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Ha'aretz Daily News – Israel

Iran Will Promise UN Not to Seek Nuclear Bomb, Semi-Official Agency Reports

Iran's semi-official Mehr news agency quotes Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi as saying that Tehran plans to submit a written promise to that effect, but does not say when; In 2005 Ayatollah Khamenei issued a religious edict 'banning production, storage and use of nuclear weapons'.

By The Associated Press

March 12, 2013

Iran plans to submit a written promise to the United Nations that it will not seek nuclear weapons, the semi-official Mehr news agency said Tuesday.

"Iran plans to declare in the UN that it will never go after nuclear bombs," the agency quoted Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi as saying. Rahimi did not say when the promise would be delivered.

Rahimi charged that Western actions of late aim to thwart Iran's "scientific progress" referring to the several rounds of sanctions aimed at the nuclear program, that have impacted heavily on Iran's economy.

Iran has repeatedly denied West suspicions that it is pursuing weapons construction under cover of its nuclear program.

In 2005, Iran's top leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issued a religious edict "banning production, storage and use of nuclear weapons".

The United States warned Iran last week that that it faces further international isolation and pressure if it fails to address United Nations nuclear watchdog concerns about its atomic activity, which the West fears has a military purpose.

In a hard-hitting statement delivered at a board meeting of the UN International Atomic Energy Agency, U.S. envoy Joseph Macmanus accused Iran of "provocative actions", singling out the recent installation of advanced uranium enrichment centrifuges.

"We are deeply concerned with what appears to be Iran's unwavering commitment to deception, defiance, and delay," Macmanus told the IAEA's board of governors, according to a copy of his speech at the closed-door session.

Western countries fear Iran is enriching uranium to develop the capacity to build nuclear weapons and have led several rounds of international sanctions, while Iran says the program is legitimate and intended for purely peaceful purposes.

The Vienna-based IAEA has been trying for more than a year to persuade Iran to give it access to sites, documents and officials as part of a stalled investigation into suspected atom bomb research by the Islamic state.

Iran has in particular refused IAEA requests to visit the Parchin military site, where inspectors suspect explosives tests relevant for nuclear arms development took place, possibly a decade ago.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/iran-will-promise-un-not-to-seek-nuclear-bomb-semi-official-agency-reports-1.508942>

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

Syria Plans to Use Chemical Arms: Israel

Thursday, 14 March 2013

By Al Arabiya with Agencies



Israel's military intelligence chief on Thursday said the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has contingency plans to use chemical weapons as it battles insurgents.

Speaking at Israel's annual Herzliya Conference on security and policy, Major General Avi Kohavi said Assad was still in control of his stockpile of chemical weapons, which the Jewish state fears could fall into the hands of militants.

"Assad is making advance preparations to use chemical weapons. He did not give the order yet, but is preparing for it," he told delegates, while stressing that the Syrian leader was still in control of Damascus's chemical stockpiles, military hardware and the air force.

Addressing the same conference earlier this week, army Chief Benny Gantz warned that "terrorist" groups fighting alongside insurgents seeking to bring down the Assad regime were becoming stronger.

"The situation in Syria has become exceptionally dangerous. The terrorist organizations are becoming stronger on the ground. Now they are fighting against Assad but in the future they could turn against us," Gantz said.

Several radical Islamist groups have joined the two-year uprising against Assad, with al-Nusra Front being the most prominent.

Kohavi also said Assad's collapse would harm his allies, Iran and Lebanon's powerful Hezbollah militant group.

When Assad falls, Iran "will lose the ability to transfer weaponry through Syria to Hezbollah," he said.

"Iran and Hezbollah are both doing all in their power to assist Assad's regime. They support Assad operationally on the ground, with strategic consultation, intelligence, weapons," the intelligence chief told delegates.

"They are establishing a popular army trained by Hezbollah and financed by Iran, currently consisting of 50,000 men, with plans to increase to 100,000," he said.

"Iran and Hezbollah are also preparing for the day after Assad's fall, when they will use this army to protect their assets and interest in Syria."

The United States and its allies are trying to keep close track of Syria's arsenal of suspected chemical and biological warfare agents. U.S. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper noted on Tuesday, U.S. intelligence agencies' concern that Assad's government "might be prepared to use chemical weapons" against his own people and that outside groups could gain access to them.

He added that Iran is doing what it can to prop up Assad's government, through aid and training, despite being weakened by international sanctions seeking to keep Tehran from developing nuclear weapons capability.

"Iran continues to be a destabilizing force in the region providing weapons and training to Syrian forces and standing up a militia force there to fight the Syrian opposition," Clapper said, with the goal of having at least a foothold in Syria even if Assad falls.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/2013/03/14/Syria-plans-to-use-chemical-arms-Israel-intel-chief-.html>

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Al Jazeera – U.A.E.

Obama: Iran Nuclear Bomb 'Over a Year' Away

US president tells Israeli TV channel that the US will not wait until the last minute to stop alleged weapons programme.

15 March 2013

Source: Agencies

Iran is "over a year or so" from getting a nuclear bomb, US President Barack Obama has told an Israeli television channel, a week before visiting Israel, warning that a military option remained on the table.



In an interview with Channel 2 on Thursday, Obama laid out a clear timeline for Tehran to acquire a military nuclear capacity, while insisting that Washington would not wait until the last minute to take action to stop it.

"We think that it would take over a year or so for Iran to actually develop a nuclear weapon, but obviously, we don't want to cut it too close," he told the private station.

Obama is due to arrive in Israel on March 20 for a three-day visit, his first since being elected president in 2008. He will also travel to the Palestinian territories.

Addressing the UN in September, Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, set a "red line" of spring or summer for when Iran would be close to weapons capability, suggesting prospects for an Israeli attack around that time.

But Iran's latest talks with world powers, plus adjustments in Tehran's uranium enrichment processes, are widely thought to have pushed back that deadline.

'Significant capabilities'

Should diplomacy fail, all options remained "on the table" for stopping Iran, Obama said.

"My message to [Netanyahu] will be the same as before: if we can resolve it diplomatically, that's a more lasting solution," he said.

"But if not, I continue to keep all options on the table."

Asked if there was a realistic option that he would order an attack on Iran's nuclear sites, he said: "When I say that all options are on the table, all options are on the table and the United States obviously has significant capabilities.

"But our goal here is to make sure that Iran does not possess a nuclear weapon that could threaten Israel or could trigger an arms race in the region - that would be extraordinarily dangerous at a time when obviously there are already a lot of things going on," he said.

Washington, Israel and much of the West believe that Iran's nuclear programme of uranium enrichment is a cover for a weapons drive, a charge denied by Tehran.

Netanyahu has said the question of Iran would be a top priority in his talks with Obama in Jerusalem.

Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons but has never confirmed or denied this.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/americas/2013/03/201331561410121887.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

March 9, 2013

N. Korea Slams U.N. Resolution, Vows Nuclear Buildup

SEOUL, March 9 (Yonhap) -- Flaring up already heightened tension on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea slammed tougher sanctions against its nuclear test and continued ramping up war rhetoric on Saturday.

An unidentified spokesman for the North's foreign ministry denounced the U.N. Security Council's toughened sanctions to punish the North's third nuclear test, calling them "clear proof" that the U.N. is "abused" by the United States that aims to bring down the Pyongyang regime "by disarming and suffocating it economically."

The U.N. Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2094 on Friday (Eastern Standard Time), which is aimed at punishing the North for carrying out an underground nuclear test on Feb. 12. The blast came two months after it carried out a banned long-range rocket launch.



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"The DPRK vehemently denounces and totally rejects the resolution on sanctions against the DPRK, a product of the U.S. hostile policy toward it," said the spokesman in the statement published by the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Bristled at the international move, the North on Friday threatened that it will sever its emergency hotline with Seoul and nullify non-aggression agreements between the two countries.

Reiterating its long-standing argument that rocket launches and nuclear tests aim to "defend its sovereignty and vital rights," the North warned that the resolution will "only result in bolstering of its nuclear deterrent qualitatively and quantitatively."

Vowing to take "stronger countermeasures in succession and a great war for national reunification," Pyongyang also said it will "reinforce (itself) as a nuclear weapons state and satellite launcher" in response to the U.N. resolution.

In a separate statement, the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland lodged fresh threats against the South and its Defense Minister nominee Kim Byung-kwan who, during his parliamentary confirmation hearing, said the country will counter any attacks by the North in a way that will either "change or topple" the North Korean regime.

"We have already made it clear that we will not forgive anyone who attacks our sovereignty and assume any such move as a declaration of war and take stern measures," said the statement, also carried by the KCNA.

"The South's warmongers must immediately apologize for their reckless remarks and keep in mind they will be the first target for elimination in a unification war if they continue to behave provocatively," it added.

Also on Saturday, the North's Cabinet newspaper Minju Joson warned the U.S. of facing "deadly blows that it had never experienced" for staging the joint military exercises with South Korea.

Calling the exercises "nuclear war maneuvers and the most disguised military provocation to mount a preemptive strike at it," the paper said North Korea will "fight a real war" with the U.S, according to a separate KCNA report, monitored in Seoul.

"We have already taken up posture for an all-out action according to the operational plan finally signed by Supreme Commander Kim Jong-un to annihilate the enemies," it said, adding the action aims to "defend the sovereignty and dignity of the country."

The two-month joint South Korea-U.S. field training exercise Foal Eagle kicked off last week and computer-simulated drills known as Key Resolve will be held from March 11-21. The South has said the joint war drills are only defensive in nature.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/03/09/56/0301000000AEN20130309001252315F.HTML>

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South China Morning Post – Hong Kong, China

Seoul and Tokyo Look to Balance the Nuclear Arms Game with Pyongyang

Pyongyang's third atomic test is prompting nervous Seoul and Tokyo to reconsider their stances towards developing nuclear weapons

Sunday, 10 March, 2013

By Greg Torode, Chief Asia correspondent

In Beijing, some officials and scholars refer to it as the "n-word" - the threat of Japan and South Korea pursuing their own nuclear weapons programme to counter North Korea's intensifying atomic bad behaviour.

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While an expanded missile defence system among US allies may be a more immediate Beijing fear as a result of Pyongyang's recalcitrance, an evolving nuclear debate in both Seoul and Tokyo is not being blithely disregarded.

Professor Zha Daojiong, international relations scholar at Peking University, warned the situation was now "rather fluid".

"Those debates are significant in the sense both Tokyo and Seoul appear to be flagging their options and testing reactions," he said.

"The reactions of value are not so much what comes out of Pyongyang, but rather Washington, DC. The US is most likely going to reassure each of the two of its treaty allies of the reliability of its nuclear umbrella. But it remains to be seen how much influence it really has on de facto preparations in Seoul and Tokyo."

The message is not lost in Washington.

As some security scholars such as Rory Medcalf of Australia's Lowy Institute have noted, the White House was unusually explicit as it detailed US President Barack Obama's call to Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe soon after the third North Korean nuclear test on February 12.

"President Obama reaffirmed that the United States remains steadfast in its defence commitments to Japan, including the extended deterrence offered by the US nuclear umbrella," the White House statement said.

Medcalf wrote this week that the use of the words "nuclear umbrella" would usually be termed more euphemistically - "something like 'all means'."

"This is a grim reminder that, deep down, the security of Asia rests on American capability - and presumed willingness - to use nuclear threats or force in an extreme crisis," he noted.

Two years earlier, the Obama administration went to extensive efforts to take into account both Japanese and South Korean concerns as it launched cutbacks in its nuclear arsenals as part of the 2010 nuclear posture review - cuts which were eased to sooth Seoul and Tokyo. Such overt attempts at US reassurance, however, have yet to thwart a lively debate on nuclear weapons needs, particularly in Seoul.

Elements of the Japanese right-wing - including prominent members of the Liberal Democratic Party, which recently returned to power - have long pondered the need for Japan to drop its official non-nuclear policy for "defensive" purposes. The hawkishness has also been fed by recent Sino-Japanese tensions over the disputed Diaoyu islands. The long-term prospect of a nuclear Japan is in part feeding debates across conservative security elites in South Korea.

Pro-nuke lawmakers from the ruling conservative Saenuri Party played the nuclear card during a National Assembly meeting late last month amid reports of further and larger tests by North Korea.

"The only way to defend our survival would be to maintain a balance of terror that confronts nuclear with nuclear," Representative Shim Jae-chol told his counterparts, according to the *JoongAng Ilbo*.

Chosun Ilbo commentator Chung Kweon-hyun, meanwhile, pointed to Japanese advances as well as domestic surveys showing increased support for a South Korean nuclear programme.

"South Koreans must have the courage to publicly discuss the prospect of the country acquiring nuclear weapons," he wrote. "This will give it strength over the long term to suppress North Korea's and Japan's nuclear ambitions."

Such an environment has prompted the US ambassador to Seoul to take a far bolder line than the White House. Ambassador Sung Kim warned that South Korea's steps towards developing its own nuclear weapons - or the US putting back in place the tactical nuclear weapons it removed from South Korea in 1991 - would be a "huge mistake".

Underpinning the hot talk, of course, is the fact that the conceptual thinking behind nuclear weapons development is hardly foreign to South Korea and Japan. Both have a technologically advanced industrial base and both have

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established nuclear energy programmes. Japan, too, has stocks of weapons grade plutonium - stocks only due to rise when a controversial plant that re-processes spent uranium at Rokkasho comes into production later this year.

Japanese officials privately acknowledge a surge in questions from both foreign diplomats and local legislators about Japan's latent weapons potential. They find themselves parroting the conventional wisdom that, theoretically, Japan could probably develop such a capability within a year.

However, many analysts have long noted that far more time would be needed to turn a basic weapon into a credible, longer-term threat - including the potential need for entirely new fleets of ballistic missile submarines and strategic bombers.

Then there are the strict safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency on its current domestic energy facilities, including Rokkasho.

As a survey for the non-partisan US Congressional Research Service stated in a 2009 report on Japan's nuclear potential: "Japan seems to have intentionally built its nuclear programme so it would not be ideal for military use, in compliance with Japanese law."

South Korea would be starting from a slightly lower base. Just as Japan reportedly embarked on a clandestine study of nuclear weapons development in the 1960s, South Korea set up its own secret programme in the mid-1970s under the iron-fisted presidency of Park Chung-hee.

A 2011 survey of de-classified CIA documents published in Global Asia magazine suggest Park's effort was more extensive than was previously thought, running for two years longer than the US had believed. South Korea was particularly active in the period from 1976 to 1978 - a time of considerable uncertainty amid North Korean aggression - including the assassination of Park's wife - and doubts about the commitment of then-US President Jimmy Carter. It was eventually shut down following Park's assassination in 1979.

Beyond the technology, of course, is the immense political and diplomatic baggage. Any such move - secret or otherwise - would be laced with difficult ironies. South Korea and, particularly, Japan are key players in the international nuclear non-proliferation efforts.

South Korea hosted the 2012 Nuclear Security Summit and preaches the need for a de-nuclearised Korean peninsula while Japan has, of course, a pacifist constitution and its once-vaunted "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" - a pledge against the manufacture, possession or importation of nuclear weapons. Its moral position is buttressed by the fact it is the only nation to suffer a nuclear attack - the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of the second world war.

There would also be considerable risks.

The authors of the Global Asia report, Peter Hayes and Moon Chung-in, warn that keeping a weapons programme truly secret proved a failure in the 1970s and would be much more difficult now.

"South Korean proliferation today would make it far more difficult to negotiate the de-nuclearisation of North Korea. An inter-Korean nuclear arms race would almost certainly lead to a new Cold War in the region involving China and Japan."

Dr Michael Green, a former White House adviser on Asia and now an expert at Washington's independent Centre for Strategic and International Studies, addressed the dangers this week.

"Both countries have the technology to have a weapon in a short time," he said of Japan and South Korea. "But not without the US finding out and not without enormous risk to their overall security situation."

This article first appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition on Mar 10, 2013 as Balancing the nuclear game.

<http://www.scmp.com/news/asia/article/1187309/seoul-and-tokyo-look-balance-nuclear-arms-game-pyongyang>

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RT (Russia Today) – Russia

North Korea Scraps Armistice, Cuts Hotline with South Following Threats

March 11, 2013

Pyongyang has nullified the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War, also cutting a communication hotline with the South on Monday. US-South Korean military drills and fresh UN sanctions against North Korea were cited as reasons for the move.

The Korean armistice agreement has been *“scrapped completely,”* North Korea’s ruling party official newspaper said on Monday, citing a senior military spokesman.

There was no formal announcement confirming the report, nor has the North Korean government openly declared its hotline with the South cut.

But according to Seoul’s Unification Ministry, attempts to contact the North by telephone at 9am failed. The hotline is used to communicate between Seoul and Pyongyang, which do not have diplomatic relations.

The news comes after the communist state said last week it was ending all non-aggression pacts with South Korea and threatened to sever a hotline with UN forces in the South, at the border truce village of Pammunjom.

On Sunday Pyongyang threatened all-out nuclear war with the US and South Korea as the two countries started joint military drills on Monday. The military exercise involves 10,000 South Korean and 3,500 American troops and will continue until the end of April.

“Our front-line military groups, the army, the navy and the air force, the anti-aircraft units and the strategic rocket units, who have entered the final all-out war stage, are awaiting the final order to strike,” Yonhap reported, quoting North Korean media.

North Korean government has repeatedly asked for the South-Korea-US drills to be halted, claiming they are a preparation for invasion. Pyongyang wants security guarantees and US troops to be removed from South Korea.

North Korea’s demands also include its recognition as a nuclear weapons state and direct talks with Washington. However, the Obama administration views such demands as contradictory.

“The United States will not accept North Korea as a nuclear state,” the US president’s national security adviser Tom Donilon said on Monday, adding that his country won’t *“stand by while it seeks to develop a nuclear-armed missile that can target the United States.”*

Washington is willing to negotiate with North Korea, but only if it takes some *“meaningful steps”* to meet international obligations first, the US senior official said.

On Friday, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution expanding sanctions against North Korea tightening financial restrictions and cargo inspections against Pyongyang. The document, drafted by the US and China, was a response to Pyongyang’s third nuclear test.

The resolution passed by the UN Security Council on Friday is the fifth of its kind since 2006, when the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) conducted its first nuclear test.

<http://rt.com/news/north-korea-cuts-hotline-070/>

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

N.Korea Nuclear Strike only If Survival Threatened: US

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12 March 2013

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

North Korea would likely only use nuclear weapons if it perceived a threat to its survival, but the United States remains uncertain how Pyongyang would define such a threat, the US intelligence chief said Tuesday.

"Although we assess with low confidence that the North would only attempt to use nuclear weapons against US forces or allies to preserve the Kim (Jong-Un) regime, we do not know what would constitute, from the North's perspective, crossing that threshold," James Clapper, director of national intelligence, said in an annual report to Congress on global security threats.

But the United States faces a challenge trying to discern North Korea's strategic calculations when it comes to its nuclear weapons.

"We do not know Pyongyang's nuclear doctrine or employment concepts," the report said.

North Korea leader Kim Jong-Un has threatened to "wipe out" a South Korean island amid fresh international pressure and new sanctions over the North's nuclear weapons and missile tests.

While much of the North's rhetoric has been dismissed as bluster, the latest threat to the border island of Baengnyeong, which has around 5,000 civilian residents, appears credible, analysts say.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/340141/n-korea-nuclear-strike-only-if-survival-threatened-us>

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Space Daily.com

Too Late to Determine N.Korea Nuclear Device: Monitors

By Staff Writers

Vienna, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

March 13, 2013

It is likely too late to determine what kind of fissile material North Korea used in its latest nuclear test, since no radioactive traces have been detected, an international monitoring group said Wednesday.

"It is very unlikely that we will register anything... at this late stage," said Annika Thunborg, a spokeswoman for the Vienna-based Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO).

The body collects data from monitoring stations around the world detecting seismic activity and monitoring the atmosphere for radioactive particles or noble gases that may escape from an underground nuclear explosion.

The detection of so-called radionuclides can take several weeks. A station in Canada detected the radioactive noble gas xenon 133 two weeks after North Korea's first nuclear test in 2006, for example, but none was detected after its 2009 explosion.

North Korea used plutonium in 2006 and 2009 and any discovery that it used highly enriched uranium for its third test on February 12 would mark a significant technological step for the impoverished and unpredictable regime in Pyongyang.

It would also raise international concerns that North Korea might pass on weapons-grade uranium, or the necessary technology and knowhow to make it, to other "rogue states" or "terrorists" seeking to make crude nuclear explosive devices.

The North has substantial deposits of uranium ore and it is much easier secretly to enrich uranium in centrifuges rather than producing plutonium in a nuclear reactor. Weapons-grade uranium is also significantly easier and safer to smuggle than plutonium.

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http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Too_late_to_determine_NKorea_nuclear_device_monitors_999.html

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
March 14, 2013

N. Korea Blasts S. Korean Calls for Nuke Capability as Threat to Korean People

SEOUL, March 14 (Yonhap) -- North Korea on Thursday blasted calls by some South Koreans for the country to develop independent nuclear deterrence, saying it is a move that will threaten the future of the Korean people.

The Rodong Sinmun, an organ of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea, said in an article titled "revealing the true nature of nuclear criminals" that Seoul has been engaged in a clandestine atomic weapons development from the 1960s onward, and even tried to build nuclear powered submarines.

The attacks come as some conservative lawmakers, scholars and civic groups have demanded Seoul protect itself by building its own nuclear deterrence capability to counter North Korea's WMD threat.

The paper said the South has been arguing it is only carrying out experiments and generating power on its research and commercial reactors, but said that such claims are only attempts at hiding the truth.

The newspaper, in addition, accused Rep. Chung Mong-joon, a seven-term lawmaker and former head of the ruling Saenuri Party, of being a "malicious confrontationist" and claimed that if the warmongers in Seoul acquired weapons of mass destruction (WMD) it would lead to a nuclear holocaust for all Koreans.

Chung and several Saenuri lawmakers demanded a revision in Seoul's nuclear policy, but the new Park Geun-hye administration and top military policymakers have said such a step does not help the country's cause and could actually complicate efforts to get Pyongyang to abandon its nuclear weapons buildup.

The North detonated a nuclear device on Feb. 12 in defiance of warnings issued by the international community. The latest provocation comes after the communist country tested nuclear devices in 2006 and 2009, and has test-fired five long-range rockets since 1998.

The Rodong Sinmun's latest article comes after another report published on Monday accusing the United States of having deployed various types of nuclear weapons in South Korea since the 1950s and using them to threaten the North for decades. It then claimed that because of the threats posed, the North's own nuclear tests are justifiable as being defensive in nature.

The paper, meanwhile, did not touch on the fact that Seoul has abandoned its nuclear weapons program carried out in the 1970s and that the United States has pulled out all of its tactical nuclear weapons from the country after North and South Korea agreed to a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula in the early 1990s.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/03/14/82/0401000000AEN20130314011400315F.HTML>

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

N. Korea 'Likely' to Launch Attack on South this Year

15 March 2013

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

North Korea is likely to launch a provocative attack on South Korea this year, a top analyst said Thursday at the launch of his think tank's annual report on the world's military capabilities.



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The International Institute for Strategic Studies said North Korea's "military first" doctrine remained clearly intact under youthful leader Kim Jong-Un.

Mark Fitzpatrick, director of the London-based IISS's non-proliferation and disarmament programme, said world powers were increasingly concerned about the threat emanating from Pyongyang.

"North Korea presents a significant threat because it has ballistic missiles that can hit Japan and all of Korea," he told AFP.

"It has nuclear devices that it may or may not be able to put on the warheads of those missiles.

"It combines that with a rhetoric that has exceeded all dimensions and a propensity to fire first."

While firing first in the next few weeks would be "dangerous" due to the ongoing US-South Korea joint military exercises, "over the course of the year, most analysts do think that North Korea will follow through with some sort of provocation," said Fitzpatrick.

He said the risk of escalation from there was "serious" because South Korea feels the need to establish deterrence credibility.

The next time North Korea attacks, "it's pretty clear that South Korea is going to respond... and where it goes from there is anyone's guess."

However, North Korea would probably not want to trigger a fully-fledged war because it would inevitably mean the end of their regime due to the huge advantage held by South Korea and the United States.

North Korea confirmed Wednesday that it had shredded the 60-year-old armistice ending the Korean War, and warned that the next step was an act of "merciless" military retaliation against its enemies.

Military tensions on the Korean peninsula are at their highest level for years.

Meanwhile China is "very nervous and angry" at Pyongyang and its support for its neighbour has diminished in the past year, Fitzpatrick said.

While Beijing wants to maintain a buffer state, he doubted that they would side militarily with them in a conflict.

"They would try to do everything they can to avoid it coming to such circumstances," he said.

"There's realisation that the Korean peninsula is probably the place in the world that is most likely to erupt into a full-scale conflict that could involve nuclear weapons.

"North Korea's nuclear tests really do up the ante on the tinderbox situation."

The IISS's annual "Military Balance" report said North Korea had continued its efforts to develop its nuclear weapons capability and its closely-related long-range missile arsenal in 2012.

Last year saw nominal Asian defence spending overtake that of European NATO states for the first time.

China now spends more on defence than neighbouring Japan, South Korea and Taiwan combined, the report said.

If the 15 percent average annual increases in China's official defence spending seen over the past decade continue, Chinese defence outlays could rival US base defence budget spending by 2025 at the latest.

Meanwhile the IISS considers the risk of a conflict between China and Japan over disputed islands in the East China Sea as very unlikely, though the spat will lead to direct military competition between the two states and cause destabilisation within the region.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/asia/340594/n-korea-likely-to-launch-attack-on-south-this-year>

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Times of India – India

7 Years in Making, Cruise Missile Fails Test

By Rajat Pandit, Tamil News Network (TNN)

March 13, 2013

NEW DELHI: The much-hyped stealth 'Nirbhay' cruise missile, in the making for at least seven years now, failed in its maiden test on Tuesday. The over 1,000-km range missile, which can carry nuclear warheads, in fact, had to be destroyed in mid-air after it deviated from its flight path along the coast in Bay of Bengal.

However, DRDO took pains to emphasize that the first test of Nirbhay (fearless) — touted to be in the same class as the famous American Tomahawk missiles and an effective answer to Pakistan's Babur land-attack cruise missile (LACM) — was not an abject failure.

"The missile was successfully launched from the Chandipur launch complex off the Odisha coast around 11.50 am. It met the basic mission objectives successfully. After travelling approximately midway, deviations were observed from its intended course at a waypoint. The missile was then put in the self-destruct mode to ensure coastal safety," a DRDO source said.

"The missile flew for around 200 km, proving 90% of the critical technologies. We will analyze what went wrong, undertake corrective action and then conduct another test," he added.

All this does not detract from the fact that the failure of the sub-sonic missile, which flies at 0.6 to 0.7 Mach, is a serious setback to India's ambition to soon brandish a long-range, nuclear-capable LACM.

The strike range of the already-inducted BrahMos cruise missile, while supersonic with a speed of Mach 2.8, is just about 300 km. Moreover, neither is BrahMos as "highly-maneuverable" as Nirbhay is designed to be, nor can it "loiter" before homing into the target.

But on Tuesday, the two-stage Nirbhay, which was being tracked by radars, warships and even a Sukhoi-30MKI fighter, developed snags in its "inertial navigation and control systems" just over 15 minutes after being launched from a road-mobile launcher.

The armed forces have been demanding nuclear-tipped LACMs, with strike ranges over 1,500 km, for a long time. While ballistic missiles like the Agni follow a parabolic trajectory, terrain-hugging cruise missiles do not leave the atmosphere and are powered and guided throughout their flight path.

Capable of evading enemy radars and air defence systems since they fly at low altitudes, even at tree-top level, cruise missiles are also much cheaper as well as more accurate and easier to operate than ballistic missiles.

Nirbhay, which deploys wings and tail fins to fly like an aircraft after being initially launched with the help of a solid-propellant booster rocket engine, has been designed to be a "universal missile" like Brahmos. That is, it's capable of being fired from land, air, warships and submarines.

"Since Nirbhay flies at a slow speed at low altitudes, enemy radars can mistake it for a bird over land or a wave over sea. After separation of the booster motor, the main missile flies like an unmanned aircraft... it can fly at tree-top level and maneuver around hills," the DRDO source said.

A military officer, however, said, "Nirbhay still has a lot of foreign components... its turbofan, for instance, is imported. It's still five-six years away from becoming fully operational."

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/7-years-in-making-cruise-missile-fails-test/articleshow/18941384.cms>

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Russia & India Report – India



India, Russia in Talks over another Nuclear Submarine

After the Nerpa or INS Chakra, the partly-completed Project 971 vessel would be the Indian Navy's second nuclear submarine from Russia.

March 14, 2013

RIA Novosti

India is in talks with Russia to finance the completion of a nuclear submarine for the Indian Navy, a senior Russian military official told RIA Novosti on Tuesday. After the Nerpa, which is being leased by India, the partly-completed Project 971 (Class Schuka-B) vessel would be the Indian Navy's second nuclear submarine.

In 2012, Russia leased out the Nerpa (now called the INS Chakra) to India for a 10-year period for \$930 million. Thanks to India's financial support, the submarine was completed at the Amur shipyard and then leased to the national navy.

"India has expressed interest in completing the next vessel. The robust hull of the second sub is ready and waiting on the stocks of the Amur plant. It is being well looked after," said the military spokesman. At the same time, he stressed that the completion of the second nuclear submarine requires an inter-governmental agreement between India and Russia. "The issue is being worked out. As in the first case, it might be leased out, not sold," said the source for RIA Novosti.

India has yet to comment on the matter publicly.

The Nerpa belongs to the third generation of submarines. It was berthed at the Amur shipyard in Komsomolsk-na-Amure in 1991. However, in the mid 1990s, funding was frozen and the vessel could only be completed with India's assistance.

The submarine has a displacement of 8140/12770 metric tonnes, a top speed of 30 knots, a maximum depth of 600 metres, an endurance of 100 days, a crew of 73 people, and is armed with four 533-mm torpedo launchers.

With the lease of the Nerpa, India became the sixth operator of nuclear submarines in the world, after the United States, Russia, France, Britain and China.

India's domestically-designed INS Arihant nuclear submarine is expected to be ready for operational deployment this year after final sea trials.

http://indrus.in/economics/2013/03/14/india_russia_in_talks_over_another_nuclear_submarine_22925.html

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The Hill

Dempsey "Committed" to Missile Defense Deal with Russia

By Carlo Muñoz

March 8, 2013

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey remains "committed" to finding common ground with his Russian counterparts on ballistic missile defense, and will carry that message to Moscow during an upcoming visit to the region.

Dempsey will meet with Gen. Valery Gerasimov, Russia's top military officer, within the coming weeks, the four-star general's spokesman Col. David Lapan told The Hill on Friday.

Discussion topics and specific dates of the bilateral visit are still being worked between Washington and Moscow, the simmering issue of U.S. efforts to extend ballistic missile defense capabilities into eastern Europe will likely be at the top of those discussions.

"I personally believe that we will find common ground with the Russian military," Dempsey said, according to Lapan.



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The visit comes as American diplomats are poised to restart talks with Russia over the missile defense program in eastern Europe.

"I expect serious talks [on the issue] this year," U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul said Thursday with local media in Russia, United Press International reported on Friday.

Russia and the United States have been at loggerheads over the Obama administration's missile defense plans to push those American systems eastward, into European countries along the Russian border.

The White House plans to field a massive network of land and sea-based ballistic missile interceptors to defend against potential long-range missile threats from Iran by 2020.

The Navy's AEGIS destroyers, warships outfitted with anti-ballistic missile weapons, are the crux of the sea-based arm of the Obama administration's European missile shield program.

Russia has strenuously opposed that plan, arguing the weapons could easily be used to take out Russian-operated missile systems stationed in the region.

Moscow has demanded that NATO sign an agreement guaranteeing that none of the weapons included in the missile shield would be used to neutralize the country's own missile defense system.

However, Brussels has balked at such a deal prompting then Russian president Dmitry Medvedev to break off negotiations with the alliance and Washington over the missile defense shield last year.

That said, Dempsey and the Pentagon have made clear the eastern European missile shield is not and should not be a strategic concern for Russia.

"It is not threatening strategic nuclear deterrence. It is very much oriented . . . against a rogue nation breaking out with some kind of nuclear and missile technology," Lapan said.

The four-star general plans to reiterate that argument during his meetings with Gen. Gerasimov "We are committed to finding a way to move this thing forward, and that'll continue until we figure it out," Lapan added.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/policy-and-strategy/287119-dempsey-qcommitted-to-missile-defense-deal-with-russia->

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Xinhua News – China

Most Americans still Favor U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Reductions: Poll

March 11, 2013

WASHINGTON, March 11 (Xinhua) -- The majority in the United States still favor a reduction in U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, but the level of support for that appears less than in the past, finds a Gallup poll released Monday.

U.S. President Barack Obama is considering a plan for further reductions in U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons, beyond those agreed to in the 2011 New START treaty.

Fifty-six percent of Americans expressed support to a deal to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, while 38 percent opposed it, the March 2-3 Gallup poll shows.

This is compared to a December 2010 poll, which found that 51 percent of Americans supported the U.S.-Russian nuclear arms reductions, while 30 percent opposed them, Gallup said.

But in the past, Gallup found much greater support for the U.S.-Russian or U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms reduction agreements.

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For example, 82 percent of Americans supported a 2002 agreement signed by the two countries on nuclear reductions. In 1987, 74 percent said they approved of the proposed U.S.-Soviet treaty to eliminate intermediate-range nuclear weapons from Europe and Russia, Gallup said.

Americans may be less inclined now to reduce U.S. nuclear weapons along with Russia because they do not view Russia as favorably as they did in the past, Gallup said. A Feb 7-10 poll showed that 50 percent of Americans hold an unfavorable opinion of Russia.

At the same time, the threats from countries such as Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have eroded Americans' support to further reduce the U.S. nuclear arsenal, Gallup added.

Americans rated Iran's and the DPRK's nuclear programs as the most critical threats to the U.S. among nine foreign policy matters in a Feb. 7-10 Gallup poll. Americans in the same poll viewed Russia's military power as much less of a threat.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2013-03/11/c_124444704.htm

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InsideDefense.com

Air Force Readies Contracts to Shape Minuteman III Modernization Plans

March 12, 2013

By Jason Sherman

The Air Force will soon ask industry for help in planning how to modernize the ground-based leg of the nuclear triad, eyeing a big-ticket acquisition effort to either maintain the Minuteman III missile or replace it with a new ICBM that could be hidden in a custom-built underground subway system.

Next month, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center plans to award multiple study contracts -- each worth as much as \$3 million -- to expand on several ways of extending the operational life of the ground-based ICBM fleet from 2025 to 2075, according to a solicitation posted in January on Federal Business Opportunities.

The center's intelligence, program development and integration directorate will evaluate the concept papers produced by the winning bidders as part of an eventual material development decision -- a key juncture in the acquisition process -- on whether to proceed with a new-start acquisition program, states the Jan. 7 broad agency announcement. Compelling industry proposals will be incorporated into a "ground-based strategic deterrent analysis of alternatives" that was launched last fall, according to the service notice.

"The Minuteman III force is sustainable through 2030 and potentially beyond with additional modernization investment," Gen. Robert Kehler, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, said in a March 5 posture statement prepared for the House Armed Services Committee. "The ongoing Ground Based Strategic Deterrent Analysis of Alternatives is studying the full range of concepts to sustain this triad leg beyond 2030."

Meanwhile, according to multiple press reports in recent months, President Obama is contemplating dramatic reductions to the nation's nuclear arsenal that are backed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Since late 2011, the Air Force has been refining potential approaches to closing gaps identified during a ground-based strategic deterrence capabilities-based assessment. Those shortfalls will require some form of remediation, the Joint Staff said in an initial capabilities document -- a potential first step in making the case for a new weapons program.

After soliciting industry ideas on approaches to improve a payload delivery vehicle, warhead integration, basing, nuclear command, control and communications, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center last year outlined five potential alternatives to explore in an analysis of alternatives. These options, according to the January notice, include the continued use of the current Minuteman III baseline missile until 2075, with no attempt to close identified gaps;

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modest modernization approach that incorporates incremental changes to the current Minuteman III baseline to close the gaps; "new fixed" missiles; "new mobile" ICBMs; and a "new tunnel" option.

Of these approaches, the most bold -- and potentially most expensive -- would be the "new tunnel" concept. It would require a vast underground subway-like network of pathways to shuttle new missiles around to multiple launch portals, any of which could be used to fire the missile. "The tunnel concept mode operates similar to a subway system but with only a single transporter/launcher and missile dedicated to a given tunnel," states the notice. "The tunnel is long enough to improve survivability but leaving enough room to permit adequate 'rattle space' in the event of an enemy attack."

Unmanned cars, either on rails or in "trackless" mode, would move along the tunnels and, in a doomsday scenario, use any one of the launch portals that would be built at "regular" intervals to allow the transporter to raise and fire the missile.

The "new fixed" concept calls for a new "super-hardened" silo capable of withstanding "ground shock levels."

The mobile concept would involve a new ICBM on a "transporter erector launcher" that is capable of off-road deployment -- one that could "leave government land to increase survivability." This system should be able to launch up to two Mk12A or Mk21 reentry vehicles, which house thermonuclear warheads.

"Guidance needs to account for the deployed mode to ensure adequate accuracy is achieved while maintaining prompt responsive capabilities," states the solicitation.

<http://insidedefense.com/201303122427355/Inside-Defense-General/Public-Articles/air-force-readies-contracts-to-shape-minuteman-iii-modernization-plans/menu-id-926.html>

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Nextgov.com

Officials Worry about Vulnerability of Global Nuclear Stockpile to Cyber Attack

By Aliya Sternstein

March 13, 2013

Senators requested a national intelligence assessment of foreign nations' abilities to protect their nuclear weapons from digital strikes after the Pentagon's chief cyber officer said he does not know whether China, Russia or other nuclear powers, aside from the United States, have effective safeguards in place.

What's more, the resiliency of most U.S. nuclear systems against a nuclear strike is untested, a new Defense Science Board report concluded.

Gen. C. Robert Kehler, chief of U.S. Strategic Command, which oversees Cyber Command, told lawmakers that he agrees a comprehensive assessment is in order. But, he added, "we do evaluate" the potential for a cyber-related attack on U.S. nuclear command and control systems and the weapons systems themselves. He could not tell Congress, however, if other nuclear nations are as prepared for the risk of a digitally-triggered atomic explosion.

"What about the Russians and the Chinese? Do they have the ability to stop some cyberattack from launching one of their nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles?" probed Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla., a member of the Armed Forces Committee.

"Senator, I don't know," answered Kehler, who was testifying on Tuesday at a committee hearing.

Questions about cyber doomsday scenarios arose as the top U.S. intelligence official, in another Senate chamber, named cyber first on his list of current transnational threats.



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There is a danger that unsophisticated attacks by highly motivated actors would have “significant outcomes due to unexpected system configurations and mistakes” or that a vulnerability in one spot “might spill over and contaminate other parts of a networked system,” James Clapper, national intelligence director, testified before the Intelligence Committee on Tuesday.

Nelson and Armed Services Committee Chairman Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., decided their panel will request a broad intelligence community assessment about the ability of foreign powers to safeguard networked nuclear systems. “In this new world of cyber threats, we of course have to be responsible for ours, but we have to worry about those others on the planet that have a nuclear strike capability, of protecting theirs against some outside player coming in and suddenly taking over their command and control,” Nelson said.

Kehler told lawmakers that, based on recent piecemeal reviews, he is confident U.S. command and control systems and nuclear weapons platforms “do not have a significant vulnerability” that cause him to be concerned. He said that in the years since the Cold War, “we’ve had fairly decent transparency” with Russian government officials on missile capabilities and understand “they are very careful about the way they provide what we would call nuclear assurity as well. This is also one of the reasons for why we would like to see additional transparency with China.”

<http://www.nextgov.com/defense/2013/03/officials-worry-about-vulnerability-global-nuclear-stockpile-cyber-attack/61855/>

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FoxNews.com

Pentagon to Beef up Missile Defense in Response to North Korean Threat, Sources Say

By Justin Fishel

March 14, 2013

The Pentagon is beefing up the nation’s missile defense in the wake of provocative nuclear threats from North Korea and is set to deploy 14 additional ground-based interceptors at missile silos in Alaska and California, congressional and U.S. officials tell Fox News.

The extra interceptors on the West Coast, designed to counter attacks from an intercontinental ballistic missile, would bring the total number of interceptors to 44, a plan originally proposed by the Bush administration. President Obama stopped the deployment of the additional interceptors when he took office in 2009, leaving the total number at 30.

Congressional sources claim that by stalling the original plan and forcing the military to bring back on line silos that otherwise would have been operational, the Obama administration has effectively wasted millions in taxpayer’s dollars.

It’s a sentiment that is not likely to sit well with conservative lawmakers when the plan is announced on Monday, particularly as they seek new austerity measures.

A senior Pentagon official hinted at the decision last week in a speech to the Atlantic Council in Washington just days after Pyongyang threatened a “pre-emptive” nuclear strike on the United States.

“North Korea’s shrill public pronouncements underscore the need for the U.S. to continue to take prudent steps to defeat any future North Korean ICBM,” James Miller, undersecretary of Defense for policy, said.

Upon completion of Missile Field Number One at Fort Greely, Alaska, Miller said, “we have the ability to swiftly deploy up to 14 additional ground-based interceptors if needed.” In addition to Fort Greely, current interceptors are set up at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

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Missile Field Number One was one of the areas where the Obama administration stopped construction in 2009. Congressional sources say it will cost at least \$205 million to bring that missile field up to speed, more than it would have cost four years ago. These officials say the price of the missiles themselves also has increased.

An Obama administration official tells Fox News that the increase in interceptors is a logical response to an evolving threat from North Korea and that “anyone who suggests we should have stayed the course” with the Bush administration’s plan is engaging in “Monday morning quarterbacking.”

This official says the North Korean threat is much different from what it was in 2009. Along with the continued testing of nuclear weapons and longer-range delivery systems, the North Koreans have advanced their mobile missile capability, even within the last six to eight months.

“What we were defending against (from North Korea) four years ago was a single rouge missile, now with the mobile missile developing you have got to be able to counter multiple missile threats ... so you have to expand your capability.”

Whether intentional or not, the announcement also coincides with 30th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan’s Strategic Defense Initiative speech. The nation’s first ground-based interceptors were set up in 2002 under President George W. Bush.

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2013/03/14/pentagon-to-beef-up-missile-defense-in-response-to-north-korean-threat-sources/>

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Washington Free Beacon

D.C. to Beijing: Stand Down on Cyber

National Security Adviser warns China on cyber attacks

By Bill Gertz

March 11, 2013

Under pressure from American industry to curb Chinese cyber attacks, White House national security adviser Thomas Donilon warned China on Monday that the United States will defend its computer networks from the attacks.

Donilon said U.S. businesses share serious concerns “about sophisticated, targeted theft of confidential business information, and proprietary technologies through cyber intrusions emanating from China on an unprecedented scale,” in a speech on Asia.

“The international community cannot afford to tolerate such activity from any country,” he told a meeting of the Asia Society in New York. “As the president said in the state of the union, we will take action to protect our economy against cyber-threats.”

The remarks were the administration’s first public acknowledgement of China’s large-scale computer hacking that has involved government entities, including military cyberwarfare units. Administration officials previously avoided criticizing Beijing for the hacking that has included theft of both government and defense secrets and proprietary corporate data stolen by hackers who broke into computer networks.

Donilon’s warning to China followed disclosure on Monday in the *Free Beacon* that senior Obama administration policymakers rejected tough action against Chinese military cyber attacks more than two years ago.

Administration officials close to the White House said an interagency policy committee examining ways to deter Chinese cyber attacks turned down several options, including the imposition of economic sanctions against China, and counter cyberattacks against Chinese hackers as potentially too disruptive for U.S.-China relations. The options were rejected in October 2011.

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The administration has instead limited its reaction to diplomacy, including requests for China to explain the attacks and issuing protests in high-level meetings.

A report by the security firm Mandiant recently identified a Chinese military unit in Shanghai as a major source of Chinese cyber espionage attacks. Earlier reports linked large-scale Chinese cyber strikes to a second military unit in Beijing.

China has denied its government carries out any cyber attacks and responded to the U.S. charges by claiming that the United States is behind hacking of Chinese computer networks.

U.S. officials told the *Free Beacon* that during a recent meeting between U.S. and Chinese officials, Chinese representatives threatened to curtail U.S.-China talks unless the United States stops making public accusations of cyber attacks.

Donilon, in his speech, said the United States wants three things from China to resolve the problem of cyber attacks.

“First, we need a recognition of the urgency and scope of this problem and the risk it poses—to international trade, to the reputation of Chinese industry, and to our overall relations,” Donilon said.

The United States also wants Beijing to “take serious steps to investigate and put a stop to these activities,” he said.

“Finally, we need China to engage with us in a constructive direct dialogue to establish acceptable norms of behavior in cyberspace,” Donilon said.

Critics of the administration’s conciliatory policy have said the lack of an effective response to the Chinese cyber attacks has encouraged more attacks.

Donilon defended during the speech the administration’s so-called pivot to Asia as the wars in the Middle East and South Asia wind down.

The national security adviser said the rebalancing is designed to promote stability and openness in the region.

“To pursue this vision, the United States is implementing a comprehensive, multidimensional strategy: Strengthening alliances; deepening partnerships with emerging powers; building a stable, productive, and constructive relationship with China; empowering regional institutions; and helping to build a regional economic architecture that can sustain shared prosperity,” he said.

Donilon insisted that the shift to Asia does not mean denigrating alliances in other parts of the world or “containing China or seeking to dictate terms to Asia.”

The Pentagon has adopted a semi-secret Asia strategy called the Air Sea Battle Concept that calls for developing weapons and capabilities that can counter China’s growing arsenal of advanced weapons, including anti-ship ballistic missiles, anti-satellite weapons, and cyber warfare capabilities.

Donilon said the Asia pivot is not limited to military capabilities but seeks to use all elements of U.S. power, including strengthening alliances with Japan and South Korea and building closer ties to states like Australia and India.

On North Korea, Donilon warned that any attempt to export nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction would be viewed as a “grave threat” to security.

Donilon said the United States welcomed China’s support for international sanctions on North Korea for its nuclear and missile tests.

However, he made no mention of the recent discovery in North Korea of a Chinese-made road-mobile missile launcher for a new North Korean intercontinental ballistic missile that can reach the United States. The Chinese-made launcher for the KN-08 missile was made public during a military parade in Pyongyang in April 2012.



On recent North Korean threats to conduct missile and nuclear attacks on the United States, Donilon said the claims “may be hyperbolic.”

“But as to the policy of the United States, there should be no doubt: We will draw upon the full range of our capabilities to protect against, and to respond to, the threat posed to us and to our allies by North Korea,” he said.

“This includes not only any North Korean use of weapons of mass destruction, but also, as the president made clear, their transfer of nuclear weapons or nuclear materials to other states or non-state entities. Such actions would be considered a grave threat to the United States and our allies, and we will hold North Korea fully accountable for the consequences.”

Donilon said that one of the three pillars of the Asia pivot is seeking better relations with China, including closer military ties.

“A deeper U.S.-China military-to-military dialogue is central to addressing many of the sources of insecurity and potential competition between us,” he said.

China’s military buildup in Asia is “drawing our forces into closer contact and raising the risk that an accident or miscalculation could destabilize the broader relationship,” Donilon said.

<http://freebeacon.com/d-c-to-beijing-stand-down-on-cyber/>

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China Daily – China

US, China Signal Hope over Web Security

Improved cooperation sought after cyberattack allegations

March 13, 2013

By Chen Jia in San Francisco (China Daily)

China and the United States are expressing hope for developing their relationship in the sensitive and controversial area of cyber security, just days before the new Chinese leadership takes power.

On Tuesday, a spokeswoman for the foreign ministry in Beijing, Hua Chunying, briefly commented on remarks the day before by Thomas Donilon, President Barack Obama's national security adviser.

Donilon said in a speech in New York that the US is deepening partnerships with emerging powers and building a "stable, productive and constructive relationship" with China.

He said both countries' leaders endorsed the goal of building a new model of relations between an existing power and an emerging one.

Hua said China-US relations are at an important stage of transition, and that China hopes to enhance coordination and cooperation with the US.

Chinese legislators at the annual session of the National People's Congress in Beijing are expected to select the country's president on Thursday, along with the premier, based on the nomination of the new president the following day.

The high-level remarks are being seen as expressions of mutual goodwill amid China's once-a-decade leadership change and the start of Obama's second term.

Hua also said that China will engage in dialogue and cooperation with the international community, including the US, on cyber security - a contentious issue between the two countries recently.

"The security of cyberspace is a global issue, which needs rules and cooperation, instead of a cyberspace war," the ministry spokeswoman said.



"China is willing, on the basis of the principles of mutual respect and trust, to have constructive dialogue and cooperation on this issue with the international community including the United States to maintain the security, openness and peace of the Internet," she added.

On Monday, Donilon had described cyber security as "a growing challenge" that the two sides should address.

In February, a Virginia-based Internet security firm, Mandiant Inc, issued a report alleging that it had traced the origin of multiple attacks against US and other Western companies to the Shanghai headquarters of secret unit of hackers backed by China's military.

Hua, calling Internet security a global issue, reiterated the official response that China is also vulnerable and has been one of the biggest targets of hacking attacks in the world.

The National Computer Network Emergency Response Coordination Center said on Sunday that in the past two months, more than 11,000 websites in China were attacked by computers from other countries. One-third of these attacks were traced to the US, it said.

The United States has invested heavily in and become increasingly reliant on networks while also developing cyber weapons, according to George Koo, an international business consultant and board member of San Francisco-based New America Media, which produces programs aimed at specific ethnic groups in the US.

The US- and Israeli-developed Stuxnet virus is believed to have been used to dismantle centrifuges at an Iranian nuclear fuel-enrichment facility. As the first country believed to have launched a cyber attack in peacetime, the US has ceded the moral high ground and is in no position to define appropriate cyber conduct, Koo said.

He cited a blog post by Jeffrey Carr, CEO of Taia Global Inc, another US Internet security firm, who said more than 30 countries are able to run "military-grade network operations" necessary to mount the kind of sophisticated attacks cited in Mandiant's report.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/2013-03/13/content_16305018.htm

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The Globe and Mail – Canada

North Korea Accuses U.S. of Cyber Attacks on its Internet Servers

By JACK KIM, Reuters

Friday, March 15, 2013

SEOUL — North Korea, usually blamed for hacking others, has accused the United States of staging cyber attacks against its Internet servers after reports of disruptions to its main news services, the latest twist from an increasingly bellicose North.

Russia's Itar-Tass news agency said a "powerful hacker attack" from abroad had brought down Internet servers inside the North, disabling access to some websites.

The accusation comes at a time of increased tension between reclusive North Korea and South Korea, along with the South's ally the United States.

The North has threatened a nuclear war with the United States in response to new United Nations sanctions over its latest nuclear test and to strike back at the South and the United States during military drills they are staging.

South Korea's MBC television said the North's state media services were among those affected by the cyber attack.

These included the websites of the KCNA news agency and the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper, which were said to be experiencing disruptions even though they were operating normally on Thursday and Friday.



“It is nobody’s secret that the U.S. and the South Korean puppet regime are massively bolstering up cyber forces in a bid to intensify the subversive activities and sabotages against the DPRK,” KCNA said on Friday.

“Intensive and persistent virus attacks are being made every day on Internet servers operated by the DPRK,” it said.

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, or DPRK, is the North’s official name.

KCNA and Rodong Sinmun have carried the North’s increasingly strident rhetoric of late, accusing the United States and South Korea of staging preparations for war and vowing to scrap the armistice that stopped fighting in the 1950-53 Korean War.

The North has also threatened to use nuclear weapons against what it called hostile forces.

North Korea in turn has been blamed for spreading malicious software that crashed the websites of government agencies and businesses, and for a cyber attack on a South Korean state-run bank server in 2011 that took more than a week to restore.

North Korea denies charges of cyber attacks and accuses the South of a conspiracy to fuel confrontation, although defectors from the North have warned that Pyongyang was recruiting thousands of computer engineers to its cyber warfare unit.

Military experts said cyber warfare was a major threat from North Korea, along with its conventional forces and its weapons of mass destruction program, that posed a security risk to utilities and communications networks in the South.

North Korea also has been accused of jamming global positioning system signals affecting hundreds of flights at South Korea’s main airport.

Earlier this week, U.S. spy agencies said for the first time that cyber attacks and cyber espionage had supplanted terrorism as the top security threat facing the United States.

The United States and China also are embroiled in a row over cyber warfare, with U.S. President Barack Obama calling his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping to discuss the issue this week.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/north-korea-accuses-us-of-cyber-attacks-on-its-internet-servers/article9812246/>

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

OPINION

Why Was North Korea in such a Hurry?

Tests of a long-range missile and a nuclear weapon were clear provocations to the international community, including China, but may lead to negotiations from a position of strength

10 March 2013

By Sukjoon Yoon

Following Kim Jong-il's orders, his son and successor Kim Jong-un recently conducted tests of both a long-range missile (under the pretext of launching a communications satellite) and a nuclear weapon. This was useful to consolidate his power within North Korea, whose starving masses have little else to celebrate, but it was also a grave provocation to the international community, even to its principal ally China. So what is the payoff for North Korea? In other words, why be so brave?

Both steps, the launching of a three-stage rocket and North Korea's third nuclear test, had been widely predicted, coming after the sinking of the South Korean vessel Cheonan and the bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010. But there have been some unexpected developments in North Korea, notably in the behaviour of the new leader, who



cried ostentatiously before his father's coffin _ an extraordinary lapse of discipline for the first secretary of the revolutionary Workers' Party of Korea. He has also been seen in public accompanied by his would-be first lady _ which is almost unprecedented in Asia's communist states. Another surprise has been that North Korea has so far declined to follow the Chinese model of economic development, which many commentators had predicted.

Still, in the matter of weapons testing, the pundits have been proved correct: North Korea successfully launched a long-range rocket on Dec 13, 2012, on the third attempt, and detonated a nuclear bomb on Feb 12 this year. It seems that Kim Jong-un is continuing the deliberately provocative strategy adopted by his father, but questions remain about what he hopes to gain from such defiance. What signals are the North Koreans trying to send, and what are the implications for South Korea, China, and the US?

The development of long-range missiles and nuclear weapons has become an attractive policy option for North Korea as a means to boost its influence, with the implicit threat of their use or further proliferation: In effect it is nuclear blackmail. It was surely not accidental that the missile test took place just one week before the South Korean presidential election of December 2012, in which Park Geun-hye was chosen as the first woman president in the country's history. Similarly, the nuclear test came at the beginning of President Barack Obama's new administration, just hours before his State of the Union address, during which he expressed his strong condemnation of the test.

These provocations occurred during South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's government and on Hillary Clinton's watch as secretary of state, and it seems that the North Koreans are attempting to demonstrate their readiness to continue developing and testing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles while hoping for a change of attitude: They are allowing the new administrations to blame their predecessors for the tensions, and inviting their adversaries to adopt a different approach.

Also, in the aftermath of the third nuclear test, there have been many rumours about further testing of nuclear weapons and missiles. It seems that North Korea is doing everything it can to disturb the peace of the incoming Park administration and the diplomatic and military circles of Mr Obama's second term.

Unfortunately, there are informal indications that the new Chinese leadership is prepared to accept and work with North Korea as a fledgling nuclear power, provided that South Korea and Japan do not respond by acquiring nuclear weapons themselves. They realise that Kim Jong-un needs to consolidate his power to survive, and they understand that the recent tests are a way of increasing his strategic leverage so as to improve North Korea's position when dealing with the US and South Korea.

The North Koreans are pushing the Chinese leadership to recognise North Korea as an established nuclear power, and to represent it as such in their dialogues with the US, Japan, and South Korea. From the Chinese standpoint, the North Korean nuclear test is less threatening to China's security than the conventional armed exchanges that occurred between North Korea and South Korea near the Northern Limit Line in March and November of 2010.

What worries the Chinese government most is the possibility that the nuclear test might furnish the US with a good excuse to enhance its military presence in South Korea.

It seems that the North Koreans are encouraging the Chinese to adopt a non-interventionist and forward-looking position to avoid damaging relations between China and North Korea which might have a significant impact on the Chinese strategic stance on the Korean Peninsula.

The Chinese government has acknowledged its difficulties in dealing with North Korea, and is becoming increasingly willing to put the North Korean issue on the table at the United Nations Security Council. This appears to be a very effective way for the Chinese to convey their message and, hopefully, will result in helpful adjustments to their policy on North Korea.

Now that North Korea has established its ability to produce missiles and nuclear weapons, it is anticipating dividends in the form of new policy approaches by the neighbouring governments of South Korea, Japan and China, as well as the



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US. However, the gap between "the sovereign right to possess rocketry and nuclear technology" and "absolutely not allowing North Korea to establish itself as a fully-fledged nuclear power" is not easily bridgeable.

The most intractable problem, from the US perspective, is the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Now that the US faces a technological fait accompli from the North Koreans it is widely anticipated that the US will move toward at least some warming of US-North Korea ties.

North Korea seems well aware of the expected US drawdown in East Asia and the prospect of regional domination by China. It understands that these changes are potentially disturbing for all the nations bordering Korea and that they are united in resisting North Korea's nuclear aspirations.

From the North Korean perspective, the potential blackmail value of the threat of proliferation puts a very large price tag on its nuclear weapons and missiles, and will not soon relinquish them.

North Korea has acquired both nuclear weapons technology and the long-range missiles necessary to deliver nuclear warheads. The meaning of this is, indisputably, that the onus is on other countries to step up to the negotiating table.

Sukjoon Yoon a retired ROK Navy Captain, is senior research fellow of the Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy and visiting professor of defence system engineering at Sejong University in Seoul.

The article originally appeared in the Pacific Forum CSIS Pacnet series.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/339672/why-was-north-korea-in-such-a-hurry>

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Time – U.S.

OPINION/Battleland

Avoiding Armageddon on the Sub-Continent

By Mark Thompson

March 11, 2013

India and Pakistan are the children of the British raj. But like many siblings, they don't get along. India is the world's largest democracy, and soon will become the planet's most populous nation. Pakistan, the globe's sixth-most-populous country, has a long history of military coups, dictators, and harboring terrorists — including Osama bin Laden. In his new book, *Avoiding Armageddon*, Bruce Riedel, a long-time CIA official now at the Brookings Institution, handicaps the challenges for the U.S. is dealing with these two nations.

The book, based on Riedel's role in advising four U.S. presidents on the region, reviews the history of American diplomacy in South Asia, the crises that have flared in recent years, and the prospects for future crisis. *Battleland* did this email chat with him last week from the Strait of Malacca, where he was traveling:

What is the most important takeaway for readers of your new book, Avoiding Armageddon: America, India, and Pakistan to the Brink and Back?

South Asia — especially Pakistan — is the most dangerous place in the world today. Armed with hundreds of nuclear weapons and home to thousands of terrorists, Pakistan and India have repeatedly gone to the brink of war. America has helped walk them back from Armageddon more than once but it may not always succeed.

Are tensions between India and Pakistan getting better or worse? Why?

The India-Pakistan relationship is up and down, but in the absence of stronger economic ties and a resolution of the basic political disputes (especially Kashmir), the two will remain one terrorist attack away from disaster.

How do you apportion responsibility between these two nations for the continuing strife between them?

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Pakistan is clearly the more provocative, because too many Pakistanis are unsatisfied with the status quo. But India, too, is capable of dangerous action like testing nuclear weapons.

Has the fact that both are now nuclear states acted as a brake on possible war between them? Why or why not?

The nuclear balance of terror is very fragile.

Unlike the Cold War, where the Arctic Ocean separated the two superpowers, India and Pakistan share a 'hot' border with frequent incidents.

It is really more like Russian roulette than mutual deterrence.

How secure do you believe each nation's nuclear arsenal is?

As Pakistan and India expand their arsenals the risk of a bomb getting in the wrong hands grows. Pakistan is also developing tactical nuclear weapons, which are much more easy to grab. And remember the vetting of who commands Pakistan's bombs is done by its intelligence service, the ISI [Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence], which is tightly linked to several terrorist groups.

Some of the groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, which attacked Mumbai five years ago, are very sophisticated and capable of using a bomb. The Pakistani military command knows its bombs are their crown jewels, but in a crisis situation the next time India and Pakistan go to the brink expect a lot of anxiety on this issue.

How much of this trouble is due to India's continued hold on Kashmir?

The conflict over Kashmir lies at the heart of Indo-Pakistani tensions but is not the only issue. It has become symbolic of a larger psychological problem — many Pakistanis, especially the army, resent India's success, and many Indians believe Pakistan is a crazy state.

India and Pakistan have agreed in principle on how to resolve the problem by giving Kashmir special status — a bit like Ulster — but they lack the political will to go to the next level and make a real deal.

The U.S. should quietly try to encourage them forward, behind the scenes. In the end it is up to them, not us.

The 1947 partition was a disaster in many ways, but we are stuck with the results. How to move out of the shadow of partition's unfinished business is the issue now for New Delhi and Islamabad.

What is the biggest mistake the U.S. has made in South Asia over the past generation? What is the most important thing for Washington to do about South Asia now?

America's biggest mistake in south Asia was to undermine civilian rule in Pakistan for decades by backing every military dictator in the country's history. It was a bipartisan mistake. Presidents from both parties fawned over the generals.

We lost the faith of many Pakistanis this way.

Now we need to get out of only doing conflict-and-crisis management to a bigger game — conflict resolution and regional integration.

It's a big idea whose time has come. But India and Pakistan must be the leaders, not the U.S.

Pulitzer Prize-winner Mark Thompson has covered national security in Washington since 1979, and for Time since 1994.

<http://nation.time.com/2013/03/11/avoiding-armageddon-on-the-sub-continent/#comments>

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China Daily – China
OPINION/Commentary

A Rush to Judge China on Cyberwarfare

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March 13, 2013

By George Koo and Ling-chi Wang (China Daily)

Despite a claim by Bloomberg Businessweek that the Chinese army is spying on Americans, the report that led to the charges has serious flaws. These raise troubling questions about a repetition of the "China spy syndrome".

Beginning with an allegation by The New York Times on Jan 30 of Chinese hacking, many publications have since run one or more stories on cyberattacks emanating from China.

The publication of a report by the Internet security firm Mandiant on Feb 18 set the stage for an announcement by the White House two days later that the US was determined to protect its businesses and punish the perpetrators at home and abroad.

Is this all orchestrated to pave the way for a new policy initiative? Or is this just a reinforcement of Obama's "pivot to Asia" and "Trans-Pacific Partnership," two major initiatives aimed clearly in response to the so-called rise of China?

Since the nascent art of hacking and counter measures of cybersecurity are subjects too esoteric and beyond the comprehension of most people, the media has focused instead on the more lurid details in the Mandiant report.

That alleged that most of the cyberattacks against corporate America came from a 12-story building in the Pudong neighborhood of Shanghai that belonged to a particular department of the People's Liberation Army, the sinister-sounding Unit 61398.

Since Mandiant is in the business of selling its services to safeguard company networks from cyberattacks, it presumably has an interest in portraying the attackers in the darkest terms possible. Using the PLA does that job well.

However, shortly after the Mandiant broke the news, articles that presented contrary views began to appear. The most comprehensive was that of Jeffrey Carr, a cybersecurity expert, who pointed out that more than 30 countries are able to run "military-grade network operations" necessary to mount the kind of sophisticated attacks cited in the report. According to the US National Intelligence Estimate, Russia, Israel, and France are among the leaders when it comes to computer hacking.

Carr concluded that Mandiant was too quick to identify China as the culprit without performing rigorous analysis to eliminate other hypotheses or comparing its cyberespionage activities with those of other countries.

Two days after The New York Times article appeared, the US edition of The World Journal, a Chinese-language daily, reported that seven of the IP addresses identified in the Mandiant report as coming from the PLA office in Shanghai were in fact in Hong Kong, including a Hong Kong University of Science and Technology address.

This should not come as a surprise, since hacking can emanate from anywhere and can easily be misdirected to appear as if it is coming from elsewhere. What was surprising was that this finding came from a little noted ethnic paper and not from the major media.

Perhaps former US vice-president Al Gore did not invent the Internet, but it is an inconvenient truth that the US defense agency did, and Americans have since led in the development and use of the Internet. As the world's most advanced economy, the US has invested heavily and become most dependent on networks in cyberspace and thus most vulnerable to attacks.

It has also led in developing and using weapons in cyberwarfare. For example, the US-developed Stuxnet virus has been credited with causing the centrifuges to spin out of control in the Iranian nuclear enhancement facility. Being the first known country to launch a cyberattack in peacetime and in the absence of any international treaty and protocol, the US has lost the moral high ground and is in no position to define appropriate conduct in cyberspace.

Of course, this is not the first time that Washington is reaping the consequences of what it has sown. It is the only country to have used the atomic bomb, and has since had to devote decades of diplomatic efforts to promote nuclear



non-proliferation and now lives in fear of nuclear weapons falling into the hands of what it calls rogue nations and terrorists.

The next Pandora's box, one the United States opened and will soon be trying to shut, is the use of drones for transnational surveillance and killing terrorist suspects. In all of that, of course, there is no due process. US friends and foes alike have experienced just how cost effective a drone is in killing people and destroying property and are now all too keen to join the drone club.

The day is nigh when Americans will be troubled by the prospect of encountering drones operated remotely and in the hands of someone holding a grudge against the US. We will then, again, have to expend endless diplomatic efforts in spreading the message "Do as I say and not as I do."

As for China, it has in its way been trying to tell the US that it does not hold a grudge. In typically understated signals, Beijing has let Washington know that it possesses silent-running submarines, stealth aircraft and missiles capable of downing communications satellites. China even went out of its way to make sure that US intelligence got a full picture of its nuclear weapons technology, as suggested by the nuclear scientist Daniel Stillman of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The latest airshows in China are displaying a large array of domestically made drones.

Indeed, China appears to be practicing a porcupine defense strategy, i.e. having peaceful intentions but making it clear that it has the ability to retaliate in kind. In fact, some have suggested that the alleged PLA hacking has been deliberately sloppy, thus leaving trails to let the US know that China too possesses the wherewithal for cyberwarfare.

Cyberespionage and cyberwarfare are serious problems that are here to stay. Washington needs to develop effective, long-term countermeasures and a thoughtful and balanced diplomacy. Singling out China as the sole villain without critically examining what other countries are doing, is counterproductive, potentially misleading and, in the long run, harmful to national interests and world peace.

George Koo is international business consultant and board member of New America Media, and Ling-chi Wang is a retired professor of Asian American history at the University of California, Berkeley.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/2013-03/13/content_16305020.htm

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Boston Herald
OPINION/Op-Ed

N. Korea Threats Could Be Real

March 13, 2013

By Peter Brookes

When considering recent North Korean promises of devastating military strikes against the United States and South Korea, it's important to understand that Pyongyang carries out its threats — except when it doesn't.

Despite this, it's probably best not to take any chances.

Once again, North Korea is pushing tensions in Northeast Asia to a fever-pitch. In addition to military action, Pyongyang is ending the 1953 armistice as well as shutting down the DMZ crisis hotline.

It's done things like this before, but this time North Korea is annoyed about new punitive economic sanctions the United Nations levied on it last week as a result of its recent nuclear explosion.

Pyongyang may also feel emboldened in light of that (likely) more advanced nuclear weapons test — and a successful long-range ballistic missile launch that preceded it.

But beyond the new U.N. sanctions, North Korea is also doing lots of messaging with its threatening words and behavior. First, it's trying to pump up the leadership credentials of Kim Jong Un to his own people.



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When he came into office, the newest king of the “Kim-dom” didn’t have the gravitas of his grandfather and the nation’s founder (Kim Il Sung), or his father (Kim Jong Il), a long-standing No. 2 and later leader.

And nothing burnishes a North Korean cult of personality like chest-thumping its archenemies, South Korea and the United States, in the state-run media.

Of course, the messages go beyond the folks at home.

North Korea can’t be any too happy with China, which supported the newest U.N. sanctions. Beijing and Pyongyang have a curious marriage; while a regional crisis doesn’t benefit China, North Korea feels it must show its independence from time to time.

Plus, Pyongyang wouldn’t mind causing some trouble for the new government in Seoul under South Korea’s first female president, Park Geun-hye, who came to power just last month.

North Korea hasn’t been afraid to mix it up militarily with South Korea in recent years, including sinking one of its warships and shelling a South Korean island.

Naturally, North Korea is also signaling to President Obama’s new national security team, including Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel that it won’t be taken for granted.

Considering ongoing and future U.S. defense cuts, Pyongyang may feel the time is right to tweak Washington’s nose.

So, in the end, North Korea makes threats. It thrives on its ability to wreak death and destruction. Some threats they carry out; some they don’t. When and where is also their choice.

The problem is that if they don’t carry threats out, they become meaningless, losing their leverage. It’s best we err on the safe side and be ready for trouble.

Peter Brookes is a Heritage Foundation senior fellow and a former deputy assistant secretary of defense.

http://bostonherald.com/news_opinion/opinion/op_ed/2013/03/n_korea_threats_could_be_real

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Washington Post

OPINION/Columnist/Opinion Writer

North Korea and the Price of Patience

By David Ignatius

March 13, 2013

The Obama administration’s approach toward North Korea has been described as “strategic patience.” A more accurate evaluation of U.S. policy would be “failure.” The administration has alternately wooed and threatened North Korea for four years, with no discernible effect.

Here’s what failure looks like: Since President Obama took office, Pyongyang has conducted several missile tests and two nuclear weapons tests, the most recent on Feb. 12. When the international community has tried to hold Pyongyang accountable, the regime has become even more erratic.

North Korea’s latest reckless action came this week, when it nullified the 60-year-old armistice that ended the Korean War and cut its hotline with U.S. forces in the South. This was Pyongyang’s way of protesting the U.N. Security Council’s unanimous decision to impose new sanctions after last month’s nuclear test. Perhaps it was also a way of hazing South Korea’s President Park Geun-hye, who took office two weeks ago.

What’s next? Unfortunately, the only thing that’s predictable about North Korea is its belligerence. Pyongyang has taken violent actions in the first months after the inauguration of each South Korean president since 1992, according to Victor Cha, a Korea expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

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What happens when diplomacy fails? This is the most disturbing problem in international relations, and it's posed now by North Korea: How should the international community respond when a nation consistently ignores red lines? What policy options exist when patience finally runs out?

Tom Donilon, President Obama's national security adviser, had some newly tough words for Pyongyang in a speech Monday to the Asia Society: "The United States will not accept North Korea as a nuclear state, nor will we stand by while it seeks to develop a nuclear-armed missile that can target the United States." But what does this language mean? The North already *is* a nuclear state, and it is developing missiles that could strike the United States with miniaturized warheads.

"North Korea will have to change course," Donilon insisted. Otherwise, it will face more sanctions and new U.S. defense moves aimed at countering a "grave threat to the United States and our allies." But what if North Korea doesn't bend? One result will be more aggressive defense policies from South Korea and Japan, complicating security in Asia. The North Korea problem is scary because its leadership seems to get more volatile over time. Kim Jong Eun, the new leader, "quickly consolidated power" after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in December 2011, according to U.S. intelligence. But some U.S. analysts believe the new president is more unpredictable and provocative than was his father.

Through two administrations, the underlying U.S. strategy toward North Korea has been to seek China's help in containing this destabilizing force in northeast Asia. But this policy, too, has largely failed, and the United States should be running out of patience. With depressing consistency, China has failed to step up to its responsibilities as a regional superpower. It doesn't like the mercurial North Koreans, but evidently it even more dislikes taking action to restrain them.

Will China's new president, Xi Jinping, lift Beijing's game by dealing more aggressively with North Korea? Some analysts see signs of a toughening Chinese stance in recent articles published in the English-language newspaper owned by the official People's Daily. Xi is also assembling a team, including Yang Jiechi, the top foreign-policy official, and Wang Yi, his successor as foreign minister, who are thought to favor more emphatic negotiations with Pyongyang, such as the so-called Six-Party Talks that took place from 2003 to 2009. The fact that China worked closely with the United States in drafting the latest U.N. sanctions resolution is also taken as a positive sign.

Some longtime Korea watchers argue that Kim is rattling sabers to get attention and that Washington should give it to him. "Even if we're at an impasse, there has to be dialogue," argues Joseph DeTrani, a former special envoy for negotiations with North Korea.

But when a country is developing nuclear weapons that could hit U.S. territory, and when its party newspaper responds to sanctions by calling for a "final showdown," the United States needs options beyond diplomacy and the threat of more U.N. sanctions. So it's reassuring that the U.S. Navy is readying ballistic missile defenses in the Pacific, and that it has such total dominance underwater that it can threaten any adversary in Asia instantly.

Counting on North Korean restraint has been a bad bet. It may be wiser to assume the worst and plan accordingly.

David Ignatius writes a twice-a-week foreign affairs column and contributes to the PostPartisan blog. He began writing his column in 1998 and continued even during a three-year stint as executive editor of the International Herald Tribune in Paris.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/david-ignatius-north-korea-and-the-price-of-patience/2013/03/13/996c49ce-8c03-11e2-b63f-f53fb9f2fcb4_story.html

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With North Korea Threat Looming, US Nuclear Disarmament Has Others Deciding to 'Arm Up'

By Rebecca Heinrichs
March 13, 2013

North Korea threatened to launch a pre-emptive nuclear attack against the U.S. last week. On Monday, Pyongyang turned up the heat, declaring that it was scrapping the armistice that ended the Korean War 60 years ago. It seems the Kim regime would have us believe it is serious about posing a nuclear threat to us and our allies.

In 2009, the same year when North Korea last announced it was nullifying the armistice, then-Senator Chuck Hagel raised what he assumed was a rhetorical question: "How can we preach to other countries that you can't have nuclear weapons but we can and our allies can?" I would assume now Defense Secretary Hagel would get an enthusiastic "amen" on this point from Kim Jong Un.

But rather than suggest the U.S. disarm before "preaching" to North Korea to refrain from using nuclear weapons, the administration reassured South Korea and Japan "at the highest levels" of its commitment to deterrence, through the U.S. nuclear umbrella and missile defense.

The administration finds itself in a quandary. By the president's own admission, he has "changed our nuclear posture to reduce the number and role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy."

Indeed, he signed the New START Treaty with Russia which requires significant cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, while requiring none from Moscow. Then, before anyone could possibly know the effects of the treaty, he committed to further reductions. The president also has yet to make good on his promise to the Senate to modernize the weapons we have.

Moreover, in 2001, while campaigning for White House, he famously said "I don't agree with missile defense."

In his first year in the Oval Office, he cut more than a \$1 billion from the Missile Defense Agency and cancelled programs designed to significantly improve the system.

Now, the administration suddenly finds it needs a convincing homeland missile defense system and the nuclear weapons it is determined to vanquish. Most urgently, it is scrambling to persuade friends and foes of its resolve and ability to successfully employ them, if needed. Committing 3,000 U.S. troops to military drills with Seoul in the face of the bellicose rhetoric from Pyongyang is part of this.

But it may be too late.

Deterring conflict requires much more than promises, even at the "highest levels." Nuclear deterrence is nothing without credibility. Friend and foe alike must believe that nuclear force will be brought to bear if necessary to preserve our security and that of our allies.

Yet it seems as though our allies have begun to seriously doubt the president's commitment to their security. We know this because they are having domestic discussions about acquiring nuclear weapons.

It's hard to blame them.

While the U.S. has been openly limiting its strategic forces, both South Korea and Japan have faced serious aggression. Despite U.N. sanctions, North Korea has pressed full speed ahead with its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs.

Pyongyang has also spent the last several years harassing the South. In 2010 Pyongyang torpedoed the South Korean Navy ship, the Cheonan, killing 46 seamen. It killed more South Koreans in an attack on Yeonpyeong Island.

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The U.S. military conducted joint military exercises with Seoul right after the attacks to show solidarity. But when China objected to having the USS George Washington participate in the exercises, and the U.S. canceled the aircraft carrier's deployment.

So much for solidarity.

China, of course, has a history of blocking meaningful sanctions against North Korea. And former Defense Secretary Leon Panetta testified that North Korea's missile program had "some help coming from" Beijing.

Meanwhile, Beijing has mounted an increasingly aggressive campaign against Japan in the East China Sea. A U.S. intelligence naval officer recently described China's maritime surveillance agency as "a full-time maritime sovereignty harassment organization."

As for Beijing's nuclear ambitions, General Robert Kehler, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command said, "It is not possible to accurately determine the precise level or conditions at which the PRC leadership might elect to attempt to match the U.S. nuclear inventory." In other words, should the U.S. continue to decrease the number of nuclear weapons in its inventory, China might be tempted to build up, if it isn't already.

Additionally, Beijing appears willing to employ nuclear weapons even in conventional conflicts. According to China's Arms Control Ambassador, Beijing's "no first use" of nuclear weapons policy does not apply in a situation in which the U.S. might intervene in Taiwan.

What the president and Secretary Hagel have seemingly failed to understand is that the superiority of the U.S. nuclear force has contributed greatly to the prevention of major war and the preservation of peace since World War II.

Haphazardly lowering the U.S. nuclear force due to an ideological opposition to nuclear weapons themselves—especially when combined with weak responses to aggression—risks a cascade of nuclear proliferation. Moreover, an effective missile defense is necessary not only for intercepting missiles, but also for convincing foes that it isn't worth launching a missile at the U.S. to begin with. It requires committed investment, testing, and sustainment over an extended period of time.

Today the rest of the world is watching the U.S. disarm and—rather than do the same—it is making the calculation that it's time to arm up.

President Obama should stop his hasty drawdown of the U.S. nuclear force, commit to its modernization, and strengthen the U.S. missile defense system. Otherwise, the path to nuclear zero will lead to only greater nuclear proliferation.

Rebecca Heinrichs is an expert on nuclear deterrence and missile defense. She is a Visiting Fellow at The Heritage Foundation.

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2013/03/13/with-north-korea-threat-looming-us-nuclear-disarmament-has-others-deciding-to/>

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Arms Control Now

OPINION/Arms Control Association Blog

Worldwide Threat Assessment (2013)

March 13, 2013

By Greg Thielmann

The "Worldwide Threat Assessment," which Director of National Intelligence James Clapper presented to the Senate Intelligence Committee on March 12, contains some closely-watched language on evolving weapons of mass

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destruction (WMD) proliferation threats. Although this year's edition borrowed liberally from the language used last year, there were also some interesting changes.

Iran

As before, the report stresses that Iran has the capacity to eventually produce nuclear weapons if it decides to do so. This time, the report adds "Iran has made progress during the past year that better positions it to produce weapon-grade uranium using its declared facilities and uranium stockpiles." The report also judges that Iran is trying to balance its desire to advance its nuclear and missile capabilities with the need to avoid a military strike or regime threatening sanctions.

One of the most significant and puzzling additions to this section was an expression of "increased concern" that the regime's demonstrated ability to launch small satellites, along with its hostility toward the United States and U.S. allies, provides Tehran with "the means and motivation to develop larger space-launch vehicles and longer-range missiles, including an...intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM)."

It is difficult to discern from publicly available information what prompted this new elaboration and explicit mention of an Iranian ICBM. The most conspicuous (non)development on this score during the last year was the total absence of large space rocket or long-range ballistic missile launch activity.

The lack of flight activity has been matched by explicit statements from Iran's Guard Aerospace Force commander that Iran's existing medium-range missiles were specifically designed for Israel and U.S. targets in the region and that no greater range was needed.

Why the U.S. intelligence community should be "growing *increasingly* concerned" about Iranian ICBMs remains a mystery.

North Korea

In the case of North Korea, on the other hand, one might expect an elevation of concern based on recent events—the display of "road-mobile ICBMs" in April 2012, a "successful" satellite launch in December 2012 and a third nuclear test in February.

Yet the 2013 Worldwide Threat Assessment mostly uses the same language as the 2012 assessment. North Korean nuclear weapons and missile programs pose "a serious threat." Both assessments cite the dangers of exporting nuclear and missile technology to others. Both assess Pyongyang's motivations for nuclear capabilities as: "deterrence, international prestige, and coercive diplomacy." And both assess that North Korea would only attempt to use nuclear weapons against U.S. forces or territory, to preserve the Kim regime. The 2013 treatment is a little more explicit about the "low" confidence level of the latter assessment, and the uncertainty about what would be perceived by Pyongyang as threatening regime survival.

It was disappointing to read in the 2013 report that North Korea has displayed "*what appears to be* a road-mobile ICBM." This formulation would appear to walk back from an unambiguous assertion by then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates in 2011 that the North Koreans "are developing a road-mobile ICBM." But it still seems to give too much credence to missiles judged to be mockups by outside experts after examining detailed ground-level photographs of the six "road-mobile ICBMs" appearing in an April 2012 Pyongyang parade. It is time for the intelligence community to provide a more explicit official assessment on this issue.

Syria

Syria was highlighted in the proliferation section of the 2013 report, noting the country's highly active chemical weapons (CW) program, and its large and dispersed stockpile of CW munitions and delivery vehicles. This year's assessment described the Assad regime as "increasingly beleaguered" and judged that it "might be prepared to use CW against the Syrian people." Moreover, it warns that groups or individuals in Syria could gain access to CW-related materials.



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Russia

The report provides an insightful political analysis of Russian domestic and foreign policies. Of greatest significance to prospects for further nuclear reductions is the judgment that Russian leaders are genuinely “wary that U.S. pursuit of [missile defenses] will result in systems that enable the United States to undercut Russia’s nuclear detent and retaliatory capabilities” and that the Kremlin will continue to look for guarantees that any system will not be directed at Russia.

The assessment also refers to Russia’s 10-year military procurement plan adopted in 2010 to “bolster deterrence with a balanced set of modern conventional, asymmetric, and nuclear capabilities.” But it notes that “funding, bureaucratic, and cultural hurdles” could complicate Russian efforts.

It is worth noting that the Russian threat to U.S. national security, by which the vast majority of the U.S. nuclear arsenal is justified, appears on p.23 of this year’s 30-page assessment.

Cyber, Terrorism, and Competition for Natural Resources

Cyber threats to U.S. national security occupy the lead-off position in the 2013 report. The terrorist threat, which opened last year’s assessment, is reported to be continuing its decline, particularly with regard to “core al-Qaida.” “Al-Qaida-inspired homegrown violent extremists” are identified as the most acute concern for protecting the homeland. Competition and scarcity involving natural resources were spotlighted more prominently this year as “growing security threats.”

Policy Implications

Given the reluctance of the intelligence community to share sensitive information with the public, filling in some of the holes left by the Worldwide Threat Assessment will be a challenge. But in light of the community’s poor track record on issues like predicting the ICBM development timelines of emerging nuclear weapons states, the press and the Congress need to continue to probe when assertions fall far short of the plain evidence that has been presented.

Taken as a whole, the Worldwide Threat Assessment can be considered a wakeup call to adjust policies in accordance with the evolving threat picture. That both the United States and Russia are confronting budget pressures, which constrain their nuclear modernization options, leads to the obvious solution of making virtue out of necessity through bilateral nuclear arms control. Negotiated reductions in nuclear arsenals can both reduce threats directly and also free resources for addressing the newer cyber and climate threats that all nations face.

Greg Thielmann has served more than three decades in the executive and legislative branches of government, specializing in political-military and intelligence issues. He is now a senior fellow of the Arms Control Association.

<http://armscontrolnow.org/2013/03/13/worldwide-threat-assessment-2013/>

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The Diplomat – Japan

Time to Change America’s Atomic Arsenal

The new mission for U.S. nuclear weapons -- minimum deterrence: The prevention of a major nuclear attack on America with a small force -- perhaps as low as 300 strategic weapons.

By Tom Nichols

March 14, 2013

Nuclear weapons in 2013 have been pushed yet again into the policy background as more pressing matters – the appalling collapse of the U.S. budget process among them – have absorbed all of Washington’s intellectual bandwidth. President Obama’s reelection means that the United States will remain publicly committed to nuclear reductions, but the studies that were supposed to detail those further reductions are now languishing in bureaucratic limbo and are

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unlikely to be a high priority. If nothing changes, the U.S. strategic deterrent will stay right where it has been since the early 1990s: merely a smaller version of the force we once arrayed against the Soviet Union.

This is largely the product of a long spell of inertia in American strategic planning. The Cold War mission of deterring another nuclear superpower by preparing for global nuclear combat, insofar as that idea ever made sense, is now a part of history and should be left behind. The new mission for U.S. nuclear weapons for at least for the next two decades, if not longer, should be one of *minimum deterrence*, meaning the prevention of a major nuclear attack on America with a small nuclear force — perhaps as low as 300 strategic weapons — targeted only for retaliation for the attempted destruction of the United States and nothing else.

This is not a radical proposal: some American military and civilian leaders gravitated to the idea of a minimum deterrent as early as the 1950s. Unfortunately, the rapid construction of nuclear arsenals during the Cold War overwhelmed any such possibility as both superpowers rushed to develop large nuclear forces divided among bombers, submarines, and land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Advocates of this traditional “triad” argue that this force helped to win the Cold War. They are only partially correct; the more we find out about the Cold War, the more the evidence points to a more refined conclusion. U.S. and Soviet leaders, as it turns out, weren’t deterred by the massive use of nuclear weapons: they were deterred by the thought of almost *any* use of nuclear weapons. If the objective is to deter an attack on the United States, then a triad of thousands of strategic weapons is, literally, overkill. During the Cold War, we fell into the trap of devising strategies to serve weapons systems, rather than the other way around. To think about tomorrow’s nuclear force, we need to abandon the tradition of simply remolding our existing nuclear deterrent into smaller versions of itself every few years. The strategic deterrent should do one thing, and one thing only: prevent the nuclear destruction of the United States by a peer like China or Russia.

What about the rogues, who can inflict great harm but not existential destruction on the U.S. or its allies? The mission of deterring WMD attacks from rogue states is not, and in reality has never been, a nuclear mission. After the Cold War, we are no longer confronting a fellow nuclear Goliath; instead, we now face a coterie of smaller Davids, each armed with various kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Threats of brute nuclear force against these smaller nations are not only useless, they are immoral. Policy wonks and armchair generals speak casually about nuclear retaliation against countries like North Korea or Iran, but the fact of the matter is that no responsible democracy like the United States would drop nuclear weapons in the crowded regions of East Asia or the Middle East any more than it would order its police to clear a street riot with a bazooka. Moreover, keeping the full panoply of nuclear forces only serves to undermine political efforts to restrain rogues like Iran and North Korea.

Whether the United States will choose to maintain conventional forces that can deliver a violent reckoning to rogue states, and thus to deter their leaders, is a separate question. It is a mission that the U.S. and its allies have already proven they can execute, as deposed autocrats like Slobodan Milosevic and Saddam Hussein could attest if they were still alive. The successful hunt for Osama Bin Laden likewise should confirm that a U.S. promise to exact justice, no matter how long it takes, should not be treated lightly.

Where strategic nuclear weapons are concerned, however, it is time to end the incoherence that has plagued debates about the U.S. deterrent since the end of the Cold War.

THE END OF THE TRIAD

The “triad” of air, sea, and land-based strategic nuclear forces is a glittering example of how weapons can drive strategy instead of the other way around. The nuclear triad was once indispensable, because its original purpose was survivability. For much of the Cold War, both sides feared a decapitating first strike that would destroy their ability to respond. With three strategic systems in place, however, it was functionally impossible to execute such a strike: a sneak attack might catch the bombers on the ground, some of the land-based force in its silos, and part of the submarine fleet in its pens. Nothing, however, would be able to smother all *three* nuclear systems fast enough to evade retaliation.



Over time, as the size of nuclear arsenals on both sides grew, the survivability issue became irrelevant: the sheer number of weapons on both sides meant that neither could muster enough force to destroy the other without being annihilated in turn. Once MAD, or mutual assured destruction, was a reality, the argument for the triad morphed from *survivability* to *flexibility*. As the superpowers developed more weapons, their strategists developed more elaborate plans for their use, and soon the question of whether nuclear weapons were meant to *deter* a nuclear war or *fight* one was lost in muddled arguments that posited a need to do both, even though civilian leaders had no inclination to use nuclear arms on any scale. From the 1960s to the 1990s, U.S. presidents and their secretaries of defense entered office only to be shocked by the immense size of the American nuclear arsenal and the complexity of the strategies for its use. Each in turn demanded changes and reforms that were rarely heeded by an entrenched nuclear bureaucracy that continued almost mechanically to match weapons to an ever growing number of targets.

If the United States chooses to pursue a minimum deterrent, it no longer needs a triad. The nuclear mission can be removed safely from at least one system, and maybe two, if the remaining U.S. deterrent is based on land and at sea.

BOMBERS AWAY?

Bombers are attractive weapons for nuclear delivery for many reasons, not least because they have the ultimate fail-safe mechanism on board: a human being. They can be sent to the very edge of their targets and still be recalled. They can change their collective minds once en route and proceed to other objectives. And they're slow, which might be a virtue; unless they're attacking Canada or Mexico, they provide precious hours in which the Americans and their enemies might negotiate.

These scenarios, however, are the kind of thing that might have sounded good in a Tom Clancy novel a quarter century ago but make less sense today. Indeed, if the goal of U.S. security policy is to avoid the use of nuclear weapons – as it should be – then this kind of flexibility might be counterproductive, especially if it tempts a President to rattle a nuclear sabre, perhaps by ordering the takeoff of a flight of stealth bombers during a tense moment. This is an idea that always sounds attractive at first but is far more complicated on closer examination. Once the bombers are up, when do they come down? Does ordering their return mean the crisis is over? Does their flight time create an artificial clock that would make a crisis even worse? Would an enemy who cannot detect stealth bombers wait to find out whether their launch is a bluff? This kind of flexibility seems to offer little to U.S. policymakers besides the ability to paint themselves into a corner.

The irony here is that the focus on *nuclear* bombers obscures the crucial role that long-range *conventional* bombers will play in the 21st century. Every argument about the utility of bombers is correct – so long as they are armed with conventional weapons that are actually usable in crowded regions. The current supply of B-1, B-2 and the venerable B-52 bombers (planes old enough to have been flown by their pilots' *grandfathers*) can stay in service until at least 2040. The Pentagon wants a next-generation bomber, but again, the rationale for a nuclear version seems to boil down to little more than that we need them because we've always had them.

LAND AND SEA

Submarines, like bombers, can begin their journey to their targets and be recalled at leisure. Indeed, because they can travel but still launch ballistic missiles, they are more flexible than bombers. They can be put to sea for long periods of time, they are difficult to detect, and their weapons are highly accurate. Whatever the final form of the American strategic deterrent in the coming decades, submarines will remain its backbone.

The main question is how many submarines are required to serve a minimum U.S. deterrent. The current U.S. fleet of 14 ballistic missile submarines is due to be replaced starting in 2027; the Navy wants a dozen new boats, while critics contend (correctly) that the number could be lower. The important point is that even one of these new submarines could carry up to 64 warheads, more than enough to lay waste to an entire country. If that's not enough firepower to deter an attack on the United States, it is doubtful that two hundred or two thousand more bombs – which would destroy the attacker and most of the Northern Hemisphere – would make any greater difference.



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There has been a fair amount of discussion about eliminating land-based ICBMs, an idea supported by organizations like Global Zero. There is a logic behind eliminating the ICBM force: if the nation's deterrent is located far from the American population, there would be less anxiety during a crisis and less impulse to preempt the enemy's nuclear forces.

This is nonetheless a dangerous proposal. Some portion of the U.S. deterrent should remain in the continental United States precisely *because* an attack on the American retaliatory force would mean an attack on North America and its people. No potential enemy should ever think it can engage in the risky math of eliminating the American nuclear deterrent without having to contemplate a full-scale nuclear war with the United States. Even if only a hundred or fewer silos remain on American soil, they should stay there until global nuclear stocks drop enough so that they can be safely removed.

The important thing to remember in considering all of these proposals is that the use of nuclear weapons is not a game. It is not an intellectual exercise, or a thought experiment. It is an unfortunate legacy of the Cold War that policy analysts and scholars became accustomed to talking about huge numbers of nuclear arms and immense casualties, but as McGeorge Bundy wrote in 1969, real policymakers don't think that way. The U.S. strategic deterrent should be the threat of last resort in almost unimaginable circumstances, rather than one tool of statecraft among many. A corresponding reform of the strategic arsenal is not only a good idea, but it is one well within reach.

*Tom Nichols is a professor of national security affairs at the U.S. Naval War College and a professor of government at the Harvard Extension School. His new book on nuclear strategy, *No Use: Nuclear Weapons and the Reform of American Security Strategy*, will be published by the University of Pennsylvania Press in 2013.*

The views expressed are solely those of the author.

<http://thediplomat.com/2013/03/14/time-to-change-americas-atomic-arsenal/?all=true>

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Brookings Institute
OPINION/Up Front Blog

Presidents, Nuclear Reductions and the Senate

By Steven Pifer
March 14, 2013

President Barack Obama desires to further reduce nuclear arsenals below the levels set in the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). Republicans on Capitol Hill and former officials of the George W. Bush administration assert that he can reduce U.S. nuclear forces only as the result of another treaty, requiring approval by a two-thirds majority in the Senate. In fact, over the past 40 years, there is plenty of precedent—set by *Republican presidents*—to the contrary.

Why this matters has to do with how Mr. Obama might codify a new arms reductions arrangement with Russia. If Moscow is prepared to engage, still an open question, the Obama administration appears to want options in addition to a treaty. Why? Fear that Senate Republicans would set an impossibly high bar for any new Obama treaty, a worry fueled by the unexpectedly partisan and bitter ratification fight over New START.

For more than 40 years, U.S. presidents reduced nuclear weapons and recorded limits—or sought to do so—in ways that did not require Senate consent to ratification, starting with Richard Nixon. Mr. Nixon in May 1972 signed the interim offensive arms agreement on strategic weapons. It froze the numbers of launchers of U.S. and Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) at levels giving the Soviets significantly larger numbers. Mr. Nixon chose to submit this as an agreement requiring a simple majority vote by both houses of Congress rather than as a treaty requiring two-thirds majority approval in the Senate.

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Some 20 years later, President George H. W. Bush made deep unilateral cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal. In September 1991, he announced what became known as the “presidential nuclear initiatives.” These included the elimination of all U.S. nuclear artillery shells and warheads for short-range ballistic missiles, as well as the removal of all tactical nuclear weapons from U.S. Navy warships, many of which would be destroyed. Mr. Bush said that he had consulted with his senior advisors and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He made no mention of the Senate or Congress—and appears not to have consulted with them before announcing a second set of nuclear initiatives in January 1992.

As a result of the presidential nuclear initiatives, the United States unilaterally eliminated thousands of tactical nuclear weapons from its arsenal. According to Department of Defense figures, the overall U.S. nuclear stockpile fell from more than 23,000 weapons to less than 13,000 during the Bush presidency. Only some of those reductions resulted from treaties approved by the Senate.

Ten years later, in November 2001, President George W. Bush announced that, as a result of his administration’s nuclear posture review, the U.S. military would maintain 1,700-2,200 “operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads.” When President Vladimir Putin asked for a new arms control treaty with limits below the levels of the 1991 START I Treaty (it allowed each side 6,000 warheads), the Bush administration came up with a novel approach: Mr. Bush would state publicly that the United States would maintain no more than 1,700-2,200 operationally deployed strategic nuclear warheads, and Mr. Putin would state that Russia would maintain X. It would be up to Moscow to fill in the X at whatever level the Russians chose; the Bush White House did not care. These would be parallel statements of national policy, not a treaty subject to approval by the Senate.

This approach held little appeal for the Russians. In the end, Mr. Bush, grateful for Russian support in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, agreed to Mr. Putin’s direct plea for a treaty. They signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT) in May 2002, a two-page agreement that limited the United States and Russia each to no more than 1,700-2,200 “strategic nuclear warheads,” though it failed to define “strategic nuclear warhead” or anything else and had no monitoring provisions. The treaty was unverifiable.

There are good reasons to consider codifying further nuclear reductions in a treaty, particularly a treaty with agreed definitions and verification provisions. But Mr. Obama has other options, as his Republican predecessors have demonstrated. Tomorrow’s blog—“SORT vs New START: Why the Administration is Leery of a Treaty”—will address why the administration might choose an option other than a legally binding treaty.

Steven Pifer is director of the Brookings Arms Control Initiative and a senior fellow with the Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence and the Center on the United States and Europe in the Foreign Policy program at Brookings.

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2013/03/14-nuclear-weapons-obama-senate-pifer>

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