



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel

UN Watchdog Concerned Iran Secretly Developing Nuclear Weapons Despite IAEA Talks

The comments by International Atomic Energy Agency head Yukiya Amano are bound to resonate with Israel and Western nations, which assert Iran is seeking nuclear weapons capacity even though it insists its atomic activities are transparent and peaceful.

By The Associated Press (AP)

April 03, 2013

The United Nations's top nuclear official expressed concern Tuesday that Iran may be secretly continuing work on nuclear weapons while his agency is tied up in protracted negotiations with the country on restarting an investigation into past suspected research and development of such arms.

The comments by International Atomic Energy Agency head Yukiya Amano are bound to resonate with Israel and Western nations, which assert Iran is seeking nuclear weapons capacity even though it insists its atomic activities are transparent and peaceful.

At the same time, critics question the objectivity of the intelligence such assessments are based on, noting most comes from the United States and Israel, Iran's greatest detractors. They say that if the information cannot be vetted publicly it should at least be shared with Tehran so that the Islamic Republic can see the evidence used to cast suspicion upon it.

Iran denies any secret weapons work — it says its nuclear program is primarily for medical and energy purposes — and skeptics note that even the United States said in 2007 that Tehran had suspended all meaningful weapons development by 2003.

Since then, however, IAEA reports have listed suspicions of tests and experiments past that date. Britain, France, Germany and Israel have also said that such work continued beyond 2003. While the United States has not publicly revised its 2007 intelligence assessment, its information remains a mainstay of IAEA assessments such as the one made by Amano on Tuesday.

"We do not know for sure, but we have information indicating that Iran was engaged in activities relevant to the development of nuclear explosive devices in the past and now," he told The Associated Press in what appeared to be his most specific assertion that such activities are continuing into the present.

While not going into detail, Amano said the IAEA's information was "cross checked ... so we have concerns."

Iran has dismissed the intelligence seen by the agency as faked and has demanded access to it. On Tuesday, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's chief IAEA delegate, cut short a telephone call from the AP seeking reaction.

Asked to comment on Amano's remarks, nuclear scientist Yousaf Butt of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, who frequently questions how seriously the IAEA's information should be taken without outside scrutiny, said Tehran "should be presented with any such evidence so it can respond to it."

Amano spoke three days ahead of a renewed round of nuclear talks between Iran and six world powers in Kazakhstan that are meant to reconcile the two sides' widely differing demands.

Iran wants an end to punishing international sanctions imposed for its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment, while the international community is calling on Tehran to curb parts of its enrichment program most suited to providing material for nuclear warheads.

Both sides were cautiously hopeful that differences were slightly narrowed as they emerged from the previous negotiating session in February. Still, any progress at the talks this week will likely be no more than incremental, and as the negotiations drag on the IAEA's attempts to restart a probe into the suspected secret weapons work is on hold.



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Like others previously, the last meeting between Iran and the IAEA on re-launching the investigation ended inconclusively after more than a year of occasional talks on the issue, with agency officials saying a pause was needed. Amano on Tuesday said his agency was now "ready to continue ... the dialogue" with Iran, even without expectations of progress.

Iran's alleged secret weapons work and its expanding uranium enrichment program are the two greatest issues of concern about Tehran's nuclear activities.

On Tuesday, Amano said there was "some possibility" that Iran may already be constructing additional sites to enrich uranium at locations unknown to the agency, based on an announcement by Tehran that they plan to build around 10 such additional facilities.

But he said the agency does not have specifics about whether work on such installations has actually started, with Iran not answering requests for "further information in this regard."

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/un-watchdog-concerned-iran-secretly-developing-nuclear-weapons-despite-iaea-talks-1.513148>

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

Iran Talks Tough Ahead of Nuclear Talks in Kazakhstan

4 April 2013

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Iran went into talks with world powers in apparently uncompromising mood Thursday by demanding the immediate recognition of its right to enrich uranium and dismissing the chances of direct talks with the United States.

The powers themselves expressed cautious optimism as each side settled in for two days of meetings that start Friday on Iran's nuclear programme in the Kazakh city of Almaty -- the fifth such talks in two years.

Iran's chief nuclear negotiator pronounced the last negotiations at the same venue "positive" and but said the powers - - comprised of the five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany and known as the P5+1 -- has to agree to its key demand in the decade-old dispute.

"We think that they can open up tomorrow's (Friday's) talks with one phrase -- and that is to accept Iran's right, particularly its right to enrich," Saeed Jalili said in a speech at an Almaty university ahead of the negotiations.

"We hope that in Almaty, they do not repeat the bitter experience they have gone through in the 34 years of our revolution and that they make the right conclusion this spring," he said referring to the 1979 Islamic revolution that ousted the shah.

The demand is inherently objectionable to world powers because Iran is prohibited from enriching uranium by the United Nations and is heavily sanctioned for its secretive work.

Jalili also appeared to downplay the chances of his one-on-one meeting with chief US negotiator Wendy Sherman -- talks Washington has been seeking for years.

"What our nation is expecting is for the US to correct its behaviour, and not in just words, and tomorrow in Almaty they are in for another test," said Jalili.

"Those who come to negotiations should come with logic and not threats, saying that all the options are on the table. This is contrary to common sense."

The P5+1 grouping is particularly concerned about Iran's enrichment to levels of up to 20 percent and the Fordo fortified bunker where such activity is conducted.

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



The powers also want Iran to ship out its existing stockpile of 20-percent enriched material.

Iran denies it is developing the atomic bomb and argues that it needs its nuclear programme for peaceful medical and energy needs.

The powers proposed in February that Iran shutter the Fordo reactor and in exchange receive small concessions offer the hope of greater ones if it made a bigger step.

Iran has reportedly been offered the right to deal in some precious metals and perform small financial transactions now prohibited by international sanctions. The Islamic Republic has already called this approach unbalanced.

But a senior US administration official said the offer on the table now was "balanced and very fair."

"It is impossible to predict the results, but we will stay very engaged with Iran," said the US official.

"We hope Iran comes prepared and makes a concrete and substantive response" to a package proposed in February.

The official refused to speculate about what would happen should Iran not accept the proposal's terms or present its own unacceptable counter-offer.

"I would hope that we are not at any last chance," said the official.

"I think if we're not sure about how much we've gotten and whether we have gotten enough, we'll go back and consult with capitals before we reach any ultimate conclusion here. So I think we have time and space to consider what we hear."

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton -- Jalili's counterpart at the Almaty talks -- herself said that she was going into the meeting with her usual "cautious optimism".

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/343950/iran-talks-tough-ahead-of-nuclear-talks-in-kazakhstan>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

Iran, Big Powers at Odds in Nuclear Talks in Kazakhstan

As a new round of nuclear talks begin, Western diplomats say Iran negotiators failed to respond clearly to offer made by P5+1; Iranian negotiator Jalili emphasizes Tehran's "right to enrichment."

By REUTERS

04 April 2013

ALMATY - World powers and Iran still appeared far apart on Friday in negotiations on Tehran's nuclear program that were aimed at calming tensions which could boil over into war.

As talks got under way in Kazakhstan, the six nations - the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany - sought a concrete response from Iran to their February offer to ease sanctions if it stops its most sensitive nuclear work.

Iranian negotiators said they had outlined their own "specific" proposals, but a Western diplomat said they had still not responded clearly to the initiative from the big powers.

The dissonant views suggested the two sides had not narrowed differences that have bedevilled a decade of on-off talks.

"We are somewhat puzzled by the Iranians' characterization of what they presented at this morning's plenary," a Western diplomat said. "There has not yet been a clear and concrete response to the...proposal (from the six powers)."

Iran's deputy negotiator Ali Bagheri did not say whether the offer was acceptable, but told reporters his side had made "specific proposals...for the start of a new round of cooperation."



"Naturally, the talks will continue today and, if necessary tomorrow, until the two sides exchange their views and until a new platform for cooperation is formed," he said after talks paused for Iranian negotiators to join Friday prayers at Almaty's main mosque.

The dispute centers on Iranian efforts to enrich uranium, which world powers suspect are part of a covert drive to achieve atom bomb capability. The UN Security Council has demanded that Iran stop the process, in several resolutions since 2006.

Iran argues it has the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes under international law and denies its nuclear work has military aims. It has refused to change course unless the big powers recognize its right to enrichment and lift sanctions.

Stakes are high because Israel has threatened to bomb the Islamic Republic's atomic sites if diplomacy fails to rein in a foe which it sees as bent on its destruction.

Chances for a quick breakthrough are seen as scant, with Iran not expected to make any major decisions on nuclear policy until after its presidential election in June.

Western diplomats are hoping at least for serious discussion of their February proposal, under which Iran would have to close a nuclear facility and ship some enriched uranium stockpiles abroad in return for modest relief on sanctions on Iranian petrochemicals and trade in gold and other precious metals.

Jalili: Iran has a right to enrichment

For years Iran has resisted ever-harsher sanctions and pressure to retreat from a nuclear program that enjoys broad support amongst its fractious political leadership.

Iran's chief negotiator, Saeed Jalili, said in a speech at Almaty University on the eve of the latest talks that their success hinged on "acceptance of the rights of Iran, particularly the right to enrichment."

The six nations, however, say this right only applies when nuclear work is carried out under sufficient oversight by UN inspectors, something Iran has refused to grant.

For now, Iran may play for time, trying to keep diplomacy on track to avert new sanctions before the June election.

Tehran's conversion of some of its higher-grade uranium stockpile to nuclear reactor fuel may have bought time for diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute peacefully.

But if talks fail to produce sufficient progress, Western governments are likely to impose yet more economic penalties, with the double aim of pressuring Tehran while seeking to persuade Israel to hold back from any military action.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu told visiting US senators on Thursday that Tehran's nuclear work must be stopped.

"We cannot allow a situation in which a regime that calls for our annihilation has the weapons of annihilation," he said.

US President Barack Obama sought to cool tempers during a trip to Israel in March, saying diplomacy was the best option, but he hinted at possible military action as a last resort.

"The probable failure of this round (of talks) does not mean that (military) strikes are imminent or that diplomacy later this year has no chance," said Cliff Kupchan, Middle East director at the Eurasia consultancy. "Obama's recent trip reassured Israel that Washington holds a tough position."

In the best case, Western diplomats say, this could give the sides time to iron out details of any future deal.

"If Iran ... really engages in a negotiation, even if we all agreed today on the terms of an agreement, it would take time to put (it) together because this is a highly technical agreement," a senior US official said before heading to Almaty.

<http://www.jpost.com/Iranian-Threat/News/Iran-big-powers-at-odds-in-nuclear-talks-in-Kazakhstan-308822>



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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
April 1, 2013

S. Korea sets Out 'Active Deterrence' Against N. Korea's Nuke Threats

SEOUL, April 1 (Yonhap) -- South Korea's defense ministry unveiled Monday a new contingency plan of "active deterrence" that allows its military to launch a preemptive strike against North Korea if the North shows signs of an imminent nuclear or missile attack on the South.

The new contingency plan was outlined in an annual policy briefing by Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin to President Park Geun-hye amid heightened tensions over the escalation of North Korea's bellicose rhetoric against Seoul and Washington.

In a briefing to Park, Defense Minister Kim said the military is mapping out "an active deterrence and will build an attack system to swiftly neutralize North Korea's nuclear and missile threats, while significantly improving our military's capability of surveillance and reconnaissance."

To achieve the goal, the ministry will speed up the deployment of a "kill chain" system capable of detecting, targeting and destroying North Korean nuclear and missile targets, ministry officials said.

South Korea had originally planned to deploy the "kill chain" system by 2015, but ministry officials said it will be deployed ahead of the planned schedule.

The new contingency plan will be formalized in October this year, when defense chiefs of South Korea and the U.S. hold annual security talks, ministry officials said.

The ministry will also speed up building and deploying South Korea's own missile defense system, named "Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD)," at an earlier date than scheduled.

The Korean missile defense system, tailored for Korean terrain, is designed to intercept hostile missiles or combat aircrafts at an altitude of 10-30 kilometers.

To enhance its reconnaissance capability, South Korea will make efforts for a speedy deployment of U.S.-made Global Hawk spy drones and put at least two military spy satellites into orbit by 2021, according to the ministry.

Last December, the U.S. government informed Congress of a plan to sell four Global Hawk surveillance drones to South Korea. The deal under the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program would be worth up to US\$1.2 billion.

Tensions remain high on the Korean Peninsula following North Korea's third nuclear test on Feb. 12, prompting the U.N. to impose new sanctions against the totalitarian regime.

Since then, North Korea has issued a constant stream of bellicose rhetoric. On Saturday, Pyongyang said it has entered into a "state of war" with Seoul, threatening to take "stern physical actions."

Last week, North Korea said it put its artillery forces on their highest combat alert and repeated threats of attacks against South Korea and the U.S.

The communist nation said they are targeting the U.S. mainland, Hawaii and Guam, as well as other U.S. military bases in the Pacific and South Korea, it said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/04/01/81/0301000000AEN20130401003700315F.HTML>

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Chosun Ilbo – South Korea
April 3, 2013



N.Korea Vows to Restart Nuclear Reactor

North Korea on Tuesday threatened to restart a nuclear reactor it shut down under an international agreement in 2008, which would enable it to produce more nuclear weapons-grade plutonium.

"We are taking action to refurbish and reactivate the reactor together with all other nuclear facilities in Yongbyon including a uranium enrichment plant," the North's official KCNA news agency cited a spokesman for the General Department of Atomic Energy as saying.

"The decision is in line with our two-track strategies of building the economy and developing nuclear power at the same time."

The threat comes amid rising tensions on the peninsula over international sanctions against the isolated state's latest nuclear test.

In a highly publicized stunt, the North blew up the cooling tower at the 5MW Yongbyon nuclear reactor in June 2008 as part of its pledge to scrap the nuclear facility.

Restarting it would allow North Korea to make nuclear weapons by extracting plutonium from highly radioactive fuel rods that can no longer be used to make electricity.

Pyongyang agreed in six-party nuclear talks in October 2007 to shut down the facility and demolished the cooling tower the following year as part of its pledge to halt the production and reprocessing of nuclear fuel rods.

U.S. Ambassador to South Korea Sung Kim, who was in charge of Korean affairs at the State Department at the time, traveled to North Korea in June 2008 to witness the demolition, which was broadcast live on CNN. The same year then U.S. president George W. Bush in turn removed North Korea from a blacklist of terror-sponsoring countries.

"There were some concerns at the time that the demolition was aimed at deceiving the international community," said Yun Duk-min at Korea National Diplomatic Academy. "Now it has become clear that it was just a show. North Korea has repeatedly scrapped agreements with the international community after getting what it wants."

Experts believe it is theoretically possible to restart the reactor without the cooling tower. They say the North could produce enough fissile material to conduct at least one more nuclear test within a year if it restarts the graphite-moderated reactor.

North Korea claims that the purpose of the Yongbyon facility is to generate electricity, but the latest announcement makes it clear that it was always intended to produce nuclear weapons.

Chun Sung-hoon at the Korea Institute for National Unification said, "The latest announcement shows that any agreements with the North to freeze its nuclear program are meaningless."

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2013/04/03/2013040300549.html

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The Seattle Times

US Moves on NKorea Aimed at Deterring New Leader

The parading of U.S. air and naval power within view of the Korean peninsula - first a few long-range bombers, then stealth fighters, then ships - is as much about psychological war as real war. The U.S. wants to discourage North Korea's young leader from starting a fight that could escalate to renewed war with South Korea.

April 3, 2013

By ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press (AP) National Security Writer



WASHINGTON — The parading of U.S. air and naval power within view of the Korean peninsula - first a few long-range bombers, then stealth fighters, then ships - is as much about psychological war as real war. The U.S. wants to discourage North Korea's young leader from starting a fight that could escalate to renewed war with South Korea.

Worries in Washington rose Tuesday with North Korea's vow to increase production of nuclear weapons materials. Secretary of State John Kerry called the announced plan "unacceptable" and stressed that the U.S. is ready to defend itself and its allies. But he and other U.S. officials also sought to lower the rhetorical temperature by holding out the prospect of the North's reversing course and resuming nuclear negotiations.

At a joint news conference with visiting South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se, Kerry said the U.S. would proceed "thoughtfully and carefully" and in consultation with South Korea, Japan, China and others.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, in a call late Tuesday to China's defense minister, called the North's development of nuclear weapons a "growing threat" to the U.S. and its allies.

Hagel, citing North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in his phone conversation with Chang Wanquan, said Washington and Beijing should continue to cooperate on those problems, according to a Pentagon statement describing the call.

Michael Green, an Asia specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said it should be no surprise that North Korea is vowing to restart a long-dormant nuclear reactor and ramp up production of atomic weapons material.

"This is part of their protection racket," Green said in an interview. "I think the end state North Korea would like is that we, the U.S. in particular, but also China, Japan, South Korea, are so rattled by all this that we decide it's just better to cut a deal with them."

Tensions have flared many times in the six decades since a truce halted the 1950-53 Korean War, but the stakes are higher now that a defiant North Korea appears to have moved closer to building a nuclear bomb that could not only threaten the South and other U.S. allies in Asia but possibly, one day, even reach U.S. territory.

That explains, in part, why the U.S. is displaying military muscle to warn the North to hold its fire.

Washington also wants to leave no doubt that it has the South's back, and that Seoul should not act rashly. Nor does the U.S. want South Korea to feel compelled to answer the North's nuclear drive by building its own bomb.

"We are in the business of assuring our South Korean allies that we will help defend them in the face of threats," Pentagon press secretary George Little said, adding, "We are looking for the temperature to be taken down on the Korean peninsula."

Even without nuclear arms, the North poses enough artillery within range of Seoul to devastate large parts of the capital before U.S. and South Korea could fully respond. The U.S. has about 28,500 troops in the South, and it could call on an array of air, ground and naval forces to reinforce the peninsula from elsewhere in Asia and the Pacific.

In just the past few months, North Korea has taken a series of steps Washington deemed provocative, including an underground nuclear test in February. In December the North Koreans launched a rocket that put a satellite into space and demonstrated mastery of some of the technologies needed to produce a long-range nuclear missile. And several weeks ago, the North threatened to pre-emptively attack the U.S.

Bruce Bennett, a specialist in North Korean affairs for the RAND Corp., said he believes much of the recent taunting from North Korea reflects turmoil among the ruling elite in Pyongyang. He cited unusually high turnover among senior officials during the 15 months that Kim Jong Un - grandson of the nation's founder - has been the top leader.

"I think with the purges going on, he's got some instability that is generally not being recognized" outside of North Korea and that may be pushing Kim to take a more confrontational stance, Bennett said in an interview. "He's trying to be blustery to make it appear that he's really in control, he's really strong and he can defeat us."



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In response, the Pentagon announced it would beef up missile defenses based on the U.S. West Coast, and it highlighted over a period of days the deployment of B-52 and B-2 bombers, as well as two F-22 stealth fighters, to South Korea as part of an annual U.S.-South Korean exercise called Foal Eagle, which lasts through April.

On Tuesday, officials said the Navy was keeping the USS Decatur, a destroyer armed with missile defense systems, in the vicinity of the Korean peninsula for an unspecified period instead of continuing its journey back to the U.S. after a Mideast deployment. And they said a similar ship, the USS McCain, had been shifted slightly to the waters off the southwest coast of the Korean peninsula as a further precautionary move.

North Korea has been an enigma to most outsiders since it was founded by Kim Il Sung in 1948. The United States has often misjudged the North's political path. After the founding Kim died in 1994, for example, U.S. intelligence officials said they believed his successor son, Kim Jong Il, would be more accommodating to the West.

"Flaky as he may be, (Kim Jong Il) nevertheless ... realizes the only way they're going to extricate themselves from the shambles that their economy is in now is to get outside help," James R. Clapper Jr. told a congressional panel in January 1995. Clapper was director of the Defense Intelligence Agency at the time; today he is President Barack Obama's most senior intelligence adviser as director of national intelligence.

AP broadcast correspondent Sagar Meghani contributed to this report.

http://seattletimes.com/html/politics/2020695274_apususnorthkorea.html

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The London Guardian – U.K.

North Korea Nuclear Threats Prompt US Missile Battery Deployment to Guam

Hagel says Pyongyang poses 'real and clear danger' to US allies as Pentagon deploys missile defence battery to Pacific island

By Ewen MacAskill in Washington and Justin McCurry on Baengnyeong Island, South Korea
Wednesday, 3 April 2013

The Pentagon ordered an advanced missile defence system to the western Pacific on Wednesday, as US defence secretary Chuck Hagel declared that North Korea posed "a real and clear danger" to South Korea, Japan and America itself.

The deployment of the battery to the US territory of Guam is the biggest demonstration yet that Washington regards the confrontation with North Korea as more worrying than similar crises of the past few years. It also suggested they are preparing for long standoff.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) is intended to provide protection for US military bases in the region against short- and medium-range North Korean missiles. North Korea has over the past few weeks warned that it could strike Guam, Hawaii and the US west coast.

The \$800m battery was not originally due for deployment until 2015, but will now be in place in weeks. There had been debate within the Pentagon about deploying it first to the Middle East to protect Israel, but the threat from North Korea is now viewed as more serious.

The Pentagon, in a statement, said the deployment was "a precautionary move to strengthen our regional defence posture against the North Korean regional ballistic missile threat".

Hagel, speaking at the National Defense University in Washington, stressed North Korea's potential military threat. "They have a nuclear capacity now. They have a missile delivery capacity now. And so, as they have ratcheted up their

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



bellicose, dangerous rhetoric, and some of the actions they have taken over the last few weeks present a real and clear danger."

His response contrasted with more muted comments by other members of the Obama administration over the last two days as they sought to reduce tensions.

China had earlier on Wednesday also voiced strong fears about rising tensions on the Korean peninsula, with Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Hong Lei telling reporters in Beijing that the country's deputy foreign minister, Zhang Yesui, had expressed serious concern over the crisis in a meeting with ambassadors from the US and South Korea.

"In the present situation, China believes all sides must remain calm and exercise restraint and not take actions which are mutually provocative and must certainly not take actions which will worsen the situation," he said.

North Korea made an announcement on Tuesday that it would resume operations to produce weapons-grade plutonium by barring South Korean workers from entering a jointly-run industrial complex.

The Kaesong industrial complex, six miles north of the heavily fortified border that has separated the two countries for six decades, is viewed as the last remaining symbol of inter-Korean co-operation.

The North has disrupted operations there before, but yesterday's move caused particular concern as South Korea and the US attempt to respond to a catalogue of provocations by the Pyongyang regime.

In recent weeks, North Korea has threatened a nuclear attack against the US and its overseas bases – a hollow threat, experts say, given the regime's relatively primitive nuclear and missile technology – and declared a "state of war" with South Korea.

China is North Korea's only remaining ally and its biggest aid donor. Its description of the situation in such bleak terms is being interpreted as a sign of growing frustration with the unpredictable behaviour of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un.

Hagel, speaking before the missile deployment was announced, said the danger posed was to South Korea and Japan, and "also the threats that the North Koreans have levelled directly at the US regarding our base in Guam, and [which have] threatened Hawaii and threatened the west coast. We take those threats seriously."

He described the US response so far as measured, conducting joint military exercises with the South Koreans – even though this involved flying US B-52 and B-2 bombers over the Korean peninsula – and working with the China to defuse the crisis.

But Hagel reiterated the risk of misreading the danger. "It only takes being wrong once, and I don't want to be the secretary of defence that was wrong once." He expressed hope that North Korea would ratchet down its dangerous rhetoric.

Using the phrase that echoes a "clear and present danger" has a special resonance in the US that in the past had been a precursor to war, though the signals from the White House so far suggest no one realistically thinks that is imminent.

The THAAD system is land-based and includes a truck-mounted launcher, interceptor missiles, a tracking radar and an integrated fire-control system.

The Pentagon statement said: "The United States continues to urge the North Korean leadership to cease provocative threats and choose the path of peace by complying with its international obligations. The United States remains vigilant in the face of North Korean provocations and stands ready to defend our territory, our allies, and our national interests."

The disruption to the Kaesong complex, which draws on investment from more than 100 South Korean firms and employs workers from both countries, was seen by some experts as a sign of a swift deterioration in an already tense situation between North and South Korea.



The unification ministry in Seoul said about 480 South Korean managers who had planned to travel to Kaesong had been prevented from crossing into the North. "South Korea's government deeply regrets the entry ban and urges that it be lifted immediately," said ministry spokesman Kim Hyung-seok. "Ensuring the safety of our citizens is our top priority and the South Korean government will take necessary measures based on this principle."

Of the South Korean workers who had stayed in Kaesong the previous night, three had returned by mid-afternoon local time, with about 800 more expected to follow. The unification ministry later said 46 workers would return by early evening, while the remainder would stay in Kaesong, according to the Yonhap news agency.

The country's defence minister, Kim Kwan-jin, said he would do everything possible to ensure the safety of workers who remained inside the zone. Those contingencies reportedly included "military action" as a last resort.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/03/us-missile-defence-system-guam-north-korea>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

N. Korea 'Approves Nuclear Strike' on US - Report

4 April 2013

WASHINGTON, April 3 (RIA Novosti) – The North Korean army said Wednesday that it had received approval to launch a “merciless” attack on the United States, including possible nuclear strikes.

The General Staff of the Korean People’s Army said in a statement Wednesday that it was formally informing the United States that American threats would be “smashed ... by cutting-edge smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear strikes,” AFP cited Pyongyang’s official KCNA news agency as saying.

The announcement out of North Korea came hours after US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel ordered missile defense systems deployed to the western Pacific island of Guam, a US territory, and said the reclusive regime’s recent behavior presents a “real and clear danger.”

“The merciless operation of (our) revolutionary armed forces in this regard has been finally examined and ratified,” AFP cited the North Korean statement as saying.

The army statement added that war could erupt on the Korean peninsula “today or tomorrow,” AFP reported.

The Pentagon said earlier Wednesday that it will deploy a ballistic missile defense system known as a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System (THAAD) to Guam in the coming weeks “as a precautionary move to strengthen our regional defense posture against the North Korean regional ballistic missile threat.”

“The United States continues to urge the North Korean leadership to cease provocative threats and choose the path of peace by complying with its international obligations,” the Pentagon statement said. “The United States remains vigilant in the face of North Korean provocations and stands ready to defend US territory, our allies, and our national interests.”

Speaking Wednesday at the National Defense University in Washington, Hagel said the North Koreans had “ratcheted up (their) bellicose, dangerous rhetoric—and some of the actions they’ve taken over the last few weeks present a real and clear danger and threat to the interests, certainly of our allies, starting with South Korea and Japan,” Fox News reported.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said Wednesday that Washington is continuing “to monitor the situation” on the Korean peninsula.

“The provocative actions and bellicose rhetoric that we see from North Korea is obviously of concern, and we take—are taking the necessary precautionary measures,” Carney told reporters, adding that Pyongyang’s behavior “represents a familiar pattern.”



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The statement Wednesday by the North Korean army follows a pledge by Pyongyang on Tuesday to restart facilities at its Yongbyon nuclear complex, including a uranium enrichment plant and a reactor.

Tensions began to rise on the Korean Peninsula after international sanctions were imposed on North Korea in response to a long-range rocket launch in December that world powers condemned as a ballistic missile test. North Korea responded by carrying out a third nuclear test in February, which was followed by more sanctions.

North Korea has threatened pre-emptive nuclear strikes on the US mainland and US military bases in the region.

Some of the threats came as US and South Korean forces carried out annual joint military drills, including near the maritime border between the two Koreas. The United States responded by deploying F-22 Raptor stealth fighters to the region.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130404/180431752/N-Korea-Approves-Nuclear-Strike-on-US.html

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Chicago Tribune

North Korea Lacks Means for Nuclear Strike on U.S., Experts Say

April 04, 2013

By Mark Hosenball and Phil Stewart, Reuters

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - North Korea's explicit threats this week to strike the United States with nuclear weapons are rhetorical bluster, as the isolated nation does not yet have the means to make good on them, Western officials and security experts say.

Pyongyang has slowly and steadily improved its missile capabilities in recent years and U.S. officials say its missiles may be capable of hitting outlying U.S. territories and states, including Guam, Alaska and Hawaii.

Some private experts say even this view is alarmist. There is no evidence, the officials say, that North Korea has tested the complex art of miniaturizing a nuclear weapon to be placed on a long-range missile, a capability the United States, Russia, China and others achieved decades ago.

In other words, North Korea might be able to hit some part of the United States, but not the mainland and not with a nuclear weapon.

The threats against the United States by North Korea's young leader Kim Jong-un are "probably all bluster," said Gary Samore, until recently the top nuclear proliferation expert on President Barack Obama's national security staff.

"It's extremely unlikely they have a nuclear missile which could reach the United States," said Samore.

The North Koreans "are not suicidal. They know that any kind of direct attack (on the United States) would be end of their country," said Samore, now at Harvard University's Kennedy School.

On Wednesday, North Korea's state-run KCNA news agency said its military had "ratified" an attack involving "cutting-edge smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear strike means," an apparent reference to miniaturized nuclear weapons.

It was the latest in a stream of invective from Pyongyang against what it apparently sees as hostile U.S.-South Korean military exercises, and U.N. sanctions imposed after its latest underground nuclear test.

Also on Wednesday, the Pentagon said it was moving a missile defense system known as the THAAD, or Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, to Guam, which Pyongyang has specifically threatened.

BOMBS AND MISSILES

The details of North Korea's weapons programs known to U.S. and other intelligence agencies remain classified. And there appear to be gaps in that knowledge, due to North Korea's highly secretive nature.

Issue No. 1052, 05 April 2013

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



Some U.S. official and private weapons experts say North Korea may have succeeded in designing, and possibly building, a miniaturized nuclear device that could be fit aboard medium-range missiles known as the Nodong.

This is in dispute, however. And even if Pyongyang has developed such a warhead, there are serious doubts about whether North Korea would be able to test it enough to ensure it actually worked.

Medium-range missiles such as the Nodong might be able to reach U.S. allies South Korea and Japan, as well as Okinawa, where there is still a large U.S. military presence. But they do not have the range to hit even remote U.S. Pacific territories.

Another missile that U.S. intelligence agencies are watching closely is the KN-08, which has a longer range than the Nodong, and was first shown off in a North Korean military parade a year ago.

Last month, Admiral James Winnefeld, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told journalists that "we believe the KN-08 probably does have the range to reach the United States."

On Thursday, a U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United States believes the KN-08 could hit U.S. Pacific territory Guam, Hawaii and Alaska, but not the U.S. mainland.

Another official acknowledged that the U.S. estimate of the missile's range is based on limited intelligence.

Greg Thielmann, a former State Department intelligence official now with the Arms Control Association, was more skeptical of the KN-08 missile.

When some experts examined close-up pictures of a KN-08 missile on display in Pyongyang, they concluded it was a fake or mock-up, Thielmann said.

"This was not ready for prime time," he said.

On Thursday, Western officials confirmed reports that North Korea had moved yet another weapon, apparently a medium-range missile known as a Musudan or Nodong B, to its east coast. Experts said it was unclear if the missile was moved as a menacing gesture or in preparation for a test firing.

The Musudan is believed to have a range of 3,000 kilometers (1,875 miles), more than the Nodong, which would put all of South Korea, Japan and possibly Guam in its range.

Thielmann said the Musudan had not flown either. "A missile that has never even had a flight test is not an operational system and is not a credible threat," he said.

CONDITIONAL THREATS?

U.S. officials say the latest threats about a nuclear strike go beyond previous rhetoric voiced not only by Kim Jong-un, but also his father Kim Jong-il and grandfather, North Korea's founding dynast Kim Il-sung.

One U.S. official said that until now, read closely, the threats from Pyongyang were conditional, suggesting an attack on the United States would only take place if the U.S. first acted against North Korea.

However, that was not the case with Wednesday's threat of a nuclear strike, the official said.

Thielmann said North Korea has several hundred missiles, most of which are variants of the SCUD-B and SCUD-C missiles with a range of 300 km and 500 km (187 to 312 miles). They have some dozens of Nodong missiles with an estimated 1300 km (862 miles) range.

"Neither of these (medium range) systems can reach Guam. Neither of them can reach Hawaii or (the) Aleutian Islands," Thielmann said. There are "missiles that North Korea pretends that it has and ... various people in the United States seem to want to lend credence to these fantastic North Korean claims."

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-04-04/news/sns-rt-us-korea-north-usa-capabilitiesbre9331a9-20130404_1_north-korea-admiral-james-winnefeld-kn-08



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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
April 5, 2013

N. Korea Loads Two Medium-Range Missiles on Mobile Launchers

By Kim Eun-jung

SEOUL, April 5 (Yonhap) -- North Korea has loaded two intermediate-range missiles onto mobile launchers and hidden them in an unidentified facility near the east coast, Seoul military sources said Friday, triggering speculation that the North is ready for an abrupt missile launch.

Earlier this week, the communist state had moved the "Musudan" medium-range missiles to its east coast, prompting the United States to send its advanced missile defense system to its base on the Pacific Ocean island of Guam.

South Korean and U.S. intelligence officials have been closely monitoring the North Korean facility believed to contain the Musudan missiles on the TELs (transporter-erector-launcher). The missile can fly 3,000-4,000 kilometers and is capable of hitting the U.S. base in Guam in the Pacific Ocean.

"Early this week, the North has moved two Musudan missiles on the train and placed them on mobile launchers," a senior military official familiar with the knowledge of the matter said.

The North's concealing the missiles atop the mobile launcher platform is seen as an attempt to launch missiles in a surprise move, the official said, noting it was not clear whether the move is for a test firing or military drills. The isolated communist nation has not yet conducted a test firing of the Musudan missile, which was first revealed to the international community in October 2010 during a military parade in Pyongyang.

On Thursday, CNN reported classified images and communications intercepts showing that North Korea has moved two mobile missiles, launchers and fuel tanks to its east coast, citing an anonymous American official.

In response to the North's military move, South Korea has sent two Aegis destroyers equipped with advanced radar systems to both of its coasts, Navy officials said.

The 7,600-ton Aegis destroyers with SPY-1 radar, which can track hundreds of targets as far as 1,000 kilometers away, have been on standby on the east and west coasts of the Korean Peninsula to track missile launches by Pyongyang, according to a senior Navy official.

"If the North fires off a missile, we will trace its trajectory," the official said asking for anonymity citing confidential information.

The South Korean military is also operating the ground-based missile defense radar system Green Pine, and the early warning aircraft Peace Eye under stepped up military readiness status to prepare for a potential rocket launch, according to the officials.

"We are closely monitoring North Korea's missile preparations, but it is not yet clear when and where it will fire off a missile," defense ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said in a briefing. "We will step up our military posture if the North's missile affects us."

In response to media reports that the North may plan to launch a missile in the coming days or weeks, Kim said Pyongyang could pick a launching day it deems "meaningful," without elaboration.

Outside observers see a high chance that Pyongyang may launch the missile in mid-April to celebrate the April 15 birthday of Kim Il-sung, the communist nation's late founder and the young leader Kim Jong-un's grandfather, in a move to bolster the regime's grip on power.

Meanwhile, the defense ministry has dispatched a team of inspectors to the front-line island of Yeonpyeong to look into the border crossing by a North Korean defector across the tensely guarded western sea border.



The 28-year-old defector, who was living in the South, slipped through radar monitoring on Wednesday night to sail across the maritime border in the Yellow Sea, sparking security concerns at a time of military tensions with the North.

"Investigations are currently underway," Kim said. "After the inspection, we'll figure out what kind of additional measures are needed" to strengthen border security.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/04/05/59/0301000000AEN20130405004351315F.HTML>

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AsiaOne News – Singapore

N. Korea Warns It Cannot Protect Embassies After April 10

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Friday, April 05, 2013

MOSCOW - North Korea has said it cannot assure the safety of embassies in Pyongyang after April 10, and has urged Britain, Russia and other European nations to evacuate diplomatic staff amid soaring nuclear tensions.

Countries across Europe on Friday reported receiving a letter suggesting they pull out of Pyongyang, as an increasingly bellicose North Korea moved two mid-range missiles to its east coast.

"Their communication said that from April 10, the North Korean government would be unable to guarantee the safety of embassies and international organisations in the country in the event of conflict," a spokeswoman for Britain's Foreign Office said.

"Our understanding is that the North Koreans were asking whether embassies are intending to leave, rather than advising them to leave." Britain was considering its next steps, she said, while reminding North Korea of its responsibilities under the Vienna Convention to protect diplomatic missions.

Russia, which has relatively close ties with North Korea, also received the missive.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow was in close contact with its partners including China over the suggestion..

"The suggestion was made to all embassies in Pyongyang and we are trying to clarify the situation," Russian news agencies quoted Lavrov as saying on a visit to Uzbekistan.

"We are in close contact with our Chinese partners as well as the Americans", and all participants in the frozen six-party talks process seeking peace on the peninsula, he added.

He said there were "many factors" that needed clarification.

The spokesman of the Russian embassy in Pyongyang, Denis Samsonov, told Russian news agencies that a representative of the North Korean foreign ministry "suggested that the Russian side examine the question of evacuating the employees of the Russian embassy." He said the mission had taken note of the information and was working normally. "We are currently in the process of taking the decision," said Samsonov, adding that the current situation in Pyongyang was "absolutely peaceful".

A Russian foreign ministry source was quoted as saying by the Interfax and RIA Novosti news agencies that the security of Russian citizens was the priority in the taking of any decision.

"Unfortunately, the situation (on the Korean peninsula) is not developing in the way that we would like. For us the security of our citizens is the priority," said the unnamed source.

In Sofia, a foreign ministry spokesman said North Korea has sent letters to Bulgaria and other EU countries telling them to consider pulling their diplomatic staff from Pyongyang for security reasons.



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"Yes, we - along with other EU member states - have received such a letter signed by a deputy foreign minister of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Dimitar Yaprakov told AFP.

He said all foreign ambassadors had been summoned by Pyongyang's foreign ministry "telling them that it was ready to assist them if they wanted to evacuate their missions." "The chiefs of EU missions to Pyongyang are meeting tomorrow there to discuss a common position and common action," he added.

The Czech foreign ministry also confirmed receiving the statement.

"I can confirm the information," spokesman Karel Srol told AFP in Prague.

"Each Czech embassy has a detailed plan of what to do in a crisis. If the situation required such steps, they would be taken," Srol said, confirming that the Czech embassy in Pyongyang has four employees.

Russia on Thursday made its harshest criticism yet of North Korea in the current crisis, describing Pyongyang's actions as "categorically unacceptable".

Moscow retains relatively close ties with North Korea which go back to the Soviet Union when Soviet forces occupied the northern part of the Korean peninsula at the end of World War II, leading to the creation of a pro-Moscow communist North Korean state.

But Russia also shares a short border with North Korea south of Vladivostok in its Far Eastern region and has clearly been irritated by the country's recent bellicose behaviour.

<http://www.asiaone.com/News/AsiaOne%2BNews/Asia/Story/A1Story20130405-413960.html>

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Global Security Newswire

Pakistan's Military Sanguine on Avoiding Wartime Nuclear Calamity

April 3, 2013

By Elaine M. Grossman, *Global Security Newswire*

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan -- Defense officials here say they are confident that if conflict once again breaks out with India, Pakistan's longtime rival to the east, the two nuclear-armed powers could prevent a catastrophic acceleration in violence.

To effectively control a wartime escalation, a nation must believe that its adversary is willing to use nuclear weapons, a senior official with the Pakistani army Strategic Plans Division, which oversees the atomic arsenal, told U.S. reporters last month.

Pakistan's strategy for its estimated 100-warhead stockpile is based on "credible minimum deterrence," said the official, who requested anonymity in addressing sensitive military topics. Realists, the senior figure noted, see Pakistan's weapons as intended for staving off aggression, not for actual warfighting.

India has a nuclear arsenal similarly believed to number roughly 100 warheads.

Pakistan and India have fought four wars since British partition in 1947, including one -- the 1999 Kargil conflict -- after the two nations acquired nuclear arsenals. Concerns linger that hostilities could flare anew as a result of unresolved issues between them, such as disputes over the Kashmir region or the use of proxies to advance each state's interests abroad.

"It's a crisis-prone relationship," said Maleeha Lodhi, a former Pakistani ambassador to the United States and now a political commentator. "Sometimes crisis breaks out between the two countries even if the two countries don't want the crisis to happen."

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



Regional experts worry that a future war could go nuclear. Moreover, any exchange of “limited” atomic blasts might quickly escalate out of control, as each nation becomes confronted with a possible existential crisis, the thinking goes.

Drawing from nuclear strategies devised decades ago by Cold War superpowers the United States and Soviet Union, any conflict should offer opportunities for “deliberate pauses, permitting time for adversaries to de-escalate by going to the table,” the Pakistani official said in comments sent subsequently by e-mail to a reporter.

Others have taken different lessons from the Cold War.

Nuclear strategy scholar Robert Jervis has described the danger of “undesired escalation” as “always present” in a crisis between two nuclear-armed states.

“The room for misunderstanding, the pressure to act before the other side has seized the initiative, the role of unexpected defeats or unanticipated opportunities, all are sufficiently great -- and interacting -- so that it is rare that decision-makers can confidently predict the end point of the trajectory which an initial resort to violence starts,” the Columbia University professor said in a 1984 book, “The Illogic of American Nuclear Strategy.”

The Pakistani nuclear official noted that Islamabad’s arsenal is under a multifaceted set of controls that reduce the risk of hasty or unauthorized launch.

Safety and security measures include monitoring scientific personnel; periodic intelligence reports; material accounting and control; special vehicles and security for sensitive materials transport; a requirement for two or more persons for carrying out key functions; the use of “permissive action links” or codes to help prevent unauthorized detonations; physical security; and the creation of personnel reliability programs and nuclear emergency security teams, the official said in a prepared briefing.

Pakistani control initiatives are also believed to include storing warheads separately from delivery platforms during peacetime, according to issue experts.

The defense official did not address that particular aspect, but did say the nation does not keep its nuclear arms in a “launch-on-warning” readiness status. This suggests Pakistan would not necessarily respond precipitously to any indications that India had fired an atomic weapon.

“When tensions escalate, one expects a rational-actor behavior from all parties,” the senior Pakistani nuclear official said.

Outsiders, though, have said either or both nations could unwittingly get caught up in the dynamics of competing battlefield strategies and lose rational control.

After Pakistan first tested nuclear weapons in 1998, India is widely believed to have formulated a so-called “Cold Start” strategy in which it would be prepared to dash across the border and seize key assets -- perhaps even cities, such as Lahore -- within reach. Under the strategy, which Indian officials have at times denied preparing, New Delhi would hope to prevent any use of Pakistani nuclear weapons.

In counter-reaction, Pakistan has expanded its atomic arsenal and devised plans to disperse these arms at the outset of any major war so they could not be captured, according to issue experts.

This dispersal might also make the use of nuclear arms more likely, some observers say.

Specifically, the worry is that spreading nuclear arms throughout Pakistani army units on a chaotic battlefield could make warheads more vulnerable to terrorist theft, unauthorized detonation or approved use based on misunderstanding.

“With dispersal, the loss of control is quite easy and that is one great fear,” said Abdul Hameed Nayyar, a retired scholar at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad.



The Pakistani military has developed “tactical” or shorter-range nuclear arms for possible battlefield use. It has also planned for a “shoot-and-scoot” tactic in its plans for war against India, which would involve moving atomic-tipped missiles on mobile launchers to help evade enemy targeting, Nayyar said.

In such an approach, “you are actually delegating responsibility” to commanders at “very, very low” echelons, he said. “And delegating authority [over] nuclear weapons at that low level is very dangerous and I think that is something we all are very afraid of.”

“Use of tactical weapons is not an element of stability in the whole Indo-Pakistan strategic equation,” agreed retired Pakistani army Lt. Gen. Talat Masood. “There are dangers in delegation of authority as far as use of nuclear weapons are concerned.”

The Pakistani military has said that launch authority would remain at high levels, though some reports suggest otherwise, he told reporters visiting Islamabad.

“But the only problem is if the conditions are unstable, and if you are that close to the border, then you can’t really exercise physical control,” Masood said.

Even if strict high-level control over nuclear use were retained, “we are not going to detonate [once] and remain limited to that,” Nayyar said, calling the use of theater nuclear weapons by Pakistan “an escalatory step” in response to India’s military doctrine.

“Deterrence is an abstract notion that sometimes fails real-world tests,” South Asia expert Michael Krepon observed in a 2011 blog post.

“Every crisis that results in the increased readiness to use nuclear weapons also increases the likelihood of accidents and loss of control over nuclear assets,” he wrote more recently in a December analysis of Pakistan’s nuclear posture. “The probability of first use as a result of accidents and unauthorized use ... appears greater than a deliberate command decision to cross the nuclear threshold.”

After a conflict breaks out, “crisis management and escalation control then become paramount,” but “there is no reliable playbook for escalation control once a crisis transitions to hostilities between nuclear-armed states,” Krepon said.

“India and Pakistan still lack the means to manage a crisis, frankly,” said Lodhi, the former ambassador. She added that the United States in the past has acted as a “fire brigade,” returning to the region repeatedly to “put out the fires.”

The United States helped calm tensions between the two antagonists in the course of four crises between 1990 and 2008, according to Krepon, a co-founder of the Henry L. Stimson Center in Washington. Whether that role could be repeated into the future to successfully prevent a nuclear war is far from certain.

Nayyar attributed the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons into South Asia to “the Pakistani urge to match India in all possible ways.” India’s Cold Start doctrine and the Pakistani response of nuclear force expansion and dispersal during conflict has become “a recipe for an all-out nuclear war,” he said.

Though Pakistani leaders could seek to temper their own responses to India’s use of its superior conventional capabilities, New Delhi has threatened outsized retaliation to any atomic attack.

Even “a very limited first use on Pakistani soil” could not necessarily “provide insurance against uncontrolled escalation, since Indian doctrine asserts that the use of nuclear weapons against Indian forces, wherever they may be situated, would prompt massive retaliation,” Krepon said in his recent analysis.

“Pakistani decision-makers understand that escalation control, even in the event of a single use of a tactical nuclear weapon, would be immensely problematic and could well have profoundly tragic consequences,” he said. “Nonetheless, they appear to view this option as being less problematic than relying solely on large-scale, long-range nuclear strikes, especially as the conventional military balance with India grows more adverse.”



<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/pakistani-military-sanguine-about-avoiding-nuclear-calamity/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

US Needs 5-7 GBIs to Intercept One Topol ICBM – Expert

2 April 2013

MOSCOW, April 2 (RIA Novosti) – The United States will need between five and seven Ground Based Interceptors (GBI) to intercept one Russian Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missile, a Russian military expert said on Tuesday.

“From my contacts with the director of the [US Department of Defense’s] Missile Defense Agency, I have learned that the Americans will need five to seven interceptors to engage one Topol-M missile,” retired Col. Gen. Viktor Yesin, former chief of staff at Russia’s Strategic Missile Forces (1994-1996), told a news conference hosted by RIA Novosti.

He did not elaborate on the nature of his contacts with the MDA head or when he had received the information.

The US has deployed 30 GBIs, Yesin said – “26 in Alaska and four in California,” adding that the effectiveness of the US countermissiles is “somewhat limited.”

He also said missile defense negotiations with the United States will produce no positive results, and that development in that area will continue.

US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel announced in mid-March that plans for the final stage of Central European-based missile shields are to be scrapped and that interceptors will instead be placed in Alaska.

The US change to the program has come in response to increasingly confrontational rhetoric from North Korea, which said Tuesday that it would restart its nuclear reactor.

The US says that the positioning of interceptors in Alaska and an additional radar station in Japan are designed to provide further coverage from any possible missiles launched from North Korea, but Russia worries that any missile defense program undermines the integrity of its own military strategy.

Russian Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov said two weeks ago that security officials from Russia and the United States will meet in the coming months to discuss the impact of recent developments. Antonov said talks could be held at a security conference in Moscow due to take place on May 23-24.

Russia says it is pressing for “legally binding agreements guaranteeing that US missile defense elements are not aimed against Russia’s strategic nuclear forces.”

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130402/180401687/US-Needs-5-7-GBIs-to-Intercept-One-Topol-ICBM---Expert.html

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Russia Beyond the Headlines Asia – Russia

Russia May Delay Chemical Weapons Disposal Until 2020 – Paper

April 5, 2013

RIA Novosti

Russia may extend the deadline for complete destruction of its chemical weapons arsenal until 2020 as it lacks industrial capacity to finish the task on schedule, the Izvestia newspaper reported on Friday.

The relevant draft proposal is being prepared by the Trade Ministry and will be submitted to the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, the Federation Council, on April 16, the paper said. The final decision will be made by the Russian president after consultation with Russian lawmakers and experts.



Russia had destroyed about 25,000 metric tons of chemical weapons, or 62 percent of its 40,000-ton stockpile as of April 29, 2012 - the deadline set by the Chemical Weapons Convention for complete arsenal destruction.

Moscow for years said it would meet the deadline, but eventually postponed the completion until 2015. Now, even the new deadline seems to be unrealistic.

Alexander Grabovsky, an expert on chemical weapons disposal, told Izvestia that the delayed construction of the last chemical weapon destruction plant, located in Udmurtia, had hampered the implementation of the program.

“The facility is still not operational and its annual capacity will be about 1,600-1,800 tons, while the volume of stockpiles it has to destroy is over 5,000 tons,” Izvestia quoted Grabovsky as saying.

Russia signed the Chemical Weapons Convention banning the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical arms in 1993, and ratified it in 1997. The Russian government has allocated 230 billion rubles (\$7.18 billion) for the implementation of the program since then, and has built six chemical weapon destruction plants, including the Kambarka facility in the Republic of Udmurtia.

Russia is unlikely to face international sanctions for the delay in the implementation of the program because it is not the only country that will not be able to meet the announced deadlines.

The United States has postponed the deadline for destroying the remaining 2,000 metric tons of its 27,000-ton chemical weapons arsenal first until 2021 and then until 2023.

As of January 31, 2012, more than 50,000 metric tons of chemical weapons, or 73 percent of the global stockpile, had been destroyed.

http://rbth.asia/news/2013/04/05/russia_may_delay_chemical_weapons_disposal_until_2020_paper_45871.html

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Start State Tests of New Ballistic Missile in 2014

5 April 2013

MOSCOW, April 5 (RIA Novosti) – The state tests of a new solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) will begin in 2014, a former Russian military commander said.

Russia announced the development of a new ICBM to replace the existing Topol-M and Yars missiles in 2012. If the tests are successful, it could be commissioned as early as in 2015.

“The state tests of the missile have been scheduled for 2014,” Col. Gen. Viktor Yesin (Ret.), who served as chief of staff of the Russian Strategic Missile Forces (SMF) in 1991-93, told RIA Novosti on Thursday.

The general added that the preliminary tests of the missile were underway, but refused to provide details on its performance characteristics.

According to open sources, the SMF currently operates at least 58 silo-based SS-18 Satan ballistic missiles, 160 road-mobile Topol (SS-25 Sickle) missile systems, 50 silo-based and 18 road-mobile Topol-M (SS-27 Sickle B) systems, and 18 RS-24 Yars systems.

Two missile divisions have been fully rearmed with Topol-M and Yars systems, while the rearmament of three more divisions will start later this year, according to SMF.

The SMF will also deploy in the near future a new automated battle management system (ASBU), which will allow rapid retargeting of ICBMs.



http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130405/180450967/Russia-to-Start-State-Tests-of-New-Ballistic-Missile-in-2014.html

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Global Post – Boston, MA
March 31, 2013

NATO Eyes Missile Shield Progress with Russia after U.S. Move

By Gabriela Baczynska

MOSCOW (Reuters) - NATO hopes a U.S. change to global missile defences will dispel Russian concern and foster cooperation on an issue that has long strained relations, alliance Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow said in an interview.

Russia has said U.S. missile shield plans could erode its nuclear deterrent. It has softened criticism since Washington announced on March 16 that it would station 14 missile interceptors in Alaska in response to North Korean nuclear threats and at the same time forgo a new type of interceptor that would have been deployed in Europe.

However, Moscow has said it wants a series of consultations on the new shield set-up and U.S. and Russian defence officials are expected to hold talks on that in the coming weeks.

Moscow has long been at odds with the West over anti-missile defences it has begun to establish in Europe, which both the United States and NATO say are aimed at preventing any attack from Iran and pose no threat to old Cold War foe Russia.

"The change in the U.S. plans ... just simply makes the situation much less ambiguous," Vershbow told Reuters. "There is now no reason for concern that the system going into Europe will have any effect whatever on Russia's strategic deterrent.

"We think there is a real window of opportunity and we hope that the Russians seize it," said Vershbow, who has held talks with senior officials from the Russian foreign and defence ministries as well as President Vladimir Putin's Kremlin.

The skipped interceptors were meant to be able to target long-range missiles, sparking concern in Moscow that they could be used against its intercontinental ballistic missiles.

"On both the NATO-Russia and U.S.-Russia tracks, we hope the dialogue will pick up speed so that we can get at least closer to some kind of a deal on missile defence cooperation," said Vershbow, a former U.S. ambassador to Russia.

"To the extent we are able to make some progress on missile defence, it might also facilitate renewed dialogue on nuclear arms reductions both at the strategic level and the non-strategic level." He said broader NATO-Russia ties would get "a shot in the arm" if progress was made on missile shields.

Moscow has frequently said it is unlikely to go for further cuts in its nuclear arsenal unless Washington satisfactorily addresses its concerns about the defence system Washington has started to deploy in Europe in cooperation with NATO partners.

Russia is also pushing to host a meeting of defence ministers of NATO and Russia in Moscow in May and some in Russia have expressed hope for progress by then.

But Moscow is sticking to its demand for legally binding guarantees that the shield will not be aimed at Russia, a request rejected by NATO and the United States.

Any significant progress may be difficult because of Russian concern that developing NATO infrastructure in central and eastern Europe is tipping the post-Cold War balance of power.

"There are broader political questions that still could remain difficult to resolve," Vershbow said.



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"NATO has been very clear that legal guarantees will not be possible but I'm sure we could develop some kind of political framework that would give the Russians the predictability that they are seeking through legally binding guarantees."

Editing by Mark Heinrich

<http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/thomson-reuters/130331/nato-eyes-missile-shield-progress-russia-after-us-move>

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Global Security Newswire

U.S. Continues Nuclear Arms Reductions

April 3, 2013

The United States has continued to reduce its counts of deployed strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems as it moves to meet the limits set by the New START treaty with Russia, State Department figures released on Wednesday show.

As of March 1, the Defense Department had 1,654 warheads fielded on 792 active ICBMs, submarine-launched ballistic missiles and heavy bombers. That is down from 1,722 deployed warheads and 806 delivery vehicles counted on Sept. 1 of last year.

The treaty requires Russia and the United States by 2018 to field no more than 1,550 strategic warheads on 700 missiles or bombers, with another 100 delivery vehicles allowed in reserve.

Russia is already below its cap levels. At the beginning of March it had 1,480 deployed warheads and 492 ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers in service.

The Obama administration has said it hopes to pursue further nuclear arsenal cuts with Russia that would also cover nonstrategic and reserve weapons. The White House is reported to have received a Pentagon report that found the United States could maintain a viable deterrent with between 1,000 and 1,100 long-range warheads.

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/us-continues-nuclear-arms-reductions/>

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USA TODAY

Pentagon Seeking 'Rules of Engagement' for Cyber-War

By Jim Michaels

April 4, 2013

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is putting the finishing touches on rules that will give military commanders clearer authority if they have to respond to an enemy cyber-attack, military officials and cyber-security experts say.

Defense Department officials have started talking more openly about offensive cyber-capabilities, including the creation of 13 teams capable of offensive operations if the United States is attacked.

"This is all putting the world on notice, particularly the Chinese, that we're tired of them breaking into private companies," said Richard Bejtlich, chief security officer at Mandiant, a computer security company.

The so-called rules of engagement will "provide a defined framework for how best to respond to the plethora of cyber-threats we face," said Lt. Col. Damien Pickart, a Pentagon spokesman.

The rules will be secret and cover more conventional combat as well.

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The cyber-warfare rules are the most contentious because it is a new domain.

"The technologies and capabilities are developing so rapidly that sometimes policies have to catch up," said Terry Roberts, a vice president at TASC, an engineering services company that works with the intelligence community and the Defense Department.

The Pentagon said the military has existing rules that allow it to defend the nation, but analysts say the new rules will give military commanders clearer guidance and make it easier to take action without clearing it at the presidential level.

The need to create a new set of rules reflects how muddled the cyber-world is. Even what constitutes an act of war is difficult to determine.

Gen. Keith Alexander, head of Cyber-Command, said recently the bulk of cyber-attacks are espionage and commercial theft, not an act of war. "If the intent is to disrupt or destroy our infrastructure, I think you've crossed a line," he said.

NATO is struggling with similar issues. A new NATO report that attempts to apply international law to cyber-warfare concludes that a state can retaliate in a proportional way against a country that attacks it.

It also said that determining where the attack originated is difficult. Even if investigators determine where an attack originated, it could have been the work of a hacker who routed it through a third nation.

Last month, when hackers launched an attack on South Korean companies, investigators initially identified China as the source of the attack. Investigators then backed off the accusation and said it was unclear where it originated.

"The item that makes cyber-warfare more difficult ... is the issue of attribution," Roberts said.

There are other murky issues. China regularly attempts to steal corporate secrets in an effort to assist its own economy, which isn't traditionally a military issue.

Alexander said the theft of corporate data by criminals and nations is "the greatest unwilling transfer of wealth in history."

The Pentagon works with the intelligence community, the Justice Department and other government agencies on cyber-issues, Alexander said.

Military officials expect the cyber-threat will worsen.

"When you look at the strategic landscape from our perspective, it's getting worse," Alexander told Congress recently.

The Pentagon has said its cyber-rules of engagement would be in accordance with normal laws of land warfare.

But some analysts say the forms of warfare are so different that they wouldn't apply. For example, most cyber-attacks are not designed to inflict physical harm.

"You take all the military rules of engagement and apply them in cyberspace and you have to be scratching your head," said Martin Libicki, an analyst at Rand. He said new rules should be created that are tailored specifically to the new technology.

One of the most brazen cyber-attacks was an assault on Iranian nuclear facilities in 2010 that damaged centrifuges at the Natanz uranium enrichment facility. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack, but the United States and Israel are suspected.

It was an act of sabotage that caused physical damage.

"If that is something we did, then we did something no one else ever did," Libicki said.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/04/04/pentagon-wants-cyber-war-rules-of-engagement/2054055/>

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Washington Post

Bird Flu Death Toll Rises to Six in China

By Lena H. Sun

Friday, April 5, 2013

The death toll from a new strain of bird flu rose to six in China on Thursday as scientists at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and around the world stepped up efforts to determine its pandemic risk.

This is the first time the H7N9 virus has been detected in humans, but there is no evidence that the strain is transmitted from human to human, officials said. At least 14 people in China have been confirmed to have H7N9, all in the eastern part of the country. According to the World Health Organization, three of the most recent fatal cases involved men: a 38-year-old from Zhejiang province, in eastern China, who became sick March 7; a 64-year-old, also from Zhejiang, who became ill March 28; and a 48-year-old from Shanghai who also became sick March 28.

Chinese authorities confirmed the sixth death on Friday, hours after the CDC reported it.

Shanghai officials closed the Huhai agricultural market on Thursday and began slaughtering birds there after discovering the new virus strain in a market pigeon. By late Friday, they had killed more than 20,000 birds at the market. Officials announced that all live poultry markets in the city would be closed beginning on Saturday.

Meanwhile, a person who had contact with one of the victims in Shanghai was in quarantine after developing flu-like symptoms, according to the Shanghai Municipal Health and Family Planning Commission.

“These deaths don’t have any links or common exposures that we know of,” Joe Bresee, chief of epidemiology for CDC’s Influenza Division, said in an interview Thursday. Chinese health authorities are monitoring more than 400 people who were in close contact with people in which the strain was confirmed. None of these people are sick, he said.

“Clearly, if there is evidence that the virus spread from human to human, that becomes a game-changing event,” Bresee said.

Officials in Hong Kong and Japan said they are taking precautions at airports. Posters and personnel are warning passengers to seek medical attention if they suspect they have bird flu. Vietnam banned all poultry products from China this week, and Taiwan set up a monitoring group.

After Chinese authorities revealed the cases last weekend, officials quickly posted the genetic sequence data from the first three cases on a public database, Bresee said. The virus’s genetic sequence shows that it’s a combination of an H7N9 virus that circulates in birds and an H9N2 pathogen, scientists have said.

The CDC is developing a kit that could be sent to other countries to allow public health officials to test for the virus, Bresee said. The agency also is using the genetic information to grow a seed virus for potential production of a vaccine, he added. That has become a routine procedure for the CDC in the past five to six years.

Other strains of bird flu, such as H5N1, have been circulating for years and can be transmitted from bird to bird, and bird to human, but not generally from human to human.

The H1N1 virus responsible for the 2009-2010 swine flu pandemic originated in pigs, then mixed with human and avian viruses, touching off the first global influenza outbreak in more than 40 years. It killed 151,700 to 575,400 people in the first year, with a disproportionate number of deaths in Southeast Asia and Africa, according to the CDC.

It’s possible that the new bird flu virus may persist in animals and occasionally occur in humans, but not develop the capacity to spread in humans, Bresee said.



Researchers don't know the source of the infection. The H7N9 virus is usually present in poultry and wild bird populations and doesn't generally make them very sick, Bresee said.

Chinese officials have tried to dispel rumors that the new bird flu strain was related to the recent scandal triggered by the discovery of more than 15,000 dead pigs in Shanghai area rivers. State media reported that health officials tested 34 samples from pig carcasses and found no traces of bird flu.

"We don't know that it's not pigs," Bresee said. "We have seen evidence from the genetic sequence that at some point, it passed through poultry. Could it be chickens? Could it be pigs? I don't know."

Scientists also don't know whether the virus is resistant to drugs or whether it has mutations that would give it greater ability to transmit and cause severe disease.

Some Chinese newspapers have questioned why it took so long for the government to announce the new cases, especially because two victims fell ill in February. The government has said it needed time to correctly identify the virus.

During the 2002 and 2003 outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome, authorities initially tried to cover up an epidemic that emerged in China and killed nearly 10 percent of the 8,098 people infected worldwide, according to the World Health Organization.

Bresee, who worked in Hong Kong during the SARS epidemic, praised Chinese officials for how quickly they have been sharing information about the new bird flu strain.

William Wan in Beijing contributed to this report.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/health-science/bird-flu-death-toll-rises-to-six-in-china/2013/04/04/a78b0b48-9d52-11e2-a2db-efc5298a95e1_story.html

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Washington Post
OPINION

Obama's 'Nuclear Zero' Rhetoric is Dangerous

By Douglas J. Feith, Frank J. Gaffney, James A. Lyons and R. James Woolsey
March 29, 2013

Recent threats from North Korea have led the Obama administration to reverse some of its previous decisions and to build up U.S. missile defenses. Welcome as that course correction is, the North's recent missile developments and underground nuclear test should cause President Obama to rethink his basic approach to nuclear weapons policy. He should acknowledge that he was unrealistic in making it U.S. policy to achieve "a world without nuclear weapons."

Whatever good and idealistic intentions may have motivated the initial rhetoric about "nuclear zero," the practical effects of embracing this slogan are harmful. The goal of minimizing the possibility of nuclear war is not served when the U.S. president, in speaking of the subject, appears disconnected from reality.

We are part of a team of 20 professionals with extensive experience in national security and defense policy who recently sent an open letter to the president. In it, we argued that the United States' triad of land-based, submarine-launched and bomber-delivered nuclear weapons has helped ensure strategic stability and discouraged proliferation of such weapons. We also warned that raising doubts about the reliability, effectiveness and sustainability of our nuclear deterrent may embolden our enemies and encourage our friends to build their own nuclear arsenals.

When Obama administration officials speak of nuclear weapons, they generally focus on audiences gratified by talk of disarmament, especially U.S. disarmament. Hence, the administration's (1) opposition to developing a reliable, new nuclear warhead; (2) opposition to ever testing our warheads again; (3) support for the Comprehensive Test Ban



Treaty; (4) support for deep new cuts in nuclear force levels; (5) eagerness for a new treaty with Russia to make such cuts a legal requirement; (6) hints of funding cuts for U.S. nuclear infrastructure (in violation of earlier promises to increase such funding, which were pledged in 2010 to win Senate votes for the “New START” nuclear arms reduction treaty with Russia); and (7) endorsement of “nuclear zero.” The president calls it “leadership” when he adopts such policies. He says other countries will more energetically oppose nuclear proliferation in Iran, North Korea and elsewhere if we demonstrate such leadership by constraining our own nuclear capabilities.

But these policies have not yielded the hoped-for diplomatic benefits regarding North Korea and Iran. Their nuclear weapons programs progress, as do their programs to develop long-range missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

Obama fails to properly weigh the cumulative negative effect his policies and rhetoric have on the many allies and partners that for decades have relied on the U.S. nuclear umbrella for their security. Such reliance on the United States’ extended deterrence is a crucial element of nonproliferation policy. Our country has made major cuts in recent years, many of them unilateral. But the more that friendly nations question the continuing vitality of extended deterrence, the more they will be inclined to develop their own nuclear arsenals. Allied officials have begun talking about such doubts. For the moment, the talk remains politically sensitive and confidential, but it is disturbing.

If, as a result of the increasing capabilities in North Korea and Iran and doubts about the United States, countries such as South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Australia (or, in other regions, Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia) begin to hedge their bets and develop their own nuclear weapons, the world will become a much more dangerous place. Playing to certain audiences that crave disarmament talk is not a cost-free exercise. The price is discomfiting serious, responsible officials in nations long content to forswear nuclear weapons largely because they could rely on the United States to provide the necessary security. Such reliance has served their interests and ours. It has contained the danger of nuclear war and preserved the world’s nonproliferation regime from collapse.

Obama’s determination to make major new cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal should be considered in this light. By some accounts, he has in mind reductions of about a third. It would be wiser if the president fulfilled the commitments he made during the debate over ratification of his New START treaty with Russia: modernize all three legs of the triad; ensure the safety and deterrent effectiveness of the weapons in each leg; and restore the critical industrial base supporting these forces.

It’s all well and good for the Obama administration to seek greater international diplomatic support for pressure to shut down the North Korean and Iranian nuclear programs. But it makes no sense to do so through means that call into question the integrity of the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

In the name of opposing nuclear proliferation, promoting international cooperation and championing peace, the Obama administration has embraced “nuclear zero” and a set of nuclear policies that risk spurring proliferation, harming U.S. alliances and increasing the danger that nuclear war someday will occur. The worst error of governments is not failing to achieve their purposes; it is achieving the opposite of what they properly intend.

Douglas J. Feith was undersecretary of defense for policy from 2001 to 2005. **Frank J. Gaffney** is founder and president of the Center for Security Policy; he was acting assistant secretary of defense for international security policy in 1987. **Adm. James A. Lyons** was commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet from 1985 to 1987. **R. James Woolsey** was director of the Central Intelligence Agency from 1993 to 1995.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/obamas-nuclear-zero-rhetoric-is-dangerous--and-unrealistic/2013/03/29/917f2036-987b-11e2-b68f-dc5c4b47e519_story.html

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The Daily Beast
OPINION/Analysis



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‘The State of War’—Kim Jong-un’s Bombastic, and Ominous, Bluster

The one-a-day rhetorical blasts suggest something is terribly wrong in North Korea, writes Gordon G. Chang.

By Gordon G. Chang

March 30, 2013

On Saturday North Korea declared that it was “entering the state of war” with South Korea. This follows Friday’s statement from leader Kim Jong-un that “the time has come to settle accounts with the U.S. imperialists in view of the prevailing situation.” The boy leader—Kim is believed to be 29—left no doubt what he meant. At the same time, he signed an order to “mercilessly strike” the U.S. and its military installations in the Pacific.

This is, of course, bluster, yet the harsh words come at a particularly sensitive moment. The abnormal regime ruling the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea is in disarray, and so the situation could quickly spiral out of control.

Every year Pyongyang makes bombastic threats before the U.S.–South Korea military exercises. Then the North Koreans go quiet when the drills begin. This year, however, the tantrum has continued, and the words have become increasingly dire. This month, for instance, Pyongyang abrogated the armistice ending the Korean War and threatened preemptive nuclear strikes on the United States. The one-a-day rhetorical blasts suggest something is terribly wrong inside the North Korean regime.

Young Kim took over in December 2011 after the sudden death of his father, Kim Jong-il. This means, among other things, that Kim Jong-un did not have time to install officials loyal to him or to learn the complex balancing required to keep the four regime elements—the military, the security apparatus, the party, and the Kim family circle—in proper alignment.

As a result, Kim Jong-un, now hailed as “supreme commander,” has had to rely on two relatives for support, aunt Kim Kyong-hui and her husband, Jang Sung-taek. As analyst Bruce Bechtol explains, you have to go back to 1949 to find a time when a North Korean leader has had a smaller group of supporters than Kim Jong-un does today.

That makes him vulnerable, especially because Jang is not only purging officials, but also dismantling the power structure put in place by Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-il favored the military over the Korean Workers’ Party, but Jang, acting in Kim Jong-un’s name, has been favoring the party by cutting the Army down to size.

These efforts, not surprisingly, have destabilized Pyongyang. Jang has stripped the military of much of its coveted revenue streams from illicit activities. About 70 percent of North Korea’s foreign currency business was conducted by the flag officers under Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-un, under Jang’s tutelage, has set about gaining control of that business. The new leader, for instance, shuttered Taepung International Investment Group, which has been described as the military’s conduit for investment abroad.

Jang is also said to have been behind the shutting of the notorious Room 39, the “slush fund” that was the center of disreputable activities, such as drug smuggling, the counterfeiting of U.S. currency, and the making of fake Viagra. This is not to say that the Kim regime is exiting illegal activities. As *The Korea Times* reports, “Experts say the developments may shift responsibility for attracting outside money to the party, which has been refurbished after gathering cobwebs under Kim Jong-il.”

Moreover, Kim and Jang have sacked top flag officers, most notably Vice Marshal Ri Yong-ho, the respected chief of the general staff. Some analysts believe there was a shootout between forces opposing Ri and those loyal to him when he was deposed last July. Whether or not these rumors are true, it has become clear that Kim’s removal of the popular Ri did not sit well with frontline commanders. In a further sign of turmoil, Ri’s successor, Hyon Yong-chol, was subsequently demoted.

Kim Jong-un may have gone too far in upsetting the top brass, so much of his strident rhetoric today appears to be an attempt to appease old-guard generals and admirals. Kim and Jang may be the most powerful individuals in Pyongyang, but they are not in control of the military, and they have not consolidated power over other regime elements. As a result of the disarray, the hardliners seem to have grabbed control.

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And don't look to China to help tame North Korea, its only formal ally. China's Communist Party is also struggling to complete a troubled leadership transition. In the turmoil of last year, the People's Liberation Army has, from all appearances, emerged as the most influential faction in the ruling group.

China's flag officers have maintained links with their North Korean counterparts and still hold pro-Pyongyang views. The Chinese military, for instance, has transferred at least six mobile missile launchers for the North's new KN-08 nuclear-capable missile, thereby substantially increasing Kim's ability to wage nuclear war. So instead of restraining their belligerent allies, the Chinese seem to be egging them on.

Kim Jong Un, therefore, does not have to worry about Beijing reining him in. And as he makes threat after threat, Kim is making it more difficult for himself to back down, especially since his regime has, over the course of decades, built its legitimacy on the use of deadly force.

North Korea is unlikely to resort to violence while the annual U.S.–South Korea military exercises continue and our readiness is high. Yet in these fluid circumstances, just about anything can happen. The window for violence on the Korean peninsula is now open.

*Gordon G. Chang is the author of [The Coming Collapse of China and Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes On the World](#). His writings have appeared in *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, among other publications.*

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/03/30/the-state-of-war-kim-jong-un-s-bombastic-and-ominous-bluster.html>

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Foreign Policy

OPINION/Shadow Government

Kim Jong Un's Two Escalation Ladders

Posted By Michael J. Green

Monday, April 1, 2013

The media is transfixed on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's threat to escalate tensions on the Korean peninsula. Kim has already declared that the North is on a full war footing, put his rocket forces on "full alert," and promised to nuke Washington and destroy the South. Predictably, a host of North Korea pundits are getting air and print time urging the administration to "engage" Pyongyang to prevent a rush to war on the peninsula (Former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson is ubiquitous, but fortunately we have been spared the geostrategic musings of NBA body art nightmare Dennis Rodman, the most recent high profile visitor to Pyongyang).

Young Kim and his National Defense Commission obviously want all attention on the escalation ladder they are now producing, directing, and starring in. However, it is the *other* escalation ladder that is far more important to them and threatening to us: the North's two decade nuclear and ballistic missile weapons development programs. Reports now suggest that Pyongyang's recent nuclear test was a well-concealed explosion of a uranium device. The test was probably successful and therefore positions the North to begin producing nuclear weapons in the near future by spinning centrifuges underground where detection and elimination will be a far more difficult task for the United States. With a deliverable nuclear weapons capability -- likely aimed at Japan and Guam first -- Pyongyang will seek to force sanctions relief and "peaceful coexistence" with the United States as a "fellow nuclear weapons state." When the North is ready to increase the protection price for not driving a pick-up truck through our store window, they will threaten to export their technology to the Middle East or engage in smaller scale provocations under cover of a nuclear deterrent, i.e., threaten to drive an even *bigger* pick-up truck through our store window.

All of this reflects a recurring pattern over the past 15 years. This time, however, the rhetoric is more shrill and unnerving. Most commentary has attributed this to young Kim's need to establish credibility with his generals -- at least one of whom he has already blown up (literally) as a message to the others. But if you think about the other

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escalation ladder, it would seem there is a more important audience -- China. Beijing surprised the North by supporting chapter seven Security Council sanctions last month in the wake of the North's missile test -- and then surprised the experts by actually implementing those sanctions with inspections at its ports. China is the one country that could bring down the North, but Pyongyang understands how to terrify Chinese leaders like a small wasp buzzing around the nose of a giant. It appears that the North's newest bellicosity may have worked. The U.N. Security Council committees responsible for implementing sanctions were humming along for the first few weeks after the members of the council unanimously adopted the tough new resolution. Then, Beijing suddenly put the brakes on last week.

Since they have learned how badly it can play for the party in power politically, the Obama administration has generally preferred not to put North Korea on the front burner. But the administration was right to brandish force, not only as a reassuring deterrent to our allies but also as a signal to Beijing that we will not be knocked off track by North Korean bluster. Of course, that signal would be more credible if the administration had not engineered a sequestration strategy that cuts our Navy and Air Force, but that is the topic for another post.

Michael J. Green is senior vice president for Asia and Japan Chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and an associate professor at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.

http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/04/01/kim_jong_un_s_two_escalation_ladders

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The London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

OPINION

We Need a Nuclear Deterrent More Than Ever

As Britain marks the 100th Vanguard patrol, Prime Minister David Cameron explains why he believes it is vital to renew Trident

By David Cameron

03 April 2013

This week marks the completion of the 100th patrol by the Royal Navy's Vanguard-class submarines, which carry our Trident nuclear missiles. Every hour of every day, one of these submarines is patrolling the oceans – silent and invisible, armed and alert, our ultimate insurance against nuclear attack. As I visit HMS Victorious to welcome home her returning crew today, I want to thank all those who provide our deterrent. The submariners, away from their families for months on end, who show the highest degree of dedication in training for a duty they hope never to carry out. The families who support them, and who endure such long periods without contact. And the 20,000 people who work onshore – including the engineers and mechanics at Faslane and Devonport; the teams at Rolls-Royce and the Atomic Weapons Establishment; and the architects and construction workers in places like Barrow who design and build our submarines. All play their part in maintaining this nation's ultimate weapon of defence.

I know there are some people who disagree with our nuclear deterrent and don't want us to renew it. There are those who say that we don't need it any more, because the Cold War has ended. There are those who say we can't afford Trident any more, so we either need to find a viable cheaper option, or rely on the United States to protect us. And there are those who say that we should just get rid of our nuclear weapons entirely, in the hope that it would encourage others to do the same. I recognise these are sincerely held views. But as Prime Minister, with ultimate responsibility for the nation's security, I profoundly disagree with them. Let me explain why.

First, we need our nuclear deterrent as much today as we did when a previous British Government embarked on it over six decades ago. Of course, the world has changed dramatically. The Soviet Union no longer exists. But the nuclear threat has not gone away. In terms of uncertainty and potential risk it has, if anything, increased. The significant new factor we have to consider is this: the number of nuclear states has not diminished in recent years – and there is a real risk of new nuclear-armed states emerging. Iran continues to defy the will of the international community in its attempts to develop its nuclear capabilities, while the highly unpredictable and aggressive regime in North Korea

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recently conducted its third nuclear test and could already have enough fissile material to produce more than a dozen nuclear weapons. Last year North Korea unveiled a long-range ballistic missile which it claims can reach the whole of the United States. If this became a reality it would also affect the whole of Europe, including the UK. Can you be certain how that regime, or indeed any other nuclear armed regime, will develop? Can we be sure that it won't share more of its technology or even its weapons with other countries? With these questions in mind, does anyone seriously argue that it would be wise for Britain, faced with this evolving threat today, to surrender our deterrent? At the end of the day these issues are matters of judgment. My judgment is that it would be foolish to leave Britain defenceless against a continuing, and growing, nuclear threat.

Second, to those who say we can not afford a nuclear deterrent, I say that the security of our nation is worth the price. Of course, the deterrent is not cheap – no major equipment programme is. But our current nuclear weapons capability costs on average around 5-6 per cent of the current defence budget. That is less than 1.5 per cent of our annual benefits bill. And the successor submarines are, on average, expected to cost the same once they have entered service. It is a price which I, and all my predecessors since Clement Attlee, have felt is worth paying to keep this country safe.

All governments should, of course, carefully examine all options, but I have seen no evidence that there are cheaper ways of providing a credible alternative to our plans for a successor and I am simply not prepared to settle for something that does not do the job. Furthermore, trying to save money by just relying on the United States to act on our behalf allows potential adversaries to gamble that one day the US might not put itself at risk in order to deter an attack on the UK. Only the retention of our independent deterrent makes clear to any adversary that the devastating cost of an attack on the UK or its allies will always be far greater than anything it might hope to gain.

David Cameron is the Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party. He is the MP for Witney. David Cameron is the Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party. He is the MP for Witney.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/9969596/We-need-a-nuclear-deterrent-more-than-ever.html>

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The Globe and Mail – Toronto, Canada
OPINION/Commentary

North Korea's Threats Show that Canada Needs to Be Part of U.S. Missile Defence Pact

By COLIN ROBERTSON, Special to *The Globe and Mail*
Wednesday, April 03, 2013

Canadian prime ministers have three files with a permanent place on their desks: national security, national unity and the U.S. relationship. When those files intersect, they require special attention.

Sooner rather than later, Prime Minister Stephen Harper is going to reconsider the Canadian decision to stay out of Ballistic Missile Defence.

The catalyst is North Korea.

Kim Jong-Un is the third in his family to lead the Hermit Kingdom, and this month has all but declared war – including threats to target North America. Normally, sabre rattling by tinpot dictators can be managed or contained. But not when the sabres are ballistic missiles.

“Nuclear threats are not a game,” United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon warned on Tuesday: “Aggressive rhetoric and military posturing only result in counter-actions, and fuel fear and instability.”

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Coupled with the improvements that Iran is making to its own ballistic missile capacity, the threat to North America is now clear and present. The United States has moved aircraft and warships to the area and announced that it will increase its ground-based interceptors in California and Alaska.

Canada has a conflicted history when it comes to nuclear weapons and domestic defence from them. Though we were present at the creation – nuclear-energy research during the Second World War in Canada was vital – we eschewed the development of nuclear arms for ourselves. Instead, we opted to develop nuclear power for peaceful purposes through the CANDU reactor. (We were later deceived by the Indians, who developed their own nuclear weaponry using plutonium derived from a research reactor provided by Canada.)

Placement of nuclear warheads on Canadian soil, as part of our alliance commitment, tormented John Diefenbaker and the resulting BOMARC controversy contributed to his government's undoing. Lester B. Pearson, who succeeded Mr. Diefenbaker as prime minister, faced similar dissent but concluded that our obligations to NORAD and NATO required participation. Mr. Pearson, who had won the Nobel Peace Prize over the Suez crisis, was derisively labelled the 'defrocked prince of peace' by a young Pierre Trudeau.

Two decades later, prime minister Trudeau faced similar divisions in his own cabinet over testing of cruise missiles on Canadian soil. Mr. Trudeau allowed the testing, arguing that "it is hardly fair to rely on the Americans to protect the West, but to refuse to lend them a hand when the going gets rough."

In good company (with Australia, France et al), prime minister Brian Mulroney rejected participation in the U.S. "Star Wars" missile-defence program because Canada "would not be able to call the shots."

When Ballistic Missile Defence was developed under George W. Bush, prime minister Paul Martin opted out, to the confusion of his new defence chief and ambassador to the United States, both of whom thought that he was going to sign on.

A divided Liberal caucus, especially the opposition from Quebec, had helped change Mr. Martin's mind.

Mr. Bush was advised that newly-elected Prime Minister Stephen Harper would not welcome a renewed request. Mr. Bush found this puzzling, reportedly asking what would happen if a North Korean missile, aimed at Los Angeles or Seattle, wound up heading towards Vancouver or Calgary.

The rest of the alliance, as well as Australia, Japan and South Korea, have signed onto missile defence. The Israelis' Iron Dome recently demonstrated the defensive worth of anti-missile technology.

Critics see Ballistic Missile Defence as a latter-day Maginot Line – costly, unreliable, and provocative. If you want to detonate a nuclear bomb in the United States you would not send it by missile. NORAD, they argue, provides sufficient defence. But continental defence has been integral to Canadian national security since MacKenzie King and Franklin Roosevelt parleyed at Kingston in 1938. We were architects of NATO because of our belief in collective security.

The U.S. defence umbrella has guaranteed the peace since 1945, and has coincided with the greatest growth in trade in world history. Canada has been a principal beneficiary, with marginal premiums. Some Canadians, wrote Mr. Trudeau during the cruise missile debate, "are eager to take refuge under the U.S. umbrella, but don't want to help hold it."

Membership in the alliance entails obligations. But it also brings great benefits that serve our national interests.

Incorporating our satellite and land-based tracking facilities into Ballistic Missile Defence could make a difference in shielding Canadians should the missiles be launched. A Senate report in 2006 concluded that an effective BMD "could save hundreds of thousands of Canadian lives."

Protecting Canadians (and Americans) was the logic of the original DEW line and NORAD, our bi-national aerospace defence agreement that has served us since 1958 and now includes aspects of maritime defence.



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Last summer, ministers John Baird and Peter McKay prepared a memorandum for Mr. Harper presenting Ballistic Missile Defence options. The Prime Minister decided the timing was not right. Circumstances have changed. BMD should now be incorporated into our 'Canada First' defence strategy.

A former diplomat, Colin Robertson is vice president of the Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute and a senior strategic advisor to McKenna, Long and Aldridge LLP.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/north-koreas-threats-show-that-canada-needs-to-be-part-of-us-missile-defence-pact/article10713612/>

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Washington Post
OPINION/Fine Print

A Rational Approach to Managing Nuclear Weapons: Deterrence

By Walter Pincus
April 3, 2013

Is the United States entering a period in which it has to learn to live with "the bomb," as in the spread of nuclear weapons?

Compare the apparent contradiction between the way Washington is dealing with North Korea and Iran and the effect this could have on other countries.

North Korea not only has the capability to produce nuclear weapons (it has conducted three underground tests), but it has also stated an intention to build them. At last month's plenary meeting of the North Korean Central Committee of the Workers' Party, "a new strategic line was laid down on simultaneously pushing forward economic construction and the building of nuclear-armed forces," said a spokesman for North Korea's General Department of Atomic Energy.

In April 2009, Pyongyang threw out inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency. Since then there has been no monitoring of those facilities. North Korea has been subjected to increasing economic sanctions, but those efforts have not slowed its progress toward a deliverable nuclear weapon.

Yet I haven't heard any official in Washington, Seoul, Tokyo or Beijing talk about attacking reactors at Yongbyon, where plutonium or uranium are being refined — or any secret facilities that may be making highly enriched uranium.

Meanwhile, Israel and the United States have threatened military action against Iran should Tehran move toward building a nuclear weapon. Israel's red line is Iran developing the capability to produce highly enriched uranium at its two major facilities at Natanz and Fordow. Both are being visited by IAEA inspectors who report on the level of enrichment being achieved.

The inspections provide the United States and Israel some early warning should Iran suddenly try to break out and produce weapons-grade material. Another tipoff: if Iran told the IAEA to leave.

And although North Korean verbal threats are treated as bluster because they don't appear to be supported with military action, Iran is seen as an "existential threat." and its repeated claims that it doesn't want to build nuclear weapons are dismissed as lies.

Several truths are not being discussed in all of this.

The first is that most people in Iran and North Korea want the prestige that goes with nuclear weapons, although most are paying an economic price. Notice that North Korea's youthful new leader tied the determination to build nuclear-armed forces with "pushing forward economic construction."

What most Americans don't know is that North Korea first sought help from the Soviet Union for a nuclear reactor after the United States threatened to use its nuclear weapons to end the Korean War. Soon after, Pyongyang learned

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that U.S. nuclear bombs and artillery shells had been stored at bases in South Korea — and the desire for their own weapons increased.

Having nuclear weapons is a popular political issue in Iran. Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi began the nuclear power program with technology and highly enriched uranium provided by the United States for a research reactor. He also had in mind gaining technology for producing a bomb. When the shah was deposed in 1979, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini ordered an end to Iran's nuclear programs.

Ironically, it was U.S. claims that Iraq, Tehran's enemy, was developing nuclear weapons that led Khomeini to restart his country's program in 1984. Today, Iran's neighbors — Russia, India and Pakistan — have nuclear weapons, as do its prime enemies, Israel and the United States.

No wonder the nuclear program appeals to Iranian national pride. In 2009, when President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad tried to calm the United States and other Western countries by appearing to negotiate the future of the nation's nuclear program, his most vocal opposition came from Iran's Green Movement leaders, who had worked against his election and feared he would give away too much.

Today there is growing talk in South Korea that the United States should return its tactical nuclear weapons, which were withdrawn in 1991, or that Seoul should develop its own nuclear deterrent.

Even Japan has some legislators talking about dispensing with their longtime principles that bar the possession, manufacture or storage of nuclear weapons on Japanese soil. Shinzo Abe, Japan's new prime minister, has said that the country's constitution does not preclude the acquisition of nuclear weapons for tactical defense.

Perhaps it's time for the United States to at least discuss this possible new reality: No nation, not even the powerful United States, can threaten strong enough economic sanctions or military action against any country whose leaders and public want to build nuclear weapons.

Take the view of Stanford professor Sigfried Hecker, a director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory from 1986 to 1997, who has visited North Korea seven times. He was the person who announced in November 2010 that the Kim Jong Il regime had built a state-of-the-art uranium enrichment facility.

On Tuesday, Hecker said in an interview posted on Stanford's Center for International Security and Cooperation Web site that North Korea "has a bomb but not yet much of an arsenal." He said Pyongyang "lacks fissile materials, plutonium or highly enriched uranium to fuel its bombs" and it is for that reason it is threatening to restart its old plutonium reactor and increase the capacity of its uranium enrichment facility.

Given that circumstance, the United States should focus on trying to dissuade the North Koreans from producing more fissile material, rather than trying to get them to totally give up nuclear weapons.

The United States should work toward Pyongyang having "no more bombs, no better bombs and no export," Hecker said.

"Why would the regime want to launch a nuclear attack when it fully knows that any use of nuclear weapons would result in a devastating military response and would spell the end of the regime?"

That's deterrence, which worked during the Cold War and I believe will continue to work no matter who has a nuclear weapon, North Korea, Iran, or any other country.

Nations ultimately will have to see this is the only rational way to proceed.

Walter Pincus reports on intelligence, defense and foreign policy for The Washington Post. He first came to the paper in 1966 and has covered numerous subjects, including nuclear weapons and arms control, politics and congressional investigations.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/managing-the-bomb/2013/04/03/6724c370-9bc0-11e2-9bda-edd1a7fb557d_story.html



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The London Guardian – U.K.

OPINION/Editorial

Trident Renewal: Nations with Nuclear Options

Pyongyang has unmistakably upped the stakes. Its rhetoric is fiercer than before. And the declared readiness to play the nuclear weapons card is shameless

Editorial

Thursday, 4 April 2013

It remains an open question where North Korea's belligerence towards South Korea and the United States is actually leading. Experience still suggests that the regime's principal aims are concessions over trade, aid and the regional military balance rather than outright war. Yet Pyongyang has unmistakably upped the stakes. Its rhetoric is fiercer than before. And the declared readiness to play the nuclear weapons card is shameless. Bombastic orders to prepare missile strikes on America, followed by Thursday's missile manoeuvres, add up to threats that cannot simply be dismissed as posturing. The sooner China and the UN can bring Kim Jong-un down off his dais and back round the table the better for us all.

However North Korea has done one western leader a small favour. David Cameron has chosen this week to mount the most public defence of the UK's Trident missile system of his premiership. Writing in the Daily Telegraph the prime minister seized on North Korea's unpredictability and aggression as reasons for renewing Trident on a like-for-like basis between now and 2028. It would be foolish to be defenceless against potential nuclear provocateurs such as North Korea and Iran, Mr Cameron argued. The cold war may be over, he wrote, but the nuclear threat, including the threat to Britain, remains.

At the general level, that is of course true. Nuclear proliferation is no longer in retreat, as it briefly was after the fall of the Soviet Union. And Mr Cameron's new willingness to discuss the Trident issue is welcome. But he will have to come up with a better reason for replacing Trident than the threat from Mr Kim. Though it is true that anything can happen in the future, there is currently no direct threat to Britain from North Korea, nor the other way round. Pyongyang and London are more than 5,000 miles apart. Britain has had no military presence "east of Suez" since the years of Harold Wilson. The British deterrent is utterly marginal to any foreseeable crisis in east Asia. Even a specific Iranian threat to the UK is hard to pin down. But a specific North Korean threat is even more far-fetched.

As part of his trumpeting of Trident, Mr Cameron visited the Trident base at Faslane and the storage facilities at Coulport, travelling into Glasgow to do a question-and-answer session at the French-owned defence electronics supplier Thales. This time his argument for Trident was that it stands at the apex of the Scottish defence industries, which employ 12,600 people, and probably more if Trident replacement goes ahead as planned and Scotland votes to remain part of the UK.

This was an interesting sign of Mr Cameron's confidence that next year's referendum will endorse the union. For a Conservative prime minister to use one of his too rare visits north of the border to extol the importance of the nuclear weapons that have long been an iconic grievance across large parts of Scottish politics was a gamble. Trident is more unpopular in Scotland than in the UK as a whole, and the SNP's promise to banish the UK nukes from an independent Scotland is fundamental to its independence narrative. Yet Mr Cameron seems to calculate that, come September 2014, jobs in the defence industries will weigh more heavily in the voters' calculations than the SNP and other anti-nuclear parties believe.

In the end, the Trident renewal decision has to rest on a stronger argument than North Korean unpredictability or preserving defence industry jobs in Scotland. Mr Cameron has not made such an argument, yet he is determined to push the renewal through. There remains a political space for a case more suited to the temper and realities of the new times. That case lies somewhere in a range from outright abandonment of the nuclear option to the scaled-back renewal promoted by the former defence minister Sir Nick Harvey. With the cold war 20 years over, British military

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capacity so diminished and public money certain to be so tight for so long, that alternative case needs to be made and settled soon if full renewal is not become an irreversible done deal.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/apr/04/trident-renewal-nuclear-options-editorial>

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Stars and Stripes

OPINION/Analysis

Do North Korea's Threats Mask Power Struggle Behind the Scenes?

By Matthew Schofield and Tom Lasseter, *McClatchy Newspapers*

April 4, 2013

WASHINGTON — The North Korean army warned the United States on Wednesday it has been cleared to wage nuclear war using “smaller, lighter and diversified weapons.”

In a speech earlier in the day, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel noted that North Korea has the nuclear weapons and the delivery system “now.”

It's the latest round in an escalation of rhetoric and actions that began with a North Korean nuclear test in February. Still, military officials and experts don't expect North Korea to launch an attack on the United States. In fact, they label such an attack as suicidal, and note that while North Korea has had one almost successful test launch of an intercontinental missile, and carried out their third apparently successful nuclear test explosion, it is thought they still only have the materials for perhaps 10 weapons, and they have yet to prove their missile works with a nuclear warhead.

For comparison, the United States has 4,650 working nuclear warheads and an array of delivery systems.

Those who study the Hermit Kingdom have very serious doubts that any attack on the U.S. or allies South Korea and Japan is even being seriously considered.

“It could be there's a whole other game going on,” said Stephen Long, a North Korea expert at the University of Richmond.

Little is still really known about the young and untested North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un. Even his age, either 29 or 30, is uncertain. But in recent weeks, the “glorious successor,” as he is known inside his sheltered nation, one of the few remaining communist dictatorships, has said that “the time has come to settle accounts with the U.S. imperialists.”

He warned of a conflict that “will not be limited to a local war, but develop into an all-out war, a nuclear war.”

Reaction at the Pentagon has been relatively calm: an almost daily effort to state American solidarity with South Korea and to defend territory and allies. Missile defenses have been positioned in the region, including Wednesday's announcement of a land-based system to be deployed to protect Guam.

The U.S. also recently announced a billion-dollar upgrade to its missile-defense system in Alaska.

But those who watch North Korea closely don't think the audience for Kim's saber-rattling was the wider world he appeared to be threatening, but the small band of elites without which he can't maintain total control.

“It's probable that he was trying to appease military hardliners with his threats,” said Ellen Kim, an expert on North Korea at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a non-partisan Washington think tank.

The actual threat may be minimal, but that Kim felt compelled to make such threats might be very worrying, experts said.

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North Korea continues to struggle under Kim. The nation is poor, the people often starving, and it remains overly reliant on China for trade. Kim needs to retain the loyalty of the military, the most significant power base outside of himself.

Jina Kim, who studies North Korea from Seoul's Korea Institute for Defense Analyses, is concerned the recent rhetoric is a sign of "potential friction among elites."

"It was reported that Kim Jong Un has ordered troops near the demilitarized zone not to make any mistake that can be utilized by (U.S. and South Korean) forces to use force against the North," she said, noting that he pointedly told troops to be cautious. But as the rhetoric escalated, the North Korean leader was reshuffling his inner circle.

"The fact that organizational change continues means that North Korea's political stability has not yet been realized," she said.

The strongest sign of discord might be that recent moves appear to have angered China, something that would not be done lightly. In the United Nations Security Council, China voted in favor of harsh sanctions on North Korea after a February nuclear test.

"The top priority now is to defuse the tension, bring down heat, focus on the diplomatic track," said Chinese U.N. Ambassador Li Baodong.

Instead, Kim Jong Un ratcheted up the tension.

Long called a deeply divided North Korean elite "a worst-case scenario."

If military hardliners are rejecting Kim's rule for not being aggressive enough, that would leave the rest of the region and the world to deal with unhappy and nuclear-armed generals.

"If Jong Un's government fails, the likelihood is that whoever takes his place would be far more hard line," Long said.

In addition to threatening nuclear war, testing a nuclear device, testing long-range missiles, declaring that the war with South Korea is still on and restarting an old nuclear reactor, North Korea cut off access to the Kaesong industrial park on Wednesday. South Korea's Yonhap News Agency quoted an unnamed official as saying, "Although the action taken is serious, it is not without precedence."

But there are also concerns, especially among conservatives in Seoul, the capital of South Korea, that beneath the heated rhetoric and posturing, the North has gained strategic ground through its continued development of its nuclear and missile programs.

North Korea in December launched a satellite into space, a development widely seen as cover for testing its ballistic missile program, followed two months later by a test of what it described as "a smaller and lighter A-bomb." Both programs have presumably upped the stakes when it comes to decision-making by South Korea and the United States, which has 28,500 troops stationed in the South, about how to react to provocations from the North.

Still, a full-scale attack by the North on the United States or its allies, as Kim's bellicose rhetoric has threatened, almost certainly would be suicidal for the Pyongyang leadership. While the Pentagon believes North Korea has produced a rocket that appears capable of hitting the United States, it's had only one mostly successful test flight.

Beyond that, the North Koreans aren't thought to have a nuclear warhead they could fit onto a missile. Their most recent test is believed to have been with a device of about the force of the bomb that the United States dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

The U.S. has an array of anti-missile defenses. Recently, F-22 fighters and B-2 stealth bombers took part in joint American and South Korean war games. Both aircraft are thought to be beyond the ability of North Korean radar to track, meaning impossible to defend against.



In fact, when Hagel was asked last month about the North Koreans' ability to produce "a true intercontinental ballistic missile armed with a nuclear warhead," he said the U.S. would not be developing policy in reaction to Kim's timelines, but that "we're ahead of any timelines of any potential threat."

<http://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/do-north-korea-s-threats-mask-power-struggle-behind-the-scenes-1.214990>

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Boston Globe

OPINION

Obama's Nuclear Vision — or Illusion?

By Graham Allison

April 05, 2013

FOUR YEARS ago today, President Obama gave his first speech abroad. In Prague, he announced a bold vision for a "world without nuclear weapons." Four years on, it is fair to ask: How is that working out? Assessing all the positives, and all the negatives, are we closer to the president's aspiration — or further from it?

Former Senator Sam Nunn, a leading advocate for pursuing a nuclear weapons-free world, compares this undertaking to climbing an unscaled mountain. Standing in the valley, it may be impossible to see the peak. But as one reaches successive base camps, new vistas appear.

In a recent op-ed in the Wall Street Journal, Nunn, along with former Secretaries of State Henry Kissinger and George Shultz and former Secretary of Defense William Perry, applauded Obama for having led the climb to two important "base camps" in the past four years: the New START treaty with Russia to reduce the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads and the Nuclear Security Summits in 2010 and 2012 that focused on the real threat of nuclear terrorism.

But as mountain climbers know, scaling unconquered peaks is much more difficult than climbing a ladder, on which each rung represents a further step toward the goal. Instead, it requires finding ways around crevices and snow packs without triggering an avalanche that could push the climber back down the mountain, perhaps even fatally.

How do the risks of avalanches compare with the prospects for progress toward the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons? Implementation of New START will subtract at least 1,600 nuclear weapons from current arsenals. But the potential for catastrophic failure appears to be growing on at least three fronts: Iran, North Korea, and Pakistan.

Despite unprecedented economic sanctions that have cut Iran's oil exports in half and reduced the value of its currency by two-thirds, Iran stands closer to its first nuclear bomb than it did four years ago. At the time of Obama's speech in Prague, Iran had enough low-enriched uranium, after further enrichment, for one bomb. Today, it has enough for six. Then, it had 4,000 centrifuges operating. Today, it has 10,000 spinning and is installing another 3,000 advanced centrifuges.

Obama has drawn a clear red line declaring that Tehran will not be permitted to acquire a nuclear bomb. But if Iran proceeds, the United States will face a fateful choice between two unacceptable options: attacking to stop Iran or acquiescing to a nuclear-armed state. Whichever of these options one drills down on leaves one with a sense that the other might be better than originally thought.

Over the past decade, North Korea has demonstrated that one of the poorest, most isolated states on Earth can build its own nuclear arsenal. Defying five rounds of UN sanctions and repeated, explicit demands from the United States and China, it now has under its belt enough plutonium to build six to 10 bombs, a new uranium-fueled pathway to additional bombs, three nuclear tests, and a successful long-range missile test. North Korea also has a history of selling nuclear material and technology to whoever will pay. Could its next customer be a terrorist group like Al Qaeda or a state like Iran?



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While Iran and North Korea combined have likely produced enough nuclear material for no more than 16 bombs total, Pakistan is now producing enough nuclear material for that many additional bombs every year. It is also actively developing battlefield nuclear weapons to support its doctrine that threatens nuclear use to defeat a conventional Indian attack. Moreover, Pakistan is a frail, if not yet failed, state that is home to several insurgencies and multiple state-sponsored militant groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba, which conducted the terrorist attacks on Mumbai in 2008. And while the military and its intelligence arm, the ISI, appear to exercise control of the country's nuclear weapons, both were unaware that Osama bin Laden was hiding for years in Abbottabad, a mile away from Pakistan's equivalent of West Point.

No president since JFK has had so vivid a sense of nuclear danger as Obama. But examining the harsh realities in 2013, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that, on our present trajectory, the likelihood of a nuclear avalanche is greater than the prospect of reaching the peak. Avoiding that tragic fate will require not just climbing faster on our current course, but making substantial strategic adjustments.

Graham Allison is director of Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and author of "Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis" and "Nuclear Terrorism: The Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe."

<http://bostonglobe.com/opinion/2013/04/04/obama-nuclear-vision-illusion/aj3Bn8W1iPZ5so00LdgPHP/story.html>

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