



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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RT (Russia Today) – Russia

Tehran Ready to Allow Experts to Parchin in Exchange for Deal with IAEA – Iran’s Ambassador to Russia

May 19, 2013

Tehran is ready to explain every “suspicious” point of the country’s nuclear program as well as allow experts to Parchin nuclear facility if the IAEA agrees to sign a protocol detailing all its questions, the Iranian ambassador to Russia says.

The protocol should contain all IAEA’s concerns about Parchin and all other objects which the agency suspects of being nuke-oriented, Seyed Mahmoud-Reza Sajjadi has told the Russian media. *“And if they don’t find anything, let’s close Iran’s nuclear file and remove it from the UN Security Council.”*

The ambassador recalled that Parchin, which the Agency suspects could have been the site of high-explosives tests related to nuclear weapons, had been fully inspected by the IAEA, but then, he said, the agency wanted to undertake further inspections.

“We agreed with a condition that such a protocol would be signed,” the diplomat said. *“We displayed flexibility. We offered – let’s sign a protocol and spell out in detail all accusations.”* But international experts want to visit the suspected facility prior to signing the protocol – *“this is a game,”* the ambassador said.

“We did not see sincerity in the way that IAEA and Yukiya Amano, director-general of the UN nuclear watchdog behaved,” Sajjadi said.

“Right now what the Iranians are saying is that in order for the agreement to be signed between Iran and the IAEA the two sides have to trust each other,” Iranian political analyst Seyed Mohammad Marandi told RT. *“And for each ‘give’ there much be a ‘take’. In other words, if Iran takes a step forward, the IAEA must give something in return, and vice versa.”*

Iran wants inspections at the Parchin military site to be conducted within a *“comprehensive framework”*, otherwise *“there is no reason to prevent Americans from saying ‘No, that wasn’t this building, it was the other in the Parchin site that we need to see,’”* Marandi said, adding that *“this story will go on forever.”*

Besides Parchin, the IAEA has suppositions over another Iran’s facility – Fordo uranium enrichment plant – and demands its closure. Speaking to journalists, Sajjadi noted that Iran was not obliged to close the facility and stop uranium enrichment.

“Have you read the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons? Does it say that we have no right to enrich uranium to 20 percent?” Sajjadi asked.

He said the demand to shut down Fordo and stop uranium enrichment was *“unfair and ridiculous”* and Iran has become a victim of double standards of the IAEA and the US.

“We doubt the sincerity of the West, because in the past they have done to us illogical proposals, including the closure of Fordo, and promised to allow us to buy gold and metals, as well as to authorize export of petroleum products. But it is unfair and ridiculous proposal ,” said Sajjadi.

“The IAEA was designed to safeguard that no one is developing nuclear weapons. But Israel has a nuclear bomb, and no one cares,” said the Iranian ambassador.

He assured that Iran does not pursue nuclear weapons as supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has made a decision not to build nuclear weapon.

“Religious fatwa is above the law”, Sajjadi stressed.

Moreover, nuclear weapons would not ensure security for Tehran, but *“on the contrary would bring risk”*, he said.



"Now Iran can develop two or three bombs from the materials it possesses. But if you had a gun with two bullets, would you really go to war against an army?" said Sajjadi.

The Islamic Republic insists it has no interest in nuclear weapons, and says it is enriching uranium for purely peaceful purposes, such as nuclear power.

There have been attempts from both sides to find common ground in the issue, but negotiations have yielded no results.

The latest Iran's nuclear talks in Kazakhstan in April also brought no breakthrough with negotiators going back to their capitals declaring *"positions remain far apart"*.

"What came out from these talks was the fact that the Iranians were willing to be flexible and had an authority to make decisions, yet the P5+1 led by Ashton did not have room for maneuver, they did not have the authority to make a decision and therefore the talks stopped," Marandi said.

Since then no date or place has been set for new talks.

Meanwhile, Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad is expected to visit Moscow on July 1-2 as Russia hosts a forum of gas exporting countries.

"The Iranian president has been invited, and so we are expecting his visit," Sajjadi said at a meeting, stressing that Ahmadinejad still will be acting president.

<http://rt.com/news/iran-parchin-deal-iaea-486/>

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The London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

William Hague: 'Very Likely' Syrian Regime Used Chemical Weapons

William Hague has said that it is "very likely" that the Syrian government has used chemical weapons against its own people.

By Harriet Alexander

20 May 2013

In a statement to parliament, the Foreign Secretary said that there was increasing evidence that chemical weapons – in particular the nerve gas sarin – had been used by forces loyal to President Assad.

There is a growing body of limited but persuasive information showing that the regime used – and continues to use – chemical weapons," he said. "We have physiological samples from inside Syria which have shown the use of sarin, although it does not indicate the scale of that use. Our assessment is that chemical weapons use in Syria is very likely to have been by the regime."

He added that there was no evidence of use of such weapons by the rebel forces.

Earlier this month Carla Del Ponte, the UN human rights investigator, said that there were "strong, concrete suspicions" that the rebels had used sarin. White House spokesman Jay Carney later insisted Ms Del Ponte was wrong, and that the Assad regime was probably guilty of using such weapons, although the US had still not reached a definitive conclusion on the matter.

Mr Hague told the House that there were "no options off the table" if Mr Assad failed to attend peace negotiations. The US and Russia have agreed to hold a conference on the Syrian conflict in Geneva, likely to be in early June.

"We must make clear that if the regime does not negotiate seriously at the Geneva conference, no option is off the table," he said. "There remains a serious risk that the Assad regime will not negotiate seriously."



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The Syrian leader has so far remained uncommitted to the talks, saying that he supported them in principle but that he was sceptical about the motives of the organisers and that "believing that a political conference will stop terrorism on the ground is unreal."

However, Mr Hague said that the coming weeks would see the "most intense diplomacy yet to bring together members of the United Nations Security Council" to agree on a course of action.

The Foreign Secretary will travel to Jordan on Tuesday ahead of a meeting with John Kerry on Wednesday. On Monday he will attend a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels, where once again Syria will be top of the agenda.

"With every week that passes we are coming closer to the collapse of Syria and a regional catastrophe, with the lives of tens of thousands more Syrians at stake. We are determined to make every effort to end the carnage," he said.

Mr Hague said that half a million refugees had fled the country in the past 10 weeks alone, and that the UN estimates that 3.5 million Syrians - of 15 per cent of the population - will have abandoned their homes by the end of the year.

He said that Britain had so far contributed £171.1m to help the Syrian people, including £30m announced last week by the Prime Minister in support for people in need in areas held by the opposition or contested. He said that the UK had provided food for 150,000 people, given equipment to the Jordanian armed forces to help provide for the refugees, and assisted with the support of Lebanese forces – providing for four border towers to protect their frontier.

"The international focus must above all be on ending the crisis," he said, adding that Britain had not armed any side during the Arab Spring conflicts, but "the case for further amendments to the arms embargo is compelling."

He said: "No decision has been made to go down this route, and if we were to pursue this, it would be under the following conditions: in coordination with other nations, in carefully controlled circumstances, and in accordance with our obligations under national and international law.

"The United Kingdom and France are both strongly of the view that changes to the embargo are not separate from the diplomatic work, but essential to it."

He added: "We have to be open to every way of strengthening moderates and saving lives."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/10069199/William-Hague-very-likely-Syrian-regime-used-chemical-weapons.html>

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Space Daily.com

Oman to Buy \$2.1B Raytheon Missile System

By Staff Writers

Muscat, Oman, United Press International (UPI)

May 21, 2013

The Persian Gulf sultanate of Oman is set to buy a \$2.1 billion missile system built by the U.S. Raytheon Co. as part of a U.S. drive to install a coordinated air-defense system linking the region's Arab monarchies to counter Iran.

Details of the contract, including the type of system involved, have not been disclosed, but Oman has been in the market for a medium-range surface-to-air missile system for some time.

Raytheon executives are expected to sign a letter of intent -- the first step in what's invariably a multiyear acquisition process -- for the purchase of the ground-based system during a visit to Oman by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, who arrived in Muscat Tuesday on a Middle East swing.

U.S. officials traveling with Kerry say the deal will enhance the air-defense systems the United States has sold to Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and other allies in the gulf.

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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These include Raytheon's Patriot Advanced Capability-3 system, a medium-range system, and Lockheed Martin's Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, system.

Lockheed Martin, the Pentagon's leading supplier by sales, sold two THAAD units to the Emirates in December 2011 for \$1.96 billion.

That was the first foreign sale of the system, which can engaged short-, medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles and can work in tandem with PAC-3 units.

It's also the only functioning system in use that can intercept targets inside and outside Earth's atmosphere although Israel's Arrow-3 system, now under development by Israel Aerospace Industries and the U.S. Boeing Co. will reportedly have that capability too.

Saudi Arabia, whose air-defense net consists of 49 PAC-2 Patriots, MIM-23B Improved Hawk and French AMX-30SA batteries, has expressed some interest in THAAD, and so has tiny gas-rich Qatar.

Dennis Cavin, Lockheed's vice president for army and missile-defense programs, said recently other member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council -- Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain -- are also enthusiastic about THAAD.

In recent months, the U.S. Defense Department has notified Congress of possible contracts totaling more than \$11.3 billion with GCC states, including Qatar and Kuwait, to bolster their defense capabilities against Iran.

Among the proposed sales is a \$4.2 billion package for Kuwait for 60 Raytheon PAC-3 Patriot missiles and related systems to counter Iran's ballistic missile threat.

There's also a proposed \$9.9 billion PAC-3 deal for gas-rich Qatar, which hosts the largest U.S. military installation in the region, the al-Udaid airbase.

The Americans are reportedly planning to install in the emirate a high-powered Raytheon AN/TPY-2 X-Band radar unit that's capable of detecting missile launches at extreme ranges.

This would triangulate with similar units deployed in Israel's Negev Desert and in Turkey that would be able to spot missile launches anywhere in northern, western and southern Iran.

The gulf monarchies' interest in air-defense systems, heartily encouraged by the United States, has created a new multibillion-dollar focus regarding military capabilities in the region.

"The U.S. major defense industries, IT firms, integration systems -- they all have an enormous opportunity," said William Cohen, a former Republican senator who served as secretary of defense during the Clinton administration and now advises U.S. businesses,

"There's a very legitimate concern about Iran being a revolutionary country. Beyond Iran, you have terrorism, cyberattack threats ... you see the implications of the Arab Spring. Every country wants to make sure it's protected against that."

The Americans have long sought an integrated missile defense system within the GCC but the member states continue to be plagued by traditional rivalries and jealousies that negate such a collaborative effort.

However, the awareness of the current Iranian threat, less concerned with a possible nuclear component and more with the ballistic missile dangers, has concentrated the minds of the GCC's strategic planners.

The oil-rich United Arab Emirates, increasingly a military heavyweight in the gulf, has been the leader in this regard.

It's seen by the Americans as the logical command center for this putative antimissile shield.

But these dynastic rivalries have held this project back for years, possibly to a critical degree.

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So the Americans will need to focus on eliminating this impediment by persuading the gulf powers to coordinate and share early warning data and interceptor systems to cover the entire region.

http://www.spacedaily.com/reports/Oman_to_buy_21B_Raytheon_missile_system_999.html

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

IAEA: Iran is Expanding its Nuclear Activities

Wednesday, 22 May 2013

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Vienna - Iran is making significant progress in expanding its nuclear program, including in opening up a potential second route to developing the bomb, a new U.N. atomic agency report showed Wednesday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's latest quarterly update said Tehran had accelerated the installation of advanced uranium enrichment equipment at its central Natanz plant.

It also outlined further progress at a reactor under construction at Arak, also in central Iran, which Western countries fear could provide Iran with plutonium if the fuel is reprocessed.

The U.S. State Department said the report was an "unfortunate milestone" marking a decade of Iran expanding its nuclear activities "in blatant violation of its international obligations." A U.S. congressional panel backed tougher sanctions against Iran.

Highly enriched uranium and plutonium can both be used in a nuclear weapon. North Korea used plutonium in two tests in 2006 and 2009, while uranium was used in the "Little Boy" atomic bomb dropped by the U.S. on Hiroshima, Japan in 1945.

The new IAEA report, seen by AFP, said Iran has installed at Natanz almost 700 IR-2m centrifuges and/or empty centrifuge casings, compared with just 180 in February. None was operating, however.

Iran has said it intends to install around 3,000 of the new centrifuges at Natanz – where around 13,500 of the older models are in place – enabling it to speed up the enrichment of uranium.

The U.N. Security Council has passed numerous resolutions calling on Iran to suspend all enrichment and heavy water activities of the kind under development at Arak. It has imposed four rounds of sanctions.

Last year additional unilateral U.S. and EU sanctions targeting Iran's oil exports and its financial system began to cause real problems for the Persian Gulf country's economy.

Israel, the Middle East's sole if undeclared nuclear-armed state, has refused to rule out military action against Iran, as has U.S. President Barack Obama. Iran says that its atomic activities are peaceful.

Diplomatic efforts to resolve the impasse, most recently in six-power talks with Iran in Kazakhstan in April, have failed to make concrete progress.

Despite developments at Natanz, the IAEA report noted that Iran has not started operating any new equipment at its Fordo facility, built under a mountain near the holy city of Qom.

Fordo is of more concern to the international community, since it is used to enrich uranium to fissile purities of 20 percent and Natanz mostly to five percent, technically much closer to the 90-percent level needed for a bomb.

The IAEA report showed that Iran has produced so far 324 kilos (714 pounds) of 20-percent enriched uranium, 44 kilos more than three months ago, but that 140.8 kilos have been diverted to fuel production, up from 111 kilos.

Experts say that around 240-250 kilos are needed for one bomb.



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At the research reactor under construction at Arak, which Iran says will start operating in the third quarter of 2014, the IAEA said that the plant's large reactor vessel had been received but not yet installed.

The same was true of a number of other major components, it added.

Iran had not provided the IAEA with "urgently required" updated design information for the IR-40 reactor at Arak since 2006, the IAEA added.

"This is important because the reactor could be used to produce enough weapons grade plutonium for one weapon a year," Mark Fitzpatrick, analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, told AFP.

The IAEA is also pressing Iran to provide access to documents, sites and scientists involved in what it suspects were research activities, mostly in the past but possibly ongoing, towards developing the bomb.

At one of these sites, the Parchin military base near Tehran, the new IAEA report said that in addition to months of activity leveling the area that the agency wants to inspect, Iran has now covering a "significant proportion" with asphalt.

"I don't think they are doing themselves any favors," one senior official familiar with the probe said, adding that some rubble from the site had been dumped in lakes.

In the U.S. Congress Wednesday, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed the Nuclear Iran Prevention Act, which would extend sanctions against Iran to the auto and mining sectors and foreign currency reserves.

The new law, should it pass the House and Senate and be signed by President Barack Obama, would require further reduction of one million barrels per day over the next year, amounting to a virtual embargo on Iran's crude exports.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/05/22/Iran-expanding-nuclear-activities-says-IAEA.html>

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The Chicago Tribune

Iran Pushes Ahead with Nuclear Plant that Worries West

May 23, 2013

By Fredrik Dahl, Reuters

VIENNA (Reuters) - Iran is pressing ahead with the construction of a research reactor that Western experts say could eventually produce plutonium for a nuclear weapon if Tehran decides to make one, a U.N. report showed on Wednesday.

In another development likely to worry the United States and its allies, the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency said Iran had added to its capacity to refine uranium, which can also provide the fissile core of a bomb if enriched to a high level.

The IAEA also said Iran had asphalted a part of a military site, Parchin, that the U.N. agency wants to visit.

That will fuel Western suspicions that Tehran is trying to remove traces of possible nuclear arms-related experiments there, perhaps a decade ago, something Iran denies.

It would now probably be "very difficult" for U.N. inspectors to find any traces at Parchin even if they were allowed access, which Iran has so far refused, one diplomat familiar with the country's nuclear program said.

The quarterly IAEA report was issued amid apparent deadlock in diplomatic efforts to resolve a decade-old dispute that threatens to trigger a new war in the Middle East.

Washington said Iran was "advancing its enrichment program in blatant violation of its international obligations".

"This report marks an unfortunate milestone with regard to Iran's illicit nuclear activities," U.S. State Department spokesman Patrick Ventrell said.

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Iran denies accusations that it is seeking the capability to make nuclear weapons, saying it needs nuclear technology for energy and medical purposes and that it is Israel's arsenal that threatens peace.

Western concerns about Iran are focused largely on uranium enrichment plants at Natanz and Fordow.

But experts say the research reactor under construction near the central town of Arak may also be a proliferation issue as it could yield plutonium for nuclear arms if the spent fuel were reprocessed, something Iran says it has no intention of doing.

Iran has transported the reactor vessel - which would contain the fuel - to the heavy water plant but has not yet installed it, the IAEA report issued to member states said.

Other major components for the reactor, including control room equipment, have yet to be put in place there, it added.

STOCKPILE BELOW ISRAELI "RED LINE"

The Islamic Republic plans to commission the plant in the first quarter of 2014 and expects it to become operational in the third quarter, the IAEA said.

Israel, which has threatened to attack Iranian nuclear sites if diplomacy and sanctions fail to stop Tehran's nuclear drive, bombed Iraq's atomic reactor in 1981 and a suspected Syrian nuclear facility in 2007.

"Once the reactor operates, it could spawn more than enough weapons-grade plutonium for a bomb per year, should Iran ever decide to do that," said nuclear expert Mark Hibbs of the Carnegie Endowment think-tank, adding Israel "might be tempted to try to repeat" what it did in Iraq and Syria.

The IAEA report said Iran had installed hundreds more centrifuges at its Natanz plant since February, underlining Tehran's defiance of Western demands to curb the activity.

They included complete or partial installation of more than 500 advanced centrifuges which, once operational, would enable Iran to speed up the accumulation of refined uranium.

But, in a development that could help buy time for diplomacy to try and resolve the dispute, the report showed limited growth in Iran's most sensitive nuclear stockpile, medium-enriched uranium, and it remained below an Israeli "red line".

Tehran's holding of uranium gas refined to a fissile concentration of 20 percent - a relatively short technical step from weapons-grade - is closely watched as the Jewish state says it must not amass enough for one bomb if enriched further.

"Iran has not yet made the decision to pursue nuclear weapons, and if it were to do so, it remains years away from a deliverable arsenal," said the Arms Control Association, a Washington-based research and advocacy group.

Additional reporting by Tabassum Zakaria; Editing by Robin Pomeroy.

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-05-23/news/sns-rt-us-iran-nuclear-iaeabre94l124-20130522_1_parchin-iaea-report-iran-pushes

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Las Vegas Sun

UN Nuke Agency's Iran Probe Driven by US-Led Intel

The Associated Press (AP)

Friday, May 24, 2013

The U.N. nuclear agency responsible for probing whether Iran has worked on a nuclear bomb depends on the United States and its allies for most of its intelligence, complicating the agency's efforts to produce findings that can be widely accepted by the international community.

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Much of the world looks at U.S. intelligence on weapons development with a suspicious eye, given American claims a decade ago that Iraq had developed weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. used those claims to justify a war; Iraq, it turned out, had no such weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency insists that it is objective in evaluating Iran's nuclear program and that its information comes from a wide range of sources and is carefully vetted. But about 80 percent of the intelligence comes from the United States and its allies, The Associated Press has been told.

Two IAEA officials, who gave the 80 percent figure, told The AP that the agency has been forced to rely more and more on information from Iran's harshest critics _ the U.S., Israel, Britain, France and Germany _ because Tehran refuses to cooperate with international inspectors.

Their evaluation appeared to be the first in percentage terms. The officials demanded anonymity because they are not authorized to release classified information.

All five nations accuse Iran of having worked on nuclear arms, with Israel and the U.S. not ruling out force as a last resort if diplomacy fails to curb programs that Tehran could use for such weapons.

France and Germany refrained from joining the Iraq invasion, insisting U.S. intelligence about Saddam Hussein's purported weapons program was inconclusive.

Intelligence services of other nations, such as Pakistan, China or Russia, also collect information on Iran. But they are compromised by the fact that their governments or individuals provided the equipment or knowledge in the past that allowed Iran to develop its nuclear program.

Today, they are reluctant to pass on what they know to the agency for political reasons _ they want to be viewed as above the fray. They also view the IAEA more as technical organization and less as the U.N.'s nonproliferation watchdog, a role the agency has increasingly assumed with its Iran probe.

That leaves the U.S. and its allies as the IAEA's main intelligence sources.

Critics invoke the Iraq fiasco to warn that the information on Iran provided by Tehran's adversaries may be at best inaccurate and at worst spin, meant to pave the way for possible attack.

"Memories of the failure and tragic mistakes in Iraq are not taken sufficiently seriously," Hans Blix, a former IAEA chief, told reporters in Dubai in March.

"There is no evidence right now that suggests that Iran is producing nuclear weapons," said Blix, who headed the team that combed Iraq in the vain search for weapons of mass destruction.

Tehran has played on the credibility gap left by Iraq as it insists it is not interested in nuclear weapons, even as it pursues a program that is near the ability to make them.

Asked about the information on which the accusations against Iran are based, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's chief delegate to the IAEA, urged the world to pay heed to "lessons learned from Iraq" in comments to the AP.

In a November 2011 report that summarized its suspicions, the IAEA said that all its intelligence on Iran "has been carefully and critically examined." But its ability to vet information has been hampered by Iran's refusal to give experts access to sites, documents and people the IAEA suspects of involvement in possible weapons research.

Such access effectively ended more than five years ago when Tehran announced it had answered all questions which it is obliged to under an agreement worked out with the U.N. agency. That has left the agency mostly dependent on outside intelligence _ and has reduced its means of crosschecking that intelligence.

A cable from the U.S. mission to the agency citing IAEA chief Yukiya Amano telling mission officials that he is "solidly in the U.S. court" on Iran _ published by WikiLeaks in 2009 _ also helps those arguing that the case against Tehran could be overblown.



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International concerns about Iran's nuclear intentions date to the fall of the Shah in 1979. Those concerns resurfaced shortly before the 2003 Iraq invasion when U.S. spy satellites verified claims by Iran's exiled opposition that Tehran was assembling a uranium enrichment program at Natanz, in central Iran.

Six years later, Iran acknowledged to the IAEA that it was building a fortified underground site at Fordo, southwest of Tehran, to enrich uranium. It did so a few days after the U.S. shared intelligence with the IAEA on its existence.

But those revelations in themselves do not prove that Iran is interested in nuclear arms.

Although uranium enriched to weapons-grade is used for the core of nuclear warheads, the Iranians have so far enriched only to grades suited for nuclear fuel, medicine and science.

Iran insists it has no intention of making weapons and asserts it, like Japan and other non-nuclear arms states, is within international rights to enrich.

In its November 2011 report, the IAEA said that Iran appeared to have conducted high explosives testing and detonator development to set off a nuclear charge, as well as computer modeling of a core of a nuclear warhead.

It also cited alleged preparatory work for a nuclear weapons test, and development of a nuclear payload for Iran's Shahab 3 intermediate-range missile.

The agency says some such work may be continuing. Without a smoking gun, Iran and its supporters have challenged the IAEA to go public with its intelligence so the world can examine the allegations.

But the agency is obligated to countries supplying it with information to maintain secrecy. IAEA officials also fear that revealing too much might tip off Tehran and allow it to hide activities under investigation.

Hence, assessments about Iran's intentions come down to a matter of trust _ something many countries are unwilling to buy into after the Iraq debacle.

Gary Samore, the White House's top adviser on weapons of mass destruction until January, says only a "couple of outliers, like Venezuela and Cuba" doubt that Iran is seeking nuclear weapons capability.

"I can't recall talking to any foreign government officials who believe that Iran's program was peaceful," he told the AP, dismissing public statements to the contrary from critics of Washington as politically motivated.

Nevertheless, public support for Iran remains strong, particularly among the 120 countries that call themselves nonaligned. Many are receptive to Iranian arguments that Western pressure on Tehran is a tactic to keep lucrative nuclear technology out of their hands.

In Tehran last year, nonaligned countries directly challenged the Security Council's position on Iran's nuclear enrichment, backing the Iranian insistence that the program is peaceful.

Russia is a U.S. partner in trying to curb Iran's enrichment program. But only after Moscow expressed unhappiness with what it saw as the agency's dependence on intelligence from the U.S. and its allies last year did the agency start to share some _ but not all _ of the intelligence it gets with a Russian expert who reports to the Kremlin.

Reflecting indirect distrust of that intelligence, Russia's Interfax news agency last year quoted Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying Moscow sees "no signs that there is a military dimension to Iran's nuclear program."

Even some experts who are skeptical of Iran question the IAEA's heavy reliance on limited sources of information.

Robert Kelley, a former senior IAEA official, describes agency claims of continued Iranian weapons work as "sketchy."

Kelley, who was part of the 2003 IAEA inspection team in Iraq, says that Iran may indeed have an ongoing weapons program. But he also suggests that the U.N. agency may be jeopardizing its impartiality "by constructing accusations based upon anonymous sources that are almost a decade old" and relying on information "clearly coming from known sources hostile to Iran."

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

"Remember the lessons of 2003," he told the AP.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2013/may/24/iran-nuclear-the-intelligence/#axzz2UDtQBc7l>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
May 18, 2013

N. Korea Denounces U.S. ICBM Test Plan as Military Provocation

SEOUL, May 18 (Yonhap) -- North Korea on Saturday denounced a possible move by the United States to test fire an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) later in the month, calling it a serious military provocation.

The Rodong Sinmun, an organ of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea said in a article monitored in Seoul, the launch, if it takes place, will be an insult to the international community and a direct threat to Pyongyang.

The daily, which effectively reflects the views of the communist country, said the ICBM test can only be seen as a prelude to a pre-emptive invasion of countries the U.S. wants to strike.

"The U.S. is trying foolishly to intimidate us with the ICBM launch," the paper claimed, and pointed out that Washington is not the only country capable of launching long-range missiles.

It then said Pyongyang has the means to make U.S. ICBM's useless and made clear that if its sovereignty is violated by just "0.001 millimeter," the communist country will take measures to "annihilate the heart of the attackers with unbelievably strong force." It did not say if it will use nuclear weapons, but the country has been threatening to hit both South Korea and the U.S. with nuclear weapons if it is provoked.

On Feb. 12 the country detonated it third nuclear device and launched a long range rocket last year that may have a range of over 10,000 kilometers.

The report comes as there have been some media reports that Washington may be moving to conduct a launch test with its Minuteman-3 missile next week from its Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

Initially Washington had scheduled the test for earlier in the month, but it had been put off, in what many experts said may be a move not to antagonize the North. The country had started to tone down its saber rattling tactics in the past few weeks after South Korea and the United States concluded the annual Foal Eagle military drills on April 30.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2013/05/18/86/0401000000AEN20130518002200315F.HTML>

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Sky News.com – U.K.

China Spreads Alternative to US GPS System

Pakistan is the latest country to sign up to the alternative to the US GPS as China aims to take its satnav system global.
Sunday, 19 May 2013

Pakistan is set to become the fifth Asian country to use China's domestic satellite navigation system, which was launched as a rival to the US sat nav system.

The Beidou, or Compass, system started providing services to civilians in the region in December and is expected to provide global coverage by 2020.

Like the US global positioning system (GPS), the Beidou system can be shut down or fed with false data in times of national security.

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The primary purpose of the systems owned by China and the US are military, designed for both accurate navigation and weapons delivery.

Thailand, China, Laos and Brunei already use the Chinese system, which currently consists of 16 operational satellites, with 30 more due to join the system, according to English-language China Daily.

Huang Lei, the international business director of BDStar Navigation, which promotes Beidou, told the newspaper the company would build a network of stations in Pakistan to enhance the location accuracy of Beidou.

He said building the new network would cost tens of millions of dollars.

American website Defensenews.com reported in early May that Pakistani military experts were in favour of using the Chinese system, even though the availability of the signal could not be guaranteed in case of conflict.

But according to one of them, Pakistan cannot place its trust in the US.

"Pakistan's armed forces cannot rely on US GPS because of its questionable availability during a conflict that has overtones of nuclear escalation," former Pakistan air force pilot Kaiser Tufail told the site.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang travels next week to Pakistan, a long-time ally, after a visit to India.

<http://news.sky.com/story/1092690/china-spreads-alternative-to-us-gps-system>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
May 20, 2013

S. Korea, U.S. to Resume Talks on Revision of Nuclear Accord Next Month

SEOUL, May 20 (Yonhap) -- South Korea and the United States are expected to resume formal negotiations early next month aimed at revising a bilateral civilian nuclear accord, a government source said Monday, in what would be the first meeting since the allies agreed to extend the deadline for a deal until 2016.

Seoul and Washington have been in consultations to resume the negotiations in the first week of June in Seoul, the source said on the condition of anonymity.

"Currently, we have been consulting with the U.S. side over the date and no date has been fixed yet," the source said.

After more than two years of negotiations, South Korea failed to win U.S. permission to enrich uranium and reprocess spent nuclear fuel in the negotiations. Instead, the allies agreed late last month to extend the current agreement by two more years until March 2016.

The agreement, last revised in 1974, bans Seoul from reprocessing spent fuel because it could yield plutonium that could be used to build atomic bombs.

Seoul wants Washington to allow it to use a proliferation-resistant technology for enriching uranium and reprocessing spent atomic fuel, but Washington has been reluctant to do so apparently because of proliferation concerns.

In the face of growing nuclear waste stockpiles and its ambition to become a global power in the civilian nuclear industry, South Korea hopes to adopt the so-called pyroprocessing technology, which leaves separated plutonium, the main ingredient in making atomic bombs, mixed with other elements.

South Korea wants the U.S. to allow it to use the new technology because it has to deal with more than 10,000 tons of nuclear waste at storage facilities that are expected to reach capacity by 2016.

Some nonproliferation experts say pyroprocessing is not significantly different from reprocessing, and the plutonium could quickly be turned into weapons-grade material.

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/05/20/59/0301000000AEN20130520004300315F.HTML>

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International Business (IB) Times – Australia

North Korea Says Firing Missiles is their Exercise of Rights to Military Drills

By Athena Yenke

May 21, 2013

South Korean Defense Ministry spokesman Kim Min Seok confirms that North Korea launched missiles waters off North Korea's east coast in between 11 a.m. and noon on Monday, May 20, and its 6th missile between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m., Bloomberg reports.

North Korea's administration says that the missiles fired from May 16 until May 19 is an exercise of rights to test-fire rockets as part of regular military drills.

George Little, North Korea's spokesman for international obligations, said that "We are monitoring what is happening and we hope that over time the North Koreans continue to look hard at the need for peace and stability on the peninsula."

Mr Little expounded that the "launches don't in themselves end a provocative pause and do not necessarily violate North Korea's international obligations. I think we can safely say we remain in a period of tensions that are relatively small-scale by comparison with the months after North Korea tested a nuclear Device in February."

Willy Wo-Lap Lam, an adjunct professor of history at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, through a phone interview with Bloomberg, said that "Using short-range missiles is a relatively restrained move by North Korea's Standards. Unlike in April when it was sending out hostile messages almost every day, North Korea has been more restrained in the past few weeks."

It is to be recalled that weeks prior to the missiles launching, North Korea evoked terror at it threatened to use its test firing of a powerful midrange Musudan rocket that would possibly threaten Guam. The Musudan rocket has a range of 3,000 miles to 3,500 miles.

According to the analysis of Professor Yang Moo Jin of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, "The North is likely testing these missiles as an armed protest against the recent military drills jointly conducted by the U.S. and South Korea."

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency also said that North's missile exercises are aimed to intensify defense against the imminent threats from the U.S. and South Korea.

It is to be remembered that following the February nuclear weapon test, the Kim regime declared preemptive nuclear strikes against South Korea and the U.S.

The Obama administration said that it will heighten pressure on North Korea if it tests a missile or nuclear device but no amount of UN intervention has stopped the Kim regime with its missile launches.

The U.S. and South Korea, have since then, made efforts to discuss with China about employing possible sanction to stall North Korea's nuclear weapons programme. China is the strongest ally to North Korea and has securely protected the North from any UN intervention.

As a result of this discussion, a Chinese state bank allegedly closed North Korea's bank accounts.



Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said that "Safeguarding peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is inevitable and what everyone wants. We hope under the current circumstances all parties will do things that will ease tensions and improve relationships."

<http://au.ibtimes.com/articles/469345/20130521/kim-jong-un-missiles-north-korea-china.htm#UZ1XT5Qo5Dx>

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People's Daily – China

President Xi Reaffirms Denuclearization on Korean Peninsula

(Xinhua)

May 24, 2013

BEIJING, May 24 (Xinhua) -- President Xi Jinping reaffirmed China's stance of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula here on Friday, stressing that targets should be met by all parties involved no matter how the situation evolves.

In his meeting with Choe Ryong Hae, the special envoy of Kim Jong Un, leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Xi stressed that denuclearization and long-lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula are common aspirations shared by all people in the region.

"China has a very clear position concerning the issue that all the parties involved should stick to the objective of denuclearization, safeguard the peace and stability on the peninsula, and resolve disputes through dialogue and consultation," Xi stressed.

Choe, director of the General Political Bureau of the Korean People's Army and a member of the Presidium of the Political Bureau of the Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee, arrived in Beijing from Pyongyang Wednesday.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90883/8257762.html>

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The Hindu – India

May 24, 2013

N. Korea Committed to Nuclear Talks, Envoy Tells China

Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA)

Beijing - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's envoy, Choe Ryong Hae, told Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday that Pyongyang was committed to the stalled six-nation talks on ending its nuclear weapons programme.

North Korea was willing to join "many kinds of dialogue", Chinese state media quoted Mr. Choe, a top military official with close ties to Mr. Kim, as telling Mr. Xi. China, the United States, South Korea, Japan and Russia have all urged North Korea to resume the nuclear talks with them.

Mr. Choe delivered a letter from the North Korean leader to Mr. Xi and said North Korea would take "positive measures" to promote dialogue, the semi-official China News Service reported.

He said North Korea wanted to "create a peaceful external environment" and planned to "develop its economy to improve people's livelihoods. China hopes all parties will exercise calm and restraint ... and promote the resumption of the six-party talks," Mr. Xi was quoted as saying.

Mr. Choe's visit was the first to China by an envoy of the North Korean leader since Kim Jong Un took power after the death of his father, Kim Jong Il, in December 2011.

The visit came as tensions in the region have been high after North Korea in February conducted its third nuclear test and responded to the subsequent international sanctions that were placed on it with threats, including nuclear war.



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Kim Jong Il made a similar commitment to dialogue during his final visit to China in August 2011, saying he was “ready to resume the six-party talks without preconditions.” But no formal talks have taken place since then.

During a meeting on Friday with Chinese military leader Fan Changlong, Mr. Choe warned that there was “no guarantee of peace” on the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. Fan is vice-chairman of the Chinese Communist Party’s Central Military Commission, which is headed by Mr. Xi.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/n-korea-committed-to-nuclear-talks-envoy-tells-china/article4746381.ece>

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Times of India – India

India to Use Geo-Stationary Satellites for Missile Defence

By Manoj K Das, Tamil News Network (TNN)

May 19, 2013

KOCHI: India has launched an ambitious programme to use its array of geo-stationary satellites (G-sats) to monitor missile activities in an area of 6,000 km. With this, the country's constellation of G-sats will become the first line of defence in its anti-missile shield. This programme is independent of the observation grid installed by defence and intelligence agencies. The advantage of using geo-stationary satellites is their fixed position at a height of 36,000 km and synchronised with the earth's movement.

Allaying fears that this deployment could compromise India's space policy, sources clarified that it is not meant as an offensive posture and data won't be shared with any other country. "We're using these satellites to warn us of an impending danger even as they continue with their primary tasks of transmission and meteorological observations," sources said.

A top source told TOI that special lens and processing electronics are being developed to significantly improve the power of G-sat cameras and telescope. "The Centre has given ISRO the go-ahead. The programme is into a crucial development phase," he said.

The project is aimed at installing sensitive surveillance equipment along with other payload on the G-sats. "They will capture the signature of any missile launch activities happening in a radius of 6,000 km. This signature will be transmitted to a central control unit which would initiate necessary counter-mechanism," sources said.

The Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) is developing the interceptor missile which has entered trial phase. "Given their strategic position, we can even have exclusive facility to monitor a country or a particular region. Given the G-sat's capability to map anything to a resolution of one metre, we will be able to capture the slightest of movements or even heat signatures," sources said.

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2013-05-19/india/39369177_1_missile-defence-interceptor-missile-satellites

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Scrap World’s Biggest Nuclear Subs

21 May 2013

MOSCOW, May 21 (RIA Novosti) - Russia will decommission and scrap two of the largest submarines in the world by 2018, a defense industry source told RIA Novosti on Tuesday.

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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The Severstal and the Arkhangelsk, both Project 841 (Typhoon-class) ballistic-missile submarines, based at Severodvinsk on the White Sea, will be withdrawn from the Navy by the end of this year and will begin to be dismantled.

"This process is to be completed before 2018-2020 at the latest," the source said, adding the boats are outdated and it is too costly to modernize them.

A third submarine of this class, the Dmitry Donskoy, has been modernized as a test platform for Russia's new Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missile, and will remain in service in that capacity for some time yet, the source said.

Six Typhoon-class submarines entered service with the Soviet Navy in the 1980s, and remain the largest submarines ever built. Three have already been scrapped.

The Typhoon class boats have a maximum displacement of 33,800 tons and were built to carry 20 SS-N-20 SLBMs, all of which have been retired.

They are to be replaced with new Borey-class strategic submarines, armed with Bulava missiles.

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20130521/181272846/Russia-to-Scrap-Worlds-Biggest-Nuclear-Subs.html

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The Journal of Turkish Weekly

New Russian Technology to 'Neutralize' US Missile Shield

Voice of Russia (VoR)

23 May 2013

The General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces has developed a technology that will counterbalance NATO's global anti-missile shield, VoR Grigory Milenin has cited the Russian Chief of Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, as saying today at the opening of the International Conference on European Security.

"We have devised a new system for counteracting the possible negative effect of the US's global shield that it may have on the Russian nuclear potential, - and we aren't going to hush it up," Gen. Gerasimov said.

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/150727/new-russian-technology-to-neutralize-us-missile-shield.html>

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Vestnik Kavkaza – Moscow, Russia

Russia Needs Neither CFE Treaty, Nor "Open Skies"

23 May 2013

At the International Conference on European Security held today in Moscow, the Russian Defense Minister, Sergei Shoigu, said the mechanism of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) is dead.

The Deputy Defense Minister, Anatoly Antonov, also said that Russia does not intend to return to the CFE Treaty, since it is outdated and requires regulation and control of arms between the Warsaw Pact (which no longer exists) and NATO.

"The cold war is over, we need new mechanisms," Antonov said.

However, NATO still expects to reach a mutually-acceptable solution with Russia on the CFE treaty. This was announced today at a briefing in Moscow by the NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, Dirk Brengelmann.

"We hope that the Russian side is also convinced that we can reach mutual understanding on the issue. Though we can see that the Russian Department of Defense said that the mechanism was dead, that they have seen the patient is critical," he said.

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According to Brengelmann, today's international conference on European security was devoted to stability and predictability. "For Russia, this is important when it comes to missile defense, it is important for all of us when it comes to nuclear weapons. I'd like to believe that the renewal of the CFE Treaty will be important for all sides as well," he said.

Another urgent issue, which arose at the Moscow conference, was the implementation of the Open Skies Treaty. According to the Deputy Defense Minister, Anatoly Antonov, the statistics of observation flights under the Open Skies Treaty says that the contract itself may be used for the intelligence exploration of the territory of Russia and Belarus.

He cited the following information on the Treaty on Open Skies. In accordance with the treaty the quota of observation flights over Russia and Belarus is 42 flights per year. A similar quota of flights is in place for the United States. In 2012, there were 37 observation flights over the territory of Russia, 2 flights over Germany and 3 flights over the UK. "Then, it turns out that the Treaty on Open Skies is used in order to carry out further exploration activities related to Russian and Belarusian armed forces," Antonov said.

<http://vestnikkavkaza.net/news/politics/40639.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Missile Defense Obstructs Nuclear Forces Cuts - General

23 May 2013

MOSCOW, May 23 (RIA Novosti) – The United States' insistence on pursuing a missile defense system in Europe is standing in the way of further cuts to Russia's nuclear deterrent forces, Russia's top general said on Thursday at an international security conference in Moscow.

"Russia will cut its strategic attack force only when it is certain that the United States' development of global missile defense will not undermine its nuclear deterrent potential," Chief of the General Staff, Army General Valery Gerasimov said at the start of the two-day Military and Political Aspects of European Security conference.

The event brings together senior defense officials from Russia, the EU, the United States and Canada, as well as independent military and political experts.

Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office Sergei Ivanov reiterated Russia's position on missile defense, stressing Moscow does not seek an advantage, merely legal guarantees regarding its current and future security.

In an opening address to participants read by Sergei Ivanov, President Putin expressed his confidence that, despite differences over issues such as missile defense, the international community is in a good position to build and strengthen collective defense and security strategies.

"The necessary prerequisites are in place: the lack of any fundamental ideological differences, mutually intertwined economies, and developing cultural, scientific and business contacts between people," Putin's message said.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that the lack of trust between Russia and the West, which he described as a "cold war relic," is a key problem in European security, and stressed that "Russia and NATO have agreed not to view each other as enemies."

However, NATO's continuing eastward expansion is undermining those areas of progress that Russia and the West have achieved, Shoigu said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that "transatlantic security should not oppose pan-European unity."

"If we want to overcome mutual suspicion regarding each other's intentions, then we need to jointly analyze the risks and develop genuinely collective, common, approaches to neutralize them," Lavrov said.

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“Working together in equitable partnership, we are able to effectively complement each other, multiplying our potential,” Lavrov added.

<http://en.ria.ru/world/20130523/181305895/Missile-Defense-Obstructs-Nuclear-Forces-Cuts---General.html>

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ITAR-TASS News Agency – Russia

23 May 2013

Russia Needs Predictability in US Military Policy - Russian Deputy Defence Minister

MOSCOW, May 23 (Itar-Tass) - Russia needs not just the information on the U.S. military policy, the country needs the predictability of U.S. actions, Russian Deputy Defence Minister Anatoly Antonov said in his speech at the international conference on European security here on Thursday.

He noted that the U.S. decision to change the deadlines to fulfil a fourth stage of the deployment of the missile defence does not mean the full lifting of Russia’s concerns over this issue. Russia needs not just a clear information over the missile defence project, “we need the predictability in the U.S. foreign policy,” Antonov said.

The deputy defence minister noted that Russia lacks a clear idea over a future U.S. policy. It is probable that the United States will come back to the decision to fulfil a fourth stage of the deployment of the missile defence system. “Therefore, we need clear predictability in the U.S. military policy,” he explained.

Today new irritating factors, which pose a threat to national security of Russia, are emerging on the border with Russia. “Settling the problem allegedly with Iran, the NATO states are disputing with Russia. Why?” Anatoly Antonov. “It is not worth powder and shot,” he said with confidence.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/746902.html>

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Thursday, May 23, 2013

Russia Wary of Deeper Nuclear Arms Cuts

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press (AP)

MOSCOW — Russia's top military officer on Thursday voiced skepticism about deeper nuclear arms cuts, saying they should require parallel reductions in non-nuclear precision weapons.

The statement by chief of Russia's military General Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov, appeared to signal the Kremlin's reluctance to negotiate a new nuclear arms deal with Washington.

President Barack Obama, who signed the landmark New Start arms treaty with Russia, has pledged to work with Moscow to seek further reductions in nuclear arsenals. But Russia, which has increasingly relied on its nuclear deterrent due to a relative weakness of its conventional forces, is worried about the U.S. edge in precision weapons.

"We can't take the path of cutting only strategic nuclear arsenals and leaving outside the framework of talks other weapons, in which some of our partners have an indisputable quantitative and qualitative advantage," Gerasimov said, adding that such approach would hurt Russia's security.

While he did not mention the United States, Gerasimov appeared to refer to U.S. plans to fit conventional warheads to some of its long-range nuclear missiles. He said that such weapons should be part of arms control talks.

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The United States has considered the development of so-called "prompt global strike" weapons that would allow the Pentagon to strike targets anywhere on the globe in as little as an hour. Such plans included modifying some of the existing nuclear-armed missiles to carry conventional warheads as well as designing new hypersonic vehicles capable of traveling at speeds at least five times the speed of sound.

Russia, which has lagged behind in designing such weapons, has strongly opposed the U.S. plans, saying it could tilt the balance of power.

"Such precision weapons, which don't fall under any qualitative, quantitative or territorial restrictions, can be used to target strategic facilities," Gerasimov said at Moscow's international security conference that was sponsored by the Defense Ministry.

Gerasimov's statement came as a clear indication that Russia would likely reject any attempts by Obama's administration to negotiate only on deeper nuclear arms cuts.

Russian officials said Obama offered Russia's President Vladimir Putin new ways to cooperate in a letter delivered last month by Tom Donilon, Obama's national security adviser.

The Kremlin wouldn't divulge the letter's content, but the business daily Kommersant reported last week that it included a proposal to negotiate deeper nuclear arms cuts and offered to sign a deal on information exchange to assuage Moscow's concerns about the U.S.-led NATO missile defense plans for Europe.

Gerasimov and other Russian officials, who spoke at Thursday's conference, reaffirmed Moscow's strong concern about the U.S. missile shield.

<http://www.ajc.com/ap/ap/defense/russia-wary-of-deeper-nuclear-arms-cuts/nXzwt/>

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Russia Beyond the Headlines – Russia

Moscow Says Agreement on Missile Shield Transparency Washington Proposed Not Enough - Newspaper

May 24, 2013

Interfax

Moscow intends to insist on getting legally binding guarantees on the non-direction of the U.S. missile shield at Russia and the Kremlin says the proposal of U.S. President Barack Obama to conclude a compromise agreement on the missile shield sphere transparency is not enough, Kommersant newspaper reported on Friday.

The newspaper reported citing a source in the Russian General Staff that a conclusion sent to the Russian president's administration said that signing an additional agreement on the missile shield transparency cannot fully guarantee Russia's safety.

"This is a positive step but obviously it is not enough. So we have proposed to insist firmly on receiving legally binding guarantees from the U.S. on the non-direction of their missile shield against the Russian potential," the newspaper quoted the source as saying.

The newspaper reported that the conclusion was sent ahead of the departure of Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, who delivered the reply of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Obama's letter.

http://rbth.ru/news/2013/05/24/moscow_says_agreement_on_missile_shield_transparency_washington_proposed_26312.html

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Air Force Times.com

Missileers Face Extra Work, No Room for Error

May 21, 2013

By Brian Everstine, Staff writer

Not only have Minuteman III missile launch officers had to withstand the media fury over “rot” from within its ranks and being in a “crisis” mode after a subpar inspection, now the remaining launch officers have to pick up an extra 24-hour shift per month to cover for the 17 who are benched for remedial training.

The issue is either another sign of low morale in the missile career field, or an example of responsibility for missileers, a career field that has recently been incorrectly shamed and labeled as “in a crisis,” depending on who is asked.

Leadership of the 91st Missile Wing is continuing to assess missile officers at Minot Air Force Base, N.D., following the suspension of 17 earlier this month for receiving the equivalent of a “D” on a March operations inspection.

Following the news of the inspection, Gen. Robert Kehler, commander of U.S. Strategic Command, ordered his inspector general to review the inspection and the responses to it.

Leadership across Global Strike Command has been looking into morale among the ranks, with each of the command’s five wings taking two morale surveys, including a climate assessment survey within the past year, command spokeswoman Lt. Col. Angie Blair said.

A main issue in the nuclear career field is a lack of future options. Air Force Secretary Michael Donley called it a “very broad and large pyramid at the bottom for the missile crews,” with a lot of junior officers starting out at the control panels, but limited command options down the line in the future.

“The whole problem is if you stay in the nuclear missile field, there are a lot of junior officers pulling alerts. There’s just not that many command positions,” said Bruce Blair, a former missile officer from 1972 to 1974 and director of the Global Zero Initiative. “It contributes to a feeling among ground crews that there’s not many opportunities for advancements with nuclear missiles. Many of them bide time, they pull their stint, and look to cross-train out.”

The statements that nuclear missile officers are in a “morale crisis” show a misunderstanding of how the system operates, missile officers said.

“I believe the morale issues have been inaccurately characterized,” said Lt. Col. David Franklin, commander of the 532nd Training Squadron at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., who has spent 17 years as a 13N officer, including duty shifts at F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. “I personally came up with and pulled crew with each of the commanders up north.”

“A lot of the negativity ... comes from people who haven’t done the job and who haven’t seen it in action,” said Capt. Nicole Klingensmith, ICBM operations director at Vandenberg.

Franklin and Klingensmith help train new missile officers that near perfection is necessary, which is also the case in inspections such as the March example at Minot.

Critics, such as Blair, have said say this has led to a culture where there is a lack of reward or incentive for performing at a near-perfect level.

“And if you don’t, if you fail, you fail in a shameful way,” he said. “You’re labeled incompetent, practically; you go into remedial training in the doghouse. It’s kind of a black-and-white culture.”

Franklin, however, said that is how the nuclear career field needs to operate, and it is unlike any other career field in the Air Force or in a civilian job.

“There is absolutely no room for incomplete knowledge or substandard performance for operations of nuclear weapons,” he said. “In my opinion, if you hone a self-critical culture and understand that mistakes will be made, you can

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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continue to ensure that your crew force understands that those mistakes will be made. It's a cognitive shift that you have to make when you deal with nuclear weapons."

The Air Force recently split the missile and space career fields, looking for more officers to start out in space as opposed to pulling missile duty, and giving nuclear officers who finish their time on alert the chance to cross-train to other jobs in the Air Force.

There are limited long-term career possibilities, making it competitive to stay in and move up, including training jobs at Vandenberg and assignments to STRATCOM. The limited advancement options mean that there is more competition for the slots. During the last two assignment cycles, there were 40 officers competing to get 19 jobs, Franklin said. Klingensmith, who recently moved from duty at Minot to Vandenberg, said she hasn't felt restricted in her career advancement. Teaching at Vandenberg was her first choice for a follow-on assignment.

"I wanted to shape the people I would want to pull alert with," she said.

<http://www.airforcetimes.com/article/20130521/NEWS/305210018/Missileers-face-extra-work-no-room-error>

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The Moscow Times

U.S. Lawmakers Seek Limits on Russia Cooperation

22 May 2013, Issue 5132

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. Republican lawmakers are trying to block President Barack Obama's overtures to Russia on missile defense, creating a potential obstacle to arms control talks.

Lawmakers are proposing a measure that would bar the administration from sharing classified missile defense data with Russia.

That would undercut a path that arms control advocates have urged to restart nuclear talks, which have been set back by a missile defense dispute. They say that if the U.S. releases classified data, it could persuade Moscow that the system is not targeting Russian missiles.

Republicans are wary of any concessions to Russia and see President Barack Obama as being too weak in negotiations.

The proposal is part of a defense bill that is in its early stages in the legislative process. Its prospects for becoming law are uncertain.

The administration has not said whether it is prepared to release missile defense data to Russia, but the director of the U.S. Missile Defense Agency, Vice Admiral James Syring, said recently that the administration has discussed the possibility.

The defense bill would also direct the Missile Defense Agency to inform Congress about any recent instances in which it has already declassified information to provide it to Russia. It would also require the administration to develop a plan to pressure Russia and China to restrict the transfer of ballistic missile technology to Syria, Iran and North Korea.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/us-lawmakers-seek-limits-on-russia-cooperation/480317.html>

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Minneapolis Star Tribune

US Air Force Test-Launches Minuteman 3 Missile in California; Delayed by North Korea Tensions

By Associated Press (AP)

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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May 22, 2013

VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. - The U.S. Air Force launched an unarmed intercontinental ballistic missile from a California base on Wednesday, a month after the test flight was postponed because of tensions with North Korea.

The Minuteman 3 lifted off at 6:27 a.m. PDT Wednesday from Vandenberg Air Force Base. It splashed down less than 30 minutes later and 4,000 miles away at the Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific Ocean, Air Force officials said.

It was the first Minuteman test-launch of 2013. Several missiles are launched from Vandenberg each year to verify the weapon system's accuracy and reliability.

The original mid-April flight was postponed by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel amid concerns that it might be misinterpreted during a time of heightened tension with North Korea.

The launch was rescheduled for Tuesday morning but was pushed back a day due to a problem with range safety instruments.

The U.S. has 450 nuclear-armed Minuteman 3 missiles ready for combat use, if directed by the president. They are in underground silos in five states.

<http://www.startribune.com/nation/208492601.html?refer=y>

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The Hindustan Times – India

US Missile Defense still Plagued by Technical Doubts

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

May 23, 2013

Washington - Three decades after Ronald Reagan launched his "Star Wars" project, the costly missile defense program has become a pillar of US strategy despite lingering doubts about its technology.

No longer designed to counter a Soviet nuclear attack, the anti-missile network is supposed to thwart a "limited attack" from North Korea or Iran. But numerous experts question if the system even works.

While Reagan's blueprint provoked bitter debate in the 1980s, today's program is now firmly entrenched in Washington. The project, however, still requires a daunting technical feat – to hit a ballistic missile travelling outside the atmosphere with another missile.

Supported by advanced radar, SM-3 interceptors aboard 26 naval ships and ground-based interceptors in silos in Alaska and California are designed to collide with long-range missiles, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), as they speed through space.

"We do have confidence in the ability of the ballistic missile defense system to defend the United States against a limited attack from both North Korea and Iran today and in the near future," lieutenant general Richard Formica, commander of US Army space and missile defense command, told lawmakers this month.

The US Missile Defense Agency says the SM-3 interceptors -- the same weapons used for NATO's anti-missile shield -- have scored hits in 25 of 30 tests, though ground-based interceptors have failed in their last two tests.

Neither Pyongyang nor Tehran have yet managed to develop an ICBM that can reach the United States, and some scientists dismiss the missile defense project as a technical illusion.

Despite billions of dollars in funding, there is no sign that "any of the fundamental unsolved problems associated with high-altitude ballistic missile defenses have been solved," wrote professor George Lewis, a physicist at Cornell University and Theodore Postol, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, in a 2010 report.

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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The Pentagon's tests only offer "the appearances of success," according to Lewis and Postol, as the trajectory, the timing of the launch and the type of missile being fired are all known in advance.

The tests are organized in "carefully orchestrated scenarios that have been designed to hide fundamental flaws," they wrote.

The Pentagon's testing reports in recent years acknowledged the ground based interceptors -- which cost \$70 million each -- so far have "demonstrated a limited capability against a simple threat" due to an immature technology.

As the United States presses ahead to build new versions of the SM-3, which cost \$20 million a piece, Congress's investigative arm -- the Government Accountability Office -- has voiced concern over "performance delays, and in some cases, performance shortfalls."

Skeptics of the project say adversaries could undercut the system by launching a barrage of missiles, attacking radars or simply employing decoys.

Aluminum balloons or numerous small wires could be enough to confuse the system, experts said.

"You can very easily create light decoys that will very easily fly with the warhead, just balloons for instance. And these are very hard to discriminate from the actual warhead," physicist Yousaf Butt, of the Monterey Institute of International Studies, said.

Even strong advocates of the program, including naval officers who served on missile defense ships, say decoys pose a tough challenge.

Despite mixed results and complaints from Russia that the system is undermining arms control efforts, the anti-missile weaponry has been sold to allies and enjoys widespread backing in Congress, where the defense industry has lobbied to keep the project well-funded.

Since its start in the 1980s, the program has cost at least \$158 billion, according to official figures, while other estimates put the price tag higher.

A budget crisis has hardly affected the program. The Pentagon has proposed \$9.2 billion for the system in 2014 and \$45.7 billion over the next five years. And some senators are pushing to fund a new interceptor site on the East Coast.

But for skeptics, the system remains unproven and possibly unworkable.

According to Butt, trying to hit an incoming warhead in space is "a very difficult problem that I don't envision being solved because it's a physics problem, not an engineering problem."

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Americas/US-missile-defense-still-plagued-by-technical-doubts/Article1-1064695.aspx>

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ITAR-TASS News Agency – Russia

US, RF Prepare to Sign New Agreement on Nunn-Lugar Program

24 May 2013

WASHINGTON, May 24 (Itar-Tass) - The United States and Russia have closely approached the conclusion of new accords on the program for the reduction of threats from weapons of mass destruction, which is more widely known as the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program.

All the main political problems connected with CTR have been settled to the satisfaction of both sides, Kennet Handelman, US Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs, told journalists here on Thursday.

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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Commenting, at a request of an Itar-Tass correspondent, on the talks on the matter, he recalled that the agreement between Washington and Moscow on the Nunn-Lugar program, concluded in 1992 and extended twice since then, expires on June 16. Handelman said he is upbeat about prospects for the drawing up of the new document.

If the new agreement is not signed before June 16 that would happen solely due to bureaucratic causes, not because of some political problems, the Pentagon official said. The CTR Program, he said, will be renewed at Russia's request so that it would be beneficial to both sides.

Last year Moscow notified Washington that the document, which establishes rules for the implementation of joint projects in the field of non-proliferation, did not suit it in the present form and suggested amending it. This was accounted for by the fact that the agreement, concluded more than 20 years ago, grants legal immunity and privileges to the American specialists who work in the RF under the Nunn-Lugar program, the privileges that are not up to the present-day Russian legislation.

Washington agreed with Moscow's suggestion and the sides set about holding talks on that. The matter was discussed at regular consultations by Rose Gottemoeller, acting US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, and Sergei Ryabkov, Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Defense ministries of the two countries also directly participated in working out a new agreement. New rules will enable the sides to finalize the implementation of the already launched projects and will also apply in the event of the emergence of additional areas of cooperation under the Nunn-Lugar Program.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/747324.html>

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China Daily – China
OPINION/Op-Ed Contributor

Duplicity of US Military Policy Exposed

May 18, 2013

By Shen Dingli (China Daily)

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Every year, the United States Department of Defense issues a report on China's military, which invariably is criticized by Beijing. This practice is not at all conducive to establishing a new type of relationship between the two countries and their militaries.

The Pentagon report on China's military is indeed mischievous. But it deserves to be studied from a professional perspective to determine how it reflects the latest developments in China's military. If we go through the reports the Pentagon has issued over the years, we will see that apart from US officials' figments of imagination, they also contain some predictive judgments. For example, the US said China was planning to build aircraft carriers much before China actually got one. That prediction came true last year when Liaoning was commissioned into the Chinese navy.

Therefore, we cannot just pour scorn on the Pentagon reports. The US military is a highly professional force and has its special qualities and advanced intelligence network. In fact, the Pentagon reports gives us a good idea about the US' surveillance- and intelligence-gathering capability and the amount of information it is willing to make public.

Pentagon reports, however, can never accurately reflect China's overall military capability because the US' intelligence network has its limitations and shortcomings. So, while China criticizes the US for exaggerating its military power and playing up the "China threat" theory, it is also likely that the US is underestimating the Chinese military's true capabilities.



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Nevertheless, the US is more prone to overestimate China's military power and to play up the "China threat" theory for ulterior motives. Of course, with China becoming more transparent as the modernization of its military continues, the possibility of the US overestimating its strength will decline.

The Pentagon continues to disregard the facts on the Chinese military's competitiveness to portray China as a threat so that the US can strengthen its alliance with other countries. This tactic of the US is nothing new for the international community. In fact, the US does not only regard China's military as a major potential rival, it also views China with skepticism in many other fields, because among other things it fears that Chinese companies' investments in the US undermines national security.

The US has not spared any effort to prevent China's State-owned or private enterprises from gaining a foothold or even entering the American market. The case of Huawei and ZTE, which many American officials allege are being used to spy on the US government, reveals Washington's unhealthy mentality of seeing Beijing as an enemy rather than a mere competitor. In contrast, China didn't create any obstacle for US Internet giants such as Cisco to enter its domestic market.

As the sole superpower, the US is swayed by considerations of profit and loss, but it could continue suffering losses if it goes on with its endless calculation game. The US rightly considers security a priority, but by pitting security against development it is wasting opportunities for economic benefits, which will ultimately compromise its security.

China's population is more than four times that of the US but its military expenditure is only one-fifth that of the US. The US needs such a huge defense budget to continue to intervene in other countries' internal affairs and fuel crises across the world, which will eventually sap its national strength and push it toward another economic recession. But conservative US politicians allege that China is developing into a big military power and criticize its defense policy.

Moreover, despite openly announcing the offensive mission of its "cyber army", the US accuses other countries of organizing cyberattacks. If the US really wants a stable cyberspace, it should first stop launching cyber attacks. Otherwise, it should stop asking other countries to do so.

China has little need to be bothered about the US' annual reports on its military. Until the recent past, China's military was too weak to be of any concern to the US. That the US is now paying attention to the Chinese military is proof that its modernization is progressing in the right direction. So if the Pentagon issues reports to portray China as a threat to other countries, Beijing can also publish reports to paint the US in a similar light.

Obviously, it would be easier for other countries to perceive the US as a threat and there will be little need to play it up. Its invasion of Iraq (and Afghanistan before that) reflects its aggressive intentions quite clearly.

The author is associate dean of the Institute of International Studies, Fudan University, Shanghai, China.

http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/opinion/2013-05/18/content_16508720.htm

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Inter Press Service (IPS) News Agency – Italy
OPINION/Article

Nuclear Iran Unlikely to Tilt Regional Power Balance – Report

By Jim Lobe and Joe Hitchon

May 18, 2013

WASHINGTON, May 18, 2013 (IPS) - A nuclear-armed Iran would not pose a fundamental threat to the United States and its regional allies like Israel and the Gulf Arab monarchies, according to a new report released here Friday by the Rand Corporation.

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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Entitled “Iran After the Bomb: How Would a Nuclear-Armed Tehran Behave?”, the report asserts that the acquisition by Tehran of nuclear weapons would above all be intended to deter an attack by hostile powers, presumably including Israel and the United States, rather than for aggressive purposes.

And while its acquisition may indeed lead to greater tension between Iran and its Sunni-led neighbours, the 50-page report concludes that Tehran would be unlikely to use nuclear weapons against other Muslim countries. Nor would it be able to halt its diminishing influence in the region resulting from the Arab Spring and its support for the Syrian government, according to the author, Alireza Nader.

“Iran’s development of nuclear weapons will enhance its ability to deter an external attack, but it will not enable it to change the Middle East’s geopolitical order in its own favour,” Nader, an international policy analyst at RAND, told IPS. “The Islamic Republic’s challenge to the region is constrained by its declining popularity, a weak economy, and a limited conventional military capability. An Iran with nukes will still be a declining power.”

The report reaches several conclusions all of which generally portray Iran as a rational actor in its international relations.

While Nader calls it a “revisionist state” that tries to undermine what it sees as a U.S.-dominated order in the Middle East, his report stresses that “it does not have territorial ambitions and does not seek to invade, conquer, or occupy other nations.”

Further, the report identifies the Islamic Republic’s military doctrine as defensive in nature. This posture is presumably a result of the volatile and unstable region in which it exists and is exacerbated by its status as a Shi’a and Persian-majority nation in a Sunni and Arab-majority region.

Iran is also scarred by its traumatic eight-year war with Iraq in which as many as one million Iranians lost their lives.

The new report comes amidst a growing controversy here over whether a nuclear-armed Iran could itself be successfully “contained” by the U.S. and its allies and deterred both from pursuing a more aggressive policy in the region and actually using nuclear weapons against its foes.

Iran itself has vehemently denied it intends to build a weapon, and the U.S. intelligence community has reported consistently over the last six years that Tehran’s leadership has not yet decided to do so, although the increasing sophistication and infrastructure of its nuclear programme will make it possible to build one more quickly if such a decision is made.

Official U.S. policy, as enunciated repeatedly by top officials, including President Barack Obama, is to “prevent” Iran from obtaining a weapon, even by military means if ongoing diplomatic efforts and “crippling” economic sanctions fail to persuade Iran to substantially curb its nuclear programme.

A nuclear-armed Iran, in the administration’s view – which is held even more fervently by the U.S. Congress where the Israel lobby exerts its greatest influence – represents an “existential threat” to the Jewish state.

In addition, according to the administration, Iran’s acquisition of a weapon would likely embolden it and its allies – notably Lebanon’s Hezbollah – to pursue more aggressive actions against their foes and could well set off a regional “cascade effect” in which other powers, particularly Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt, would feel obliged to launch nuclear-weapons programmes of their own.

But a growing number of critics of the prevention strategy – particularly that part of it that would resort to military action against Iran – argue that a nuclear Iran will not be nearly as dangerous as the reigning orthodoxy assumes.

A year ago, for example, Paul Pillar, a veteran CIA analyst who served as National Intelligence Officer for the Middle East and South Asia from 2000 to 2005, published a lengthy essay in ‘The Washington Monthly’, “We Can Live With a Nuclear Iran: Fears of a Bomb in Tehran’s Hands Are Overhyped, and a War to Prevent It Would Be a Disaster.”

More recently, Colin Kahl, an analyst at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) who also served as the Pentagon’s top Middle East policy adviser for much of Obama’s first term, published two reports – the first questioning



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the “cascade effect” in the region, and the second, published earlier this week and entitled “If All Else Fails: The Challenges of Containing a Nuclear-Armed Iran,” outlining a detailed “containment strategy” — including extending Washington’s nuclear umbrella over states that feel threatened by a nuclear Iran — the U.S. could follow to deter Tehran’s use of a nuclear bomb or its transfer to non-state actors, like Hezbollah, and persuade regional states not to develop their own nuclear arms capabilities.

In addition, Kenneth Pollack, a former CIA analyst at the Brookings Institution whose 2002 book, “The Threatening Storm” helped persuade many liberals and Democrats to support the U.S. invasion of Iraq, will publish a new book, “Unthinkable: Iran, the Bomb, and American Strategy”, that is also expected to argue for a containment strategy if Iran acquires a nuclear weapon.

Because both Brookings and CNAS are regarded as close to the administration, some neo-conservative commentators have expressed alarm that these reports are “trial balloons” designed to set the stage for Obama’s abandonment of the prevention strategy in favour of containment, albeit by another name.

It is likely that Nader’s study – coming as it does from RAND, a think tank with historically close ties to the Pentagon – will be seen in a similar light.

His report concedes that Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons would lead to greater tension with the Gulf Arab monarchies and thus to greater instability in the region. Moreover, an inadvertent or accidental nuclear exchange between Israel and Iran would be a “dangerous possibility”, according to Nader who also notes that the “cascade effect”, while outside the scope of his study, warrants “careful consideration”.

Despite Iran’s strong ideological antipathy toward Israel, the report does not argue that Tehran would attack the Jewish state with nuclear weapons, as that would almost certainly lead to the regime’s destruction.

Israel, in Nader’s view, fears that Iran’s nuclear capability could serve as an “umbrella” for Tehran’s allies that could significantly hamper Israel’s military operations in the Palestinian territories, the Levant, and the wider region.

But the report concludes that Tehran is unlikely to extend its nuclear deterrent to its allies, including Hezbollah, noting that the interests of those groups do not always – or even often – co-incide with Iran’s. Iran would also be highly unlikely to transfer nuclear weapons to them in any event, according to the report.

Jim Lobe joined IPS in 1979 and opened its Washington, D.C. bureau in 1980, serving as bureau chief for most of the years since. Joe Hitchon is a contributor to Inter Press Service news.

<http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/05/nuclear-iran-unlikely-to-tilt-regional-power-balance-report/>

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

OPINION/Article

Clear or Nuclear: Will Saudi Arabia Get the Bomb?

Tuesday, 21 May 2013

By Dr. Naser al-Tamimi, Special to Al Arabiya

As the impasse over Tehran’s nuclear program worsens, those most likely to be directly affected by an Iranian bomb are showing greater alarm. While the media fixates on Israel and its possible reaction, other regional players have no less at stake.

Despite Riyadh’s long-held advocacy of making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, there has been much speculation in the past few years about the possibility of its acquiring, or developing, nuclear weapons should Tehran obtain the bomb.

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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In the words of Saudi King Abdullah: "If Iran developed nuclear weapons (...) everyone in the region would do the same," a sentiment echoed by Prince Turki al-Faisal, former head of Saudi Arabia's General Intelligence Directorate.

Why go nuclear?

A major deterioration in U.S.-Saudi relations - especially if Washington fails to stop Tehran's nuclear program or decides to scale back its military presence in the Middle East due to its recent energy discoveries and/or fiscal constraints - could force Riyadh to reconsider nuclear weapon acquisition to avoid having to face foreign aggression without U.S. security assurances.

The second issue is a mirror image of the first, namely, the concern over Iran's nuclear ambitions. If Tehran crosses the threshold, this development could increase the pressure on Riyadh to walk in the nuclear path.

In Feb. 2012, a senior Saudi source told *The Times*: "There is no intention currently to pursue a unilateral military nuclear programme but the dynamics will change immediately if the Iranians develop their own nuclear capability (...) politically, it would be completely unacceptable to have Iran with a nuclear capability and not the kingdom."

A third factor in the Saudi calculus is Israel's nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. Given Israel's status as an assumed, but undeclared, nuclear weapons state, the most immediate consequence of Tehran's crossing the nuclear threshold would be the possibility that Tel Aviv ends the ambiguity about its program and announces that it has nuclear weapons as a form of deterrence against Iran. This in turn will increase the pressure on Riyadh to acquire its own deterrent vis-à-vis Israel as well as Iran.

Perhaps a more critical factor in the nuclear equation is Saudi Arabia's economic outlook. The country depends almost exclusively on oil export revenues to develop its economy, but the kingdom is an oil-consumer as well as a producer. Burning oil for electricity production currently consumes about a quarter of the crude oil Saudi Arabia produces, which could have very serious implications for the future. In 2012, the country consumed an average of 3.04 million barrels per day, according to the International Energy Agency.

Third-party connections

There have been suggestions that, rather than develop an indigenous nuclear program, Saudi Arabia would simply seek to buy nuclear warheads from Pakistan or China. According to a news report, Riyadh is beefing up its military links with Islamabad to counter Tehran's expansionist plans, either by acquiring atomic weapons from Pakistan or its pledge of nuclear cover, a claim also reported in *The Guardian*.

Alternatively, Pakistan might offer a deterrent guarantee by deploying its own nuclear weapons, delivery systems and troops on Saudi territory. This arrangement could be particularly appealing to both Riyadh and Islamabad, allowing the Saudis to argue that they are not violating the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) since the weapons would not be theirs.

A Pakistani presence might also be preferable to a U.S. one, because stationing Muslim forces on Saudi soil would not trigger the kind of opposition that has in the past accompanied the deployment of American troops.

However, a good Pakistani working relationship with Washington is essential. The Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act of 2009 (also known as the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill) authorized a massive increase in U.S. civilian assistance to Islamabad, tripling it to \$1.5 billion a year.

Despite tensions between the two states, Pakistan remains keen on developing its relationship with Washington, and the continued proliferation of nuclear technology is unlikely to encourage either economic or military aid.

Indeed, selling complete nuclear weapons would come at a great political cost. Islamabad might forfeit U.S. foreign assistance and drive Washington into closer cooperation with its mortal enemy, India. Providing Riyadh with a Pakistani nuclear umbrella would also increase the likelihood of convergence between New Delhi and Tehran, as both nations might view the move as part of a larger Sunni threat.



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Relations with Islamabad

Although relations with Islamabad are improving, the Saudi leadership has no great trust in Pakistan's intentions. On the contrary, many WikiLeaks documents have revealed Saudi dissatisfaction with Pakistani politicians and policies.

Above all, Indian-Saudi economic relations have improved rapidly in recent years. At present, New Delhi is the fifth-largest trading partner for Saudi Arabia, and Riyadh is the top supplier of oil to India (approximately 700,000 barrels per day).

Saudi Arabia will take into account that India and China will be key markets for its petroleum products during the next two decades. In addition, Saudi nuclear acquisition could prompt a pre-emptive strike by Israel, especially if the sale became known before the weapon was activated.

In theory, the Saudis could pursue a nuclear option with the Chinese, but in the current strategic environment, it is hard to imagine this as a realistic scenario. Beijing and Riyadh have never had close military relations, largely because Washington has provided the Saudis with advanced military equipment, as well as security assurances against international threats, that China cannot provide.

While Beijing and Washington do not see eye to eye on many issues, including the severity of the Iranian threat, it is unlikely that Beijing would jeopardize its political, trade and other relations with Washington over supplying the Saudis with nuclear weapons.

Additionally, China is a member of the NPT system, and thus obliged "not in any way to assist, encourage, or induce any non-nuclear weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, or control over such weapons or explosive devices."

Under the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994, Beijing would face revocation of the U.S. nuclear cooperation agreement it worked so hard to secure, as well as the possible imposition of economic sanctions, if it were deemed to have "aided or abetted" the acquisition of nuclear weapons.

If U.S.-Saudi relations should falter, the Chinese would doubtless view it as an opportunity to take a more active role in Saudi affairs. However, there is no evidence suggesting that this relationship will sour in the near future; in fact, as shall be seen, it is clearly improving.

Domestic constraints

Technical barriers for entry into the nuclear club are high, and it is difficult for states to completely hide a clandestine military program from foreign intelligence observers. Indeed, many analysts believe that Riyadh's talk about developing nuclear arms may be more intended to focus Western attention on its concerns about regional risks, than to indicate any kind of definitive action to go nuclear.

It is unlikely that the Saudis would want to proliferate at the present time; doing so would deeply strain the U.S.-Saudi relationship, perhaps to an irrevocable degree. It would also place Riyadh in breach of a memorandum of understanding signed with Washington in 2008, promising U.S. assistance with civil nuclear power on condition that Riyadh not pursue "sensitive nuclear technologies."

Riyadh's desire to maintain a strong relationship with Washington, especially in light of the kingdom's desire to prevent unconventional terrorism within its borders, inhibits any appetite to develop nuclear weapons. There is also strong evidence that Washington is committed to defending Saudi Arabia. The Obama administration authorized, in the last three years, the largest ever arms sales to Riyadh.

Furthermore, the character of the Saudi establishment militates against taking the drastic step of nuclear proliferation. Journalist Richard Nield has noted that Riyadh has committed itself to a major industrialization and economic diversification campaign that will require sustained engagement with the rest of the world. "It's not rational that they would jeopardize this in favour of a pre-emptive strike against the theoretical possibility of a nuclear-armed Iran."

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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The same idea is echoed by Kate Amlin, a nuclear analyst at the U.S.-based Monterey Institute of International Studies, who believes that Saudi leaders would not want to incur the political and economic backlash resulting from pursuit of a nuclear arsenal, at a time when they are trying to integrate further into the international economy.

Finally, it would take many years and considerable financial cost for Riyadh to develop nuclear weapons. There exists a relatively strong consensus regarding the immature state of the Saudi nuclear technology infrastructure.

The country lacks the human expertise and technical knowledge necessary to develop a nuclear weapons program on its own. It does not operate nuclear power facilities, and its scientists do not have the necessary experience to enrich uranium for reactor fuel, to convert nuclear fuel, or operate reactors in desert conditions.

There have, however, been clear signs recently of the Saudis' intent to enter the nuclear arena. In June 2010, the kingdom commissioned Finnish management consultancy Poyry to offer a strategy for nuclear and renewable energy use, and to study the economic and technical feasibility of becoming involved in all aspects of the nuclear power chain, including uranium enrichment.

Earlier that year, the Saudi government said it planned to build a new technology centre, the King Abdullah City for Nuclear and Renewable Energies, in Riyadh. Despite this, it will be years before it is developed; some experts estimate that the Saudi nuclear civilian plan might take up to 15 years.

Given that it is the world's top oil exporter, handling a nuclear Saudi Arabia would be a delicate matter. However, at least for now, the Saudis have no alternative but to rely on a U.S. defence umbrella in the region. Still, it would be contrary to Riyadh's practice to put all its eggs in one basket.

Thus, the kingdom will work in two parallel routes, strengthening its military, particularly the air force and navy, while aggressively seeking to buy the civil nuclear technology that could in the future provide the technical capacity and human resources for dealing with nuclear weapons. Overall, though not insurmountable, the obstacles to Saudi nuclearization are considerable. Much depends on Tehran's ambitions, and the West's determination to stymie them.

Dr. Naser al-Tamimi is a UK-based Middle East analyst and the author of the forthcoming book "China-Saudi Arabia Relations, 1990-2012: Marriage of Convenience or Strategic Alliance?" He is also a regular contributor to Al Arabiya, with particular research interest in energy politics, the political economy of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, and Middle East-Asia relations.

[An extended version of this article was first published in the Middle East Quarterly.]

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2013/05/21/Will-Riyadh-get-the-bomb-.html>

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The Globe and Mail – Toronto, Canada

OPINION/Commentary

Let's Put Missile Defence back in our Arsenal

By DEREK BURNEY and FEN OSLER HAMPSON

Tuesday, May, 21 2013

In a turbulent and uncertain world where nationalism and religious zealotry are on the rise, Canada needs to consider actions that will safeguard and advance its national interests. Nowhere is this more true than in the area of nuclear proliferation, as states such as North Korea and Iran develop these weapons and, with them, a long-range missile delivery capability. A good place to start would be to relaunch discussions with the U.S. for a partnership role in ballistic missile defence.

The most obvious threat is from the erratic regime in Pyongyang, which is desperately pursuing its ambition to deploy a missile capacity capable of striking the U.S. homeland. One may discount the wild rhetoric and clumsy tests, but there's little doubt that North Korea is determined to acquire a capability to threaten North America and hold our cities

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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hostage, however perverse or irrational such a goal might seem to be. Conventional analyses simply do not apply on anything emanating from a government about which so little is known.

Like it or not, given the uncertainties about North Korea's technological prowess, Canada would be as vulnerable as the United States. We would almost certainly be on the flight path of any missile the North Koreans decided to fire at the U.S., should that day come. And there's no guarantee that a missile directed at Washington or New York, or even Seattle or Los Angeles, wouldn't inadvertently land on Toronto or Vancouver. It would be prudent for us to act accordingly and begin to deal with this security challenge now.

The infamous Kim dynasty has ruined the lives of millions of its own people, most of whom, apart from a privileged military and civilian elite, live in brutal gulag-style conditions denied even the most basic means of livelihood. What little wealth North Korea generates, mostly through illicit drug and arms sales, is squandered on military muscle and advanced weapons technology.

What the newest Kim intends to do with North Korea's nuclear arsenal, assuming he's really in control, is as unpredictable as it is destabilizing. Even China, its closest neighbour and ally, is increasingly wary about spontaneous combustion on the Korean Peninsula. The humanitarian and economic fallout would be devastating, and not just in the immediate vicinity.

Canada came very close to signing a ballistic missile defence agreement with the U.S. in 2004 but backed away at the last minute, ostensibly to avoid a renewal of the arms race but more likely because of domestic political allergies about doing anything on security with the George W. Bush administration.

At that time, the Liberal government of Paul Martin seemed to want a "say" in what was planned but was reluctant to make any kind of hard commitment to participate. As a result, we're on the outside looking in at what had the potential of refitting NORAD to a 21st-century threat. (The initial purpose of NORAD was for a different threat in a different age.) By standing down, we simply became irrelevant.

A priority for any government is the preservation of national security and, if anything, the risk of nuclear proliferation is greater today than it was a decade ago and not just from North Korea but also from countries such as Iran that appear intent on acquiring such capabilities. Initiatives are under way to quash the threat from terrorists, including the homegrown variety. Even more lethal are looming missile threats against which Canada has no practical defence other than to hope that our neighbour will act in its own interest and defend us against an attack, accidental or otherwise.

That's simply not good enough. The best antidote to the antics of North Korea is, as political economist Nicholas Eberstadt contended in *The Wall Street Journal* recently, a "threat reduction strategy" – a combination of sustained military and civilian actions, and not a repeat of offers of dialogue in the face of "bait and switch" extortion demands from North Korea trying to gain rewards for bad behaviour from all-too-gullible Western powers.

A serious effort by Canada to join in ballistic missile defence could be a constructive and prudent part of this strategy, complementing our continued support for strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation treaty regime, and would provide us with both a say and a role against missiles from other regimes as well. The time to act in our own security interest is now, and a partnership in ballistic missile defence should be the obvious priority.

Derek H. Burney is senior strategic adviser for Norton Rose Canada LLP and a former Canadian ambassador to the United States (1989–1993). Fen Osler Hampson is director of global security at the Centre for International Governance Innovation and Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/commentary/lets-put-missile-defence-back-in-our-arsenal/article12003778/?cmpid=rss1>

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SPACE.com

OPINION/Space Insider Columnist

Issue No. 1059, 24 May 2013

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China Space Program Ramping Up Capabilities, Pentagon Says

By Leonard David, SPACE.com's Space Insider Columnist
21 May 2013

China's growing space prowess shows no signs of slowing, the U.S. Department of Defense said in its annual report to Congress on military and security developments involving the People's Republic of China.

The Pentagon has been carefully monitoring China's space activities, and pointed out that last year, the country conducted a total of 18 space launches and expanded its space-based intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, navigation, meteorological and communications satellite constellations.

"At the same time, China continues to invest in a multidimensional program to deny others access to and use of space," said David Helvey, deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia, during a Pentagon news conference on May 6 that highlighted the report.

The report explains that China is keen on improving its capabilities "to limit or prevent the use of space-based assets by adversaries during times of crisis or conflict."

Helvey said the Pentagon welcomes the actions that China has taken to improve openness and the amount of information that's made available about its military, including the regular publication of defense white papers.

"However, many uncertainties remain, which only underscores the importance of building a military dialogue with China that is sustained and substantive," he told reporters.

Space capabilities

The nearly 100-page document, "Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2013," flags a number of Chinese space developments and trends, including the following:

China launched six satellites for its Beidou navigation constellation in 2012. These six satellites completed the regional network, as well as the in-orbit validation phase for the global network, expected to be completed by 2020.

In 2012, China launched 11 new remote sensing satellites, which can perform both civil and military applications. China has developed a large constellation of imaging and remote sensing satellites under a variety of mission families. These satellites can support military objectives by providing situational awareness of foreign military force deployments, critical infrastructure and targets of political significance.

China also launched three communications satellites, five experimental small satellites, one meteorological satellite, one relay satellite and a manned space mission last year.

China will continue to augment its orbiting assets, with the planned launch of 100 more satellites through 2015. These launches include imaging, remote sensing, navigation, communication and scientific satellites, as well as manned spacecraft.

China is pursuing a variety of air, sea, undersea, space, counterspace and information warfare systems, as well as operational concepts, moving toward an array of overlapping, multilayered offensive capabilities extending from China's coast into the western Pacific.

China's 2008 Defense White Paper asserts that one of the priorities for the development of China's armed forces is to "increase the country's capabilities to maintain maritime, space and electromagnetic space security."

Further, China continues to develop the Long March 5 rocket, which is intended to lift heavy payloads into space. LM-5 will more than double the size of the Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and Geosynchronous Orbit (GEO) payloads China is capable of placing into orbit.

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To support these rockets, China began constructing the Wenchang Satellite Launch Center in 2008. Located on Hainan Island, this launch facility is expected to be complete sometime this year 2013, with the initial LM-5 launch scheduled for 2014.

Space dominance

SPACE.com contacted several leading China experts to get their input on the newly issued report.

"What is clear, from other Chinese writings and the DOD's report, is that the 'new historic missions' — which lay out the roles and missions of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) — continue to be in force," said Dean Cheng, a research fellow on Chinese political and security affairs at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative public-policy think tank in Washington, D.C.

Those "new historic missions," Cheng told SPACE.com, "include the need to establish space dominance and information dominance. The latter includes space dominance as part of its tool kit."

Cheng said there is no reason to think the PLA is not interested in pursuing these goals. "As important, though, there is also no reason to think that the PLA is somehow doing this in defiance of, or without the knowledge of, the Chinese government."

Indeed, those sorts of arguments — often put forth by folks who seem to know little about how China is actually governed, Cheng said — raises an interesting question: "Should we feel reassured by the possibility that the PLA is not firmly under the control of the civilian leadership of the People's Republic of China?"

'Blind and deafen the enemy'

One item in the Pentagon report points to PLA writings that emphasize the necessity of "destroying, damaging and interfering with the enemy's reconnaissance...and communications satellites," suggesting that such systems, as well as navigation and early warning satellites, could be among the targets of attacks designed to "blind and deafen the enemy."

That analysis of Chinese literature "suggesting satellites as targets" caught the eye of Joan Johnson-Freese, professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval War College in Newport, R. I.

"I am always baffled at why it would be thought that a country would take out a satellite — creating debris with the potential to damage their own satellites — when taking out the ground station is easier, yields the same result, and without the debris-creation issues," Johnson-Freese said, noting that the opinions she is expressing are her own and do not reflect the views of the U.S. government, the Department of the Navy, or the Naval War College.

Dual use

Johnson-Freese pointed out that China has not conducted further orbital-debris-generating anti-satellite (ASAT) tests since a widely condemned 2007 operation that created about 3,000 new pieces of space junk.

"I think [China has] learned from the U.S. and India that the way to do ASAT tests without international condemnation is to call them missile-defense tests and conduct them in a manner nonthreatening to other space assets," she explained. "So, that China hasn't done a high-altitude kinetic test means little in terms of capabilities development...but does perhaps show that they are learning to be more responsible/responsive to international norms," Johnson-Freese told SPACE.com via email.

Johnson-Freese also said the dual-use potential of most space technology continues to make it difficult to determine what its main purpose is meant to be. That's especially true for remote sensing and tracking systems, because China needs tracking for its human spaceflight program.

"In that regard, it seems important to understand that for the military, capabilities equal intent for potential military use...when that may or may not be the case," she concluded.

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Survivability and resilience

"This Pentagon report says that unspecified 'PLA writings emphasize the necessity of' using anti-satellite weapons to 'blind and deafen the enemy.' However, one can easily find many comparable discussions in American writings," said Mark Gubrud, a postdoctoral research associate in the Program on Science and Global Security at Princeton University.

China has demonstrated its ability to develop and test ASAT weapon technologies, Gubrud said. The nation destroyed one of its own dead weather satellites in 2007, for example, and three years later took out an object that was not in orbit.

"The U.S. has similar ASAT-capable weapons, which have been tested dozens of times and which are operationally deployed in dozens and hundreds," Gubrud told SPACE.com. "China is not known to have perfected such weapons and operationally deployed them in force."

On the other hand, Gubrud added, the report documents China's increasing reliance on military and civilian space systems. This would seem to give the Chinese an interest comparable to U.S. interests in the survivability and resilience of space resources, he said.

Level of deception

"I maintain that the only way to secure this interest is by combining defensive measures, such as hardening and backups, with strong arms control which bans both satellite weapons and anti-satellite weapons," Gubrud said. "If the threat to satellites is limited, defensive measures can be effective, but if it is unlimited, the offense will win."

Gubrud said the Pentagon report cites official Chinese policy that stresses, rather deceptively, that space weaponization is not inevitable.

I would like to see the U.S. engage in a similar level of deception," Gubrud said. "Let's have American and Chinese diplomats gather with those of other nations and pretend to negotiate a treaty banning space weapons and their use. Since in reality it is impossible to develop and test space weapons without other major powers — and probably the whole world — knowing, the generals would have to abide by this treaty just as if it were a real one."

Leonard David has been reporting on the space industry for more than five decades. He is former director of research for the National Commission on Space and co-author of Buzz Aldrin's new book, "Mission to Mars – My Vision for Space Exploration," published by National Geographic.

<http://www.space.com/21251-china-space-capabilities-pentagon-report.html>

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THE DIPLOMAT – Japan

OPINION/Flashpoints

China's No-First-Use Policy Promotes Nuclear Disarmament

By Hui Zhang

May 22, 2013

On April 16, the Chinese Ministry of Defense released the eighth edition of China's bi-annual white paper on defense since 1998. However, unlike the previous editions, this one does not reiterate China's long-standing doctrine of no-first-use nuclear weapons. The obvious omission has sparked a debate over whether China is changing its nuclear doctrine. If China abandons its no-first-use nuclear pledge, which has guided China's nuclear strategy since its first nuclear test in 1964, it would severely undermine the global disarmament process, potentially preventing the U.S. and Russian from further reducing their nuclear arsenals and even encouraging the U.S. to expand its nuclear forces. Is China really changing its nuclear policy?

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Colonel Yang Yujun, a spokesman for China's Ministry of Defense, answered this question unambiguously during a briefing on April 25 when he stated: "China repeatedly reaffirms that China has always pursued no-first-use nuclear weapons policy, upholds its nuclear strategy of self-defense, and never takes part in any form of nuclear arms race with any country. The policy has never been changed. The concern about changes of China's nuclear policy is unnecessary."

Colonel Yang also explained that all former White Papers (with the same general title "China's National Defense") were comprehensive (zonghe xing), and elaborated on China's nuclear policy in detail in sections on "national defense policy" and "arms control." But this latest edition for the first time adopts a "thematic" model (zhuanxi xing) and focuses specifically on the employment of China's armed forces; it does not address nuclear policy in detail.

While the new white paper does not explore generally its no-first-use policy, it emphasizes that the PLA Second Artillery Force (PLASAF) is "primarily responsible for deterring other countries from using nuclear weapons against China, and carrying out nuclear counterattack." It also explains clearly how the PLASAF employs its nuclear force during peace and war time:

"[China] keeps an appropriate level of readiness in peacetime... If China comes under a nuclear attack, the nuclear missile force of the PLASAF will use nuclear missiles to launch a resolute counterattack either independently or together with the nuclear forces of other services."

It should be noted that the term "nuclear counterattack" in the context of China's nuclear strategy generally means "nuclear retaliation to a first nuclear strike" or "second nuclear strike."

Many experts and scholars are suspicious of China's no-first-use pledge, with the Pentagon's 2013 annual report on the Chinese military calling it ambiguous. But China's nuclear force posture has all the features of a meaningful no-first-use policy. It has a much smaller and simpler arsenal with a much lower alert status than required for a first-use option.

Some security analysts challenge whether China can maintain its no-first-use pledge for some extreme scenarios, such as if an enemy uses conventional weapons to attack China's nuclear arsenal. These analysts suggest China might consider a conventional attack the equivalent of a first nuclear strike and consequently initiate a retaliatory nuclear strike. However, in practice, since 1980, when it initiated China's nuclear modernization, the PLASAF has focused on increasing the survivability of its nuclear force by deploying mobile missiles and moving missiles underground, to ensure that the country's limited number of land-based strategic missiles can survive a first strike— nuclear or not.

Since 1985 China has built the tunnels of the underground great wall to protect its smaller nuclear arsenal and assure a reliable second-strike capability. The tunnels are reportedly hundreds of meters underground, deep in mountain areas, and difficult to detect from space. They are designed to withstand nuclear and conventional attacks. If Beijing believes its nuclear arsenal can survive a first nuclear strike, why not a conventional strike?

In fact, the PLASAF has also developed and deployed advanced conventional missiles including DF-21s that can attack aircraft carriers and penetrate regional missile defense systems. These new conventional forces should make Chinese leaders more confident and less reliant on nuclear weapons to deal with conventional attacks.

In fact, there is no evidence that China will change its long-standing no-first-use nuclear doctrine. Since its first nuclear explosion in 1964, China has consistently adhered to a nuclear policy that features a minimum deterrent and a no-first-use pledge, both aimed at avoiding a costly nuclear arms race. This policy has been based on Chinese leaders' perception of the nature and role of nuclear weapons and has been continuously embraced by top Chinese leaders, from Mao Zedong until today. As Mao stated a few months after China's first nuclear test: "We don't wish to have too many atomic bombs ourselves. What would we do with so many? To have a few is just fine."

China's nuclear policy has proven to be effective and smart, providing savings that can be used on economic development. As its conventional capabilities grow, Beijing should have more confidence to pursue firmly and unshakably its nuclear policy rather than follow the road of U.S. and Russia's nuclear development. It is unthinkable that China would change its policy to pursue extremely expensive weapons parity with the superpowers.



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In fact, to make substantial progress towards President Obama's goal of a nuclear-free world, each nuclear weapon state must change its strategic doctrine from one based on preemption to a purely defensive one based on a no-first-use policy. This will provide a solid base to promote further reductions of nuclear weapons. A no-first-use policy could also be an important measure to strengthen the nonproliferation regime, as no-first-use pledges would discourage other states from seeking nuclear weapons by removing a basic proliferation incentive while deemphasizing the role of such weapons. If the nuclear weapons states truly intend to take steps toward a nuclear-free world, it is time for them to adopt a global agreement on no-first-use of nuclear weapons.

Hui Zhang, a physicist, is leading a research initiative on China's nuclear policies for the Managing the Atom Project in Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

<http://thediomat.com/flashpoints-blog/2013/05/22/chinas-no-first-use-policy-promotes-nuclear-disarmament/>

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The Japan Times – Japan

OPINION/Commentary

China's Nuclear Program still Shrouded in Secrecy

By Michael Richardson

May 23, 2013

SINGAPORE – China's program to expand and modernize its conventional armed forces is well-documented and closely watched by nearby Asia-Pacific states, as well as the United States and other more distant countries with interests in the region. However, China's arsenal of nuclear weapons and delivery systems (missiles and aircraft) is shrouded in secrecy — and controversy.

Japan and other Asian countries worry that the Obama administration, anxious to reduce the \$80 billion cost of maintaining and refurbishing America's aging nuclear arms infrastructure, may be overlooking evidence that China's atomic arsenal is much bigger than officially estimated.

They also worry that Beijing may be seeking nuclear parity and eventual superiority over both the U.S. and Russia, a development that could undermine U.S. pledges of extended deterrence to protect its nonnuclear Asian allies, including Japan and South Korea, from nuclear attack or blackmail. The upshot would be increased pressure on vulnerable Asian nations to develop their own nuclear weapons.

Most U.S. arms control officials and analysts continue to say that China has between 240 to 400 nuclear warheads, nearly all of them on ballistic missiles in underground silos or on mobile launchers that are hard to find and destroy. These include long-range missiles capable of reaching the U.S. mainland.

Such a force is less than a third of the arsenals kept by the U.S. and Russia, which between them still have far more long-range nuclear weapons than any other states with nuclear arms, despite big negotiated cuts in their inventories.

Still, the Chinese force would be enough to ensure strategic deterrence, meaning that if China was attacked by a nuclear power, it could still retaliate and inflict unacceptable damage.

China's state media have reported various steps in recent months to improve the survivability of the country's nuclear arsenal and enable it to launch a devastating retaliatory strike. One step is to put multiple nuclear warheads on land-based inter-continental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, each one capable of striking a different target.

In its annual report to Congress on May 6 on military and security developments involving China, the U.S. Defense Department said that the Chinese armed forces were also developing and testing several new classes a variants of offensive missiles, forming additional missile units, upgrading older missile systems and devising methods to counter ballistic missile defenses to ensure that enough nuclear armed Chinese missiles would reach their targets in a conflict.

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The Pentagon added that China was now close to having five nuclear-powered submarines that could launch a new class of nuclear-tipped missile, the JL-2, with an estimated range of more than 7,400 km. This would give the Chinese Navy “its first credible sea-based nuclear deterrent,” the Pentagon report said.

China has not publicly declared how many nuclear weapons it has and there is no way for outsiders to verify their estimates. China officially proclaims a “no first use” policy, stating that it would use nuclear forces only in response to a nuclear strike against China.

The pledge has two parts: first, that Beijing will never use nuclear weapons first against any nuclear-weapon state; and second, that it will never use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against any nonnuclear-weapon state or nuclear-weapon-free zone of the kind that exists in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

However, a senior Chinese general warned some years ago that if the U.S. attacked China with precision-guided conventional weapons in a conflict over Taiwan, Beijing might respond with nuclear arms. He was subsequently promoted.

China’s military doctrine puts a high premium on concealment, deception and surprise. Gen. Viktor Esin, a former commander of Russia’s Strategic Rocket Forces, told officials and journalists in the U.S. on a visit in December that he had concluded China might have 850 nuclear warheads ready to launch, while others were kept in underground tunnel storage for use in an emergency. He estimated the total size of the Chinese nuclear arsenal at between 1,600 and 1,800 warheads.

Esin, now a professor at the Russian Academy of Military Science, said that Moscow was so concerned that it would consider abandoning the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty signed with the U.S. in 1987 if the Chinese build-up did not stop. The INF Treaty bans the U.S. and Russia from having missiles with ranges of up to 5,500 km, as well as their launchers and related support facilities. The ban covers short-, medium- and intermediate-range missiles.

Meanwhile, China, North Korea, Iran, India and Pakistan have all been expanding and modernizing their ballistic missiles in these categories, ostensibly as a deterrent against attack. This has been fueling a dangerous, although seldom acknowledged, nuclear arms race in Asia.

The danger is intensified because some of these ballistic missiles can carry conventional high-explosive warheads or nuclear warheads, and in a conflict there would be no way of differentiating between the two until too late.

Some cruise missiles deployed by China and other Asian countries are also dual-use, meaning they can carry conventional or nuclear warheads. China also has aircraft that carry nuclear bombs.

A 2009 study by the U.S. Air Force’s National Air and Space Intelligence Center said that new medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles being brought into service by China, North Korea, India and Pakistan were “strategic systems, and most will be armed with nonconventional warheads,” a reference to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. The study said that China currently deployed three different ballistic missiles for “regional nuclear deterrence.”

The head of the U.S. Strategic Command, Air Force Gen. Robert Kehler, said in August that he did not believe that China had massively and surreptitiously enlarged its nuclear arsenal. Nonetheless, he has been ordered to report to Congress by the middle of August on whether an underground tunnel complex in China, reportedly stretching for more than 4,800 km, has been used to conceal a secret nuclear weapons build-up.

The recent Pentagon report to Congress on China said that it had “a technologically advanced underground facility (UGF) program protecting all aspects of its military forces, including C2 (command and control), logistics, missile and naval forces.”

The report added that given China’s no-first-use nuclear weapons policy, the Chinese military had assumed it might need to absorb an initial nuclear blow while ensuring that its leadership and strategic assets survived.



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Unraveling China's nuclear secrets without its cooperation will be nearly impossible. The best hope may be for the U.S. and Russia to make any future nuclear arms reduction negotiations contingent on participation by China, India and Pakistan.

Michael Richardson is a visiting senior research fellow at the Institute of South East Asian Studies in Singapore.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/05/23/commentary/chinas-nuclear-program-still-shrouded-in-secrecy/#.UZO9aK1GuY>

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