bomb.

Western powers believe Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon under cover of a civilian atomic electricity programme, a charge Tehran denies.

Sunni Muslim Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter, is engaged in a fierce rivalry with Shi'ite power Iran and is seen in Western countries as the most likely Middle Eastern state to seek an atomic weapon if Iran did the same.

Analysts have also said an Iranian nuclear weapons capability might persuade Egypt and Turkey to seek a bomb too.

Israel, which has never declared its atomic weapons capability, is thought to be the Middle East's only nuclear-armed power now although Iran's eastern neighbour Pakistan has atomic weapons.

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In December 2011, former Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki al-Faisal said that if Tehran did gain nuclear weapons capability, Saudi Arabia should consider matching it.

Riyadh has also announced plans to build 17 gigawatts of atomic energy by 2032 as it moves to reduce domestic oil consumption, freeing up more crude for export.

However, a report by the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) says that although there is some risk that Saudi Arabia would seek an atomic bomb, it would more likely rely on its ally, the United States, to protect it.

"The conventional wisdom is probably wrong," the report said.

Even if Saudi Arabia wished to acquire a bomb, "significant disincentives would weigh against a mad rush by Riyadh to develop nuclear weapons".

CNAS, based in Washington, was set up in 2007 as a non-partisan thinktank aiming to develop U.S. security policy.

The report's authors include Colin Kahl, a former deputy assistant U.S. Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, and Melissa Dalton, a foreign affairs specialist with the secretary.

The difficulty and expense of embarking on a nuclear arms programme in defiance of international law and the wishes of the kingdom's most important ally, Washington, would be a powerful argument against such an undertaking, it said.

Riyadh is a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. Some analysts have argued that instead of attempting to build its own atomic weapon, Riyadh might try to buy a fully developed nuclear bomb from ally Pakistan.

However, the report said this was also unlikely.

"Instead, Saudi Arabia would likely pursue a more aggressive version of its current conventional defense and civilian nuclear hedging strategy while seeking out an external nuclear security guarantee," they said.

The report said Egypt did not see Iran's nuclear ambitions as an existential threat and that Turkey already has a nuclear deterrent in the form of its NATO security guarantees.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2013/Feb-20/207205-iran-nuke-unlikely-to-start-mideast-arms-race-usreport.ashx#axzz2LTgJgbq9>

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

Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

Iran Starts Upgrade of Nuclear Site: Diplomats

Associated Press (AP)

21 February 2013

In a disheartening signal to world powers at upcoming Iran talks, Teheran has started installing high-tech machines at its main uranium enrichment site that are capable of accelerating production of reactor fuel and — with further upgrading — the core of nuclear warheads, diplomats said Wednesday.

Iran already announced last week that it had begun mounting the new enriching centrifuges, but one diplomat said at the time that the announcement was premature with only a 'small number' on site and not yet installed.

Diplomats told The Associated Press on Wednesday, however, that installation was now well on its way, with inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency seeing close to 100 or more machines mounted when they toured the site a few days ago. Depending on experts' estimates, the new-generation centrifuges can enrich uranium three to five times faster than Iran's present working model.

The Islamic Republic insists it is not working on a nuclear weapons program, but rather is enriching uranium only to make reactor fuel and for scientific and medical purposes — as allowed by international law.

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But many nations are suspicious because Iran went underground after failing to get international help for its uranium enrichment program in the 1980s, working secretly until its activities were revealed a decade ago. More recent proposals for international shipments of reactor fuel in exchange for Iranian enrichment concessions have foundered, with each side blaming the other.

Shrugging off demands to mothball enrichment — and growing international sanctions — Iran has instead vastly expanded the program to where experts say it already has enough enriched uranium for several weapons if the material is further enriched.

The start of the centrifuge upgrade at Natanz, Iran's main enrichment site southeast of Teheran, flies in the face of world-power efforts to induce Iran to scale back on enrichment. As such, it is likely to hurt chances of progress at Feb. 26 talks in Kazakhstan between the two sides — adding to a string of negotiating failures.

When Iran announced its intentions last month, Western diplomats downplayed the proclamation's significance, noting Teheran did not say when it would start populating Natanz with the new machines. But any start of an upgrade is sure to increase international concerns, particularly if verified as expected in an IAEA report later this week.

The three diplomats speaking to the AP on Wednesday all are involved in the Vienna-based IAEA's attempts to monitor Iran's nuclear program. They demanded anonymity because they were not allowed to discuss confidential information.

Meeting Iran in Kazakhstan are the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany.

Russia and China often are at odds with the West on how harshly Iran's nuclear activities should be censured, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said recently that Iran was within its legal rights to install new generation centrifuges. At the same time, he called for a suspension of uranium enrichment during negotiations to improve the political atmosphere.

While moving to increase the potency of its enrichment program with the new centrifuges, however, Teheran also has recently resumed converting some of its higher-level enriched uranium at its Fordo enrichment site into reactor fuel plates after suspending the activity last year. That is likely to provide some reassurance to nations concerned about Iran's nuclear aims because the plates are difficult to reconvert back into weapons usable material.

About 700 of the old machines at Fordo are churning out higher-enriched material that is still below — but just a technical step away — from weapons-grade uranium. Iran says it needs that higher-enriched level to fuel a research reactor

With higher-enriched uranium their immediate concern, the six powers over the past months have inched toward meeting Iranian demands of sanctions relief but say Teheran must first suspend its output at Fordo. Iran, in turn, wants sanctions eased before it commits to even a discussion of an enrichment cutback.

The diplomats said Iran was also upgrading its enrichment capabilities at Fordo but declined to provide further details ahead of the release of the IAEA report.

In first revealing plans to update last month, Iran indicated that it could add more than 3,000 of the new-generation centrifuges to the more than 10,000 older models it has at Natanz turning out enriched uranium at grades lower than at Fordo. The lower the grade, the harder it would be to turn into weapons-grade material.

Olli Heinonen, the former IAEA deputy director general in charge of Iran, told the AP last week that Iran could install 3,000 or more of the high-tech centrifuges at Natanz within six to nine months, assuming that Teheran had the material to make the machines.

Iran, in its dealings both with the six powers and the IAEA, has continually acted as if it were in the position of strength. On Saturday, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, asserted that his country was not seeking nuclear weapons, but that if Teheran intended to build them, 'the US could in no way stop the Iranian nation.'



David Albright, whose Institute for Science and International Security is a source for the US government on proliferation issues, said Iran's hopes that the new centrifuges could strengthen its hand at the Kazakhstan talks could backfire.

'Given the low expectations for negotiations during the next several months, Iran risks giving the impression to the West that it is racing to the bomb rather than strengthening its negotiating position,' he said Wednesday.

But analyst Yousaf Butt, professor and scientist-in-residence at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, said that — with Iran legally entitled to enrich — the six powers first 'should consider rolling back some sanctions' if they want Iran to respond.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/kt-article-display-1.asp?section=middleeast&xfile=data/middleeast/2013/February/middleeast_February284.xml

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

Bloomberg News

Risk of Military Strike Wanes as Iran Talks Resume

By Indira A.R. Lakshmanan

February 22, 2013

Feb. 22 (Bloomberg) - There's scant hope for a breakthrough next week when negotiators from the U.S. and five other nations meet Iranians for long-awaited talks over the Islamic Republic's nuclear ambitions, according to current and former Western and Iranian officials.

While a sanctions campaign by the U.S. and European Union has hurt the Persian Gulf state's economy and reduced its oil revenues, the penalties have yet to persuade Iran to bow to international demands to curtail its atomic program.

The sanctions continue to bite, yet the tension that hung over Iran's nuclear program last year -- when Israel's leaders raised the threat of a military strike and pressed the U.S. to do the same -- has dissipated. More than a dozen Western diplomats and analysts said in interviews that the focus now is on seeking confidence-building gestures to make possible future step-by-step agreements.

"I am not optimistic" about the outlook for a deal "but I am hopeful that, at a bare minimum, they will keep them going and they will set a date and place for the next meeting," Thomas Pickering, a former undersecretary of state for political affairs and former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said in an interview yesterday.

Pickering echoed the sentiments of other former and current U.S. and European officials who said the fundamental obstacle is deep-seated mutual distrust. Talks between Iran and its negotiating partners -- the U.S., France, Britain, Germany, China and Russia -- resume Feb. 26 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, after an eight-month lapse.

'Serious Doubts'

"On our side, we have very serious doubts about their disinterest in nuclear weapons; on their side, they have very serious doubts about our disinterest in regime change," said Pickering, who has been involved in Iran policy for decades.

Iran insists its nuclear program is for civilian energy and medical research. The U.S., the EU, and other members of the United Nations Security Council suspect Iran has a covert atomic weapons program.

The U.S. and the European Union are engaged in a dual-track approach to Iran -- pursuing nuclear talks while pressing sanctions to try to force Iran to make a deal. A U.S. proposal for a one-on-one meeting with Iran on the sidelines of the Almaty talks remains on the table, according to two U.S. officials who asked not to be named in discussing the offer.



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CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
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“Sanctions, while they have had powerful effects on the Iranian economy, have not apparently affected the regime’s nuclear calculus,” said Michael Singh, a former senior director for Mideast and Iran policy at the White House under then- President George W. Bush.

‘Status Quo’

So far, “the regime prefers the status quo,” and Iranian leaders are “risk-averse at the moment” because of their own presidential election scheduled for June, said Singh, managing director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

At the same time, some of last year’s anxiety about a possible military strike on Iran’s nuclear facilities has abated because Iran has been careful not to cross red lines set by Israel. Iran has converted some of its medium-enriched uranium into fuel plates for its medical reactor, making it harder to convert that material into bomb-grade fuel.

Even so, Iran is expanding its nuclear program with the installation of more advanced centrifuges, which will multiply its enrichment capability, the UN’s International Atomic Energy Agency reported yesterday.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said after the IAEA report that Iran is “closer than ever to attaining enriched material for a nuclear weapon” and is advancing toward Israel’s “red line,” according to a text message from his office.

Regime Change

One weakness of the dual-track policy under President Barack Obama, critics say, is that with every new sanction the U.S. heralds, Iran suspects the U.S. is not seeking not a deal, but rather is trying to bring down the Iranian regime.

The only way to break the impasse “is to be serious about diplomacy,” which is “difficult, time-consuming, and could take years,” said Vali Nasr, dean of the Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies in Washington and a former senior adviser at the State Department under then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

The U.S. needs to negotiate “in a concrete way” toward eventually lifting oil sanctions and permitting Iran to conduct low-level, 5 percent enrichment solely for power plants, under appropriate safeguards, Nasr, who’s also a Bloomberg View columnist, said in an interview. “If you’re really serious, everyone knows what this deal looks like.”

Sweetened Offer

From the international community’s point of view, Iran has been unwilling to make meaningful concessions. From Iran’s view, the U.S. and its allies want to dictate terms and refuse to recognize what Iran calls its legal right to conduct uranium enrichment for a civilian nuclear program.

Even a slightly sweetened offer from the U.S. and its allies may have little chance. Iranian officials have said they don’t see easing peripheral sanctions, such as those on gold and civilian aircraft parts, as a fair trade for agreeing to give up enrichment of uranium at 20 percent levels. While Iran says it’s making medium-enriched uranium for medical research, that stockpile may be more easily converted into weapons-grade fuel than 5 percent uranium used in power reactors.

“There remains a mismatch between what the two sides are demanding and what they are willing to put on the table,” said Trita Parsi, author of “A Single Roll of the Dice: Obama’s Diplomacy With Iran” and head of the National Iranian American Council. Sanctions have had the opposite of their intended effect and caused Iran to harden its position rather than concede, he said.

‘Basic Rights’

Iran’s ambassador to the UN, Mohammad Khazaee, criticized the dual-track policy as “contradictory” and said sanctions undermine rather than encourage diplomacy.

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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"For some in the U.S., pressure has become an end in itself," he said in a speech in New York Feb. 20. "As long as the U.S. leaders choose to base their policy towards Iran on 'my way or the highway,' they should rest assured that Iran would not compromise on its basic rights under pressure or threat."

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei complained in a Feb. 16 speech that world powers only want the Islamic Republic to bend to their will. "What's the point of such negotiations?" he said. "This won't lead anywhere."

Sanctions proponents, such as Mark Dubowitz, the executive director of the Washington-based Foundation for Defense of Democracies, say that even more pressure is needed.

It's not surprising Iran is in no mood for compromise, because the country is "closing in on an undetectable nuclear breakout" point at which it could produce enough weapons-grade fuel before being detected by UN inspectors or Western intelligence services, Dubowitz said in an interview.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-02-22/risk-of-military-strike-wanes-as-iran-talks-resume.html>

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

February 17, 2013

N. Korea Tested Long-Range Missile Engine before Nuke Blast: Sources

SEOUL, Feb. 17 (Yonhap) -- North Korea tested an engine for its new long-range missiles one day before its third nuclear test last week, government sources here said Sunday.

Pyongyang carried out a function test of the engine for its long-range "KN-08" missiles on the Dongchang-ri launch site in North Pyongan Province on Monday, according to multiple government sources.

It was one day before the communist country defied international warnings by detonating what it calls a miniaturized atomic device, drawing a chorus of worldwide condemnations and prompting the United Nations Security Council to start work on "appropriate measures" against the North's latest provocation. The North also conducted nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

"It appears that North Korea conducted the engine test aimed at extending the range of the KN-08 missile to over 5,000 kilometers," said a source. He declined to be identified.

"If the North decides the test successful, it is expected to operationally deploy the new long-range rocket," he added.

North Korea unveiled six units of the mobile missile last April to celebrate the 100th birthday of Kim Il-sung, its founding father and grandfather of current leader Kim Jong-un. Experts assumed that the missile measuring 2 meters in diameter and 18 meters in length could carry a nuclear warhead, while the North has yet to conduct a test-firing.

"What deserves attention is that the North carried out the engine test despite being aware of the fact that the U.S. surveillance satellite would detect the move," said another source.

"The engine test right before its third nuclear test would be intended to intensify its threat to the U.S. and its allies," he added.

North Korea has been making good on its threat to the international community following its nuclear test, warning that it is ready to conduct additional nuclear tests and can acquire intercontinental ballistic missiles "to counter hostile forces and bolster its self-defense capabilities."

Seoul has been keeping close tabs on the possibility that the North may launch the long-range rocket if the U.N. Security Council slaps tougher sanctions on the North for its latest atomic test, according to military officials.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/02/17/29/0401000000AEN20130217003300315F.HTML>



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

Korea Times – South Korea
February 19, 2013

'US Nuke Umbrella Not Enough'

Rep. Chung Mong-joon dismisses Galluci's assurances
By Chung Min-uck

Rep. Chung Mong-joon, a senior ruling Saenuri Party lawmaker, said Tuesday the U.S. nuclear umbrella falls short of reliable protection, calling for South Korea to acquire nuclear weapons.

Chung's call triggered criticism by two U.S. nuclear experts — Robert Galluci, President William Clinton's special envoy on the North's nuclear program and Gary Samore, President Barack Obama's arms control coordinator.

"Some say that the U.S. nuclear umbrella is a torn umbrella. If so, we need to repair it," said Rep. Chung in an opening speech during the Nuclear Forum 2013 hosted by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

He reminded the audience of his call for nuclear armament during a National Assembly speech two years ago. "Then, I proposed the re-introduction of tactical nuclear weapons because the threat of a counter-nuclear force is the only thing that will discourage North Korea from developing its nuclear arsenal."

He acknowledged that the ROK-U.S. alliance has been one of the most successful military partnerships but said "it has been an abject failure" when it comes to the North Korea nuclear issue.

U.S. nuclear weapons in South Korea were voluntarily withdrawn in 1991 shortly before the inter-Korean Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in 1992.

He explained that the advantage of bringing them back is that Seoul will not be in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) since the nuclear weapons would be from Washington. "We would simply be restoring the pre-1992 condition," he added.

The ex-Saenuri Party chairman further went on to claim that Seoul needs to develop its own nuclear weapons saying, "Some say the only way to solve the North Korean nuclear problem is for the nation to follow the India-Pakistan example, or the case of Israel," which means to go nuclear and, concurrently, maintain strong political ties with the U.S.

Gallucci, who successfully came up with the Washington-Pyongyang framework on freezing North Korea's nuclear activities in 1994, and Gary Samore, executive director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, opposed it.

"I don't think there is any weakness in the ROK-U.S. alliance," said Gallucci when asked about the South Korean lawmaker's view. "I myself cannot find any reason to re-introduce U.S. nuclear weapons in the region. It would be inconsistent with the general direction of the administration of the U.S. to move away from relying on nuclear weapons to achieve security objectives. Moreover, I think there is virtually no advantage for the military in basing nuclear weapons on Korean soil."

"South Korea can be confident with the United States military alliance as it includes a nuclear umbrella, a U.S. commitment to use nuclear weapons to defend South Korea. Everyone including North Korea believes that commitment is really strong," said Samore.

He said Seoul can legitimately request Washington to station nuclear weapons inside South Korea but there was no military need to since the United States can deploy nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula anytime.

"The only value of re-introducing nuclear weapons would be political assurance. If there was a consensus in South Korea, it is something for the South Korean government to appeal to the U.S."



The two nations are currently in ongoing talks to revise their bilateral atomic energy agreement.

The nuclear accord is set to expire in 2014 and the two nations have been in talks to amend it since 2010.

The accord bans Seoul from enriching uranium or reprocessing spent fuel. The government has been requesting an amendment to this citing the "peaceful use of nuclear energy."

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2013/02/120_130747.html

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

February 20, 2013

N. Korea May Need Several Weeks to Prepare for Additional Nuke Tests: Observers

BEIJING/SEOUL, Feb. 20 (Yonhap) -- Though North Korea has threatened to take stronger measures to protect its sovereignty following its Feb. 12 nuclear blast, experts say the isolated country may need several weeks to prepare for additional atomic tests.

The diplomatic source in Beijing, who did not wish to be identified, claimed Pyongyang is very conscious of China and about concerns of radioactive contaminants from its underground test.

"After the latest test, the North seems to be carefully checking the condition of the tunnel used under Mt. Mantap at the Punggye-ri test complex," he said, adding that this check means it will be weeks before the country is ready to detonate another atomic device.

Pyongyang already warned it can take such a step to protect itself from outside provocation, particularly, from the United States.

"The North has been quick to point out that not only was the atomic test a success, but there were no fallouts to the environment," the observer said. There have been news reports released in South Korea that claimed the North used zigzag and spiral tunnel structures to contain the blast.

The Punggye-ri site, in the northeastern part of the country, was used by Pyongyang to conduct the Feb. 12 test, along with two previous detonations carried out in 2006 and 2009. Because of its location, not far from the Chinese border, Beijing conducted extensive tests for radioactive contamination that may have leaked out.

Concerned about the radioactive contamination from the test site, South Korea, the United States and Japan have also been monitoring air samples, but have yet to detect radionuclides such as xenon or krypton in the atmosphere.

The Chinese source, however, said that satellite photos of the site showed there were no signs of tunnel openings being damaged by the blast that caused a magnitude 4.9 earthquake, according to the Korea Meteorological Administration. He said the entrance to the western tunnel, where the latest test probably occurred, and the southern tunnel were both unchanged following the detonation.

"Whether the North conducts more tests is a matter of political deliberation," he said, hinting that Pyongyang can conduct a test at any time if it is willing to take the risk of radioactive materials being released into the environment.

Another North Korean analyst echoed this view by saying that though Pyongyang would likely wait until the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) decides on what actions to take before blowing up another device, there does not seem to be any technical hurdles to taking such a step.

The UNSC is currently examining what actions it can take to penalize the North, although progress may be slow due to concerns raised by countries such as China and Russia.



On the reservations raised by China, some official sources in Seoul claimed there is talk of Beijing cutting and significantly reducing the food supply reaching the North as part of a move to better control Pyongyang.

Seoul believes Beijing provides around US\$300-400 million worth of food aid to the North every year. If this support is withheld, the impact on the North's food situation could cause problems for the already impoverished country. Following the two previous nuclear tests, Beijing did cut off oil shipments temporarily.

"China may not openly sanction the North like Seoul or Washington through the United Nations, yet it can take its own measures to penalize the country for defying the wishes of the international community," a government insider said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/02/20/11/0301000000AEN20130220004700315F.HTML>

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

People's Daily – China

DPRK Says Nuclear Test "Self-Defense" Measure against U.S. Threat

(Xinhua)

February 2013

GENEVA, Feb. 19 (Xinhua) -- The nuclear test on Feb. 12 was a "self-defense" measure in reaction to the United States' ever increasing threat, a diplomat of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said here on Tuesday.

Jon Yong Ryong, first secretary of the DPRK's mission in Geneva, told a public plenary of the Conference on Disarmament that it was a primary counteraction measure for self-defense and dignity of the nation, in which it had "exercised maximum self-restraint."

In response to the statements by the United States, Jon said that if the United States took a hostile approach towards the DPRK, it would render the situation complicated and this would only lead the DPRK to take successively stronger steps.

The DPRK also threatened South Korea with "final destruction" at the meeting, according to media reports.

"As the saying goes, a new-born puppy knows no fear of a tiger. South Korea's erratic behavior would only herald its final destruction," Jon was quoted as saying.

The United States said that there was nothing defensive in the carrying-out of nuclear tests in violation of international obligations and United Nations resolutions which demanded that the DPRK did not carry out additional tests, and which reiterated the determination of the UN Security Council to take action in case of future tests.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/8135288.html>

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

Korea Times – South Korea

February 20, 2013

NK Nuke was Bought and Paid for By a Key End-User: Iran

All intelligence indicators received and processed by GIS/Defense & Foreign Affairs show that the nuclear weapon tested by North Korea on Feb. 12, was paid for, and intended for, the Islamic Republic of Iran.

It was, in essence, a test of an Iranian nuclear weapon, and involved scientific as well as financial involvement by the Iranian government.

Moreover, the weapon was not _ as some media reporting has averred _ a "step toward" a North Korean or Iranian nuclear weapons capability: it was in fact a demonstration of a common North Korean and Iranian operationally-ready nuclear weapon.



Just as North Korean officials indicated long before the first North Korean nuclear weapons demonstration on Oct. 9, 2006, that the North Koreans had effectively tested its weapons and proven their design in the May 1998 Chagai-I series of tests by Pakistan, so the North Korean tests _ particularly the February 12, 2013, test, were to prove Iranian weapon design efficacy.

However, given the commonality of the payload “nipple” on the Iranian and North Korean missiles, it seems likely that the nuclear weapon design tested would be the baseline system for both countries.

North Korea on Feb. 12, 2013, detonated its third nuclear explosion, a miniaturized warhead, at an underground site at Punggye-ri. Even by Feb. 14, 2013, there was no detectable aerial evidence of the test, so well protected was the test site.

However, seismic data indicated _ through two different methods _ that the warhead yield was at least double that of the second nuclear test on May 25, 2009, and was either six to seven kiloton yield or 10 kiloton yield, and was from a warhead sufficiently small to fit into the nose compartment already in service on the North Korea’s Taepo-Dong 2 and Iran’s Shihab 3D intermediate-range ballistic missiles.

Initial interpretations of the limited evidence available soon after the detonation indicated that the weapon was a normal nuclear warhead (uranium and plutonium), and not the next-stage weapon on which the North Koreans had been working. That would be a boosted-fission weapon, just below the level of a thermonuclear warhead.

The Feb. 12, weapon was below the boosted fission level weapon. There was a large satcom terminal near the entrance to the test site (which was unusual), and it was believed that this was because the weapon was, indeed, a joint Iranian-North Korean weapon, and was, in fact, funded by Iran.

Intelligence sources noted that there were significant numbers of Iranians present at the test site.

Significantly, there were two test sites being prepared; one, heavily camouflaged, and the one used for the Feb. 12, 2013, test, indicating that a follow-on detonation was possible in the weeks following the third weapon test.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2013/02/511_130797.html

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

Voice of Russia – Russia

North Korea Unable to Create Nuclear Arms - Russian Top-Level Official

February 20, 2013

The third nuclear test conducted by North Korea on February 12th does not mean that Pyongyang can create nuclear arms which could be placed on ballistic missiles, a top-level representative of the Russian Defence Ministry told ITAR-TASS today on condition of anonymity.

He believes that North Korea has neither the necessary scientific, industrial, production, and weapons-making base for the creation of nuclear weapons.

On February 12th North Korea carried out a third underground test, exploding a 10-kiloton bomb. Pyongyang’s conduct was denounced by Russia, the USA, China, Britain, Japan, and France.

http://english.ruvr.ru/2013_02_20/North-Korea-unable-to-create-nuclear-arms-Russian-top-level-official/

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

Reuters – U.S.

Spy Agencies Scrounge for Details on North Korean Nuclear Test

By Mark Hosenball and Jack Kim



Wednesday, February 20, 2013

WASHINGTON/SEOUL (Reuters) - U.S. and allied spy agencies have found no traces of telltale nuclear-related particles from North Korea's February 12 nuclear bomb test, leaving unresolved basic questions about the device's design, according to officials in the United States, Europe and South Korea.

This lack of scientific evidence suggests that key questions may remain unanswered about the type of fissile material used in the test, which was detected by seismic sensors. It also leaves unaddressed questions about how far the North has advanced in its bomb design.

After the test, the U.S. Air Force Technical Applications Center in Florida dispatched WC-135 "sniffer" airplanes to look for traces of gas residue that could offer clues to the device's design, but those efforts apparently turned up empty, the officials said.

An Air Force spokesperson confirmed that the planes were dispatched but said no results from the missions could be released. A U.S. intelligence official said analysis from the tests "was continuing."

Based on seismic evidence, both officials and private experts say there is little doubt that the North Korean device was several times more powerful than those tested in 2006 and 2009.

While estimates of the explosive power of the latest test vary widely, most officials and experts estimate it was at least five kilotons, which is smaller than the power of the atomic bomb the United States dropped on Hiroshima in World War Two.

In a statement about the test issued through its official news agency, North Korea declared that it had used "a miniaturized and lighter nuclear device with greater explosive force than previously (and which) did not pose any negative impact on the surrounding ecological environment."

One critical question is what kind of fissile material North Korea used in the latest test.

In the two earlier tests, North Korea is believed to have used plutonium as the fissile core of its test devices.

Following international diplomatic pressure, North Korea in 2007 abandoned plutonium production. But it later acknowledged that it had built facilities to produce highly enriched uranium, another fissile material that can be used in bombs.

While plutonium is a by-product of nuclear reactors, experts say it can be difficult to build a bomb using the material because specifications have to be precise. Experts say it would be easy for North Korea to make large, if not almost unlimited, quantities of highly enriched uranium.

'MAY NOT FIND ANYTHING'

Absent the trace evidence that might have been collected by sniffer planes - and without leaked information from within the North Korean testing program - U.S. and allied officials said it would be very difficult for outsiders to determine whether the latest test involved a plutonium or uranium core.

Other key issues include precisely how powerful the device was, how it was configured and how far the North Koreans have advanced in miniaturizing a device they might eventually deploy on long-range ballistic missiles that have been under development.

Officials and experts familiar with the capabilities of sniffer planes said that over the years the North Koreans have become increasingly effective at burying and sealing their tests sites to conceal even the faintest scientific traces.

"History would teach us that the North Koreans do like to hide their secret activities and control the message," said David Albright, a private nuclear expert who has visited North Korea and talked with officials about its nuclear program.



A European national security official said the North Koreans were becoming "very effective" at hiding evidence that would offer clues to its nuclear secrets.

A South Korean official knowledgeable about the February 12 test said that most likely the North Koreans dug a test tunnel deeply and sealed it tightly to prevent detection.

"The most plausible point is the structure of the pit was made so that it wasn't a straight line that opened to the outside, but had multiple turns and also many intercepting blockades," he said.

"We need to remember that this is deep in the mountains (where) they tested that are formed of heavy rocks, not out in flat, exposed area," the official said, adding: "We may not find anything."

South Korean, U.S. and European officials all noted that the trace materials sometimes decay rapidly - in the case of highly enriched uranium within a couple of days after an explosion. The longer no traces are found, the less likely that any traces will be found.

Although "there is still some time left, the chances of finding anything is getting lower and lower," the South Korean official said.

Additional reporting by David Chance; Editing by Marilyn W. Thompson and Eric Beech.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/20/us-korea-north-nuclear-usa-idUSBRE91J1CY20130220>

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
February 21, 2013

N. Korea Says Giving up Nukes Will Lead to 'Tragic Consequences'

SEOUL, Feb. 21 (Yonhap) -- North Korea will counter what it calls nuclear threats from the United States with its own nuclear deterrent to avoid the "tragic consequences" faced by other nations that caved to outside pressure to denuclearize, the North's state-run media said Thursday.

"The tragic consequences in those countries which abandoned halfway their nuclear programs, yielding to the high-handed practices and pressure of the U.S. in recent years, clearly prove that the DPRK was very far-sighted and just," the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said in a commentary in English interpreted as indicating the country's intention not to abandon its nuclear program.

Amid tightening sanctions and U.S. pressure, Libya agreed in 2003 to give up the country's weapons of mass destruction and nuclear programs and implemented the agreement the next year. The government of leader Moammar Gadhafi fell in 2011.

The North's possible allusion to Libya is believed to be reflecting its heightened efforts to justify its ownership of nuclear weapons.

In defiance of United Nations resolutions, North Korea detonated what it called a miniaturized nuclear device on Feb. 12, spurring international condemnations and debates over further tightening sanctions on the communist country.

The U.S. portrayed the test as a "challenge" to the international community and stepped up hostile actions and threatened a "preemptive nuclear attack," the KCNA said. "This can neither frighten the DPRK (the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) nor make it retract its countermeasures," it said.

The "ceaseless nuclear blackmail and sanctions" by the U.S. are threatening the North's right to self-determination, the KCNA said, adding, "Therefore, what the DPRK finally opted was the strategic resolution to react to nuclear weapons with nuclear weapons."



Following the Feb. 12 test, the North has ratcheted up claims that the country will take further steps, leading the international community to believe the country is preparing more nuclear tests.

The commentary also said any efforts to open dialogue may be futile unless the U.S. first gives up its "hostile" policy, vowing to continue its nuclear activities.

"Efforts through dialogue and by dint of international law will all end up in smoke as long as the U.S. hostile policy and threat of a nuclear war continue," the commentary read.

North Korea "will take tougher countermeasures in succession if the U.S. goes hostile," it said. "The DPRK's substantial countermeasures based on justice and truth will continue till it wins a final victory."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/02/21/35/0401000000AEN20130221009500315F.HTML>

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

London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Photographs Show New Activity at North Korea Nuclear Site

North Korea has resumed activity at a nuclear site following its internationally condemned atomic test, amid fears that the regime is planning to trial further bombs.

21 February 2013

Source: Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Examining satellite photos, the US-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins University detected a rise in traffic at the Punggye-ri site but cautioned that there was not enough evidence to assert that a new test was in the works.

The think tank said that there had been no sign of vehicles or people moving at the site for a day after North Korea carried out its third nuclear test on February 12 but that activity had resumed by February 15.

Writing on the institute's 38 North blog, analysts Jack Liu and Nick Hansen said the change over a few days may indicate that North Korea "took safety precautions to ensure radioactivity levels were sufficiently low before sending personnel back into the area."

North Korea is believed to have tightly sealed the site, making it difficult for the United States and other nations to detect from the air whether Pyongyang used uranium - which would prove it has a second nuclear method in addition to its plutonium program.

But the analysts found activity in two different parts of the site. They said that if North Korea detonated the bomb in a tunnel in the northern area, "then the southern tunnel would be readily available for a fourth test."

North Korea likely used the northern tunnel area for its previous nuclear test in 2009, but it is not known in which area it carried out its latest explosion.

The analysts said that another reason why activity appeared to increase this month was the melting of snow that fell the day after the nuclear test.

Despite widespread international condemnation, North Korea has taken on a defiant tone since its latest nuclear test, leading to fears that it will conduct another blast or long-range rocket test.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/9884507/Photographs-show-new-activity-at-North-Korea-nuclear-site.html>

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

Russia Beyond the Headlines – Russia

No Breakthroughs on Nuclear Arms Reduction

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
Phone: 334.953.7538 | Fax: 334.953.7530



Without U.S. concessions on missile defense, Russia will not discuss nuclear arms reduction

February 18, 2013

By Elena Chernenko, Ivan Safronov, *Kommersant*

Under Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller left Moscow with mixed results. No breakthroughs were made on nuclear arms reductions, as Russian officials believe the U.S. proposal is aimed at softening Russia's stance on missile defense. However, a new agreement could be drawn up to replace the Nunn-Lugar program before the G-20 summit in St. Petersburg.

Thursday, February 14, marked the end of a two-day visit to Moscow by Rose Gottemoeller, the acting under secretary of state for arms control and international security. The U.S. official came to Russia to discuss two key issues: the possibility of further reductions in both U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals and a new cooperation agreement to replace the Nunn-Lugar program.

As far as Russia is concerned, the first topic is off the table for the foreseeable future, primarily due to differences over missile defense.

Ahead of her visit, Gottemoeller said she was going to Moscow to negotiate a new agreement to reduce the two countries' nuclear arsenals that would "encompass all arms categories: strategic and non-strategic, deployed and non-deployed."

Washington's proposal was met with skepticism in Moscow. A source in the General Staff of Russia's armed forces referred to the U.S. initiative as "not in accordance with the present-day realities" and stated that the idea of a unilateral disarmament was a "political move."

"They are trying to lure us into softening our stance on missile defense," the source said.

The White House believes that Russia and the U.S. could dispose of half their warheads and not compromise to the security of either state. If Moscow refuses to consider the idea, the White House could enlist the support of two-thirds of the Senate and undertake a unilateral reduction.

"For us, missile defense is a cornerstone issue. Without an agreement, Russia will not reduce its arsenal any further," said a source in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

According to the source, Moscow and Washington are now looking for ways to provide Russia with guarantees regarding the U.S.-led NATO missile defense system (Moscow wants to be assured that it is not aimed at its nuclear deterrent) without having to seek approval from the U.S. Congress, as opposed to the legally binding guarantees that Russia had previously demanded. However, a compromise has yet to be found.

Before negotiations commence on further reductions, Moscow considers it necessary to fulfill the requirements of the START Treaty, the source noted. "If the talk is of a package agreement, we would like to see it also contain strategic non-nuclear weapons, but Washington is not ready for that," the source said. "There remains the problem of the imbalance [in favor of the U.S.] in conventional weapons. Clearly, it is not a short-term issue."

More productive negotiations were to be had on the second topic: an agreement to replace the Nunn-Lugar program, under which the U.S. has funded the dismantling of surplus Russian nuclear warheads and chemical weapons since the early 1990s. The Russian authorities have decided not to extend the program when it expires in June, declaring that Russia no longer needs subsidies.

During the negotiations with Gottemoeller, the Russian side stated the conditions under which Moscow would sign a new agreement with Washington on this matter. Diplomatic representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defense said that it must be "based on equality."

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said that Moscow was "satisfied with the content of the consultations" on the issue.



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

"We are moving forward, but to say that we have achieved an outcome or a breakthrough would be premature. But despite the differences, there is a dialogue," said Ryabkov. Asked when a new agreement would be signed, the diplomat couched his words figuratively: "We have not yet reached the last station where everyone has to leave the train, sit down at the table, and put pen to paper."

Meanwhile, according to the president of the PIR Center, Vladimir Orlov, the parties could draw up a draft agreement over the next six months — in time for the meeting between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Barack Obama that is due to be held in September on the margins of the G-20 summit in St. Petersburg. Orlov believes the Nunn-Lugar program should be replaced by a new 10-year program that is more compact in terms of financing and number of projects.

"The priority should be to use the positive experience of the Nunn-Lugar program to implement projects in third countries," said Orlov. "The withdrawal of U.S. assistance programs from Russia will not only remove an anachronism, but also alleviate sore points, such as liability for damages."

Under the Nunn-Lugar program, U.S. contractors hired to work in Russia did not bear any responsibility for incidents and accidents that occurred on their watch.

According to Orlov, the framework of the new program between Russia and the U.S. could include cooperation in the CIS — for example, to improve safety in the nuclear industry. In the Middle East, they could set about retraining nuclear engineers and military scientists from Iraq and Libya.

In addition, Russia and the U.S. could realize projects to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Southeast Asia.

First published in Russian in Kommersant.

http://rbth.ru/international/2013/02/18/no_breakthroughs_on_nuclear_arms_reduction_23009.html

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

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Later Borey Class Subs to Carry Only 16 Missiles – Source

20 February 2013

MOSCOW, February 20 (RIA Novosti) – Russia's upgraded Project 955A (Borey-A) class nuclear-powered strategic submarines will carry only 16 Bulava ballistic missiles each rather than the 20 missiles previously reported, a senior defense industry source said on Wednesday.

"The Project 955A differs significantly from the original Borey (Project 955) but not in the number of missiles carried – there will still be 16 on board," the source said.

At the same time, the improved vessels are equipped with advanced sonar, navigation, communications and fire-control systems and have lower electromagnetic signature, which makes them more "stealthy," the official added.

Previous media reports, including those from RIA Novosti, had reported the Project 955A as being armed with 20 Bulava missiles.

The first submarine of the improved Borey-A class, the Knyaz Vladimir, was laid down in July 2012.

The construction of the Alexander Suvorov, the fifth in the series and second of the improved Project 955A (Borey-A) class, will begin on July 28, when Russia celebrates Navy Day, while the sixth submarine, the Mikhail Kutuzov, will be laid down in November.

The Borey class submarines are set to become the mainstay of the Russian Navy's strategic nuclear deterrent fleet, replacing the ageing Project 941 (NATO Typhoon class) and Project 667 class (Delta-3 and Delta-4) boats.

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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Russia's first Borey class submarine, the Yury Dolgoruky, officially entered service with the Russian Navy on January 10. It has been assigned to the 31st submarine division of the Northern Fleet.

Russia is planning to have three Borey class and five Borey-A class submarines by 2020.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130220/179588098/Later-Borey-Class-Subs-to-Carry-Only-16-Missiles--Source.html

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

Global Security Newswire

U.S. Should Pursue Nuclear EMP Weapon: Ex-Lab Head

February 20, 2013

By Rachel Oswald, *Global Security Newswire*

ARLINGTON, Va. -- One of the United States' most prominent nuclear weapons experts on Wednesday urged the government to develop nuclear weapons that could be used to short-circuit enemies' electrical infrastructure, to counter similar capabilities possessed by Russia and China.

Former Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory head John Foster noted in a speech at the annual Nuclear Deterrence Summit recent claims by Moscow that it has "developed and deployed no-yield clean penetrating EMP weapons tailored to terminate any conventional attack."

"Similarly if the U.S. were to send a naval carrier force to aid Taiwan, the Chinese could use a nuclear EMP weapon to disable the carriers' command and control," Foster asserted. "Such declaratory warnings and capabilities cause our allies to question their confidence in our continued deterrence."

Foster, who has long advocated for development of next-generation nuclear weapons, did not cite examples of partner nations that have become skeptical of the strength of U.S. extended deterrence in light of Russian and Chinese offensive EMP capabilities.

"The credibility of our nuclear deterrent would be enhanced if we could develop and certify nuclear weapons such as those described by Russia and China," he stated, adding, that at the minimum the Defense Department and the national nuclear laboratories "should promptly address what capabilities are most needed and if they can be provided without nuclear testing."

Washington's nuclear weapons policy for years has been to not pursue additional capabilities out of concern that would open up new arms races. The United States has maintained a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing since 1992.

"Yes, some of those capabilities might be considered to be new and would then have to be reviewed by the White House and approved by the president. But that hurdle should not prevent the DOD from requesting what is needed to provide a more credible nuclear deterrent," according to the physicist who led the Livermore site from 1958 to 1965 and subsequently served at high levels at the Pentagon.

The George W. Bush administration was interested in developing a Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, which was envisioned as a low-yield nuclear weapon that could destroy enemies' subterranean WMD arsenals without causing significant loss of life. Lawmakers refused to fund work on the weapon in the wake of a congressionally ordered study by the National Academy of Sciences that concluded the warhead could cause massive loss of life as it would not be able to bury itself deep enough in the ground.

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/us-should-pursue-earth-penetrating-nuclear-emp-weapon-ex-lab-head/>

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

Los Angeles Times

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Computer Security Firm Blames Cyber Spying on Chinese Military

Mandiant says a clandestine Chinese military unit has conducted sophisticated cyber espionage operations against dozens of American and Canadian companies.

By Ken Dilanian, *Los Angeles Times*

February 19, 2013,

WASHINGTON — A clandestine Chinese military unit has conducted sophisticated cyber espionage operations against dozens of American and Canadian companies, according to a private report that provides unusual new details about China's involvement in cyber theft of economic and trade secrets.

The report by computer security firm Mandiant Corp. in Alexandria, Va., breaks new ground by attributing attacks against 141 companies to a specific 12-story office building in the financial center of Shanghai.

According to the report, the building is home to the 2nd Bureau of the People's Liberation Army's General Staff Department's 3rd Department, which is known as Unit 61398.

Mandiant said it traced computer penetrations to Unit 61398 by telltale digital signatures left in malware, the use of Shanghai phone numbers and social networking information posted by some of the hackers. The report profiles three operatives associated with the unit, including one known by the moniker "Ugly Gorilla."

The report said Unit 61398 has stolen "technology blueprints, proprietary manufacturing processes, test results, business plans, pricing documents, partnership agreements and emails and contact lists."

It said it's impossible to inventory the losses since hackers often copy, rather than remove, digital data and erase all but traces of the theft.

Mandiant, which signs confidentiality agreements with its clients, did not name the companies targeted. The New York Times first disclosed details from the report Tuesday.

Chinese authorities have repeatedly denied any government involvement in the hacking of U.S. companies.

"Cyberattacks are anonymous and transnational, and it is hard to trace the origin of attacks, so I don't know how the findings of the report are credible," said Hong Lei, a Foreign Ministry spokesman in Beijing.

"China is also a victim of hacking attacks," he said, hinting that some attacks on China originated in the U.S. "Chinese laws clearly forbid hacking attacks, and we hope relevant parties takes a responsible attitude on this issue."

Richard Bejtlich, Mandiant's security director, said the report "should dismiss all the wiggle room that the Chinese use to deny engaging in this conduct."

Bejtlich said U.S. officials had indicated that they were "ready to go beyond just sort of watching the fireworks happen and they wouldn't be particularly upset if we released a report."

President Obama signed an executive order last week that aims to improve U.S. cyber defenses by sharing more classified government information about digital threats with private companies that operate critical infrastructure, including energy, telecommunications, utilities and dams.

White House spokesman Jay Carney declined to address the report or discuss U.S. intelligence assessments of Chinese cyber spying.

"We have repeatedly raised our concerns at the highest levels about cyber theft with senior Chinese officials, including the military, and we will continue to do so," Carney told reporters.

U.S. intelligence officials have said for years that Chinese cyber attacks present a growing threat to U.S. security and economic interests, but they have been reluctant to provide details in public.

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A highly classified National Intelligence Estimate under preparation asserts that China is a major player in cyber attacks, along with Russia, Iran and several other countries.

U.S. intelligence and military agencies conduct aggressive cyber operations against foreign governments and their agencies. U.S. and Israeli experts, for example, allegedly cooperated on a cyber attack that sabotaged Iran's efforts to enrich uranium for several years.

But U.S. intelligence officials said they don't steal foreign trade secrets or technology to benefit U.S. companies.

Bejtlich said no evidence indicates that Unit 61398 tried to destroy American infrastructure via a cyber attack, but he said the unit stole potentially sensitive data from electric utilities and chemical companies.

"By virtue of the access that they have, they could cause some damage," he said. "They wouldn't even have to do it on purpose."

It's sometimes easier for hackers to disable computer networks than to sneak into them and steal data, said Michael Hayden, former head of the CIA and the National Security Agency, which conducts America's digital spying abroad.

"In the cyber domain, an actual attack is often easier than conducting the reconnaissance," Hayden said in an email. "That's what makes this so unnerving."

Members of the House and the Senate intelligence committees responded sharply to the 76-page report.

"This is a sobering public report on the lengths to which the Chinese military has gone to infiltrate and hack American companies," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), who chairs the Senate Intelligence Committee.

"The Chinese government's direct role in cyber theft is rampant and the problems have grown exponentially," said Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

"The Mandiant report provides vital insights into the Chinese government's economic cyber espionage campaign against American companies," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-china-cyber-20130220,0,7881440.story>

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

China Daily – China

Chinese Military Never Supports Cyberattacks

February 20, 2013

(Xinhua)

BEIJING -- China's military spokesman said on Wednesday that the country's armed forces had never backed any hacking activities, denouncing US cyber security firm Mandiant's report as groundless both in facts and legal basis.

China's laws ban any activities disrupting cyber security and the Chinese government always cracks down on cyber crimes, Geng Yansheng, spokesman with Ministry of National Defense, said at a briefing.

Mandiant on Monday released a report which alleged that a secret Chinese military unit in Shanghai was behind years of cyber attacks against US companies.

Geng said Mandiant's report was groundless in fact because it came to the conclusion that the source of attack came from China based simply on the discovery that attacks were linked to IP addresses based in China.

First, as known to all, it is so common for hacking attacks on the Internet to take place by peculating IP addresses that "it happens almost everyday," according to the spokesman.

Second, there has been no clear and consistent definition of cyber attacks around the world. The report lacks legal basis to assert cyber espionage only by cataloguing some routine cyber activities, he said.

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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Third, cyber attacks are transnational, anonymous and deceptive with their source often difficult to identify. Releasing irresponsible information will not help solve problems, Geng added.

The spokesman further said China actually is a major victim of cyber attacks.

Statistics show that Chinese military end users connected to the Internet frequently come under cyber attack from abroad. In these cases, source IP addresses suggest that the majority of them come from the United States, Geng said, adding, "but we do not point fingers at the United States based on the above-mentioned findings, and every country should deal with cyber security in a professional and responsible manner."

Additionally, he said, to address criticism from foreign statesmen and media outlets about Chinese hacking, the Chinese side would like to resolve the issues through joint law enforcement and consultations with other countries.

According to the spokesman, the Chinese Ministry of Public Security has since 2004 assisted more than 50 countries and regions in investigating some 1,100 cases of cyber crime, and China has established bilateral law enforcement cooperation with over 30 nations and regions, including the United States, Britain, Germany and Russia.

Lodging one-sided media accusations will not help solve problems, but only jeopardize existing cooperation, he urged.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-02/20/content_16240194.htm

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

Bloomberg BusinessWeek

Portrait of Accused China Cyberspy Unit Emerges

By Christopher Bodeen

February 20, 2013

BEIJING (AP) — Unit 61398 of the People's Liberation Army has been recruiting computer experts for at least a decade. It has made no secret of details of community life such as badminton matches and kindergarten, but its apparent purpose became clear only when a U.S. Internet security firm accused it of conducting a massive hacking campaign against North American targets.

Hackers with the Chinese unit have been active for years, using online handles such as "UglyGorilla," Virginia-based firm Mandiant said in a report released Tuesday as the U.S. prepared to crack down on countries responsible for cyber espionage. The Mandiant report plus details collected by The Associated Press depict a highly specialized community of Internet warriors working from a blocky white building in Shanghai:

—RECRUITING THE SPIES: Unit 61398, alleged to be one of several hacking operations run by China's military, recruits directly from universities. It favors high computer expertise and English language skills. A notice dated 2003 on the Chinese Internet said the unit was seeking master's degree students from Zhejiang University's College of Computer Science and Technology. It offered a scholarship, conditional on the student reporting for work at Unit 61398 after graduation.

—CYBERSPY WORKPLACE: Mandiant says it traced scores of cyberattacks on U.S. defense and infrastructure companies to a neighborhood in Shanghai's Pudong district that includes the 12-story building where Unit 61398 is known to be housed. The building has office space for up to 2,000 people. Mandiant estimates the number of personnel in the unit to be anywhere from hundreds to several thousand. The surrounding neighborhood is filled with apartment buildings, tea houses, shops and karaoke bars.

—THE UNIT 61398 COMMUNITY: While the building's activities may be top secret, Unit 61398's status in the community as a military division is not. It turns up in numerous Chinese Internet references to community events, including a 2010 accord with the local government to set up a joint outreach center on family planning. Other articles describe mass weddings for officers, badminton matches and even discussion of the merits of the "Unit 61398

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Kindergarten." Other support facilities include a clinic, car pool, and guesthouse — all standard for the military's often self-contained communities across China.

—THE PIPELINE: The Mandiant report describes a special arrangement made with China Telecom for a fiber optic communication infrastructure in the Unit 61398 neighborhood, pointing to its need for bandwidth and its elite status. The contract between the two refers to Unit 61398 as belonging to the General Staff Department 3rd Department, 2nd Bureau, and says China Telecom agreed to the military's suggested price due to "national defense construction" concerns.

—MODUS OPERANDUS: The cyberspies typically enter targeted computer networks through "spearfishing" attacks, in which a company official receives a creatively disguised email and is tricked into clicking on a link or attachment that then opens a secret door for the hackers, Mandiant says. The cyberspies would steal and retransmit data for an average of just under a year, but in some cases more than four years. Information technology companies were their favorite targets, followed by aerospace firms, pointing to a key area of interest as China seeks to develop its own cutting-edge civilian and military aircraft.

—ONLINE HANDLES: Mandiant identifies three of the unit's hackers by their screen names. It says one of them, "UglyGorilla," was first detected in a 2004 online forum posing a question to a cybersecurity expert about whether China needed a dedicated force to square off against an online cohort being mustered by the United States. The user of another screen name, "Dota," appears to be a fan of Harry Potter; Mandiant said references to the book and movie character appear as answers to his computer security questions.

Unit 61398 hackers were sometimes identified as the "Comment Crew" by security companies due to their practice of inserting secret backdoors into systems by using code embedded in comments on websites.

—REVEALING TWEETS: And what helped Mandiant track down the source of hacking into more than 140 companies and organizations from the U.S. and elsewhere? Facebook and Twitter.

China's "Great Firewall" of Internet filtering blocks those U.S.-based social networks, but Unit 61398 operators got around that by accessing them directly from the unit's system. Mandiant was able to see that Facebook and Twitter accounts were being accessed from Internet Protocol addresses connected to the unit. It's not clear whether those accounts aided in hacking or were simply for the hackers' personal use.

"These actors have made poor operational security choices, facilitating our research and allowing us to track their activities," the report says.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2013-02-20/portrait-of-accused-china-cyberspy-unit-emerges>

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

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

US Sees Russian Cyberthreat as China Grabs Headlines

22 February 2013

WASHINGTON, February 21 (By Carl Schreck for RIA Novosti) – A report linking the Chinese military to cyberattacks on US businesses and government agencies has garnered global headlines this week, arguably stealing the cybertheft limelight from another country American officials cite as a significant threat to US network security: Russia.

"The Russian operations appear to be much more sophisticated and professionally run than the Chinese, since we only ever seem to catch China," cybersecurity expert Jeffrey Carr told RIA Novosti on Thursday.

The report released this week by the Virginia-based computer security firm Mandiant, traced members of elite Chinese hacking groups to the vicinity of a Chinese military building on the outskirts of Shanghai.

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A day after the study was first reported in The New York Times on Tuesday, the White House released its new strategy to protect US businesses from industrial espionage and cyber theft.

But while China has been the focus of Washington officials' vows to protect US interests from cyberthreats, such attacks emanating from Russia are as advanced—if not as plentiful—as those carried out by Chinese cyberwarriors, Internet security expert Scott Borg told NBC News this week.

"The Russians are technically advanced," Borg said in the interview. "The Chinese just have more people dedicated to the effort, by a wide margin. They are not as innovative or creative as the US and Russia. China has the greatest quantity, if not quality."

Russian cyberespionage tends to focus on "military espionage and operations," Borg, head of the nonprofit US Cyber Consequences Unit, which advises the US government and businesses on cybersecurity, told NBC News.

"China's main focus is stealing technology," he said. "These things are quite separate. You use different tools on critical infrastructure than you use for military espionage and different tools again on stealing technology."

In a briefing Wednesday on US President Barack Obama's strategy to counter cyberespionage, US Under Secretary of State Robert Hormats called China "a country that does pose serious problems," but said other countries raise concerns as well.

"We've had similar conversations with Russia and other countries," Hormats said.

US Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said last year that "entities within" China and Russia "are responsible for extensive illicit intrusions into US computer networks and theft of intellectual property."

Figuring out who exactly is behind cyberattacks is exceedingly difficult, said James Hendler, professor of computer science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York.

"We know Russia has significant capability ... but a problem in the cyberworld is that it's very hard to know who's really doing what," Hendler told RIA Novosti on Thursday.

Russian hackers were widely alleged to have been behind cyberattacks against the governments of neighboring Estonia and Georgia in 2007 and 2008, though the Russian government has denied any involvement in those attacks.

The United States, meanwhile, is believed to have carried out targeted cyberattacks against Iran's nuclear program, while Washington accused Tehran of complicity in a cyberattack on the US banking system last month.

Countries including Israel, France, Ukraine, Turkey and Taiwan also have considerable cyberwar capabilities, Carr, head of the cybersecurity firm Taia Global told RIA Novosti.

"Perhaps a little too much attention is being paid to China," Carr said.

Washington and Moscow announced in 2011 that they were expanding Obama's "reset" policy with Russia to include cyberspace in order to "help our two governments better communicate about small and large-scale threats to our networks, facilitate better collaboration in responding to those threats, and reduce the prospect of escalation in response to crisis incidents."

Caitlin Hayden, a spokeswoman for the White House National Security Council, told RIA Novosti on Thursday that the Obama administration is "working with the Russian government to bolster our cyber cooperation and risk reduction efforts, including confidence-building measures in cyberspace."

"We are committed to working with our Russian counterparts to improve our collective cybersecurity and addressing cybercrime and other common threats," Hayden said.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20130222/179615523/US-Sees-Russian-Cyberthreat-as-China-Grabs-Headlines-----.html>

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

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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Los Angeles Times

Studies of H5N1 Bird Flu to Require Strict Reviews

Strict rules are issued to address security fears about experiments with the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus.

By Eryn Brown, *Los Angeles Times*

February 21, 2013,

U.S. health officials announced plans for scientists to move forward with controversial research on the deadly H5N1 bird flu and said that any discoveries about how the virus might gain the ability to spread easily among humans should be shared with other scientists and the public.

The new policy, released Thursday by the National Institutes of Health, requires that studies aimed at making the virus more dangerous would now be subject to a heightened level of review. Effective immediately, researchers will have to explicitly delineate the potential science and health benefits — as well as safety risks — involved in their work before they can get government funding, said Dr. Amy Patterson, NIH associate director for science policy.

The NIH, through the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, is a leading funder of flu research.

The H5N1 virus is endemic in some bird populations in Asia and the Middle East, and began infecting people in the late 1990s. The World Health Organization has confirmed 620 cases of H5N1 in humans since 2003. It has been fatal nearly 60% of the time.

So far, the virus has mostly spread from birds directly to humans. But public health officials fear a pandemic could be in the offing if it were to mutate in a way that makes it easier to spread from person to person.

That's why scientists have been trying to see whether they can create a more contagious strain of H5N1. The new policy will allow that work to resume while trying to ensure that the virus can't escape the laboratory and cause a deadly pandemic, through accidental or deliberate means.

"Further understanding this virus is imperative," Patterson said.

The concern over the H5N1 experiments dates to 2011, when virologists Ron Fouchier of Erasmus Medical Center in the Netherlands and Yoshihiro Kawaoka of the University of Wisconsin announced that they had independently created bird flu strains that could be spread through the air among ferrets, which are often studied in the lab as proxies for humans.

The scientists were interested in seeing how mutations in the virus' genetic code could make such mammal-to-mammal transmission possible. Learning which DNA changes were key could help public health officials spot potentially dangerous alterations that emerge in the wild. The information also might help scientists develop better vaccines or antiviral drugs, Fouchier and Kawaoka said.

But just as the researchers were preparing to publish reports on their work in the journals *Science* and *Nature*, the U.S. National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity asked that their studies be redacted so that the recipe for the contagious version of the virus would not fall into the wrong hands.

Fouchier, Kawaoka and dozens of other scientists agreed to a voluntary moratorium on their experiments as they worked with government agencies to identify the safest manner to proceed. The new rules are an outgrowth of those deliberations.

The biggest change is the addition of two new levels of review for research proposals involving this type of H5N1 experiment, Patterson said.

First, government agencies that are considering funding H5N1 transmission experiments will have to make sure the proposals satisfy seven criteria, including requirements that the research addresses scientific questions important to

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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human health; that there are no other ways to answer those questions; and that safety and security risks can be managed effectively.

If the proposals pass these tests, they will undergo "a higher level of scrutiny" by reviewers at the Department of Health and Human Services, who will further consider the risks and benefits.

One of the seven criteria is a requirement that research will be "anticipated to be broadly shared in order to realize its potential benefits to global health."

Michael Osterholm, a infectious disease researcher at the University of Minnesota and a member of the biosecurity panel, objected to that requirement.

"The genie will get out of the bottle," he said. "If we publish this, it's right there for everyone to know. Any lab in the world could do the same work."

H5N1 researchers lifted their self-imposed ban in January, stating that they would resume work once governments announced safety plans.

Scientists who depended on U.S. funding were not able to proceed immediately. But now that the U.S. guidelines are out, researchers who halted their H5N1 transmission studies can submit documents addressing the criteria of concern. Patterson said that the department-level review process could be expected to take about three to four weeks.

Patterson said that Fouchier's and Kawaoka's experiments in 2011 would have qualified for funding under the new rules, but that "there would have been a lot more upfront articulation" of the risks and benefits.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/science/la-sci-bird-flu-research-20130222,0,6692740.story>

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

London Daily Telegraph – U.K
OPINION/Analysis

Analysis: North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions Can only Be Stopped By China

North Korea's third nuclear test last week will have cost the country enormous amounts of money, has infuriated everyone (including China, its principal ally and supporter) and will probably bring a further round of United Nations sanctions down upon North Korea's head, writes John Everard, a former British ambassador to North Korea.

By John Everard
16 February 2013

So why did its young leader, Kim Jong-un, go ahead with it in the face of strong warnings to desist? I think there were many reasons, but two main ones.

Firstly, the North Korean regime has calculated that its survival depends on having a credible nuclear deterrent.

Pyongyang has watched what has happened to those who did not have this, from Saddam Hussein to Muammar Gaddafi, and concluded that agreements with the international community, although they can be useful for extracting aid, will not in the end guarantee the Kim dynasty's continued hold on power – only the possession of "nukes" will achieve this.

There may have been a time when Pyongyang was willing to trade its nuclear programmes for other benefits but that moment, if it existed, has passed. North Korea has repeatedly made clear that it now has no intention of abandoning its nuclear weapons programme. But to make its nuclear deterrent credible it has to continue to perfect it – and crucially to show that it can build a nuclear device small enough to mount on a missile (it successfully tested a long-range missile, in the guise of a space launch, in December). Hence last week's test.

Secondly, North Korea is in many ways a very traditional East Asian state.



The Confucian virtue of filial piety is vitally important in the North Korean system, particularly in showing respect to the god-kings who rule the country. Kim Jong-un's late father, Kim Jong-il, was deeply attached to the nuclear programme, and some experts even believe that his Last Instructions commanded his young son and heir to continue and develop it.

Kim Jong-un is leader only because he was anointed by his father to succeed him, so to ignore Kim Jong-il's wishes, an act of flagrant impiety, would call into question his fitness to rule. Therefore, whatever he personally might think of the nuclear programme, Kim Jong-un is duty bound to continue with it.

Although I have had no direct contact with ordinary North Koreans since last week's test I doubt that popular reaction to it will be very different to what I found at the time of North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, when I lived in Pyongyang. I found then that my North Korean contacts reacted to it in many different ways. (North Koreans are not regimented automatons as is commonly thought, but sharply differentiated individuals, and I found as great a variety of opinion amongst them as anywhere else in the world).

Some glowed with pride. They knew that their country was backward and poor compared to South Korea, or even China, but here at last was a real achievement – South Korea did not have nuclear weapons, but now their country did. Others were more thoughtful. They asked me how much the test had cost, and I shared with them estimates current at the time.

Then they asked how much a ton of rice cost. I do not doubt that they were working out how much rice could have been bought for the money spent on the test.

Incidentally I do not know how many of the North Koreans we have seen dancing in the streets to celebrate last week's test were genuine in their enthusiasm for the nuclear programme but I strongly suspect that they were all genuinely enjoying themselves. North Koreans love to sing and dance but do not get an excuse to hold a street party very often. A successful nuclear test probably seemed as good an excuse as any for many of them to put on their best clothes and practice their dance steps – even in the winter cold.

What happens next will depend most of all on China.

Although North Korea depends on China for aid and trade, and despite repeated declarations of friendship by both sides, the North Koreans that I knew really did not like the Chinese, whom they regarded as rude, bullying, fond of eating the most disgusting things and with unfortunate personal habits. I once asked a friend whether they minded working with foreigners. They replied that they liked western foreigners, and found them polite and good company. "Not like Chinese", they said, shuddering.

My contacts with China suggest that this dislike is reciprocated. Some have told me that they find North Koreans mendacious and devious, and almost impossible to understand.

But despite this antipathy the two countries have been forced into a strategic embrace. North Korea needs Chinese aid and diplomatic support, and China needs to avoid a North Korean collapse (which might send floods of refugees into China's north-eastern rust belt). It also finds North Korea a useful buffer against US forces in South Korea.

Moreover North Korean soil is soaked in Chinese blood from the Korean War. The families of the perhaps one million Chinese soldiers who died "defending North Korea against imperialist aggression" feel strongly that an alliance defended at such cost should never be abandoned.

There are however many other Chinese who believe that the time has come to end, or at least reduce, China's support for North Korea. If their view prevails then China has the ability to apply overwhelming pressure to North Korea, by halting aid or limiting trade. If it were ever to do this it is likely that there would be fundamental changes in North Korea – the trick would be to achieve these without violence.

But there is so far little sign that China will change its policy. If it does not do so then Kim Jong-un's regime will probably suffer no more than minor damage as a consequence of this test. Short of a military intervention in North



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Korea (for which I detect absolutely no appetite) the United Nations Security Council's only recourse against that country is sanctions.

But China for the most part does not implement the existing Security Council sanctions on North Korea even though it voted for them following that country's two previous nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

For example, although UN member states are required to report any inspection of a North Korean cargo suspected of containing illicit goods, China has not once done so despite the fact that the great bulk of North Korea's trade flows either across the two countries' common border or through the Chinese port of Dalian, which lies opposite the North Korean port of Nampo.

Luxury goods, whose import into North Korea is banned by the Security Council, in fact reach Pyongyang in large quantities from China, and the UN Panel of Experts that monitors sanctions implementation has reported many times that illicit North Korean arms shipments have travelled unimpeded through Dalian.

So unless China starts effectively to implement sanctions, both the sanctions currently in force, and any new ones that the Security Council may introduce in response to this third nuclear test, will be blunted, and Kim Jong-un will be able to sleep peacefully at night.

This cycle of nuclear (or missile) test followed by sharp words but only ineffective sanctions from the Security Council, followed by another test, is very dangerous. With each iteration North Korea comes closer to being able to launch a nuclear weapon at its arch-enemies, Japan and the United States. Some have argued that it would never in practice do this. I only wish that I were so sure.

John Everard is a former UK ambassador to North Korea.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/9874966/Analysis-North-Koreas-nuclear-ambitions-can-only-be-stopped-by-China.html>

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

Xinhua News – China
OPINION/Commentary

Commentary: Hacking Allegations against China Both Baseless and Revealing

February 20, 2013

BEIJING, Feb. 20 (Xinhua) -- U.S. cybersecurity firm Mandiant on Monday claimed in a report that hackers related to the Chinese military attacked some U.S. websites, once again stirring up the "Chinese hackers threat."

Mandiant put forward as its main evidence a claim that many of the cyber attacks were launched from IP addresses registered in the Chinese metropolis of Shanghai.

However, one does not need to be a cybersecurity expert to know that professional hackers usually exploit what is called the botnet in other parts of the world as proxies for attacks, not their own computers.

Thus, it is highly unlikely that both the origins of the hackers and the attacks they have launched can be located.

That is why China's foreign ministry and defense ministry both described the firm's report as "amateurish" when they dismissed Mandiant's false accusations.

However, it is beyond belief that a firm specialized in the field of cybersecurity could be so indiscreetly desperate as to jump to a conclusion so full of loopholes, unless it has a good reason.

If one takes a closer look at Mandiant's report, it is not too difficult to find that it reeks of a commercial stunt.

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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In a statement accompanying the firm's report, Kevin Mandia, founder and CEO of Mandiant, seems to do nothing but market the products and services of his company.

"Given the sheer amount of data this particular group (the hackers) has stolen, we decided it was necessary to arm and prepare as many organizations as possible to prevent additional losses," he said.

Next time, the CEO could simply say: "See the Chinese hackers? Hurry up, come and buy our cybersecurity services."

Moreover, the much-hyped threat can also be attributed to some U.S. politicians and businessmen who always seek to use China to pursue their personal political and commercial interests, especially at a time when the U.S. Congress is about to approve a budget plan for the country's new fiscal year.

Without targeting China as a "presumed enemy," they might run short of excuses to demand more money to build an even stronger cyber military force or buy cybersecurity hardware and services from a company whose CEO used to serve in the U.S. air force.

As the birthplace of the World Wide Web, the United States already has a matchless superiority and ability to stage cyber attacks across the globe.

Currently, the U.S. military has established a significant cyber force, including the 780th Military Intelligence Brigade, which is a regular military unit tasked with carrying out cyber missions.

Earlier media reports said Iran was once attacked by U.S. military intelligence agencies through the Internet, while, according to China's foreign ministry, a majority of the cyber attacks against China come from the United States.

In fact, the credibility of the United States has already been seriously questioned because of its government's habit of accusing other nations based on phoney evidence.

In 1993, the United States accused "Yinhe," a Chinese cargo ship, of carrying banned material for making chemical weapons to Iran. However, no suspected goods were found after a joint Chinese-Saudi inspection.

Similarly, facts will eventually prove that the cyber attacks accusations are groundless and will only tarnish the image and reputation of the company making them, as well as that of the United States.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/indepth/2013-02/20/c_132181511.htm

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

Foreign Policy

OPINION/National Security

Why America Reserves the Right to Nuke You First

And why it shouldn't.

By JOHN ARQUILLA

February 19, 2013

In 1945, Harry Truman ordered the first atomic bombing of another country; today, Barack Obama reserves the right to mount the world's next nuclear strike -- as have all American presidents since Truman. It is very odd that senior U.S. foreign policy officials, who have devoted most of the past seven decades to trying to control the spread of nuclear weapons, still want Washington to be able to use them first in a pinch. Even President Obama, a supporter of the abolition of *all* nuclear weapons, wants to be able to fire the first nuclear shot. No wonder North Korea, Iran, and others view efforts to get them to renounce their proliferation programs with much skepticism.

To be sure, the American ardor for atomic weapons has cooled since the famous *Fortune* magazine survey of December 1945, in which 22 percent of the public expressed the view that far more than "just" two nukes should have been dropped on Japan. Yet even as enthusiasm for inflicting massive destruction on others waned, there was still considerable fascination with these weapons in government and the military. Indeed, the idea of waging preventive

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nuclear war on Soviet Russia or communist China -- that is, hitting them before they had nukes of their own -- was closely considered for years, finally being rejected by Dwight Eisenhower in 1954.

This was the same year, however, that he articulated a doctrine of "massive retaliation" for any sort of act of aggression. Thus an incursion by some aggressor's conventional forces was now theoretically subject to a nuclear riposte. The idea was that this threat would keep the peace around the world. It didn't. Instead, a spate of irregular wars and acts of terrorism arose and, as Thomas Schelling put it in his classic *Arms and Influence*, the massive retaliation policy "was in decline almost from its enunciation."

Still, a version of massive retaliation lived on into the 1960s in the minds of NATO strategists who were concerned that Russian numerical superiority in tanks and warplanes was too great to match. And even after Western forces were beefed up, making conventional defense possible, the nuclear option was kept on the table in the form of an attractive euphemism, "flexible response." This meant that NATO would try to defend without resort to nukes, but would use them if it had to. Every "Reforger" exercise that began with conventional defense ended with the call for nuclear strikes.

Even as the Cold War was winding down and the Red Army was crumbling, the United States and its NATO allies grimly held on to the option of nuclear first use. Now it was only thought of as a last resort, but it was still on the books. And it remains a policy alternative today for NATO, though the current U.S. nuclear posture limits the right to first use by targeting only those nations who have not signed on or adhered to the various strictures imposed by the Nonproliferation Treaty -- which still leaves considerable room for first use.

For all the American intransigence about adopting no first use as policy, the concept has been embraced elsewhere. Next year Beijing will observe 50 years of its declared policy of no first use of nuclear weapons. India has also taken this position as, less credibly, has North Korea. Russia long held to a no first use policy, but renounced it 20 years ago when the country was in a state of freefall after the collapse of the Soviet Union. A decade ago Moscow clarified that it would only reserve the right to first use of nuclear weapons in the face of a massive conventional invasion of Russia. The bottom line is that the United States would be in very good company if a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons were declared.

Ironically, the country most staunchly opposed to renouncing the first use of nuclear weapons, the United States, would be the greatest beneficiary of such a policy. If a behavioral firewall existed between more traditional military operations and nuclear war -- that is, if forces in the field, at sea, and in the air didn't have to worry about an atomic attack -- then incomparable American strategic advantages would truly be locked in. U.S. naval mastery of the world's ocean commons is close to unparalleled in all history -- as is the Air Force's dominant position among world powers. It is extremely difficult to conceive of a situation in which American ground forces, deployed even to the most distant theater of war, would be mortally imperiled by the maneuvers of some opposing conventional force.

One of the biggest objections to adopting a no first use doctrine is that one's enemies might cheat and strike first. This simply begs the question of why they wouldn't mount a nuclear Pearl Harbor whatever the declaratory policy, no first use or not. And the answer is the same: Retaliatory threats (mutual assured destruction) remain a very powerful deterrent. No first use, however, reinforces the firewall between conventional and nuclear war, by formalizing this posture as a matter of policy and ethics.

And it does so in much the same way that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has operated. Since it went into effect in 1997, the CWC has been embraced by almost every nation (there are some 190 signatories at present) and has been a driving force in the destruction of nearly three-fourths of the world's chemical weapons stocks. Similarly, an American embrace of a doctrine of no first use of nukes could breathe fresh life into both arms reduction and nonproliferation efforts. And to those who worry about a nuclear power declaring, but not really making, reductions, a no first use policy, though it may spur decreases, need not reduce arsenals to dangerously low levels. Thus, what Charles DeGaulle once called an "arm-tearing-off" capability could be retained as long as needed, for deterrence.

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This point about a no first use doctrine impelling sizeable reductions in the world's nuclear arsenals has one other major benefit: The fewer nukes there are, the less likely it is that any of them will fall into the hands of a terrorist network. There has never been a "nuclear Napoleon," due to the problem of mutual assured destruction, but if there ever is one he will come from a network. Unlike a nation with its fixed geography and population centers, a globally dispersed network is virtually impossible to target for retaliatory nuclear strikes. So if, say, al Qaeda, were to have even a handful of nukes, its coercive power would be enormous, upending seven decades of strategic thought about the utility of these weapons.

Better, then, that the world's leading power should set the tone now by renouncing first use of nuclear weapons, and following this declaration up with revitalized efforts to reduce existing stocks and prevent any further proliferation of perhaps the very worst weaponry ever conjured by the mind of man.

*John Arquilla is professor of defense analysis at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School, author of *Worst Enemy: The Reluctant Transformation of the American Military*, and co-editor of *Afghan Endgames: Strategy and Policy Choices for America's Longest War*.*

http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/02/19/why_america_reserves_the_right_to_nuke_you_first?page=full

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

Omaha World-Herald

OPINION/Editorial

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

World-Herald Editorial: Prudence Needed in New Nuke Debate

It's been widely reported that President Barack Obama is likely to call for new reductions in the U.S. strategic nuclear arsenal. Recent reports have said a decrease to around 1,000 warheads — down from about 1,700 — is being strongly considered by the administration.

In general, a further decrease in our nation's strategic nuclear inventory could be prudent, but it has to be pursued in a responsible way.

Any reductions would need to be paired with similar reductions negotiated with Russia, and President Obama made a general call for such talks in his State of the Union address. The United States would need to maintain all three legs of the nuclear triad (land-based missiles; bombers; submarines). And the administration should keep its commitment to fund modernization of nuclear-weapons laboratories and other infrastructure to ensure the continued guarantee of deterrent reliability.

Two years ago, the Obama administration pledged to the Senate to maintain the triad and provide the modernization funding. The New York Times has reported that the administration now is considering scaling back that funding.

The promises were made to secure passage of the nuclear accord called New START, which passed the Senate on a 71-26 vote with support from both of Nebraska's U.S. senators at the time, Mike Johanns and Ben Nelson. That treaty, which this newspaper editorially supported, will reduce the number of U.S. strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550 by 2018.

Decreasing the number of U.S. warheads further, to around 1,000, needn't trigger alarm about the strength of the U.S. nuclear capability if the conditions described above are met. Our country needs to maintain a nuclear inventory of sufficient size and reliability to meet our security needs.

The New York Times and the Center for Public Integrity report that the administration is considering trying to negotiate nuclear reductions within the framework of the New START accord, which would mean that new cuts could be implemented without approval of the U.S. Senate. The president's national security adviser, Tom Donilon, is planning to travel to Russia soon to lay the groundwork for new talks.

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Making further nuclear reductions without the concurrence of the Senate seems an unwise approach, however. While it's true that such decreases would likely meet strong Republican opposition, it is also true that nuclear arms agreements traditionally — and rightly — deserve debate in the Senate.

President Obama has sometimes used rhetoric that raises the prospect of achieving, someday, a nuclear-free world. As an abstraction, the goal has appeal and, indeed, is a general goal under the decades-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Act.

But in the real world, we're a very long way from achieving serious global progress toward a planet free of nuclear weaponry. Just last month during the Senate committee hearing before being confirmed as the new secretary of state, John Kerry said the nuclear-free goal is "worth aspiring to, but we'll be lucky if we get there in however many centuries the way we're going."

That said, there are reasonable opportunities to explore further reductions that are compatible with our national security. Just do them sensibly, incrementally, through responsible negotiations, approval by the Senate and common-sense assurances of weapons reliability.

<http://www.omaha.com/article/20130220/NEWS0802/702209959/1677>

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

The National Interest
OPINION/Commentary

Obama Renews Arms-Control Push

By Steven Pifer and Michael O'Hanlon
February 20, 2013

In his State of the Union address, President Obama said that his administration will engage Moscow to seek further reductions in U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, returning to the nuclear arms-reduction agenda that he first laid out in an April 2009 speech in Prague.

The president in Prague called for reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons in U.S. security policy and embraced the goal of a world free of nuclear arms—though he cautioned that much had to happen in order to get to zero. One year later, in April 2010, he recorded his most important arms-control achievement, signing the New START Treaty.

That treaty began its third year of implementation last week. It requires that the United States and Russia each reduce its nuclear forces to no more than 1,550 deployed strategic warheads on no more than seven hundred deployed strategic missiles and bombers. Those limits kick in fully in 2018.

To be sure, New START represents progress. But its levels hardly make sense twenty years after the end of the Cold War.

The president indicated he is prepared to go further. His administration reportedly is considering seeking to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear forces to a level of 1,000-1,100 deployed strategic warheads. That would be a welcome step. It would cut the number of Russian warheads capable of striking America by 30 percent.

At the same time, the lower level would mean that the Pentagon could build and operate fewer strategic systems in the future, which would save precious defense dollars. The U.S. military nevertheless would still maintain a robust triad of missiles on submarines, land-based missiles and bombers that would deter any adversary from attacking the United States or its allies.

The White House reportedly also would like to expand reductions to include all U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons—reserve strategic warheads and tactical (or non-strategic) weapons as well as deployed strategic warheads. That makes sense as the distinction between strategic and non-strategic becomes increasingly blurry.



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At present, New START covers only one-third of the Russian and American arsenals. By constraining all nuclear weapons, a new approach would address the large number of Russian tactical nuclear arms that concern U.S. allies in Europe and Asia. They worry the Senate as well; ratification opponents criticized New START for failing to include tactical weapons.

Limiting all U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons would put Washington and Moscow in a stronger position to insist that any subsequent reductions involve the other nuclear weapons states, most of whose weapons are not strategic.

The Obama administration will face two big challenges in reinvigorating the nuclear agenda. First, how will Moscow respond? The Russians have shown little enthusiasm for further cuts and bear much responsibility for the fact that arms control languished in 2011-2012.

The Russians, however, may have incentives to engage. The U.S. military can with its current force structure easily stay at the New START limits, while the Russian military must build new missiles to do so. Lowering the limits would offer Moscow a chance to save money. Also of interest to the Russians: putting all weapons on the table would mean constraining reserve strategic warheads, where the U.S. military has a significant numerical advantage.

If the Russians engage—admittedly, still an open question—Republicans in the Senate will pose the second big challenge. They are skeptical of arms control in general. The White House and others were surprised by how tough it was to secure ratification of New START. Would Senate Republicans consent to ratification of a new treaty with lower limits? Or would the administration adopt a less formal approach that would obviate the need for Senate approval?

It is not clear whether President Obama's new arms-reduction push will be able to overcome these challenges. In any case, he should test the proposition with the Russians and put this issue at the top of the agenda when national-security advisor Tom Donilon visits Moscow later this month.

If the Russians show interest, long months of hard bargaining will lie ahead. The sides will have to deal with questions—such as verifying limits on nuclear weapons at storage sites—that they have not faced before. Then there might (or might not) be a debate in the Senate. But success would mean that the president could leave a transformational nuclear legacy when he departs office in 2017. More importantly, Americans would be safer and more secure.

*Steven Pifer, director of the Brookings Arms Control Initiative, and Michael O'Hanlon, research director in the Brookings Foreign Policy Program, are co-authors of *The Opportunity: Next Steps in Reducing Nuclear Arms*.*

<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/obama-renews-arms-control-push-8122>

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

AOL Defense
OPINION/Strategy & Policy

Nuclear Weapons Critics Suffer Cold War Brain Freeze; Deterrence Works, Argues Top Air Force Official

By James Blackwell
February 20, 2013

Before his latest State of the Union speech, President Obama was widely reported to be ready to propose a significant reduction in nuclear weapons. Then North Korea conducted a nuclear test the day before the address. (The photo above shows Kim Jong-Un smiling after his country's recent successful ballistic missile test.) In his speech, President Obama only committed the US government to work with Russia to "seek further reductions," though the New York Times said before the speech that the administration aimed to cut as many as 700 of our 1,700 deployed nuclear weapons. One of America's most highly regarded nuclear strategists argues below that nuclear deterrence works. James A. Blackwell, an

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Air Force official, posits that those who argue they are Cold War weapons of such tremendous power as to be unusable are demonstrably wrong.

The Editor.

There is an unsettling paradox in much of the recent debate over nuclear weapons in this country. Some pundits, fixated on purging "Cold War thinking" from those of us with real-world responsibilities for nuclear deterrence, are themselves suffering from thoughts frozen in time. In the midst of this important debate, let me offer some examples of the new strategic concepts emerging from a new generation of deterrence thinkers.

The conventional wisdom is that a world with fewer nuclear weapons is inherently a better world. What we are discovering is that less is not less, less is different.

US policy has led in reducing nuclear weapons. At its peak in 1967, the US stockpile stood at a staggering 31,255 warheads. Just since 1991, we have disassembled more than 13,000 weapons, and in the past decade taken our stockpile – the total number of weapons -- down from 10,526 in 2001 to 5,113 in 2010. Our nuclear weapons and delivery platforms now number an order of magnitude less than during the Cold War, and this policy continues -- creating new conditions in the global nuclear balance.

In this new nuclear environment, potential adversaries are reaching conclusions we did not expect, and our allies and partners are more nervous about it than we want them to be. This new world of several contending nuclear powers behaves differently than the bi-polar world that preceded it.

Deterrence is no longer (if it ever really was) a rational actor systems model; it works as a mental model. It's more like the "hot hand" rule in basketball – players do not keep mental statistics on who has the highest percentage shot for a particular game situation; instead they carry a moving mental image of who at that moment is on a streak and feed the ball to that player instinctively. The same kind of thing happens in crisis and conflict. Behavioral scientists call this "fast, frugal heuristics," and are beginning to explore the empirical dimensions of this 21st century deterrence dynamic.

There are some surprising findings and insights.

First, just because no one has detonated a nuclear weapon in war since 1945, does not mean they are sitting idly by, with little purpose. Nuclear weapons are in fact "used" every day -- not to win a war, but to deter any adversary from thinking they could get away with starting one. As budget pressures rise, many call for not spending more on weapons we cannot use in the kinds of conflicts most likely to occur – presumably counter-terrorism or conventional warfare. But a nuclear war is the conflict we need to make sure remains the least likely to happen.

Second, there is much new research on 21st century deterrence of rogue actors and terrorists. We now know that, during the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Saddam Hussein was persuaded that if he were to order use of chemical weapons against US troops, the US would have responded with tactical nuclear weapons.

Hussein had extensive discussions with his generals – lectures really – and injected that assumption into all their war planning. Such thinking likely resides within the decision-making processes of other states that face a similar calculus. There is merit in reinforcing such fears among others who would harm their neighbors. It turns out that terrorists, even suicide bombers, harbor visceral fears of nuclear weapons, fears that can be exploited to deter them from acting should they ever get one.

Islamic terrorists adhere to the Koran's proscriptions against poisoning the earth with radiological effects and creating mass casualties among the innocent. Cyber and psychological campaigns can broadcast messages across terrorists' own social networks to convey this narrative challenge to terrorists' intent. Terrorist cells also fear failure, so technical sabotage, misinformation and deception can magnify doubt about the prospects for a successful detonation.

Third, US nuclear weapons serve as a powerful instrument of nonproliferation. Post-Cold War experience reveals that others, from Saddam's Iraq, to North Korea, Libya, Iran and others, pursue nuclear weapons as the centerpiece of an asymmetric counter to the United States' conventional military superiority. As every other nuclear power except the U.S. modernizes their nuclear weapons, and as the number of nuclear armed states continues to grow, our allies and

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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partners who rely on our extended deterrent are increasingly motivated to consider obtaining their own nuclear arsenal. We must actively pursue a flexible strategy that allays such concerns among allies.

Some assert that a reliable nuclear deterrent does not require the ability to retaliate immediately, only the assurance that U.S. nuclear forces would survive any attack.

Aside from the fact that none of America's nuclear triad is on "hair-trigger" alert, the reality of fewer nuclear weapons is that we cannot rely solely on a super-survivable second strike nuclear force that deters only by threatening retaliation. Such a posture could readily be perceived as threatening our intent to strike first. We must have a resilient nuclear arsenal that deters a nuclear strike in the first place.

No president would want to ask the American people to ride out a first strike and then trust him to order a retaliatory strike on behalf of the remaining fraction of our population. What the president needs is a nuclear force that would lead no nuclear armed state, faction or terrorist to conclude that it has less to lose by striking us first, even with just one or a few nuclear weapons. We must not give anyone cause to contemplate such a move.

This is a very different form of deterrence than the Cold War. No longer can we rely on the mathematics and purely rational models of nuclear exchange developed in the 20th century. We must understand human perception and decision-making. For 21st century deterrence, the value of first-strike stability is now at least equally important as maintaining an assured retaliation capability. Those of us in the new generation of strategic thinkers have liberated our minds from Cold War thinking to make sure that today, nuclear weapons are never used.

James Blackwell is special advisor to the Air Force's assistant Chief of Staff for strategic deterrence and nuclear integration.

<http://defense.aol.com/2013/02/20/nuclear-weapons-critics-suffer-cold-war-brain-freeze-deterrence/>

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

Foreign Policy
OPINION/National Security

Nuclear Deference

How Obama can convince Moscow he's not out to ruin Russia.

BY DMITRI TRENIN

February 21, 2013

Barack Obama hopes to engage Russia in his effort to continue reducing nuclear armaments. For the president, this is vital for advancing his goal of a world less reliant on nuclear weapons. For Moscow, however, nuclear arms remain the bedrock of military security and a key component of Russia's international status. This does not necessarily doom Obama's approach, but it makes further reduction of U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals contingent on Washington's willingness to consider Moscow's security needs. The United States should examine those requirements in order to understand not only what kind of a deal with Russia is possible, but how Russia's needs relate to its own security interests.

Since the end of the Cold War nearly a quarter century ago, Russia has existed in a heretofore unprecedented strategic environment. For the first time ever, it faces no likelihood of a major war erupting either in the west or in the east that might involve Russia. In another first, there is no threat of a foreign invasion of Russia itself. And, finally, having reconciled itself with the loss of both its outer empire in Eastern Europe and the inner one in what used to be the USSR, Russia has no need to physically control others and no interest in reabsorbing them within a new imperial construct.

Thus, for nearly 20 years following the breakup of the USSR, Moscow could afford to postpone the modernization of its conventional forces, allowing them to decay, while fully relying on its nuclear umbrella. Psychologically, being one of two nuclear superpowers helped the Kremlin overcome the trauma of imperial collapse and state disintegration. As a

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result, Moscow's present concept of a great power is the reverse of the classical one. It aims not so much at dominating others as not being dominated by the stronger powers. Given that the Russian military is no match for the Pentagon -- or soon the PLA -- the Kremlin believes nuclear deterrence is the best way of preserving Russia's strategic independence.

This deterrence operates at both strategic and tactical levels, making up for the huge gap in conventional capabilities between Russia and the leading military powers of the 21st century. Like the United States, Russia, of course, has inherited from the Cold War a nuclear arsenal which was absurdly large, thus allowing for massive reductions under the START and New START treaties -- but now the smaller the numbers have become, the smaller the margin is for further reductions. Russian political and military leaders have also identified three factors which weigh on their strategic calculus and impact policy decisions: the steady U.S. progress in the development of a global missile defense system, the vastly increased capabilities of non-nuclear weapons systems that can perform strategic missions, and the growing Chinese capability to dramatically increase its nuclear arsenal, should Beijing want.

Of course, none of the above, for now, can appreciably devalue Russia's nuclear deterrent, but, looking two decades ahead, each of these factors will become much more important. This means that the United States, if it wants further cuts in nuclear weapons, will need to credibly assure the Russians that U.S. missile defense deployments, while effective against third countries (i.e., Iran), will not diminish Moscow's deterrence power. Washington will also need, when discussing tactical nuclear weapons, to include non-nuclear systems with a capability for precise strikes. Finally, both Washington and Moscow soon need to reach out to Beijing to include it in the process of limiting nuclear arms and enhancing strategic stability. None of these tasks will be easy, but all of them will be necessary if relations among the world's major nuclear powers are to be further stabilized.

Great-power stability is crucial for a number of reasons. One is stopping further nuclear proliferation, mainly in Iran and North Korea, for which Russia and China are key. Moscow's assessment of the pace of Tehran's nuclear program may differ from Washington's, but it has zero interest in a nuclear-armed Iran. Russians might prefer a different way of dealing with Pyongyang than the very uneven U.S. approach to North Korea, but they clearly see the dangers of living next to a country that is constantly testing its nuclear devices and long-range missiles. U.S.-Russian cooperation at the strategic level certainly creates a better prospect for coordinated non-proliferation efforts.

Another issue is regional security. Next year's U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan is ushering in a number of uncertainties in Central and South Asia. In post-American Afghanistan, the Taliban are likely to increase their influence, even as Pakistan and India will compete even more intensely there. Russia's defense policy these days focuses more and more on contingencies along its southern borders, primarily in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Moscow has been trying, with mixed results, to revamp and strengthen the very loose post-Soviet Collective Security Treaty Organization, which it leads, to deal with emergencies in that part of the world. A Eurasian economic union might help, but, to be successful, it will need to stay economic and voluntary. Americans should lose no sleep over it: Moscow's desire, and ability, to impose its will on these partners is small. The Russian empire will continue to rest in peace.

To many U.S. observers, however, Russia's efforts there are virtually indistinguishable from former tsarist and Soviet practices. Yet, the decade-long Chechen war, and the ten-year postwar recovery have resulted in a settlement under which Chechnya exists as a virtual state loosely associated with Russia. It is actually more stable and more prosperous today than other republics in the Russian North Caucasus. As to Georgia, Russia's military response to President Saakashvili's 2008 reckless attack in South Ossetia was strong, but also measured: Despite the popular belief in the West, Tbilisi controls almost as much territory today -- with very minor exceptions -- as it did before the war. Both South Ossetia and Abkhazia broke away from Georgia and proclaimed independence in the early 1990s, although now, unlike before the war, they also host regular Russian forces. For the foreseeable future, both places are de facto Russian military protectorates. The United States and virtually every other country support Georgia's territorial sovereignty, so the conflict will only be resolved politically. Until then, it will remain safely frozen.

Moscow's biggest benefit from Obama's foreign policy reset has been his downplaying of the NATO option for Georgia and Ukraine. Since then, the domestic changes in Kiev and, more recently, in Tbilisi have de-emphasized the NATO

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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accession option even more. Russian policymakers and strategic planners feel relieved: They no longer have to account for the possibility of U.S. power projection too close to their borders. In the South Caucasus, they are happy to leave Georgia to deal with its own problems, and only worry that the long but uneasy truce between the Azeris and the Armenians in Nagorny Karabakh may be broken. As Erevan's formal military ally with forces on the ground, and Baku's economic partner, Moscow has a stake in keeping the situation under control -- an interest shared by Washington.

The NATO enlargement specter out of the picture, Ukraine has remained an economic and geopolitical issue to Russia, but it has ceased to be a military one. The Baltic states may be perennially worried about their big neighbor, and some Swedes may implicitly use Russia as an argument in favor of increasing defense expenditures, but Europe has ceased to be a priority for Moscow's strategists. Their only significant new activity along the western axis has been the announced deployment of missile defenses to counter NATO's system -- in the wake of a failure, so far, to reach an agreement with the United States on the issue. In the best possible scenario, U.S./NATO and Russian defenses can be operationally coordinated -- with the Western system, while effective against third-country missiles, having no capability against the Russian nuclear deterrent. A formal treaty to this effect is not necessary, but a high degree of mutual openness is. If this were achieved during Obama's second term, it would amount to a real game-changer in U.S.-Russian strategic relations, phasing out residual adversity now rooted in mutual mistrust and allowing collaboration to gradually prevail.

Finally, as Russia's military reform progresses and its force modernization continues, Moscow may become a more equitable partner to the Pentagon in a number of areas, from search and rescue in the Arctic, to fighting pirates off the African coast, to anti-narcotics operations in Afghanistan. The United States may indeed appreciate a solid working relationship with a country that, while being vociferously independent and straight-talking, is no longer expansionist and ideological. Americans should kick the habit of seeing mainly through the prism of its past experience with the Soviet Union, or through the optics of Russia's domestic developments alone. Obama's nuclear bid, to be successful, requires an updated and comprehensive look at Russia.

Dmitri Trenin is director of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
OPINION/Interview
February 22, 2013

(Yonhap Interview) Former U.S. Commander Says N. Korea Could Build ICBM in 5-7 Years

By Kim Eun-jung

SEOUL, Feb. 22 (Yonhap) -- North Korea may be able to develop nuclear-tipped long-range missiles capable of reaching the U.S. mainland in less than a decade if the country keeps up its nuclear ambitions, a former U.S. military commander in South Korea said Friday.

"If North Korea continues its military first policy and continues to put its full effort into nuclear missile development, it is my assessment that it could develop an operational ICBM capable of targeting the United States in the next five to seven years," Ret. Gen. Burwell Bell said in an email interview with Yonhap News Agency.

North Korea, defying international warnings, conducted its third nuclear test on Feb. 12, two months after its long-range rocket launch. Many now wonder whether the isolated communist nation has mastered the technology to build a small warhead to be mounted on a long-range missile capable of hitting the U.S.

Bell, who served as commander of the U.S. Forces in South Korea from 2006-2008, said he believes that North Korea can be a full-blown nuclear and missile developer within a decade.



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Although it remains largely unclear whether Pyongyang used a uranium-based device for its latest test, Bell said the North is rapidly nearing its goal of developing nuclear weapons "capable of massive destruction of civilian and military targets."

"North Korea's military-first policy will remain one of the largest threats to regional and world peace," he said.

In the face of increasing North Korean threats, Bell said South Korea and the United States should further solidify their alliance. About 28,500 U.S. troops are currently stationed in South Korea as a deterrent against the North.

As a tit-for-tat response to the North's nuclear weapons development, some call for re-deployment of U.S. tactical nuclear bombs to South Korea that were withdrawn when the two Koreas signed a deal in 1992, pledging to make the Korean Peninsula nuclear-free.

Bell dismissed as counterproductive such a call for re-deployment of nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula, saying that a U.S. nuclear umbrella is enough for South Korea to defend itself against the North.

"From a military perspective, it is not necessary for tactical nuclear weapons to be placed on the Korean Peninsula for America's nuclear umbrella to be militarily effective," Bell said. "United States delivery systems from off-shore military platforms can easily place small and precise nuclear weapons onto any desired target in North Korea."

However, if Seoul does request Washington to re-deploy nuclear weapons to the Korean Peninsula, the U.S. government should consider it in a "very serious and thoughtful (manner)," he said.

Bell also said the two allies should not rule out any options, including a "preemptive strike," to prevent Pyongyang from making any attempt to use its nuclear weapons.

"Failure to have such a plan would amount to dereliction of duty," he added.

Military and security officials in Seoul worry the North may launch provocations using mobile missiles, called KN-08 missiles, which are installed on the Transporter-Erector-Launcher (TEL), as they can be easily hidden from satellites.

The KN-08 missiles, which were first shown in a military parade in Pyongyang in April last year, have prompted outside military experts to reassess the North's missile capabilities. The focus of such a review is now on whether the North's missile technology is improving at a pace that could pose a new challenge.

Bell said the KN-08 and its carrier have not yet been operationally deployed, but the fact that the missile carrier TEL was apparently imported from China, the North's last remaining major ally, is "a very disturbing issue."

"It indicates that China continues to provide technology and capability for the North to threaten its neighbors and indeed the world," he said. "China should be harshly condemned for assisting North Korea in advancing its capability to destabilize the region and threaten its neighbors."

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

Issue No. 1046, 22 February 2013

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