



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1064, 28 June 2013

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FARS News Agency – Iran
Saturday, June 22, 2013

Lavrov: G5+1 to Offer New Round of Talks to Iran after Rouhani's Swearing Ceremony

TEHRAN (FNA) - Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the Group 5+1 intends to offer Tehran a new round of talks after the swearing in ceremony of Iran's new president.

"The new offer for the resumption of a new round of talks between Iran and the Group 5+1 (US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany) will be submitted to Iran after Iranian President-elect Rohani's swearing ceremony," added the Russian foreign minister.

Last month, Iran and the six world powers wrapped up their 4th round of talks after two days of intensive negotiations in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The Iranian team was led by Iran's top negotiator Saeed Jalili, who is also the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), and the G5+1's representatives were presided by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton.

Iran had announced a day prior to the start of the talks that it would enter the negotiations with the G5+1 with clear, groundbreaking proposals.

Iran has so far ruled out halting or limiting its nuclear work in exchange for trade and other incentives, saying that renouncing its rights under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) would encourage the world powers to put further pressure on the country and would not lead to a change in the west's hardline stance on Tehran.

Iran is under four rounds of UN Security Council sanctions for turning down West's calls to give up its right of uranium enrichment. The United States and the European Union have ratcheted up their sanctions on Iran this year to force it to curb its nuclear program.

Iranian officials have always shrugged off the sanctions, saying that pressures make them strong and reinvigorate their resolve to further move towards self-sufficiency.

Russia unlike the western members of the G5+1 reiterates on the necessity for recognition of Iran's right of uranium enrichment.

The senior Russian officials have on several occasions emphasized the need for progress in Iran's nuclear case and the relevant negotiations on the basis of mutual cooperation and respect.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920401000871>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

Netanyahu: Iran Seeks Nuclear Arsenal of 200 Bombs

In 'Washington Post' interview, premier rejects importance of Rohani win, says he's ready to engage in talks with Palestinians.

By HERB KEINON
23 June 2013

Iranian president-elect Hassan Rohani's victory in the recent elections demonstrates the hollowness of the argument that stiff sanctions would unite the Iranian people around the regime, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said in an interview published Friday in The Washington Post.

"The sanctions were often dismissed because it was said [that] they would get the Iranian people to rally around the regime.

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Some rally,” Netanyahu said and added that, while the elections reflected deep public dissatisfaction with the regime, the results did not have the power to change Iran’s nuclear ambitions.

“It’s important to step up the sanctions, not to relent, not in any way to offer concessions in advance of any serious change in Iran’s nuclear program. The sanctions produced some changes in Iran, but they haven’t produced yet the change we need to see.”

Netanyahu warned that Iran was not seeking one or two nuclear bombs, “but 200 bombs. They’re building ICBMs [intercontinental ballistic missiles] parallel to developing their nuclear weapons program. The ICBMs are not intended for us, they’re intended for you. Within six to eight years, they intend to be able to reach the continental United States.”

Netanyahu was diplomatic when asked whether he believed and trusted US President Barack Obama, who has said he would not accept a nuclear Iran.

“I believe that’s his goal,” Netanyahu said, adding that “we’re all [being] tested, all of us. And the jury is out on all of us, on whether we muster the resolve to prevent this from happening.”

Regarding the diplomatic process with the Palestinians, Netanyahu said that placing preconditions on negotiations – something the Palestinians have done consistently over the last four years – “is the quickest way to undermine peace.”

He reiterated his view that the reason the conflict with the Palestinians has not been solved is not because of the settlements, but rather because of the Palestinian “persistent refusal to recognize a sovereign Jewish state in any boundary.”

The settlements, he said, are “one of the results” of the conflict, “but it’s certainly not its cause.”

He also rejected the idea that Israel needed to solve its conflict with the Palestinians in order to get “international pressure off our backs.” Once this is solved, he said, there will be “be pressure on other things.

The history of the Jewish people does not speak kindly to that effect.”

He said that the “horrible distortions” people believed about the Jews for the last 2,500 years were transferred onto their beliefs about the Jewish state. “I don’t think that’s materially going to change.”

But, he said, Israel needs to solve the Palestinian issue because “we don’t want to be a bi-national state.” The trick, he said, was in finding “the balance between effecting a separation between the Israelis and Palestinians and assuring that the Palestinian state does not become an Iranian outpost.”

<http://www.jpost.com/Diplomacy-and-Politics/Netanyahu-Iran-seeks-nuclear-arsenal-of-200-bombs-317409>

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FARS News Agency – Iran

Tuesday, June 25, 2013

Iran Utilizing Missile, Nuclear Technologies to Make Hi-Tech Oil Industry Equipment

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iran is currently using its missile and nuclear technologies to manufacture advanced equipment needed for the country’s oil industry, an Iranian refinery official said.

“We have manufactured gas turbine impeller fans by utilizing our domestic missile and nuclear technologies at a cost one-fifth of similar imported products,” Head of the Central Workshop of Shahid Hasheminejad Gas Refining Company Youssefian said.

He noted that the manufactured fan is regarded as one of the most complicated parts of (engine’s) compressors.



Youssefian said that experts and engineers of Shahid Hasheminejad Company produced the impeller fan through reverse engineering.

He underlined that the impeller fans at the refinery were not functioning properly and the company could not purchase the fans even at higher prices due to the US-led western sanctions imposed against Iran, reiterating that sanctions have encouraged the company to invest more in domestic production and led to its advancement.

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

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

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

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

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

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13920404000784>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

Iran Signals No Scaling Back in Nuclear Activity Despite Victory of 'Moderate' Rouhani

Islamic Republic's atomic energy chief says country to press ahead with uranium enrichment; tells reporters that Iran will not shut down underground nuclear bunker despite western requests.

By Reuters

28 June 2013

ST PETERSBURG, Russia - Iran will press ahead with its uranium enrichment program, its nuclear energy chief said on Friday, signaling no change of course despite the victory of a relative moderate in the June 14 presidential election.

Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani, head of the Islamic Republic's Atomic Energy Organization, said production of nuclear fuel would "continue in line with our declared goals. The enrichment linked to fuel production will also not change."

Speaking through an interpreter to reporters at a nuclear energy conference in St Petersburg, Russia, he said work at Iran's underground Fordow plant - which the West wants Iran to close - would also continue. Iran refines uranium at Fordow that is a relatively close technical step away from weapons-grade.

Iran says it is enriching uranium to fuel a planned network of nuclear energy power plants, and also for medical purposes.

But enriched uranium can also provide the fissile material for nuclear bombs if processed further, which the West fears may be Tehran's ultimate goal.

Abbasi-Davani said Iran's so far only nuclear power plant - which has suffered repeated delays - had been "brought back online" three days ago and was working at 1,000 megawatt capacity. A UN nuclear agency report said in May that the Russian-built Bushehr plant was shut down, giving no reason.



"Thankfully in the last days, no concrete defects with the plant have been reported to me," Abbasi-Davani said.

Hopes for a resolution to the nuclear dispute were boosted this month with the election as president of Hassan Rouhani, who has promised a more conciliatory approach to foreign relations than confrontational predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Rouhani will take office in early August.

NO FORDOW CLOSURE

As chief nuclear negotiator under a reformist president between 2003 and 2005, Rouhani struck a deal with European Union powers under which Iran temporarily suspended uranium enrichment activities. The work restarted after Ahmadinejad was first elected and has been sharply expanded.

Iran's theocratic supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said on Wednesday the nuclear stand-off could easily be resolved if the West were to stop being so stubborn.

The hardline Khamenei wields ultimate control over Iranian nuclear policy, although the president exerts some influence.

While accusing the West of being more interested in regime change than ending the dispute, Khamenei did express a desire to resolve an issue which has led to ever tighter and more damaging sanctions on Iran's oil sector and the wider economy.

But analysts say it remains highly uncertain whether Iran may now be more prepared to meet the demands of world powers that it immediately halt its most sensitive enrichment, to a fissile concentration of 20 percent, and stop work at Fordow.

Asked whether there would be any change in Iranian policy after Rouhani's election and whether it could suspend 20 percent enrichment, Abbasi-Davani said Iran's nuclear program was aimed at producing electricity and for medical purposes.

"In line with these two goals of course the production of energy will not stop," he said.

Fordow is under the monitoring of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, he said. "So in line with our declared plans ... we will of course continue our work at this center."

Iran will soon hand over to the Vienna-based IAEA a list with plans for new nuclear reactor sites, he said, speaking in front of a model of the Bushehr reactor at the Islamic state's stand at the nuclear industry fair in St Petersburg.

<http://www.jpost.com/Iranian-Threat/News/Iran-signals-no-scaling-back-in-nuclear-activity-despite-victory-of-moderate-Rouhani-318076>

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China Daily – China

DPRK Seeks Ending of UN Command

June 22, 2013

(Xinhua)

UNITED NATIONS - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said Friday it wanted "the dissolution of the UN Command" on the Korean Peninsula, which, it said, is "only misused by the United States" and "has nothing to do with the United Nations."

The statement came as Sin Son Ho, the permanent representative of the DPRK to the United Nations, was speaking at a press conference at UN Headquarters in New York.

"The UN Command is the US Command in essence," he said.



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The United Nations Command is the command structure for the multinational military forces supporting South Korea during and after the Korean War in the 1950s.

The Korean War came to a cease-fire on July 27, 1953, when the Armistice Agreement was signed in Panmunjom on the border of the DPRK and South Korea. But the war is not officially over because no peace treaty has ever been signed.

"As a whole, the UN Command cannot play its role and is doomed to be dissolved," Sin said. "The dissolution of the UN Command is a pressing issue."

The UN Command resolution is "not only necessary to remove the root cause of the tensions on the Korean Peninsula," but also necessary to secure peace in the region, he said.

Meanwhile, the DPRK UN ambassador also called for a permanent peace treaty to replace the Armistice Agreement.

"The dissolution of the UN Command is one of the first requirements," he said. "Unfortunately, the United States has gone against" such a proposal from Pyongyang.

Earlier this year, Pyongyang argued that the United States is against replacing the Armistice Agreement with a permanent peace treaty because it wants to hold onto the armistice regime and the UN Command.

"We hope the US to accept our proposal this year when it marks the 60th year of the signing of the Armistice Agreement," he said.

On the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, Sin said, "We are not against the denuclearization, but the denuclearization should not be unilateral."

At the same time, he reaffirmed the offer to hold talks with the United States, which he said could include the issue of nuclear weapons, but he reiterated that the US hostility can "lead to war any time" on the Korean Peninsula.

"The DPRK-US talks can have broader and in-depth discussion to replace the armistice mechanism," he said.

On Sunday, the DPRK's National Defense Commission proposed high-level talks with the United States without preconditions "to defuse tension and realize regional peace and security on the Korean Peninsula."

In response, the United States, Japan and the Republic of Korea on Wednesday called for "meaningful" steps on denuclearization by Pyongyang in exchange for better ties with them.

"We agreed a path is open for the DPRK toward improved relations with the United States, Japan and the ROK if the DPRK takes meaningful steps on denuclearization," the three countries said after their envoys concluded a trilateral meeting in Washington on issues related to the DPRK.

"We reaffirmed our commitment to the September 19, 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, including its core goal of the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner," the US State Department said in a statement.

China, Russia, the United States, the DPRK, Japan and the Republic of Korea are the six participating states. The Six-Party Talks is seen as a mechanism for realizing peace and stability in Northeast Asia and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2013-06/22/content_16645752.htm

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The StarPhoenix – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Nuclear Freeze Best Hope if NKorea Disarmament Talks Restart, says Former Obama Adviser

By Matthew Pennington, Associated Press

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June 24, 2013

WASHINGTON — The former top White House official on counter-proliferation said Monday that diplomacy is unlikely to get North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and the best to hope for is a verifiable freeze in its production of fissile material.

Gary Samore, who resigned from his White House position in January, said it's not practical to achieve nuclear disarmament unless there's a change of leadership in Pyongyang or a fundamental change in the strategy of its ally China.

Samore told a forum on U.S.-Korean affairs that a more attainable goal is to delay the North's next round of nuclear and missile tests to stymie the North's progress toward having a weapon that can hit the U.S. He said China is frustrated with North Korea and would support that objective.

"We shouldn't minimize the value of postponing as long as we can the next round of rocket or nuclear tests, recognizing that any deal we have with North Korea is likely to fall apart in the end because they cheat or renege on it," said Samore, now director of research at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

North Korea has offered to negotiate with the U.S. after months of provocations and a February underground nuclear test, but the prospects for fresh talks remain uncertain. Washington says it wants Pyongyang first to take steps showing it is committed to denuclearization — a goal it has veered from by asserting its right to have atomic weapons.

Samore said verifying a freeze in North Korea's fissile material production would require very intensive inspections at its Nyongbyon nuclear facility, and any other undeclared facilities where the North may be conducting uranium enrichment.

Samore also spoke about concerns that Iran and North Korea could be sharing nuclear know-how as they have with ballistic missile technology.

He said both the George W. Bush and Obama administrations have communicated to North Korea that the U.S. would not tolerate the North providing nuclear weapons or material to Iran, but it's unclear whether Pyongyang has taken that warning seriously. He said the U.S.' ability to verify any such transfers is not certain.

"It's something we really have to be worried about," Samore said.

Iran maintains its nuclear program has only peaceful uses.

Samore said North Korea is ahead of Iran in its production of fissile material and nuclear weapon design, and if there's any flow of technology, it would likely be, as in the case of missiles, from Pyongyang to Tehran.

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/Nuclear+freeze+best+hope+NKorea+disarmament+talks+restart/8571800/story.html>

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Asahi Shimbun – Japan

U.S., North Korea likely to Discuss Nuclear Issue

June 25, 2013

By YOSHIHIRO MAKINO, Correspondent

In a minor concession to China, a U.S. diplomat will meet his North Korean counterpart concerning the hermit country's nuclear development program, but he will reject Pyongyang's demand for unconditional high-level talks, sources said.

Glyn Davies, U.S. special representative for North Korea policy, and Kim Kye Gwan, North Korea's first vice foreign minister, will likely hold their meeting in a third country following dialogue between Pyongyang and Seoul, according to the sources.

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Washington's move to have Davies make contact with Kim came after the United States and China agreed at the June 7-8 summit in California that North Korea should be denuclearized. Washington believes the agreement points to a shift in Beijing's approach toward Pyongyang, the sources said.

China wields enormous influence on North Korea and has been its only major ally.

The United States apparently decided to seek more cooperation from China concerning North Korea by paying respects to Beijing through the Davies-Kim meeting but not going so far as to change U.S. policy.

After meetings with Japanese and South Korean officials in Washington last week, the three countries said they would agree to a new round of six-party talks if North Korea starts the process of abandoning its nuclear complex in Yongbyon and commits to a freeze of its nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

If the six-party talks are held, Washington will likely demand that Pyongyang give up all of its nuclear-related operations, including the uranium-enrichment facilities out of Yongbyon.

When Davies meets Kim, the U.S. representative is expected to convey this stance on North Korea's nuclear programs, the sources said.

North Korea is demanding the United States come to the negotiation table without any conditions. Pyongyang is also pressing Washington to recognize North Korea as a nuclear power.

Officials of nations involved in the six-party talks, which are aimed at denuclearizing North Korea, expressed skepticism that the talks will resume even if the U.S. and North Korean representatives meet.

http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/korean_peninsula/AJ201306250083

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Defense Update.com – Israel
June 25, 2013

Chinese Air Force Gets More H-6K Strategic Bombers

Posted by Noam Eshel

The Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) recently received 15 Xian H-6K bombers with nuclear capabilities, according to Jane's Defence Weekly.

The H-6K, an updated version of the H-6 bomber (originally, a locally built version of the 1960s vintage Russian Tupolev Tu-16 bomber), is a medium-sized craft designed for long-range attacks, stand-off attacks and large-area air patrol. Unlike its predecessor, the H-6K can carry cruise missiles under its wings. The H6-K also

maneuvers more deftly than the H-6 and requires a smaller crew to operate. H-6K reportedly has a combat radius of 3,500 km. It can carry weapons in the internal weapon bay and on four underwing pylons. The nuclear-capable Changjian-10 (long sword) CJ-10A cruise missiles it carries have a range of 1,500-2,000 km, effectively extending the bomber's combat range to 4,000-5,000 km – long enough to reach Okinawa, Guam and even Hawaii from China's mainland.

Analysts stipulated that PLAAF missiles be able to reach Taiwan, southwestern Japan and Guam, a range of control that requires a 3,000 km combat radius and powerful attack capability. Only the combined combat radius of the H6-K and Changjian-10 strike range currently satisfy the length requirement for those missions.

http://defense-update.com/20130625_h-6k-bombers-delivered-to-pla-air-force.html

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution

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Tuesday, June 25, 2013

Institute: NKorea Tunnel Work at Nuke Test Site

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Satellite photos show signs of new tunnel work at North Korea's underground nuclear test site, a U.S. research institute said Tuesday.

The U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies said in an analysis that it does not appear to indicate another underground blast is imminent at the Punggye-ri site in the country's northeast.

But it suggests North Korea has continued to work on its nuclear weapons program despite a recent easing of the tensions that followed its atomic test in February.

The commercial imagery shows gray spoil, apparently of rock dug from inside the mountain site, dumped near a tunnel entrance.

The work appears to have started by late April, according to the analysis published on the institute's web site, 38 North. The latest photo is from June 1.

The images provide hints about what's going on at Punggye-ri but critical activities are conducted underground out of aerial view. And it is notoriously difficult to gauge Pyongyang's intentions, particularly with regard to its nuclear program that has advanced despite U.N. Security Council demands for it to desist.

North Korea has conducted three test explosions at Punggye-ri, in 2006, 2009 and this February.

"This new activity probably shows that Pyongyang continues to work on its nuclear arsenal and that it wants to be in a position to conduct more nuclear tests if the current round of diplomatic activity fails to make progress," said 38 North editor Joel Wit, who is a former State Department official.

While North Korea offered earlier this month to restart talks with the U.S. without preconditions, Washington is cautious because of the failure of past aid-for-disarmament negotiations. It says it will judge Pyongyang by its actions, and for dialogue to resume, North Korea needs first to take steps to show it is sincere about previous commitments to abandon nuclear weapons.

The North's latest nuclear test drew international condemnation and tighter U.N. sanctions. Young leader Kim Jong Un's government responded by issuing a litany of dire threats against the United States and its allies and announced it was restarting a shuttered plutonium reactor that can produce fuel for bombs.

The institute says it's too soon to determine the exact purpose of the recent activity at Punggye-ri, near to one of three entrances to the mountain. The images show rails have been installed for mining carts to carry spoil via a western entrance used for the 2009 test and possibly the February test.

It could indicate construction of a new tunnel that will take several years to complete; repair to an existing tunnel; or clearing of debris from existing tunnels caused by past nuclear tests, according to the analysis.

The institute notes that opening a sealed tunnel previously used for a test would be hazardous because of the dangers of radioactivity.

<http://www.ajc.com/ap/ap/transportation/institute-nkorea-tunnel-work-at-nuke-test-site/nYTrW/>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
June 26, 2013

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N. Korea 'Deliberately Breached' Chinese Contract over Missile Vehicles: U.N. Report

SEOUL, June 26 (Yonhap) -- The U.N. Security Council's sanctions committee on North Korea has concluded that Pyongyang appears to have "deliberately breached" a contract with a Chinese company by converting Chinese lumber transporters into missile launch transporters, according to a U.N. report on Wednesday.

The 16-wheel missile launch transporter was seen at North Korea's military parade in April last year, raising concerns that the vehicle's design and technology might have come from China. If so, it would be a violation of U.N. resolutions that ban member states from selling "all arms and related materials" to the North.

In its annual report, the Security Council's North Korea Sanctions Committee Panel of Experts said, citing a Chinese briefing to the committee in October last year, the Chinese company named Hubei Sanjiang Space Wanshan Special Vehicle Co. exported six lumber transporters to North Korea in 2011.

China told the committee that, "These vehicles had a substantive distinction from transporter-erector-launchers or missile transporters and could not be used for transporting or launching missiles," according to the annual report.

The North's Forestry Ministry Rim Mok General Trading Co. signed a contract to buy the six vehicles worth 30 million yuan (about US\$4.9 million) from the Chinese company.

According to the contract, North Korea said the vehicles would be used for "transporting the timbers in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)."

Citing an image analysis conducted by the U.N. Institute for Training and Research Operational Satellite Applications Program, the North Korean missile vehicles and the Chinese vehicles named "WS51200" match in terms of their "fronts and sides, the fenders, the exhaust systems, fuel tanks and tires," the U.N. report showed.

"On the basis of the information currently available, the panel considers it most likely that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea deliberately breached the end user guarantee that it officially provided to Wuhan and converted the WS51200 trucks into transporter-erector-launchers," it said.

North Korea, which has conducted three nuclear tests since 2006, has been hit by a series of U.N. sanctions.

The U.N. panel said the U.N. sanctions have delayed the North's development of missile and nuclear arsenal.

"Overall, the panel believes that while the imposition of sanctions has not halted the development of nuclear and ballistic missile programs, it has in all likelihood considerably delayed the timetable of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, through the imposition of financial sanctions and the bans on the trade in weapons has choked off significant funding which would have been channeled into its prohibited activities," it said.

"In both its imports and exports, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to use a variety of techniques to circumvent national controls, indicating that the imposition of sanctions has hampered its arms sales and illicit weapon programs."

The U.N. report, the third of its kind since 2010, also recommended putting additional North Korean individuals and entities related to the North's nuclear and ballistic missile program on the list of sanctions against North Korea.

In a brief statement, South Korea's foreign ministry said the latest report "is expected to contribute to the international community's effective implementation of the U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea."

"(South Korea) will further strengthen coordination with the international community for the effective implementation of sanctions against North Korea," it said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2013/06/26/50/0301000000AEN20130626005000315F.HTML>

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Japan Daily Press – Japan

Japan Expected to Call Off Order to Shoot Down North Korean Missiles

June 29, 2013

By Ida Torres in National

Although they have not confirmed the existence of such a decision, sources are saying that Japan is ready to lift the order to shoot down any incoming missiles from North Korea. This comes as the reclusive state has visibly toned down their provocative actions and words. Pyongyang have even called for high level meetings with the United States to resolve any residual issues between the two, particularly on the matter of nuclear missile testing.

Defense Minister Itsunori Onodera made no mention of the lifting of the order, but gave the assurance that they are still closely monitoring the situation with North Korea, even if the issue seems to have died a quick death as of late. At the height of the constant threats of an attack by North Korea last April, both Japan and South Korea made several large-scale military preparations for any forthcoming attack. The Maritime Self-Defence Force was asked to deploy Aegis destroyers equipped with long-range SM-3 interceptor missiles in the Sea of Japan, plus Patriot Advanced Capability-3 or PAC-3 missile interceptors at three locations around Tokyo that were within the range of any ballistic missiles coming from North Korea.

But now that the issue has seemingly died down, there is no need anymore for the interceptors to be where they are now. Whether the orders and the subsequent lifting of it are true or not, the Ministry of Defense refuses to make any comments.

<http://japandailynews.com/japan-expected-to-call-off-order-to-shoot-down-north-korean-missiles-2931414>

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The Economic Times – India

Pakistan Raises 25,000-Strong Force to Protect Nuclear Arsenal

By Press Trust of India (PTI)

Saturday, June 22, 2013

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has raised a 25,000-strong special force and put in place extensive measures to protect and manage its strategic assets, including its nuclear arsenal, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar said today.

"A special security force of 25,000 personnel, who have been specially trained and provided sophisticated weapons, has been deployed to protect (the nuclear assets)," Dar said, while winding up the debate on the 2013-14 budget in the National Assembly or lower house of Parliament.

Pakistan has raised a special response force, a special escort force and a marine force to protect and guard its strategic assets, he said without giving details.

Besides, there are also counter-intelligence teams and a "personnel reliability programme" to oversee the strategic programme, he said.

The 25,000-strong security force has been equipped with the latest equipment and the personnel are fully prepared for "mobility on the ground or in the air", he said.

The Strategic Plans Division, which manages the nuclear arsenal, has set up a training academy for the security force, Dar said.

The security force was always prepared and it trained for all conditions and eventualities on the basis of past experiences and potential scenarios involving the strategic assets, he said.

The system for identifying dangers is always at high alert and is constantly being reviewed, Dar said.



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Pakistan's strategic assets programme is based on strong foundations and meets international standards for security and management of nuclear assets as laid down by organisations like the Nuclear Suppliers Group and Missile Technology Control Regime, he said.

Over the past year, the military too has provided details of the special security force raised by the Strategic Plans Division.

Several batches of this force have passed out of training academies across the country.

http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2013-06-22/news/40134534_1_security-force-strategic-plans-division-nuclear-assets

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Nuclear Arms Reduction Deals to Become Multilateral – Lavrov

22 June 2013

MOSCOW, June 22 (RIA Novosti) – Any upcoming treaties on nuclear arms reductions will have to involve all countries that have atomic weapons at their disposal, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Saturday.

Lavrov was commenting on US President Barack Obama's proposal from earlier this week to slash US and Russian nuclear arsenals by one third from the limit imposed by the bilateral New START treaty in 2010.

The New START limits deployed nuclear warheads to 1,500 per country, though the actual slashing of nuclear arsenals is still ongoing.

Moving beyond the New START will make nuclear arsenals of the United States and Russia comparable to those of other countries with nuclear weapons, Lavrov said.

"This means that further moves possibly proposed for reduction of actual strategic offensive arms will have to be reviewed in a multilateral format," Lavrov said on Rossia-1 television.

"And I'm talking not just official nuclear powers, but all countries that possess nuclear weapons," the minister said.

In addition to the United States and Russia the list of confirmed nuclear powers currently includes Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan and North Korea. Israel is often accused of possessing nuclear weapons, and Iran of developing them, but neither confirmed the allegations.

The number of atomic weapons at the disposal of nuclear powers other than Russia and the United States is considered to be between 100 and 300 per country, according to the Federation of American Scientists.

Lavrov also said that Russia will be taking into account US plans for a missile defense shield in Europe when deciding on further nuclear arms reduction. He added that Obama acknowledged the "necessity" of this approach.

Russia has argued for years against the US missile defense shield plans, insisting that it could disrupt the strategic parity between the two former Cold War rivals.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20130622/181811968/Nuclear-Arms-Reduction-Deals-to-Become-Multilateral--Lavrov.html>

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The Moscow Times – Russia

Lavrov Raises Questions on Non-Nuclear U.S. Weapons

23 June 2013 | Issue 5153

The Associated Press (AP)

Issue No. 1064, 28 June 2013

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ST. PETERSBURG — Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said conventional weapons must be taken into account when Washington and Moscow meet to discuss President Barack Obama's proposal to make radical reductions in their nuclear arsenals.

Obama said Wednesday in a speech in Berlin that he wants U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles reduced by one-third, more than required by a treaty that took effect two years ago.

But Lavrov said Friday that talks on further nuclear reductions should also factor in new types of American weapons, such as so-called "prompt global strike" weapons that would let the U.S. strike targets anywhere in the world in as little as an hour.

Lavrov didn't specify how Russia wants to limit such weapons, but noted that they have a capability comparable to nuclear weapons.

"Imagine a weapon that is delivered to any part of the Earth in one hour. That's the goal," he said. "It doesn't have an inhumane effect of a nuclear weapon, but militarily, it's much more efficient. We have to take this into account before we decide on any further reductions."

Lavrov's comments reflected Moscow's reluctance to conduct further nuclear arms cuts at a time when it is lagging far behind the United States in designing new weapons, and its conventional forces are a shadow of the Red Army's former might. All that has prompted Moscow to rely increasingly on its nuclear deterrent, and it has invested a large share of its petrodollars into modernizing its nuclear missiles and atomic submarines.

The minister said U.S. missile defense plans remained a top concern for Moscow, and the U.S. refusal to conclude a treaty that would bar space-based weapons has worried Moscow. He added that NATO's edge in conventional forces also should be taken into account.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/lavrov-raises-questions-on-non-nuclear-us-weapons/482073.html>

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The Windsor Star – Windsor, Ontario, Canada

Russia's Top Military Officer Skeptical about further Nuclear Arms Cuts

By Vladimir Isachenkov, Associated Press (AP)

May 23, 2013

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.

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

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existing nuclear-armed missiles to carry conventional warheads as well as designing new hypersonic vehicles capable of travelling 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 Defence 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 co-operate 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 defence 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.windsorstar.com/news/Russias+military+officer+skeptical+about+further+nuclear+arms/8424058/story.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

US-Russia Bombs-to-Fuel Program 95% Complete - NNSA

25 June 2013

MOSCOW, June 25 (RIA Novosti) - A landmark nuclear nonproliferation program involving the conversion of Russian weapons-grade highly-enriched uranium (HEU) into nuclear fuel is 95 percent complete, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) said on Tuesday.

More than 475 metric tons of Russian HEU has been eliminated under the program known as Megatons to Megawatts, representing 19,000 nuclear warheads converted to civilian use, the NNSA said in a statement.

Under the 1993 US-Russia HEU Purchase Agreement, Russia converts HEU from dismantled nuclear weapons into low-enriched uranium, which is delivered to the US and used in nuclear power plants to generate nearly 10 percent of all electricity produced in the United States each year.

Nearly half of all US commercial nuclear energy comes from nuclear fuel derived from Russian nuclear weapons, the administration said.

Since 2000, US experts have monitored the elimination of 30 metric tons of Russian HEU, roughly equivalent to about 1,200 nuclear weapons, every year.

Russia also conducts reciprocal monitoring activities at US facilities to verify the exclusively peaceful use of all LEU delivered under the agreement.

The United States Enrichment Corporation and Russia's nuclear technology export agency Techsnabexport, the executive agents for the agreement, manage the commercial aspects and logistics of the uranium shipments and transfers, NNSA said.

<http://en.ria.ru/world/20130625/181864873/US-Russia-Bombs-to-Fuel-Program-95-Complete---NNSA.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Build 100 New Military Bases and Airfields

27 June 2013

MOSCOW, June 27 (RIA Novosti) – About 100 new defense infrastructure facilities, including airfields and Army and Navy maintenance and supply bases, will be built in Russia to accommodate new weapon systems, a top military official said Thursday.

By 2016, 316 garrison towns are to be built, their number due to increase to 495 by 2020, said General Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff of Russia's Armed Forces, adding that more than 3,000 facilities, including barracks, parking lots, cafeterias, etc., would be built in those locations.

All of those facilities will be put into operation months before new arms and military equipment are delivered, he said. Other installations are slated to include air, land and naval test sites and advanced training centers.

All of that will help significantly enhance personnel training standards and make the Armed Forces more efficient, Gerasimov said.

In early May, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said the share of new weaponry in service with the Russian armed forces must be up to 75 percent by 2020. Russian officials previously cited rearmament goals of 30 percent by 2015 and 70 percent by 2020.

The Russian government has allocated 22 trillion rubles (\$730 billion) for an ambitious armed forces rearmament program through 2020.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20130627/181914590/Russia-to-Build-100-New-Military-Bases-and-Airfields.html

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Engineering & Technology Magazine – U.K.

UK Invests £48.7M in Nuclear Cooperation with France

25 June 2013

By Tereza Pultarova

A new £21.7m facility at the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston is to be built as a further part of the UK's contribution to the nuclear weapons information project with France.

According to the parliamentary sources, the overall investment in Project Teutates will amount to £48.7m.

The deal to share resources, in order to cut cost of military projects, between the UK and France was signed in 2010 by UK Prime Minister David Cameron and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy. Both countries committed to invest into new centres dedicated to experiments on warhead materials and parts.

The facilities will use extremely high power X-rays to test materials at high temperature and pressure, mimicking conditions during nuclear explosions. The data gathered should help to assess performance and safety of warheads and might be used in development of new warhead types.

The facilities involved are the French Valduc Centre for Nuclear Studies and the UK's Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston.

Defence Minister Philip Dunne has confirmed the construction of the Technology Development Centre, which is part of the UK's contribution to Project Teutates, has so far cost £27m and the remaining part will be invested into a new facility within the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston.

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According to Mr Dunne, wider costs of Project Teutates have been withheld as disclosure would be "likely to prejudice commercial interests and would impact on the formulation of Government policy".

<http://eandt.theiet.org/news/2013/jun/nuclear-cooperation-uk-france.cfm>

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Roll Call

Shrinking Warhead Stocks Mean Uncertain Future for Nuclear Triad

By Megan Scully, Roll Call Staff

June 25, 2013

The Pentagon has vowed to preserve the famed nuclear triad despite President Barack Obama's goal to cut strategic nuclear weapons by as much as a third, avoiding — at least for now — a heated political debate over the future of the nation's land-, sea- and air-based delivery systems.

At some point, though, the nuclear arsenal may simply become too small to justify the expense of maintaining and replacing the aging bombers, submarines and intercontinental ballistic missiles that make up the triad. Where that point might be, however, is a matter of intense debate.

Indeed, any discussion of altering the triad is a political minefield. The Cold War construct was an accidental doctrine that grew out of intense service rivalries in the 1950s and 1960s. But in the intervening decades, it has become sacrosanct in many quarters, due as much to parochial interests as strategic concerns.

Earlier this year, Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's confirmation was dogged by a Global Zero report he co-authored that proposed eliminating the nation's intercontinental ballistic missiles as part of bilateral negotiations with Russia.

To quell criticism and ultimately win Senate support, Hagel pledged to stand by the triad. Modernizing all three legs, he said, should be a "national priority."

Just hours after Obama used a June 19 speech in Berlin to call for nuclear reductions, Hagel filled in some blanks and once again vowed to protect the triad.

"As we pursue these reductions, let me emphasize three things — three things that will not change," Hagel said June 19 at the University of Nebraska. "First, the U.S. will maintain a ready and credible deterrent. Second, we will retain a triad of bombers, ICBMs and ballistic missile submarines. Third, we will make sure that our nuclear weapons remain safe, secure, ready and effective."

Hagel's comments might table, temporarily, any official discussion about the future of the triad. On Capitol Hill, Republicans and Democrats alike do not appear to be even considering the possibility of abandoning the three-pronged nuclear deterrent.

"We ought to start off with the premise that we want to keep the triad," Senate Armed Services Chairman Carl Levin said last week.

But it is nonetheless a topic that lawmakers and defense officials alike will revisit in the coming years, particularly as the high bills for building new long-range bombers, ballistic missile submarines and ICBMs begin to mount.

Broaching a Dyad

Some current and former military officials have attempted to at least lay the groundwork for that debate in recent years. Adm. Mike Mullen made headlines just days before retiring as the military's top officer in 2011, when he uttered the word "dyad" in a speech, saying maintaining the triad might become cost prohibitive the smaller the nuclear arsenal gets.

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Retired Gen. James E. Cartwright, the former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, helped further fuel the debate when he co-authored the Global Zero report. In an interview last week, Cartwright argued that reducing a leg of the triad could actually benefit national security if Obama's goal of reducing the arsenal to about 1,000 nuclear warheads becomes a reality.

With a smaller nuclear arsenal, Cartwright argued, there is no room for error. In short, it may be better to fully invest money and manpower in two legs of the triad — building in any necessary redundancies — than spread resources too thinly across all three legs.

"You're going to have to have a substantially higher degree of assurance that weapons work and that delivery systems will get through," Cartwright said. "Is there a tipping point somewhere here around the 1,000 number that says that I would have so few missiles or so few bombers or so few submarines that if one of them failed it could be sufficient to actually make my capability not assured?"

Former Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher, a California Democrat who served as undersecretary of State for arms control and international security affairs during Obama's first term, said the future of the triad is one issue that will be reviewed again and again as the number of weapons decreases.

"There has to be a level of confidence, and for decades we were able to have size provide confidence," she said. "And when size starts to be less of a crutch, then you've got to make tough decisions."

However, Tauscher does not expect any major changes to the nation's nuclear posture to happen quickly. The triad, for instance, may continue to be effective until the nation's strategic warheads dip to the 800 range.

"I'm confident that we are still, on a timeline, a good way away from having to make a decision about our nuclear posture, the size and the breath of the stockpile and the triad," she said. "But they are looming issues."

Others believe that keeping the delivery platforms intact could ultimately make getting to lower levels of warheads easier. If supporters of each leg of the triad fear their leg will be the one eliminated, they won't be on board with further reductions to the arsenal.

"I think you reduce the support for lower numbers [of warheads] if you don't commit yourself to the triad," said Morton H. Halperin, a nuclear expert and veteran of the Johnson, Nixon and Clinton administrations.

The political sensitivity is clear. In the immediate aftermath of Obama's speech, 10 self-described "missile states senators" from Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Utah and Wyoming blasted Obama's proposed reductions and defended the need for ICBMs.

Cartwright said he doesn't expect to see any resolution to the debate over the size of the nuclear arsenal in general — or the triad in particular — anytime soon. Obama's speech in Berlin, he said, was simply the first step in an arms-reduction dialogue that will span multiple administrations and Congresses.

"This is going to cross into the next administration, which I think is probably a good thing," Cartwright said. "He has allowed a process by which it won't just be an edict."

http://www.rollcall.com/news/shrinking_weapon_supply_means_uncertain_future_for_nuclear_triad-225916-1.html?pos=oplyh

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The Washington Free Beacon

Treaty Cheating

Russia said to be violating 1987 missile accord

By Bill Gertz

June 25, 2013

Issue No. 1064, 28 June 2013

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Russia is engaged in a major violation of the terms of the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with the United States by building a new medium-range missile banned under the accord, according to U.S. intelligence officials.

Disclosure of the treaty violation comes as President Barack Obama last week called for a new round of arms negotiations with Moscow aimed at cutting deployed nuclear warheads by one-third.

Intelligence officials said internal assessments identified Russia's new Yars M missile that was tested earlier this month as an INF missile with a range of less than 5,500 kilometers.

"The intelligence community believes it's an intermediate-range missile that [the Russians] have classified as an ICBM because it would violate the INF treaty" if its true characteristics were known, said one official.

However, Russia is denying its new Yars M missile represents an INF violation.

Retired Lt. Gen. Victor Yesin, a former commander of Russian strategic forces and current consultant to the chief of the general staff, said in an email to the *Washington Free Beacon* that Russia is complying with the terms of INF because the Yars M, also known as RS-26, is an ICBM and not a banned intermediate-range system.

"According to the information I have, Russia closely follows the obligations arising from the 1987 INF Treaty and 2010 New START Treaty," Yesin said. "The RS-26 ballistic missile, which is a Topol class ICBM, is not covered by the INF Treaty as its range is over 5,500 kilometers. Russia officially informed the U.S. about that in August 2011.

The issue of Russian INF compliance was raised in Moscow on Monday by presidential aide Sergei Ivanov, who told a television interviewer that Russia would not adhere to INF treaty constraints indefinitely.

"A legitimate question arises: On the one hand, we have signed the Soviet-U.S. treaty, and we are honoring it, but this can't last endlessly," Ivanov said according to Interfax.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said June 19 that some of Russia's "neighbors," a reference to China, were developing INF missiles and suggested Moscow would not allow the INF treaty to hinder its strategic arms buildup.

"We cannot accept a situation that would put the strategic deterrent system out of balance and make our nuclear forces less effective," Putin said on the same day Obama announced plans for a one-third cut in the U.S. deployed nuclear warhead arsenal.

Two U.S. intelligence officials said the new Yars M mobile missile is not an ICBM and that the administration needs to confront the Russians on the system or risk undermining the entire arms control agenda.

The Russian INF violation initially was disclosed in vague terms by members of Congress, including House Armed Services Committee Chairman Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon (R., Calif.), and House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Chairman Rep. Mike Rogers (R., Mich.).

McKeon and Rogers wrote to Obama in April describing earlier concerns over what they called "a massive Russian violation and circumvention of an arms control obligation to the United States of great significance to this nation and its NATO allies."

"Briefings provided by your administration have agreed with our assessment that Russian actions are serious and troubling, but have failed to offer any assurance of any concrete action to address these Russian actions," the two chairman stated in the April 12 letter.

They noted that Senate Intelligence Committee members also have raised concerns about "clear examples of Russia's noncompliance with its arms control obligations."

McKeon and Rogers said they expected the administration's annual arms control compliance report, due to Congress April 15, to "directly confront the Russian violations and circumventions."

"We also seek your commitment not to undertake further reductions to the U.S. nuclear deterrent or extended deterrent until this Russian behavior is corrected," they said.



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McKeon said in a statement in response to Obama's Berlin disarmament speech that "Russia is cheating on a major existing nuclear arms control treaty."

"I have been urging the president through classified and unclassified correspondence to take seriously these violations by Russia since last year, but the president has ignored these concerns," he said.

In February, McKeon and Rogers wrote to Obama asking why he had not responded to a classified Oct. 17 letter outlining "significant arms control violations by the Russian federation."

"It is clear that the Russian Federation is undertaking both systemic violation and circumvention of a significant arms control obligation to the United States," they said. "Such is the reality that confronts the United States, despite four years of your best efforts to 'reset' relations with that country."

White House National Security Council spokeswoman Caitlin Hayden said the administration reports to Congress regularly through the annual report on arms control compliance.

"We take very seriously the importance of compliance with arms control treaties and agreements," she said. "When compliance questions arise, we routinely seek to resolve them with our treaty partners, and we will continue to do so. We also keep Congress informed of such matters."

Alexandra Bell, spokeswoman for Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Rose Gottemoeller, said the annual arms compliance report would be issued "in the near future" and will address issues of concern to Congress.

None of the administration or congressional officials interviewed for this report would identify the treaty in question.

However, the intelligence officials said the violations directly apply to the INF treaty.

"How can President Obama believe [the Russians] are going to live up to any nuclear treaty reductions when he knows they are violating the INF treaty by calling one of their missiles something else?" one official said.

The Reagan-era INF treaty banned ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 1,000 kilometers and 5,500 kilometers, or 620 miles and 3,418 miles. The treaty led to the elimination of U.S. nuclear-tipped Pershing ballistic and Ground-Launched Cruise missiles in Europe, along with Russian SS-20, SS-12, SS-23, SS-4, and SSC-X-4 missiles.

U.S. officials said the first details about the INF-range RS-26 missile emerged last year and intelligence assessments later confirmed the missile violates the INF treaty.

However, senior Obama administration officials so far have played down or dismissed the violation to avoid upsetting current and future arms talks with Moscow, the officials said.

Mark B. Schneider, a specialist on Russian missiles at the National Institute for Public Policy in Virginia, said the new Yars M missile appears to be an INF violation.

"There is increasing evidence that the 'new' Russian ICBM that they now call the Yars M or Rubezh is either a circumvention or violation of the INF Treaty," Schneider stated in an email.

Other potential INF violations outlined in Russian press reports include Moscow's development of a new ground-launched cruise missile, and reports that the Russians have used anti-ballistic missiles and surface-to-air missiles as surface-to-surface missiles, Schneider said.

The June 6 test of the Yars M, first disclosed by the *Free Beacon* June 7, revealed it was launched from a missile base at Kapustin Yar and landed at an impact range at Sary-Shagan, about 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles) away. That is "clearly INF range," Schneider said.

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Schneider said that if the Russians tested a single-stage SS-27 Topol ICBM during that test, its expected range would be around 3,000 kilometers and under New START counting rules it would not be classified as an SS-27 ICBM. "Hence it would be a violation of the INF Treaty," he said.

Excessive "Soviet-level" secrecy surrounding the new Yars M missile also is raising questions among western missile experts about whether it violated the INF treaty, Schneider said.

A House Armed Services Committee staff member said administration officials recently told Congress that Russia was complying with the New START treaty.

The staff member said the issue of Russian treaty violations is not new and efforts were made in last year's defense authorization bill to press the administration for answers to concerns expressed by both House and Senate members.

The refusal to address what one official called a "militarily significant" arms treaty violation led to the inclusion of language in last year's version of the defense authorization bill that limited implementation of the 2010 New START arms treaty.

The fiscal 2014 defense bill includes a similar provision passed by the House earlier this month.

McKeon said the current legislation was approved "by an overwhelming margin" and "would prohibit further reductions while Russia is violating—if not in material breach of—its current obligations."

"There is bipartisan agreement that faithfulness and an honest, open exchange are the heart of any successful arms control process," McKeon said.

In response to the legislative provision in last year's bill, Obama threatened to veto it if the provisions blocking New START implementation were in the final bill.

In June 2012, Rep. Michael R. Turner (R., Ohio), then-chairman of the Armed Services subcommittee on strategic forces, wrote to senior Obama administration national security officials questioning whether recent Russian strategic missile tests were carried out in violation of the INF treaty.

Turner asked the officials, including current Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, whether Russia was developing capabilities "in configurations that violate the INF treaty."

In response, James N. Miller, undersecretary of defense for policy, sidestepped the questions in an Aug. 3, 2012, letter to Turner said last year's ICBM tests were "not subject to any provisions or restrictions under the INF Treaty."

However, Miller added: "The United States continues to monitor-these issues very closely. Further information on the matters you raised will be available in the forthcoming Annual Compliance Report."

Article VI of the INF treaty states that neither party shall "produce or flight-test any intermediate-range missiles or produce any stages of such missiles or any launchers of such missiles."

<http://freebeacon.com/treaty-cheating/>

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The London Guardian

Former US General James Cartwright Named in Stuxnet Leak Inquiry

Report says Cartwright, once the second-highest ranking US officer, is under investigation over Iran cyber attack leaks
By Agencies

June 27, 2013

A retired US general, James Cartwright, is the target of a Justice Department investigation into the leaking of secret information about the Stuxnet virus attack on Iranian nuclear facilities in 2010, NBC News reported on Thursday, citing unidentified legal sources.



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NBC said Cartwright, once the second highest ranking officer in the US military, was being investigated over the leaked information about the computer virus, which temporarily disabled 1,000 centrifuges used by Iran to enrich uranium, setting back its nuclear programme.

A "target" is someone a prosecutor or grand jury has substantial evidence linking to a crime and who is likely to be charged.

The Justice Department referred questions to the US attorney's office in Baltimore, where a spokeswoman, Marcia Murphy, declined to comment.

The New York Times published a detailed account of the Stuxnet program in June last year, in which it said President Barack Obama had decided to accelerate US cyber attacks, which began under George W Bush.

The story was based on 18 months of interviews with "current and former American, European and Israeli officials involved in the program, as well as a range of outside experts", the Times said in its story.

Cartwright, a four-star general who is now retired, was vice-chairman of the joint chiefs of staff from 2007 to 2011. The Times reported that he was a crucial player in the cyber operation called Olympic Games, started under Bush.

Bush reportedly advised Obama to preserve Olympic Games. According to the Times, Obama ordered the cyberattacks to be accelerated, and in 2010 an attack using a computer virus called Stuxnet temporarily disabled 1,000 centrifuges that the Iranians were using to enrich uranium.

Congressional leaders demanded a criminal investigation into who leaked the information, and Obama said he had zero tolerance for such leaks. Republicans said senior administration officials had leaked the details to bolster the president's national security credentials during the 2012 campaign.

The Times said Cartwright was one of the crucial players who had to break the news to Obama and vice-president Joe Biden that Stuxnet had escaped onto the internet.

An element of the program accidentally became public in the summer of 2010 because of a programming error that allowed it to escape Iran's Natanz plant and sent it out on the internet, the Times reported. After the worm escaped, top administration officials met to consider whether the program had been fatally compromised.

Obama asked if the program should continue, and after hearing the advice of top advisers, decided to proceed.

The US and other Western countries believe the Iranian nuclear enrichment programme is aimed at building atomic weapons, while Tehran says it is solely for civilian energy purposes.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2013/jun/28/general-cartwright-investigated-stuxnet-leak>

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Albuquerque Journal – Albuquerque, NM

Couple Pleads Guilty in Bomb Scheme

By Mark Oswald, Journal Staff Writer

Saturday, June 22, 2013

A former Los Alamos National Laboratory scientist and his wife pleaded guilty Friday to charges related to communication of classified nuclear weapons information to a man they believed to be a Venezuelan government official.

Both P. Leonardo Mascheroni and Roxby Mascheroni will go to prison – Leonardo for at least two years and Roxby for at least a year – according to the U.S. Attorney's Office in Albuquerque.

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In a scheme that as described by federal agents often sounded like a James Bond movie plot, Leonardo Mascheroni, 77, was alleged to have told an FBI officer masquerading as a Venezuelan agent that he could help Venezuela develop a nuclear bomb in 10 years and 40 missiles with nuclear warheads in 20 years.

According to court documents from the indictments of the Mascheronis in 2010, he also suggested an explosion over New York that could produce an “electromagnetic pulse” to knock out the metropolis’ electrical power and a laser that could blind satellites; in Venezuela, a secret underground reactor for enriching uranium and another subterranean facility for undetectable tests of “microbombs”; and making Venezuela Latin America’s defense “umbrella,” able to retaliate against attacks with nuclear bombs.

In 2009, after federal agents raided his Los Alamos home, Mascheroni acknowledged that he had received \$20,000 from a man claiming to represent Venezuela in return for a report on how Venezuela could develop “a nuclear deterrent” that he hoped would show then-President Hugo Chavez that a nuclear weapons program was impractical.

He maintained then that all of the information was unclassified from the Internet and contained nothing that could help Venezuela develop a nuclear weapon. The Mascheronis and their attorneys couldn’t be reached Friday, after the U.S. Attorney’s Office announced the guilty pleas late in the day.

The Mascheronis were indicted on 22 counts in September 2010, about a year after agents searched their home. Friday in federal court in Albuquerque, the couple pleaded guilty to various charges under the federal Atomic Energy Act.

Leonardo Mascheroni pleaded guilty to two counts of communication of “restricted data” and one count of retention of national defense information; two counts of conversion of government property; and six counts of making false statements.

Mascheroni admitted in his plea agreement that, in November 2008 and July 2009, he unlawfully communicated the restricted data “with reason to believe that the data would be utilized to secure an advantage to Venezuela.”

This came after he visited the Venezuela embassy in Washington and told personnel there that he had worked at LANL for many years, that he “was interested in working for Venezuela” and asked for a meeting. He also later adopted the code name “Luke,” Mascheroni admitted.

He also acknowledged that he illegally converted Department of Energy information to his own use and selling it and “failing to deliver classified information relating to the United States’ national defense to appropriate authorities and instead unlawfully retaining the information in his home.”

Finally, Mascheroni, a naturalized U.S. citizen from Argentina, acknowledged lying to FBI agents when he was interviewed in October 2009, when his home was searched.

Roxby Mascheroni, 70, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to communicate restricted data, another conspiracy count and making false statements.

Under the terms of the plea agreements, which are subject to court approval, Leonardo Mascheroni will be sentenced to a prison term of at least two years and up to 5 1/2 years, followed by 10 years of supervised release. His wife will go to prison for from one to two years, followed by nine years of supervision. The couple’s sentencing hearings have yet to be scheduled.

LANL security clearance

Mascheroni worked for LANL from 1979-88 with a “Q” security clearance providing access to classified information. He attracted national attention with charges that he was dismissed from the lab on trumped-up security risk charges and because of differences on how to advance laser fusion, which tries to harness nuclear energy similar to that of the sun and hydrogen bombs. The lab has maintained that he was laid off in a reduction of force.

In recent years, Mascheroni went to Congress to question management of the nation’s nuclear weapons labs and argue that his laser would help weapons reliability.



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He said in October 2009, after the FBI raid at his house, that when his appeals to Congress went unheeded, he reached out to other countries, leading to his supposed contact with Venezuela. He said his actions were meant to move "toward a world without nuclear weapons" and "to seduce other countries into going without nuclear weapons."

Roxy Mascheroni worked at LANL between 1981 and 2010, where her duties included technical writing and editing. She also held a security clearance.

The raid on the Mascheroni home made news around the world and even provoked comment from Hugo Chavez, who died earlier this year. The controversial president said the investigation was "part of a well-conceived plan" against his country, intended to portray Venezuela "as a nuclear government." The subsequent indictments didn't allege the government of Venezuela ever sought or was passed any classified information.

The man whom Mascheroni believed was his Venezuelan contact – "Luis Jimenez" – turned out to be an undercover FBI agent, the 2010 indictments say. The two met twice at a Santa Fe hotel and a third time at another area hotel, and once received \$20,000. In a 2009 interview, Mascheroni said he never opened the envelope with the \$20,000 and gave it to the FBI when they searched his house.

<http://www.abqjournal.com/main/213193/news/couple-pleads-guilty-in-bomb-scheme.html>

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Reuters – U.S.

Missing Nuclear Material May Pose Attack Threat: IAEA

By Fredrik Dahl

Friday, June 28, 2013

VIENNA (Reuters) - Nuclear and radioactive materials are still going missing and the information the United Nations atomic agency receives about such incidents may be the tip of the iceberg, said a senior U.N. official.

Any loss or theft of highly enriched uranium, plutonium or different types of radioactive sources is potentially serious as al Qaeda-style militants could try to use them to make a crude nuclear device or a so-called dirty bomb, experts say.

Khammar Mrabit, a director of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said there had been progress in recent years to prevent that from happening. But he said more still needed to be done to enhance nuclear security.

"You have to improve continuously because also on the other side, the bad guys, they are trying to find ways how to evade such detection," Mrabit said in an interview.

"The threat is global because these people operate without borders," he said on Thursday before an IAEA-hosted meeting of more than 100 states in Vienna next week on how to ensure nuclear materials do not fall into the wrong hands.

The U.N. agency is helping states combat smuggling of uranium, plutonium or other items that could be used for a nuclear weapon or a dirty bomb, which uses conventional explosives to scatter radioactive material across a wide area posing health risks and massive cleanup costs.

About 150-200 cases are reported annually to the IAEA's Incident and Trafficking Database. More than 120 countries take part in this information exchange project, covering theft, sabotage, unauthorized access and illegal transfers.

While making clear that most were not major from a nuclear security point of view, Mrabit said some were serious incidents involving nuclear material such as uranium or plutonium.

These incidents mean that "material is still out of regulatory control", said Mrabit, who heads the nuclear security office of the IAEA. "Maybe this is the tip of the iceberg, we don't know, this is what countries report to us."

DIRTY BOMB DANGER

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In one reported case, police in former Soviet Moldova two years ago seized highly enriched uranium carried by smugglers in a shielded container to prevent it from being detected, a sign of increased sophistication of such gangs.

But unlike in the 1990s - after the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union weakened control over its nuclear arsenal - the few cases that are reported involve grams of enriched uranium or plutonium, not kilograms.

"A lot has been improved," Mrabit said.

Analysts say radical groups could theoretically build a crude but deadly nuclear device if they have the money, technical know-how and the amount of fissile material needed.

Obtaining weapons-grade fissile material - highly enriched uranium or plutonium - poses their biggest challenge, so keeping it secure is vital, both at civilian and military facilities.

An apple-sized amount of plutonium in a nuclear device and detonated in a highly populated area could instantly kill or wound hundreds of thousands of people, according to the Nuclear Security Governance Experts Group (NSGEG), a lobby group.

Because radioactive material is seen as less hard to find and the device easier to manufacture, experts say a "dirty bomb" is a more likely threat than a nuclear bomb.

In dirty bombs, conventional explosives are used to disperse radiation from a radioactive source, which can be found in hospitals, factories or other places not very well protected.

George M. Moore, a former senior IAEA analyst, said in an article in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists last month that "many experts believe it's only a matter of time before a dirty bomb or another type of radioactive dispersal device" is used.

Mrabit said: "Statistically speaking no reasonable person will say that this will never happen. The probability is there."

Editing by Elizabeth Piper.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/06/28/us-nuclear-security-iaea-idUSBRE95R0BV20130628>

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/Review & Outlook

The Obama Age of Proliferation

While the President dreams, nuclear weapons spread.

June 23, 2013

"We may no longer live in fear of global annihilation," President Obama declared on Wednesday, "but so long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not truly safe." He's right about the last point, because even as the President offers new dreams of U.S. nuclear disarmament, the world is entering a new proliferation age.

Mr. Obama returned this week to Berlin to give his long-promised speech laying out his plans to rid the world of nuclear weapons. His idea is to remove those weapons initially and primarily from American hands. North Korea and Iran each got a single line in his speech, which is at least more than he gave to China, which is investing heavily in the world's third largest nuclear arsenal. Nukes in the hands of terrorists? Mr. Obama said he'll hold a summit on that one in 2016.

Give Mr. Obama points for consistency. Since his college days at Columbia in the 1980s, he has argued for American disarmament and arms-control treaties. When he last issued a call for a nuclear-free world on European soil four years ago in Prague, the Norwegian Nobel Committee rewarded him with a peace prize.

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This week he announced that the U.S. could "maintain a strong and credible strategic deterrent" with a third fewer strategic nuclear weapons, or about 1,000 in all. He also called for "bold" cuts in tactical nukes in Europe without offering specifics, which suggests that was mostly for show.

He said he'll work on reducing U.S. stockpiles through "negotiated cuts" with Russia. Whenever this Administration negotiates with Russia, beware. But there's another danger. President Obama left the door open to unilateral U.S. reductions, possibly without Congressional approval.

The Berlin initiative is the long-promised follow-up to the 2010 New Start accord with Russia, which brought down stockpiles of warheads, missiles and bombers. In his speech this week, President Obama urged everyone to "move beyond Cold War nuclear postures." But is there anything that evokes the Cold War more than arms control with Moscow?

Even the Kremlin isn't likely to embrace this new offer. "We cannot endlessly negotiate with the United States the reduction and limitation of nuclear arms while some other countries are strengthening their nuclear and missile capabilities," Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told Russian radio last month. By "some others," he means China.

Good point. Bilateral negotiations are an anachronism. Before the Cold War powers cut any deeper, how about some clarity about the size of the Chinese arsenal and its intentions? Beijing hides its warheads and missiles in tunnels and has the industrial wherewithal to build many more quickly. The Pentagon thinks the Chinese have up to 400 nuclear warheads, which sounds low. The Pakistanis possess more than 100.

The Russians are terrified of a rising Chinese military on their long southern border. Beijing likely has 1,800 bombs and warheads, the former commander of Russia's Strategic Forces told the military journalist Bill Gertz last year. Whether this number is accurate or not, the Russians think it is. They're reluctant to give away any more of their rusting strategic long-range arsenal. Forget about any progress on thinning Russia's formidable stockpile (size unknown) of shorter-range tactical weapons.

Yet engaging in arms talks could give the Kremlin fresh leverage over America's missile defenses. The Russians have wanted to kill the program since Ronald Reagan made it a priority, and they have found a weakness in President Obama's dreams of disarmament. To get New Start, the White House in 2009 cancelled plans for a missile defense site in Poland that would protect the U.S. against an Iranian ICBM.

Mr. Obama is literally pleading with Moscow to strike another arms deal, which underscores the surreal nature of his vision. He handed the Kremlin reams of classified data about American missile defense, supposedly to allay fears that U.S. defenses will weaken Russia's nuclear deterrent. Invoking executive powers, the Pentagon and State Department rebuffed requests by Congress to specify the information shared with Russia to see if it might have jeopardized U.S. security.

Even if Russia won't go along, Mr. Obama's new nuclear strategy says the U.S. has more warheads, missiles and submarines than it needs. The White House can invoke this conclusion to prune the arsenal through budget cuts or executive orders. This way he can also impose changes to America's missile defenses sought by the Russians without direct Congressional approval.

Meanwhile in the real world, North Korea adds to its nuclear arsenal and tests weapons with impunity. Iran marches ahead toward its atomic capability despite U.N. sanctions. Their neighbors in Asia and the Middle East watch and get ready to build or buy their own weapons in response. The legacy of the President who dreams of nuclear disarmament is likely to be a world with far more weapons and more nuclear powers.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB1000142412788732457790457855552707034238.html>

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Huffington Post
OPINION/The Blog

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Our Generation's Security Challenge: Eliminating Nuclear Weapons

By Joel Rubin
June 24, 2013

There are approximately 17,300 nuclear weapons in the world across nine countries. Of these, nearly 7,700 are in the United States.

This is why we should pay attention to President Obama's call to action in Berlin. It was a call for all of us to remember that the manmade threat of extinction is still present, but within our control to change.

Our massive stockpile of nuclear weapons was designed to fight a foe -- the Soviet Union -- that no longer exists. It costs between \$60-70 billion per year to maintain this arsenal.

In an era of fiscal stress and tight budgets, where security threats are transnational and distinct from the Cold War, what justification do we have for maintaining such a large nuclear arsenal?

It turns out, not much.

There is a consensus among senior defense and security officials that we should reshape our nuclear forces and use the financial savings to fund other national security priorities. By reshaping our nuclear arsenal, we would allow our national security strategy to redirect resources to combatting the threats of the 21st century, such as terrorism, cyber dangers, pandemics, and global warming.

Obama's speech is not the first time a president has made this point.

Presidents George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush both recognized the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and made changes in our country's force structure through executive decisions, reducing our nuclear arsenal by thousands of weapons.

President Obama has followed their example by negotiating a treaty with Russia to reduce each country's nuclear arsenals to more reasonable levels. And he is following the Bushes' wise precedent of making executive decisions to address the threat that nuclear weapons pose to global security.

He is doing so in close consultation with our allies in Europe and with Russia, and is basing it upon the advice of our nation's military and security leaders. They all support the view that the size of the American nuclear arsenal today far exceeds any utility it may once have had in protecting both American and our allies' security.

Therefore, a new round of reductions to a level up to one-third below what the U.S. will have when it reaches the New START Treaty mandated levels of 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads, as outlined by the president in Berlin, is both reasonable and smart, safeguards American security, honors our country's commitments to our allies, and saves money for the American taxpayer.

This announcement, which reaffirms the president's vision of achieving the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons that he first articulated in 2009 in Prague is a call to action for all Americans.

And it is a call that puts our adversaries on notice as well. The international community is clamoring for efforts to reduce the number of nuclear weapons and nuclear states in the world. The tremendous global effort that has been put to combat both Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs -- led by the United States -- is the best evidence of this desire.

Strong American leadership on this issue, as symbolized by the president's speech, adds momentum to the efforts to prevent the proliferation of these destructive weapons. If we expect other countries to fulfill their obligations to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, the United States must live up to our own commitment to reduce our stockpiles. As we do, the international nonproliferation regime will be strengthened and America will gain more leverage to deal with nuclear programs in places like Pakistan, North Korea and Iran.

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The president's speech however is more than a call to action. It is also a test. It is a test to our adversaries, to put them on notice that we are serious about changing the way the world views nuclear weapons.

And this challenge is also a test for our nation and for humanity. Will we take the steps needed to eliminate this danger, to strengthen global security, to get our fiscal house in order, or will we give in to fear and keep the status quo, with the unending expense and danger that it presents?

This is our generation's challenge. And it is a challenge that we must meet.

This piece originally appeared on Ploughshares Fund's blog.

Joel Rubin is the Director of Policy and Government Affairs at Ploughshares Fund.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joel-rubin/eliminating-nuclear-weapons_b_3467252.html

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The Moscow Times – Russia
OPINION/Commentary

Prompt Global Hysteria

25 June 2013 | Issue 5155

By Alexander Golts

In the late 1980s, I closely followed U.S. President Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" program, or Strategic Defense Initiative. But what I couldn't understand was why the Kremlin took it so seriously, when the program had not developed any new weapons systems and posed no threat to the Soviet Union's national security. The answer was apparently that the Soviet military-industrial complex desperately needed a bogeyman with which it could convince leaders to allocate huge sums of money for defense, even in a rapidly deteriorating economic situation. As a result, the attempt to oppose the Strategic Defense Initiative played a significant role in the collapse of the Soviet Union. History is repeating itself as U.S. Prompt Global Strike is replacing "Star Wars" as the new bogeyman.

Prompt Global Strike is a conventional weapon system that uses strategic delivery vehicles, such as ballistic missiles and bombers, but with non-nuclear warheads. The Kremlin is afraid that a Prompt Global Strike attack would enable Washington to disarm Russia's nuclear forces and command centers without having to worry about a counterstrike. At a recent meeting devoted to modernizing Russia's aerospace defenses, President Vladimir Putin said, "There has been increasing talk among military analysts about the theoretical possibility of a first disarming, disabling strike, even against nuclear powers." The top brass have apparently convinced Putin that the proper response to the Prompt Global Strike threat is to build up Russia's aerospace defenses.

But does Prompt Global Strike pose a threat to Russia? In terms of the strategic balance between the U.S. and Russia, Prompt Global Strike is more likely to reduce U.S. military potential than increase it. After all, the New START treaty limits the number of strategic delivery vehicles, and each side has the choice of whether to mount nuclear or conventional warheads on them. Of course, a nuclear warhead will cause much more damage than a conventional one. What's more, the New START treaty permits the U.S. to have almost twice as many delivery vehicles as Russia — a fact that, for some reason, does not disturb the Kremlin in the same way that it frets over the U.S. missile defense system and Prompt Global Strike. But the concept of a Prompt Global Strike — using strategic delivery vehicles to carry conventional weapons — does not constitute a violation of strategic stability.

Notably, Putin spoke about countering the Prompt Global Strike within the context of creating an aerospace defense system. This implies that Putin's top military advisers have convinced him that Russia needs to develop an advanced missile defense system to destroy strategic delivery vehicles that may be fitted with conventional warheads. Putting aside for now the question of whether Russia will even manage to create this kind of missile defense system, the issue is why Moscow accuses the U.S. of attempting to upset strategic stability with its global missile defense system when Russia is itself planning to create its own version of a missile defense system.

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All of this coincided with U.S. President Barack Obama's proposal to reduce U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear arsenals to about 1,000 deployed warheads each, or one-third less than levels permitted by the New START treaty. Obama added a number of interesting points on U.S. nuclear strategy to his initiative. For example, Obama states that a massive disarming nuclear strike — the type Putin fears the most — is highly unlikely in the 21st century. Obama also instructed the Pentagon to drastically reduce its reliance on nuclear retaliation in strategic planning and to reduce the importance of nuclear weapons in U.S. military strategy.

In essence, Obama is once again proposing a departure from the outdated, Cold War-era concepts of nuclear deterrence, parity and mutually assured destruction.

If Russia were to agree to Obama's proposal to reduce its strategic nuclear arsenal to about 1,000 deployed warheads, it would also have to give up plans to deploy new strategic weapons systems that have not yet been built, especially heavy missiles.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quick to explain that Washington would have to first quell Moscow's concerns over its missile defense plans and its Prompt Global Strike system, as well as reduce the imbalance in conventional weapons in general. Only then would Moscow be ready to enter into negotiations — and only on a multilateral basis, with the participation of other nuclear countries, namely China. In reality, when Lavrov throws unrealistic demands about U.S. conventional and nuclear weapons and missile defense all into one big basket, this shows that Moscow is once again playing the spoiler role and has no interest in holding serious talks on disarmament.

The problem is that after the U.S. withdraws its troops from Afghanistan in 2014, the control and reduction of nuclear weapons is the only issue that Washington will have any real interest in discussing with Moscow. But Russia seems to have closed the door on such talks long before they even had a chance to begin.

Alexander Golts is deputy editor of the online newspaper Yezhednevny Zhurnal.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/prompt-global-hysteria/482296.html>

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Union of Concerned Scientists
OPINION/All Things Nuclear

Take Another Look at B61

OPINION/Analysis

By Eryn MacDonald, analyst
June 25, 2013

Growing costs of the life extension program (LEP) for the B61 bomb have put the program in the congressional spotlight. Estimates range from the NNSA's roughly \$8 billion (double its original estimate) to DOD's nearly \$10.5 billion. And none of these include the cost of a new guidance system that the Air Force wants to install, which will add another \$1-2 billion.

In an era of tight budgets and sequestration, the news that it may cost up to \$25 million each to extend the life of 400 B61 bombs has inspired scathing commentary about these "gold-plated" bombs and left many wondering whether there is a more economical way to meet requirements. Senator Dianne Feinstein, for example, raised this question in an NNSA budget hearing, saying that she had been briefed on an alternative plan that could cost just \$1.5 billion.

The alternate plan that Feinstein referred to, known as the "triple alt," for triple alteration, is a simpler version of the LEP that would replace only the radar (which uses vacuum tubes) and the neutron generator and power source (both "limited life components" that have always been planned for replacement on a set schedule). This could extend the weapon's life by 10 years or more for billions less than the current, much more ambitious approach, which would also replace hundreds of other non-nuclear components.

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Donald Cook, the NNSA deputy administrator for defense programs, replied to Feinstein's questions at the hearing by saying that the triple alt plan, while less expensive now, would actually be more expensive in the long run, because it would just delay the need for a more extensive LEP. The chosen plan, Cook said, "is the lowest cost life extension program that meets the military needs." This argument was laid out in greater detail by John R. Harvey, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear, Chemical, and Biological Defense Programs in a recent talk.

Harvey's talk included a response to continuing high profile questions about the need for such an ambitious and expensive LEP in the face of severe budget constraints. He stated that the NNSA had considered the triple alt as one option in the B61 LEP study but rejected it for the following reasons:

- Does not meet key military requirements (yield, safety, use control, LLC [limited life component] interval, surety, compatibility issues with F-35, B-2A aircraft)
- Does not address other known aging issues associated with 40 year old components (Multiple Code Coded Switch, parachute, Programmer, Electronic Assembly)
- Would not achieve consolidation of warhead types from four down to one
- Eliminates opportunity to reduce stockpile size (e.g., potential to retire B83-1 bomb later next decade)
- Would not save as much money as some have argued

Some of these reasons, like the consolidation of four warhead types to one, seem to be based more on wishes than real military needs. The military argues that the consolidation will save money in the long run, but according to Hill staff who have looked at the issue closely, there are no figures to justify that argument. Moreover, if there are known aging issues with additional components, new versions could if necessary be added to the changes made in a scaled-back LEP.

Most importantly, though, it is simply not known what the future needs for the B61 will be. While Harvey questions the accuracy of the lower cost estimates for the triple alt, he says that "[t]he big factor arguing against [it] is the cost of the follow-on B61 LEP next decade to 'finish the job.'" He notes that one of the major costs for the program are operations at the Pantex plant to disassemble the bomb, replace aging components, and then reassemble it. He also says that because of a high workload of LEPs during the 2020s, it is not certain that a second B61 refurbishment program could be fit in.

There are a couple of problems here, however.

First, it is not yet clear whether many of the B61s currently in service will even be needed by the time the planned LEP is completed. The B61 comes in four versions, two "tactical" that are designed to be delivered by fighter planes (the B61-3 and -4), and two "strategic" that are designed to be delivered by long-range bombers (the B61-7 and -11). Exact numbers are classified, but the United States is currently estimated to have a total of about 540 B61s, with about 400 due to undergo life extension. About 180 B61s are kept at bases in Europe; these are tactical versions of the bomb.

NNSA's plans call for the LEP to produce a new version of the bomb—the B61-12—to replace the B61-3, -4, -7 and -10 (the last of which is not currently deployed). (The B61-11 is a newer version of the bomb. It entered service in the 1990s and is not a part of the current LEP.) The B61-12 will be based on the B61-4 warhead, and will be deliverable by either fighter planes or long-range bombers, thus serving as both a strategic and tactical weapon.

By the time the planned B61 LEP is completed, however, the tactical version of the weapon may no longer be in service. Speaking in Berlin on June 19, President Obama stated explicitly that "we'll work with our NATO allies to seek bold reductions in U.S. and Russian tactical weapons in Europe." Those are the very same warheads that the NNSA is insisting have to be reworked so they can be around for decades longer. Does the left hand know what the right hand is doing?

Similarly, as a condition of approval of the New START arms control agreement, the Senate demanded that the administration work with Russia to reduce tactical nuclear weapons. Russia has a much larger stockpile of such weapons than the United States. If the administration decides to reduce or eliminate the tactical B61 bombs in its arsenal to



induce Russia to follow suit, this would alter significantly warhead levels and requirements. Stockpiles of strategic warheads like the B61-7 could also be reduced.

Adding to the uncertainty about the future of the tactical version of the B61 is the fact that it is not clear that the European countries that currently host B61s want to continue doing so. Deployment of these weapons in Europe is intended to reassure NATO allies of the U.S. commitment to the alliance. However, both U.S. and NATO military leaders have acknowledged that the weapons' value is political rather than military. Some NATO members, like Germany, have already called for the removal of the B61, seeing it as too expensive to maintain given its lack of military relevance.

If a new tactical version of the B61 ends up not being needed, then the need to consolidate four weapons into one becomes a non-issue, as does the need to integrate the life-extended version of the bomb with two different types of aircraft (fighters and bombers). This would preclude the need for many of the more ambitious aspects of the currently planned LEP.

A second potential problem is scheduling. While Harvey argues that a heavy workload means that Pantex might not be able to fit in another round of work on the B61 in ten years, the NNSA is notorious for its inability to accurately predict program schedules. The current highest-priority LEP is for the W76 submarine-launched ballistic missile warhead, and this has fallen behind. The NNSA had extended the production period for this program to 2021, but more recently decided to devote more resources to the program so it will be complete by 2019.

The NNSA also says it will begin production on the B61 LEP in 2019. According to the NNSA, it has to meet that date or some components in deployed warheads could start to fail. However, a DOD review of this complicated LEP predicts—based on past experience—that production will not begin until 2022. The more elaborate the LEP, the more likely it is to slip, and DOD notes that the B61 proposal is far more complicated than the W76-1 already in production.

The NNSA has a marked tendency to rush into major projects only to find that its cost and schedule estimates are off by large amounts, that requirements have been overstated, budgets have changed, and, sometimes, that the entire project is unnecessary. Recent examples of this are the canceled Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Replacement- Nuclear Facility and Pit Disassembly and Conversion Facility, the too-small-for-its-equipment Uranium Processing Facility, and now possibly the MOX program.

A simplified version of the B61 LEP would be significantly more likely to proceed on or near schedule. Given the tightness of the timeline—not to mention budget—and since changes in plans or schedules for other LEPs are also likely over the next decade, the workload argument favors using the simpler approach now, rather than falling back to it later when current schedules can't be met.

Rather than racing ahead with an approach that includes unnecessary bells and whistles, Congress and the NNSA should take the opportunity offered by the triple alt to pause and realistically consider the future of the B61. This approach could provide time for the administration to determine whether a new version of the weapon is truly needed, given possible upcoming changes to the U.S. nuclear arsenal. It could also relieve pressure on the NNSA budget in the short term, allowing it to complete the higher-priority W76 LEP.

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<http://allthingsnuclear.org/take-another-look-at-b61/>

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The Japan Times – Japan
OPINION/Editorial

Mr. Obama Rekindles Nuclear Dream

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June 26, 2013

Five years ago, then as a candidate for U.S. president, Mr. Barack Obama made a triumphant appearance in Berlin. That speech drew 200,000 people and traced a direct line between the Obama candidacy and the power and imagery of U.S. President John F. Kennedy, who made a similar address 50 years earlier.

In an attempt to re-energize his agenda, Mr. Obama last week returned to Berlin and reasserted his vision of a world without nuclear weapons. That dream continues to animate the president — and remains controversial, as divisive as it is ambitious.

Just after taking office, Mr. Obama delivered a speech in Prague that outlined his vision of a world without nuclear weapons. In that address, he conceded that his goal would not be realized for many years, most likely not even within his lifetime, but he insisted — rightly — that such “distant” objectives must not be abandoned. The end of the Cold War may have ended the threat of nuclear annihilation, but the continuing existence of nuclear arsenals and the spread of their weapons pose a danger that is real and growing.

He followed that speech with strategic arms negotiations with Russia, striking a deal that cut the nuclear arsenals of the two former Cold War rivals to 1,550 strategic deployed warheads.

That was a notable accomplishment: The New START agreement signed by Mr. Obama and then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev was a two-thirds reduction from the level set by the original START treaty.

Critics noted that the agreement only addressed deployed warheads, leaving thousands more on the shelves available for eventual redeployment. Nor did it touch the thousands of tactical nuclear weapons that both countries retain.

Sadly the two countries’ example was not followed by other nuclear weapon-possessing governments.

Among the countries recognized by the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as “nuclear weapon states,” China has most significantly expanded its arsenal, although the other two such governments (France and the United Kingdom) continue to modernize their arsenals.

India and Pakistan, which possess nuclear weapons but never signed the NPT, are expanding and modernizing their own stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Some experts reckon that India and Pakistan may now have more of these weapons than some of the recognized nuclear powers.

North Korea, which withdrew from the NPT in 2003, continues its nuclear programs, and Iran’s nuclear ambitions remain shrouded. Plainly the nuclear disarmament movement has lost its momentum.

While Washington and Moscow may lead the way, other governments are not following their example. Undaunted, Mr. Obama has doubled down, returning last week to Berlin to resume his campaign. This time, he called for a one-third reduction in U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals, bringing those stockpiles down to just 1,000 warheads.

Mindful of the omissions from New START, he also called for a cut in the number of deployed tactical nuclear warheads in Europe and promised to work with U.S allies in Europe and Moscow to find ways to do so.

Russia’s response was cool. President Vladimir Putin has been an especially vocal critic of U.S. missile defense plans, warning that they could threaten his country’s nuclear deterrent, a threat that becomes even more real as Russia reduces the number of nuclear weapons.

Russia is also worried about United States’ conventional weapons that have great explosive power as well as extreme accuracy or “niche capabilities.”

Finally, Moscow wants all countries’ nuclear programs on the table. There is real concern in Moscow (and in Washington, to be honest) that China might “sprint to parity” if the two former superpowers reduce their arsenals to just 1,000.



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For its part, China denies having any such intention, just as the U.S. denies that its antimissile systems would be effective against larger strategic arsenals (as in Russia or China) or that its “conventional strike option” has utility beyond the terrorists or other discrete targets.

Two competing truths hang over the nuclear debate. The first is that Russia is now more dependent on its nuclear weapons than it was during the Cold War. The once-mighty Soviet military machine has collapsed and Moscow cannot marshal the conventional forces that once so frightened Europe. Its nuclear weapons perform additional duties in defending the homeland and projecting Russia’s power and status.

The second truth is that there is no standing still. If the established nuclear powers cling to their weapons and do not reduce their arsenals, other countries will follow them down the nuclear path.

The utility of such weapons — as either producers of status or security — means that other nations will no longer forego them. The established nuclear weapon states must delegitimize such weapons, and that message will only be sent and believed when those governments make real strides in dismantling their arsenals.

Japan is not just an onlooker in this process. A commitment to continuing nuclear disarmament is essential and Tokyo should be more vocal in its support for that goal.

At the same time, however, Japan benefits from the U.S. nuclear umbrella. Some of the most compelling objections to continuing reduction in U.S. nuclear weapons is the fear that allies will feel abandoned or insecure.

Japan, like other countries enjoying the U.S. nuclear deterrent, must make it clear to the U.S. (and the two countries’ shared adversaries) that Japan supports such cuts, and that it has faith in other elements of the U.S. deterrent.

Japan does not need or demand nuclear weapons — either to possess its own or to depend on those of an ally.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2013/06/26/editorials/mr-obama-rekindles-nuclear-dream/#.Uct6Q4Ao5Dx>

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Russia Beyond the Headlines (RBTH) – Russia
OPINION/Commentary

American Idealist in Europe: Obama’s Nuclear Talk

U.S. President Barack Obama's recent speech in Berlin indicates that he remains an "idealist with many illusions" when he proposes more vigorous nuclear reduction.

By Alexander Kolbin, special to RBTH
June 26, 2013

Addressing a crowd at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on June 19, 2013, U.S. President Barack Obama could not but recall that, exactly 50 years earlier, another U.S. President, John Kennedy, had delivered his famous “*Ich bin ein Berliner*” speech in Berlin. Obama recalled that fragment of Kennedy’s speech where the former president predicted the arrival of “peace with justice” in a world where freedom would triumph and Cold War dividing lines would disappear.

Obama specified that part of this “peace with justice” should mean the following: an end to the proliferation of nuclear weapons, a diminishing role of nuclear weapons in the U.S. nuclear doctrine, a one-third cut in deployed Russian and U.S. strategic nuclear weapons, a reduction in the nonstrategic nuclear weapons of Russia and the United States, preventing Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament of North Korea, in addition to early ratification by the United States of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CNTBT).

The American president made a similar call for nuclear disarmament in Prague, in May 2009. The main outcome of that Obama speech was the revival of nuclear disarmament talks, which led to the signing of a new START treaty in 2010.

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Nevertheless, many of Obama's other "*Prague theses*" concerning nuclear disarmament have still not been implemented. For instance, the United States has not yet ratified the CNTBT, which prevents the treaty from coming into force. Talks on a treaty to ban production of fissionable materials, which Obama expanded on in 2009, never started.

Moreover, North Korea has since carried out two nuclear tests, and suspicions about Iran's nuclear program have only increased. Meanwhile, the new Offensive Reduction Treaty, in spite of all its pluses, has shown that neither Russia nor the U.S. will be ready in the coming decade to cut their strategic weapons below the levels set by the 2002 START Treaty.

On the day Obama spoke in Berlin, the Russian president declared that Obama's proposals were impossible to implement at present.

"We cannot allow the balance of the strategic deterrence system to be upset, to lower the effectiveness of our nuclear forces," Vladimir Putin said during a meeting on the state defense contract.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov added that Russia "cannot endlessly agree on bilateral cuts and limitations of nuclear weapons with the U.S." According to him, "lending the disarmament process a multilateral character is becoming an ever more pressing task."

The multilateral nature of any future nuclear disarmament talks is not the only Russian condition for continued nuclear reductions. Russian leaders have set out these conditions more than once since 2009. First, Russia and the U.S. should comply with their commitments under the new START, under which cuts would only be completed in 2018.

Second, any nonstrategic nuclear weapons cuts urged by Obama in his Berlin speech would only be possible once American nonstrategic nuclear weapons were withdrawn from Europe.

Third, any future nuclear weapons cuts should be carried out in the context of measures to prevent weapons from being deployed in outer space, to limit development of non-nuclear strategic weapons and to limit development of the U.S. anti-ballistic missile system.

So, in fact, Russia's answer to Obama's proposals had been formulated before the American president repeated them in Berlin. Russia's stance can be summed up as the following: Russia will not agree to cut its strategic nuclear forces before 2018 and reduce nonstrategic nuclear weapons, so long as U.S. nonstrategic nuclear forces and infrastructure are on European territory.

By the same token, after 2018, cuts would be possible if the ABM problem were solved, development of space weapons and non-nuclear strategic arms were limited, and other nuclear powers joined the disarmament process.

Obama must have known these preconditions when he spoke about disarmament in Berlin. What was the aim of his initiatives?

First, practical steps in the field of nuclear arms control and disarmament rhetoric remain his foreign policy trump cards. Second, in Berlin, Obama positioned himself as an ideologist and builder of the "peace with justice" predicted by Kennedy. According to Obama, "peace with justice means pursuing the security of a world without nuclear weapons – no matter how distant that dream might be."

Having recognized in Prague that the goal of a nuclear-free world "will not be reached quickly –perhaps not in my lifetime," Obama, a true idealist, probably expects that, in 50 years' time, some other American president might recall his Berlin speech, standing on the threshold of a nuclear-free world.

At the same time, to come up with any initiatives in such a difficult sphere as disarmament, one has to remain "an idealist without illusions," as Kennedy described himself. Judging from the Russian response to Obama's proposals, the "world of peace with justice" and the "world free of nuclear weapons" referred to by Obama are, so far, ideals that have nothing in common with the real interests and possibilities of its future inhabitants.



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http://rbth.ru/opinion/2013/06/26/american_idealist_in_europe_obamas_nuclear_talk_27487.html

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Heritage Foundation
OPINION/The Foundry

The White House's Dangerous New Nuclear Weapons Strategy

By Michaela Dodge
June 26, 2013

Last week, President Barack Obama announced his next initiative on nuclear weapons reductions, calling on Russia and the U.S. to reduce actively deployed nuclear warheads by one-third from 1,550 to around a 1,000. The White House also released a Fact Sheet on the new U.S. nuclear weapons employment strategy. The President's initiative rings hollow at a time when every nuclear power except the U.S. is increasing its strategic arsenal.

The world hasn't become any safer since President Obama took office. The U.S. doesn't even know what will be the international effects of the failed New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which entered into force in 2011. The treaty mandates U.S. reductions, while allowing Russia to build up. As Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) observes:

"Before seeking additional reductions to our nuclear arsenal, the administration should certify that the Russians are fully complying with all existing arms agreements, and the administration should honor the nuclear modernization commitments it made during the last round of nuclear reductions."

The Administration's review wasn't strategic because it was based on the premise that the U.S. has more weapons than it needs, as the President said in March 2012 in South Korea. In contrast, a sound strategic review would begin by assessing threats that the U.S. or allies might face.

There are plenty. Since President Obama took office, North Korea conducted its third nuclear device test and threatened to use nuclear weapons on U.S. cities. Russia has launched its most extensive nuclear weapons modernization program since the end of the Cold War, and Iran is moving ever closer to obtaining nuclear weapons capability of its own.

The President's new guidance is based on false premises. For example, it "directs DOD [Department of Defense] to strengthen non-nuclear capabilities and reduce the role of nuclear weapons in deterring non-nuclear attacks." Yet sequestration and budget caps will reduce the Pentagon's budget by almost one trillion dollars between now and 2021. This scale of reductions will not allow the military to protect U.S. vital national interests. The sequestration is already causing a readiness crisis, and conventional weapons cannot substitute for the unique attributes of nuclear weapons.

The Fact Sheet says that the President is taking these steps to achieve "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." This is just wishful thinking on the part of the President. A world without nuclear weapons is not inherently more stable or peaceful. World War I and World War II, which followed centuries of brutal warfare, are testaments to this fact. Only after the invention of nuclear weapons has mankind enjoyed unprecedented levels of relative peace.

Nuclear weapons policy is too important to be left to unrealistic assumptions and wishful thinking. This nation cannot afford to just barely deter an attack; it needs a nuclear weapons arsenal that is credible in the minds of U.S. allies and adversaries today and in the decades ahead.

Michaela Dodge specializes in missile defense, nuclear weapons modernization and arms control as policy analyst for defense and strategic policy in The Heritage Foundation's Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies.

<http://blog.heritage.org/2013/06/26/the-white-houses-dangerous-new-nuclear-weapons-strategy/>

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POLITICO.com
OPINION/Opinion Contributor

Modernize, Don't Abandon our Nuclear Arsenal

By SEN. DEB FISCHER
June 26, 2013

The Brandenburg Gate served as an iconic backdrop for the 20th-century struggle between freedom and oppression. Standing before the gate in the long shadow of Presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, President Barack Obama made a remarkable — and indeed a historic — announcement last week that could drastically alter the course of the 21st century for the United States and our allies.

Before thousands of German citizens, the president announced our nation was effectively abandoning the long-standing policy of “peace through strength.” Instead, Obama pledged to pursue a policy of “peace with justice.” “Peace with justice means pursuing the security of a world without nuclear weapons, no matter how distant that dream might be,” Obama explained. Reducing our nuclear arsenal by one-third, he argued, brought us closer to this lofty goal.

Following the president’s speech, the Pentagon quickly released a report on the new nuclear strategy, which succeeded in making one thing clear: The world is increasingly unstable. It states, “the risk of nuclear attack has increased”; it cites nuclear terrorism and nuclear proliferation as key threats; and it expresses concern with Russian and Chinese nuclear modernization and the “growth of China’s nuclear arsenal.”

In an age of persistent nuclear proliferation, it is puzzling as to why the commander in chief would endorse shedding a third of our deterrent power. Responsible national security policy requires a realistic recognition of the world as it is, not as we hope it to be.

It is naive to believe terrorists and rogue nations will be swayed by the philosophical righteousness some may attach to the president’s new policy. And count me among the skeptics in believing that China or Russia will abandon its own nuclear modernization plans.

Moreover, deep reductions in strategic weapons could actually undermine the stability that characterizes current force levels. Russia is estimated to maintain several thousand tactical nuclear weapons, which are exempted from current arms reduction agreements, compared with a few hundred such devices in U.S. inventories.

The Department of Defense report notes, “large disparities in nuclear capabilities could raise concerns ... and may not be conducive to maintaining a stable, long-term strategic relationship, especially as nuclear forces are significantly reduced.” In short, as the number of strategic weapons diminishes, other nuclear weapons become more important. When potential adversaries hold greater numbers of these weapons, the U.S. and our allies are less secure.

Perhaps the president is motivated by cost reductions — a pitch to fiscal conservatives like me — reasoning that fewer weapons could save us tax dollars. This, too, is unconvincing. Testifying earlier this year before the House Appropriations Committee’s Subcommittee on Energy and Water, Don Cook, the deputy administrator for Defense Programs at the National Nuclear Security Administration, stated that “not much savings will be achieved” by nuclear reductions. I received similar assessments from the directors of our national weapons labs.

Some argue deep cuts are necessary because nuclear weapons pose a threat to humanity. Lesser is better, they insist. The president suggested a similar view in his Berlin speech: “So long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not truly safe.” I disagree.

Our freedom, security and prosperity are all contingent upon the United States maintaining a position of unquestioned strength. Since World War II, nuclear weapons have provided the bulwark of American national security. Nuclear deterrence is not academic; it is real. For example, the administration’s recent decision to order a nuclear-capable aircraft to the Korean region earlier this year clearly reaffirmed the power and relevance of our nuclear deterrent.

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The president also failed to acknowledge his previous commitments to nuclear modernization. When the Senate ratified New START in 2010, the president pledged to provide critical funding to modernize our aging nuclear forces (some still have 1960s vacuum tubes) and supporting laboratories. The reasoning was clear: As we retain fewer weapons, we must exponentially increase our confidence in their ability to fully function — deterrence depends on it. This promised funding has not materialized.

The Senate should not consider additional arms reductions when we have not achieved the modernization guaranteed in exchange for the last round of cuts to the arsenal.

Despite the president's pledge to pursue the "dream" of a world without nuclear weapons, the truth is that dreams don't always match reality. The frigid reception from Kremlin officials to Obama's call for further Russian nuclear reductions was telling. Moreover, history has proved the current Russian president isn't exactly a good-faith negotiator.

It's no secret that we live in a dangerous world and national security decisions must be made to bolster — not weaken — our ability to counter a growing array of threats. A strong, safe America requires a nuclear deterrent that is modern and effective, not aging and depleted. As former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher famously warned, "This is no time to go wobbly."

Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.)

<http://www.politico.com/story/2013/06/modernize-dont-abandon-our-nuclear-arsenal-93451.html>

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The Oakland Tribune – Oakland, CA
OPINION/Editorial

Oakland Tribune Editorial: Nuclear Iran is Inevitable, must Plan Accordingly

June 28, 2013

From this considerable distance the recent presidential elections in Iran might appear to be at least a wisp of fresh air in a repressive and dangerous country. After all, the most pragmatic candidate won a landslide victory. So maybe, just maybe, that can lead Iran to reason on nuclear weapons issues.

Unfortunately, such thinking is more wishful than thoughtful.

We are sad to say the election of Hassan Rohani as president will change little about Iran, except perhaps its outward style. We acknowledge that just about anything is a welcome change from the shrill and tiresome Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the outgoing president. And that Rohani is more outward looking and less rhetorically rambunctious than Ahmadinejad. But the truth is that Rohani will have little influence on Iran's nuclear policy.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei runs the Islamic Republic of Iran with a tight grip. That his personal approval was needed for a candidate to be placed on the ballot tells us all we need to know about who is in charge. It is highly unlikely he will settle for anything less than Iran gaining full membership in the nuclear arms club.

This election won't change that. Nor will sanctions or military threats.

It appears to us that Khamenei is willing to do whatever it takes to obtain the begrudging (and fearful) respect that comes to any nation with nuclear weapons.

Until this point the world's focus has been on stopping Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, either through negotiation, threats or sabotage. But intelligence reports tell us that Iran has installed about 9,000 new centrifuges at facilities in Natanz and Fordow and it is clear the nation is nearing "critical capacity." We fear that ship is ready to sail and that such a voyage will cause a paradigm shift sooner rather than later.

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The challenge of the new normal, to coin the vernacular, will be for the world in general and the United States in particular to shift focus toward fashioning an effective strategy for containing Iran once it has nuclear weapons that it can effectively strap to its Shabab-3 ballistic missiles. That could be within a year or two.

Devising such a policy is no small task and has few good options, especially when dealing with an unpredictable regime bent on flexing its newfound muscle for all the world to see. North Korea leaps immediately to mind.

Adding to the degree of difficulty is that while both Russia and China have influence with Iran, neither has demonstrated much inclination to use it on the nuclear issue. It is difficult to tell if that is merely obstreperousness or the product of their calculus as to inevitability.

The bottom line is that while a nuclear Iran is a frightening prospect, it is a very real one that is unlikely affected by this election. The U.S. and western powers must begin thinking through the containment options.

http://www.insidebayarea.com/breaking-news/ci_23556227/oakland-tribune-editorial-nuclear-iran-is-inevitable-must

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