



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1007, 15 June 2012

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Issue No.1007, 15 June 2012

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Press TV – Iran

Iran Will Not Allow Western Spies to Visit Parchin: MP

Saturday, June 09, 2012

An Iranian lawmaker has lashed out at insistence of International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Director General Yukiya Amano to visit Iran's military site in Parchin, saying that "Western spies" will never be allowed to visit the military sites.

Iran and IAEA held a new round of talks in the Austrian capital, Vienna, on Friday, ahead of the forthcoming multifaceted negotiations between Tehran and the P5+1 - the US, France, Russia, China, and Britain plus Germany - in the Russians capital, Moscow.

The IAEA is pressing Iran for an agreement to give its inspectors immediate access to the Parchin military complex, where the agency claims explosive tests related to development of nuclear weapons have taken place.

Tehran has forcefully rejected claims that it pursues military objectives in its nuclear energy program saying that as a member of the IAEA and a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty it is entitled to peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

"Parchin industries are non-nuclear military industries and we will not allow Western spies to inspect our military technology," Iranian lawmaker, Evaz Heidarpour, said on Saturday.

He added that Iran has high deterrence power in military terms and is the dominant power in the region in military industries.

"The US and the West are trying to access information related to our military industries. We, as the people's representatives, will not allow our military industries, which are devoid of any kind of nuclear activity, to be visited by Western spies," he reiterated.

The lawmaker stated that Iran may even sue the IAEA for taking satellite photos of Parchin military site.

On May 26, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, Fereydoun Abbasi, said the IAEA insistence on visiting Parchin is due to pressure from certain countries.

Abbasi added that Iran has not been convinced and "no documents or reason has been presented to us" to persuade us to arrange a visit to Parchin military site.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/06/09/245385/iaea-parchin/>

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Seattle Times

Sunday, June 10, 2012

Iran Denies Reports of Demolitions in Base

Iran's military is denying claims by the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog that it demolished buildings at a base in a suspected attempt to cover up nuclear testing, the state media reported Monday.

The Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's military is denying claims by the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog that it demolished buildings at a base in a suspected attempt to cover up nuclear testing, the state media reported Monday.

The report by YJC.ir news website quoted Defense Minister Gen. Ahmad Vahidi as saying allegations that Iran was trying to erase evidence at the Parchin military base are "irrelevant and unwise." Iranian officials have issued similar denials over the past few weeks but this is the first by the defense minister, under whose authority the base falls.

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"The allegations are aimed at affecting nuclear talks in Moscow," Gen. Vahidi was quoted as saying, referring to an upcoming round of negotiations between Iran and six world powers in the Russian capital over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program.

The West suspects Iran is trying to develop weapons technology. Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency showed to member nations of its board last month satellite images indicating a cleanup of the site, saying the photos depicted water streaming out of one building, the razing of several other buildings and removal of earth at the facility.

The activities at the Parchin military base southeast of Tehran are a recent IAEA concern. Iran says Parchin is a conventional military base.

Earlier on Sunday Ali Asghar Soltanieh Iran's envoy to the IAEA told state Arabic-Language TV , Al-Alam, that Iran will not block access of the IAEA inspectors to Parchin, "if both Iran and the agency reach an agreement on the modality" of a visit.

He said soon both sides will agree on a new round of the talks on the issue. So far, talks have led to little progress in resolving the dispute.

http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2018400785_apmlirannuclear.html

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Daily Star – Lebanon

Moscow Nuclear Talks could Stall, Iranian Negotiator Warns

June 10, 2012

Reuters

VIENNA: An Iranian negotiator warns this month's talks in Moscow over Iran's nuclear program could stall because of faulty preparation.

Ali Bagheri said advance talks were agreed on to clarify the agenda for the Moscow round, set for June 18-19.

The official IRNA news agency says Bagheri made the complaint in a letter to senior EU official Helga Schmid Sunday.

Lack of progress in talks between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency is disappointing and it shows Tehran's continued failure to abide by its commitment to the U.N. nuclear watchdog, a U.S. envoy said Saturday.

The IAEA and Iran failed at talks Friday to unblock an investigation into suspected atom bomb research by the Islamic Republic, a setback dimming any chances for success in higher-level negotiations between Tehran and major powers in Moscow.

The IAEA, a Vienna-based U.N. agency, said no progress had been made in the meeting aimed at sealing a framework deal on resuming its long-stalled investigation.

Six world powers were scrutinizing the IAEA-Iran meeting to judge whether the Iranians were ready to make concessions before a resumption of wider-ranging negotiations with them in Moscow on the decade-old nuclear dispute.

"We're disappointed," Robert Wood, the acting U.S. envoy to the IAEA, told Reuters in an emailed comment.

"Yesterday's outcome highlights Iran's continued failure to abide by its commitment to the IAEA, and further underscores the need for it to work with the IAEA to address international community's real concerns," he said.

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The IAEA had been pressing Iran for an accord that would give its inspectors immediate access to the Parchin military complex, where it believes explosives tests relevant for the development of nuclear arms have taken place, and suspects Iran may now be cleaning the site of any incriminating evidence.

The U.S., European powers and Israel want to curb Iranian atomic activities they fear are intended to produce nuclear bombs. The Islamic Republic says its nuclear program is meant purely to produce energy for civilian uses.

Both the IAEA and Iran – which insists it will work with the U.N. agency to prove allegations of a nuclear weapons agenda are “forged and fabricated” – said before Friday’s meeting that significant headway had been made on the procedural document.

But differences persisted over how the IAEA should conduct its inquiry, in which U.N. inspectors want access to sites, documents and officials.

“The IAEA and Iran have on some points significantly diverging ideas of how a new agreement would look,” said Mark Hibbs of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

But Hibbs said “negative” signals from Vienna did not necessarily have to mean anything in the talks in Moscow between Iran and the six powers – the United States, Russia, France, Germany, Britain and China.

The talks pursued by world powers are aimed at defusing tension over Iran’s nuclear works that has led to increasingly tough Western sanctions on Iran, including an EU oil embargo from July 1, and stoked fears of another Middle East war.

Full transparency and cooperation with the IAEA is one of the elements the world powers are seeking from Iran.

But they also want Iran to stop its higher-grade uranium enrichment, which Tehran says it needs for a research reactor but which also takes it closer to potential bomb material.

Iran wants relief from sanctions and international recognition of what it says is its right to refine uranium. “If the West makes a serious offer to Iran, we could see real progress. But if Moscow fails to move forward, we’ll have big problems,” Hibbs said.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/International/2012/Jun-10/176341-iran-warns-moscow-nuclear-talks-could-stall.ashx#axzz1xWZxXt1B>

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Press TV – Iran

West Must Comply with Iran's Rational Demand of Nuclear Rights:

Vahidi

Sunday, June 10, 2012

Ahead of the scheduled talks between Iran and six major world powers (P5+1) in Moscow, Iran’s Defense Minister Brigadier General Ahmad Vahidi urges Western countries to comply with Tehran’s nuclear demands.

“Western countries should comply with Iran's rational demand of [having access to] the peaceful use of nuclear energy,” Vahidi told reporters on Sunday.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran's policy is [based on] defense for its nuclear rights,” he added.

Countries should pay heed to the fact that Iran, while being interested in interaction and cooperation, will not give up its rights, the minister pointed out.

Based on instructions by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iran opposes nuclear weapons and any kind of weapons of mass destruction.



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On February 22, Ayatollah Khamenei said the Iranian nation has never sought and will never seek nuclear weapons.

Iran and the P5+1 - Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States plus Germany - held three sessions of plenary talks, focusing on Iran's nuclear energy activities, in Baghdad on May 23 and 24 after an earlier round of negotiations in Istanbul in mid-April.

The two sides agreed to hold another round of talks in Moscow on June 18 and 19.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/06/10/245431/west-must-comply-with-iran-ndemand/>

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RT (Formerly, "Russia Today") – Russia

Syrian Rebels Aim to Use Chemical Weapons, Blame Damascus – Report

10 June 2012

The armed Syrian opposition has got their hands on chemical weapons, which they acquired from Libya, a media report claims. They allegedly plan to use it against civilians and pin the atrocity on the Bashar al-Assad regime.

The report by DamPress claims the opposition group in possession of the weapons is being trained in its use inside Turkey. No further detail on the alleged conspiracy is given.

The Libyan stockpile of chemical weapons was a matter of great concern during last year's civil war in the country. There were fears that they may end up in the hands of the terrorists and used elsewhere in the world. However unlike Libya's portable surface-to-air arsenal, no reports of the weapons going missing was made public.

Syria has a greater number of chemical weapons than Libya. Military experts say the agents in the Syrian stockpile are also more modern than what Gaddafi had produced for his military. Syria also didn't join the Chemical Weapons Convention and is not obliged to declare what chemical weapons it possesses.

The chemical framing plot allegations comes days after British journalist Alex Thomson from Channel 4 news accused a Syrian opposition group of trying to set him and his crew up to be killed by government forces. He said a western journalist death would give bad publicity for Damascus.

Syria is sliding back into violence after a UN-brokered peace plan failed to bring the rival forces in the country to negotiation table. The worst of the incidents of renewed bloodshed were two massacres of civilians in the villages of Houla and al-Qubair.

Opposition blame the killings on pro-government paramilitary forces, while Damascus says both incidents were provocations carried out by terrorist groups. The UN observer mission currently deployed in Syria failed to establish for certain who committed the atrocities.

The conflict in Syria has been raging for 15 months now, with the exact death toll difficult to establish. UN estimates that about 10,000 people have been killed in the violence.

<http://www.rt.com/news/syria-chemical-weapons-plot-532/>

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FARS News Agency – Iran

June 12, 2012

Iran Plans to Build Nuclear-Fueled Submarines

TEHRAN (FNA) - A senior Iranian Navy commander stressed Iran's high capabilities in designing and manufacturing different types of submarines, and announced the country's move towards manufacturing nuclear-powered submarines.

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Speaking to FNA on Tuesday, Lieutenant Commander of the Navy for Technical Affairs Rear Admiral Abbas Zamini pointed to the navy's plan to manufacture super heavy nuclear-powered submarines, and stated, "Right now, we are at the initial phases of manufacturing atomic submarines."

He noted Iran's astonishing progress in developing and acquiring civilian nuclear technology for various power-generation, agricultural and medical purposes, and said such advancements allow Iran to think of manufacturing nuclear-fueled submarines.

He further reminded that using nuclear power to fuel submarines is among the civilian uses of the nuclear technology and all countries are, thus, entitled to the right to make such a use.

On May 29, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari lauded Iranian experts' success in repairing heavy submarines, saying their outstanding capabilities and mastery of the hi-tech used in naval vessels display the failure of enemy sanctions and pressures.

Addressing a ceremony to launch a heavy submarine after the subsurface vessel was overhauled by Iranian experts, Sayyari said that Iran is among the very few world countries with the ability to carry out full or partial repairs for submarines.

He said the submarine, called 'Tareq', is now fully ready to be dispatched to the high seas.

Last year, the Iranian Navy's Tareq-class submarine, 'Younus', managed to set a new record in sailing the international waters and high seas for 68 days.

Iran's Younus submarine, sailing alongside warships of the 14th fleet of the Iranian Navy, returned home in early June 2011 following an over two-month-long mission in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

The deployment of the Iranian submarine in the Red Sea was the first such operation by the country's Navy in far-off waters.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9103081864>

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Press TV – Iran

Uranium Enrichment Is Iran Inalienable Right: Jalili

Wednesday, June 13, 2012

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Saeed Jalili has stressed that uranium enrichment is an inalienable right for the Islamic Republic.

"According to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, enrichment is the Islamic Republic of Iran's inalienable right and Iran is a member of the NPT and there is nothing wrong when enrichment is being used for peaceful purposes," Jalili said.

He made the comments in Iran's Majlis (parliament) on Wednesday ahead of the upcoming talks with the P5+1 group in Moscow on June 18 and 19.

Iran's five-point proposal package is scheduled to be discussed in the Moscow negotiations.

Jalili also referred to a religious decree issued by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, which bans the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Jalili said the decree should be a starting point for global nuclear disarmament, adding that threats and pressure against Iran have proved ineffective.

The Iranian official said the P5+1 -- the US, Britain, Russia, France, and China plus Germany -- and Iran should cooperate, saying Tehran's activities are all under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).



He concluded that Tehran is ready to hold the upcoming talks in the presence of journalists so that the public can judge the talks.

The US and its Western allies are pressuring Iran by imposing sanctions as they accuse Tehran of pursuing military objectives in its nuclear energy program.

However, the IAEA has never found any evidence indicating that Tehran's civilian nuclear energy program has been diverted towards nuclear weapons production.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/06/13/246018/uranium-enrichment-iran-inalienable-right/>

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Daily Star – Lebanon

Iran: All Nuclear Proposals on Table for Talks

June 14, 2012

Agencies

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TEHRAN: Proposals from both Iran and the group of six world powers will be on the table at the next round of talks in Moscow next week, not just the West's demand to halt Iran's highest level uranium enrichment, Iran's top nuclear negotiator said Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov called for a diplomatic settlement of the Iranian nuclear standoff.

Saeed Jalili said the European Union's foreign policy chief, Catherine Ashton, has agreed the negotiations will include Iranian proposals. The two days of talks are scheduled to begin Monday.

Jalili briefed Iran's parliament about the upcoming talks, indicating that Iran does not see them has a simple negotiation over how much uranium enrichment Iran can carry out, if any.

Ashton "agreed that Iran's five-point proposal is on the agenda for the Moscow discussions, even non-nuclear issues," Jalili told an open session of parliament. "We will enter into the Moscow talks on this basis."

Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi told a news conference in Tehran Wednesday after meeting Lavrov that he was "optimistic" about the Moscow talks. Lavrov flew into Iran Wednesday for a brief visit to discuss the upcoming international talks. In a joint news conference after meeting Salehi, Lavrov revealed little of what they talked about.

"The Iranian side is interested in coming up with solutions which would contribute to the settlement of the nuclear issue," Lavrov said, speaking through an official interpreter.

He reiterated Russia's opposition to unilateral sanctions imposed by Western countries that are hurting Iran's oil export-dependent economy.

For his part, Salehi said patience was required to resolve the standoff.

"The direction taken by the two sides to resolve the issue is the right one," Salehi said. "The issue is complicated and one has to have patience to make progress."

The Iranian foreign minister added: "In this process, it can slow down at times, then accelerate. But we are optimistic about the final result."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Tuesday that the Iranians "are under tremendous pressure from the Russians and the Chinese to come to Moscow prepared to respond" to proposals by the world powers to alleviate the showdown over Tehran's nuclear activities.



She said: "The Russians have made it very clear that they expect the Iranians to advance the discussion in Moscow. Not just to come, listen and leave. We will know once it happens."

Moscow is the most sympathetic to Tehran among the six powers negotiating with it in the talks, although it has sided with the West in expressing fears that the Islamic Republic could be pursuing the development of a nuclear weapons capability.

The so-called P5+1 group of nations – comprising U.N. Security Council permanent members Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, plus Germany – offered a package of proposals to Iran in the last round, in Baghdad in May.

They called for Iran to halt its enrichment of uranium to 20 percent, ship out its stockpile of 20 percent uranium and halt enrichment at its fortified Fordow facility.

In return, they offered nuclear cooperation, spare parts for Iran's dilapidated passenger aircraft fleet and an easing of an EU ban on tanker insurance that hinders oil sales to Asia.

Iran's negotiators rejected the package as grossly insufficient. They countered it with a list of their own issues, including many non-nuclear topics such as regional security.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Jun-14/176757-iran-all-nuclear-proposals-on-table-for-talks.ashx#axzz1xm2GR1Ls>

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RT (Formerly, "Russia Today") – Russia

Israel May Use Military Force 'to Secure' Syria's Alleged Chemical Arsenal

14 June 2012

The Israeli army is considering using military force to prevent Syria's alleged chemical warfare stockpiles from getting into the hands of Hezbollah or Al-Qaeda. Tel-Aviv believes that Damascus is no longer capable of securing its arsenal.

Syria has never declared it possesses chemical weapons stocks, but the Israeli military does not put its existence under question. Tel Aviv believes Syria has been busy producing mustard and nerve gas for the last 40 years.

On Monday Israeli Maj. Gen. Yair Naveh, the country's deputy military chief, warned that Syria could pose a threat to Israel with its chemical weapons. He declared Syria has *"the largest chemical warfare stockpiles in the world,"* and warned that Assad's regime could *"treat us the same way they treat their own people."*

Some Israeli politicians claim the Syrian government is already using chemical weapons against its population. A senior member of the ruling Likud party, Ayoob Kara, told Israel Radio on June 9 that the Syrian government is using *"chemical weapons against men, women, and children."*

They have become the latest in the chorus of Israeli high ranking officials who have rushed to voice their concerns over Syria's alleged chemical arsenal.

The head of Israel's Northern Command responsible for the front that borders Lebanon and Syria, Maj. Gen. Yair Golan, warned that Assad's regime could pass its chemical weapons to Lebanon-based Hezbollah if the regime of President Bashar al-Assad crumbles under the militant attacks that have lasted for over a year now.

According to the general, this could happen if Assad's regime loses control over its military bases. Simultaneously, Maj. Gen. Golan openly called Syria a *"failed state."*

Israel would not mind if international forces invade Syria to oust President Assad.



Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz believes the world should unite to crush Assad's regime, the same as it did in Libya, where coalition forces overthrew Colonel Muammar Gaddafi.

"A crime against humanity, genocide, is being conducted in Syria today. And the silence of the world powers is contrary to all human logic," Mofaz announced.

"Since in the not-distant past the powers chose military intervention in Libya, here the required conclusion would be immediate military intervention to bring down the Assad regime," he said.

But he made it clear that Israel would not take part in the intervention.

"We cannot get involved, for understandable reasons. But I think that the West, led by the United States, has an interest in guarding the threshold (so) genocide does not take place," Mofaz told Reuters.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been more cautious in his remarks, telling Bild newspaper that the military intervention is *"a decision for the leading powers who are now talking about it."* He added that the less he says about it as prime minister of Israel, the better.

However, he used the opportunity to link alleged crimes of the Syrian regime with Israel's arch-enemies.

"This is a slaughter carried out not only by the Syrian government. It is being helped by Iran and Hezbollah," he said in broadcast remarks to his cabinet on Sunday.

The international pressure on President Bashar al-Assad's regime has been mounting for the last 15 months, but Israel has only recently openly added its voice to anti-Assad rhetoric.

Meanwhile, recently information surfaced about armed Syrian opposition planning a provocation with the use of chemical weapons. Reportedly, they have obtained chemical weapons from Libya and plan to use it against Syrian civilians, shifting the blame for the atrocity on the government forces.

In the light of the recent Israeli rhetoric over Syria's alleged chemical stockpile threat, fears arise that the chemical weapons ghost story might become an excuse for a foreign intervention into the country.

There has already been a precedent when the alleged weapons of mass destruction were used as an excuse for a foreign military intervention in Iraq.

The international military operation against regime of Saddam Hussein in 2003 was officially aimed at stripping the dictator of weapons of mass destruction – which were never found – while Saddam was hanged by hasty executioners after a short trial.

<http://www.rt.com/news/israel-syria-chemical-weapons-803/>

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Chinese Firms Breaking UN Embargo on North Korea

Chinese firms are breaking a United Nations embargo by supplying North Korea with key components for ballistic missiles including launch vehicles, according to evidence provided by an intelligence agency in the region.

By Julian Ryall, Tokyo

08 June 2012

Classified documents seen by The Daily Telegraph show that Beijing has failed to act when confronted with evidence that Chinese companies are breaking UN Resolution 1874 and helping North Korea to build long range missiles.

This measure, passed with China's support on June 12, 2009, strengthens an arms embargo by urging all UN members to inspect North Korean cargoes and destroy any items linked to the country's missile or nuclear programmes.



But a study compiled by the intelligence agency of a country in the region shows how North Korean companies are continuing to buy banned materials in China. These entities "have been smuggling in or out controlled items by either setting up and operating a front company in China, or colluding with Chinese firms to forge documents and resorting to other masking techniques," says the report.

The companies include the Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation, known as KOMID, which deals in weapons and military equipment and has been singled out for UN sanctions.

Launch vehicles for long range missiles are among the items illegally purchased inside China. North Korea is currently trying to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) that would be able to reach the United States. The country has already built a handful of nuclear bombs.

"The North Korean entities subject to UN sanctions are known to have been deeply involved in the North Korean procurement of Chinese ICBM transporter-erector-launcher vehicles," says the report.

In August 2011, Changgwang Trading Corporation, a front company for KOMID, bought four lorries in China that were then altered into ICBM launchers and displayed in a parade in Pyongyang to celebrate the centenary of the birth of North Korea's founder, Kim Il-sung.

In addition, the Korea Ryonbong General Corporation purchased 2 tons of vanadium, which is used in the manufacture of missiles, from a Chinese company in May 2011.

Much of the equipment was shipped to North Korea from the Chinese port of Dalian.

"The UN North Korea Sanctions Committee has frequently asked China for clarification of North Korea's weapons transport through the port of Dalian, but China is said to have been shifting the responsibility to shipping companies of other nations or refusing to answer," says the report.

Sometimes, a bribe of between £40,000 – £60,000 is paid to a customs official to send each 40ft container filled with illegal missile components through Dalian, according to the report. North Korea also conceals its shipments.

"To hide its trade, North Korea has been using all available means, including falsely describing the contents of the shipments, forging the country of origin as China and purchasing the materials in the name of Chinese firms," adds the report.

Personnel from North Korean banks and trading companies regularly meet at Beijing International Airport to deliver large sums of money earned from weapons deals. This happens with the "connivance of Chinese authorities and the customs office," says the report.

China is North Korea's oldest and most committed ally, sending millions of "volunteer" soldiers to fight for the North during the war caused by its invasion of South Korea in 1950.

More recently, Beijing has propped up the bankrupt state with fuel and food supplies, while providing diplomatic support in the Security Council. China's aim is to guarantee the presence of a friendly state on its north-eastern border instead of a united Korean peninsula that might fall into America's orbit.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/9320339/Chinese-firms-breaking-UN-embargo-on-North-Korea.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
June 10, 2012

N. Korea again Rules Out Nuclear Test

SEOUL, June 10 (Yonhap) -- North Korea said Saturday that it has no immediate plan to conduct a third nuclear test.



The North's latest announcement made through a statement issued by its foreign ministry spokesman came amid growing international concern about its possible nuclear test following April's failed rocket launch.

"(South Korea) seeks to rattle the nerves of the DPRK (North Korea) in a bid to cause it to conduct a nuclear test, though such a thing is not under plan at present, and take such strong retaliatory measures as Yeonpyeong Island shelling incident," the statement said.

"This scenario is aimed to strain the relations between the DPRK and the countries around it and create an atmosphere of putting pressure and sanctions on it," the statement said, accusing the South of "defaming" the celebrations of the Day of the Sun, the anniversary of the Korean Children's Union and other auspicious events in the North.

In a similar statement issued on May 22, Pyongyang ruled out an imminent nuclear weapon test, but vowed to expand and bolster its nuclear deterrence as well as its sovereign right to launch satellites, while slamming the Group of Eight nations' condemnation of its failed long-range rocket launch in April.

There has been speculation that the communist country may carry out a nuclear test to try to compensate for April's botched rocket launch. The long-range rocket, which Pyongyang claimed was meant to put a satellite into orbit, exploded soon after lift-off on April 13. South Korea and the U.S. said it was a cover for testing the North's ballistic missile technology.

The North has a track record of carrying out a nuclear test following a long-range missile test. In 2006, the North conducted its first nuclear test, three months after the test-firing of its long-range Taepodong-2 rocket. The second nuclear test in 2009 came just one month after a long-range rocket launch.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/06/10/13/0401000000AEN20120610000100315F.HTML>

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Korea Times – South Korea
June 11, 2012

North Korea Signals Reengagement: Experts

By Chung Min-uck

North Korea is signaling willingness to reengage with the outside world following a botched rocket launch in April, experts said Monday.

"By saying it had no immediate plans to conduct a third nuclear test, the North seems to be feeling the international pressure," said Cheong Seong-chang, a senior fellow at the Sejong Institute.

On Saturday, Pyongyang stated through its foreign ministry spokesman that "(South Korea) seeks to rattle the nerves of the DPRK (North Korea) to cause it to conduct a nuclear test, though such a thing is not being planned at present."

The spokesman also said that Seoul's stance "strained relations between the DPRK and surrounding countries so as to create an atmosphere of putting pressure and sanctions (on North Korea)."

Pyongyang ruled out an imminent nuclear weapon test in a similar statement on May 22.

"I guess the North is starting to reengage with the outside world following international pressure after the failed rocket launch," said professor Yun Duk-min of the Korea National Diplomatic Academy. "Even China, its closest ally, is opposing the nuclear test."

Days after the failed rocket launch, the UN Security Council issued a presidential statement unanimously condemning Pyongyang's provocative act. Beijing also has been clear on its support for denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and the resumption of the six-party talks aimed at achieving this.



According to the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency, in 2011 almost 90 percent of Pyongyang's total external trade came from neighboring economic powerhouse China recording \$5.6 billion, a 62.4 percent increase compared to the previous year.

"With Kim Jong-un consolidating his position as new leader, Pyongyang has been more focused on stabilizing the livelihood of the people," said Cheong. "Internally, it prohibited the export of fishery products and has kept on saying it had a misunderstanding with Washington concerning the scrapping of a leap day deal."

Following the rocket launch, Washington halted a food aid shipment to the North that had been agreed to on Feb. 29 after Pyongyang promised to suspend nuclear tests, missile launches and enrichment of uranium.

Pyongyang claims the launch was aimed at deploying a satellite and thus was not a violation of the agreement. "The North thinks it's impossible to engage with the current Lee Myung-bak administration as it is considered as aiming for the regime's collapse," said Cheong. "It will keep a hard-line stance until a change in the South's administration while beginning to engage with other nations including the U.S."

However, some believe Pyongyang may again be pursuing a dubious contradictory policy to gain the upper hand in foreign relations by continuously changing its position.

"Actions are more important than words," said a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade official. "We are sticking to the international consensus of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula."

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/06/116_112805.html

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China Daily – China

Elite Missile Unit Offers Rare Glimpse

June 11, 2012

By Xin Dingding (China Daily)

Editor's note: *The Second Artillery Force, one of the four divisions of China's military, recently opened its doors to the country's English-language media.*

China's missile division has always been the most mysterious part of the People's Liberation Army.

Since the country's first conventional-missile brigade was established by the Central Military Commission in 1993, few civilians have ever had the chance to see the inner workings of this elite unit.

It first grabbed attention in July 1995, when China announced the PLA would carry out missile tests in the high seas. Six missiles were fired in a week and each successfully hit their target.

The following spring, the brigade fired four more missiles in another maneuver. Once again, all the missiles hit their targets.

The missions announced to the world that China had both nuclear and conventional missiles, and thereby a strengthened military deterrence system.

Before that, China had only nuclear missiles. The Gulf War in 1990 helped the nation's military leaders realize that conventional missiles were playing a bigger role in modern warfare.

The first conventional-missile brigade was formed under the Second Artillery Force, which controls both nuclear and conventional missiles. It is one of the four branches of the PLA, along with the army, the navy and the air force.

"Our brigade is known for its accuracy in missile launches," said Tan Weihong, the brigade's commander in an interview at its headquarters. "Of the 114 missiles it has launched so far, all have accurately hit the target."



That record is a reflection of how hard the brigade is working to strengthen its combat abilities.

"Conventional missiles are a trump card in modern warfare," Tan said. "So we must be ready at any time. We must be able to deliver a quick response to attacks, hit the targets with high accuracy, and destroy them totally."

The brigade, which spends one-third of each year outside its base, goes to every corner of the country for training.

Missile-launching vehicles, larger and longer than trucks, painted with camouflage and equipped with super-large tires, have driven thousands of kilometers to places like the deep forests of South China and the windy plateaus of the nation's northwest.

Along the way, soldiers collect information on roads and bridges to build a database, which will be useful in future operations.

At the same time, data gathered at the training missions allow the brigade to determine how the equipment performs under various conditions. It helps improve missile operators' launch skills in all kinds of weather and geological conditions.

Besides hardships in training, the brigade's tradition of "being scientific and precise" and "to never stop pursuing perfection" is also a reason for its 100-percent success rate, said Major Deng Huihui, a 29-year-old staff officer.

Deng recalled that a few years ago, he took part in a drill in Northwest China. In the field, the missile launch vehicle was parked on uneven terrain. Missile operators had to consider the best way to arrange the cables. Otherwise a single launch could destroy the cables and abort further drills.

Believing he was one of the best missile operators in the brigade, Deng had full confidence in the way he arranged the cables.

"But the brigade's then-chief of staff gave me 13 pieces of advice. I was shocked, but from him I learned the importance of pursuing perfection. This is the 'secret' of our brigade," he said.

Zhang Jichun, the brigade's commissar, agreed: "In the last 19 years, our soldiers changed, and our weapons are more advanced, but the tradition remains."

In the past years, the brigade's armament has been updated several times. Each time, the soldiers learn how to use the equipment in the shortest period of time.

Meanwhile, with the increase of missile launching units over the years, the brigade had to develop a new commanding system to replace the old one that was based on vocal orders.

"The new system can handle multiple launches at the same time, which was impossible in the past," Tan said.

Brigade leaders now also give more thought to the human factor.

"The soldiers' psychological health is something I consider now, but didn't in the past," Tan said.

Enlisted soldiers nowadays were mostly born in the 1990s, with some born in the 1980s, said Major Zhang Zhibin, a political instructor of the brigade's fourth battalion.

Most of the young soldiers he meets are the only child of a family, some from single-parent families and some that used to live with grandparents.

"They grew up comfortably. Many don't know how to take care of themselves. They like to spend time alone instead of communicating with others," he said.

They also grew up with computer games, the Internet and instant messengers such as QQ. Zhang Yichao, the brigade's chief of staff, said a few even had an addiction to the Internet before joining the army.

In recent years, the brigade has been doing its best to meet the young soldiers' needs.



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In its recently revamped camp, which has a small artificial pond at the center, soldiers are accommodated in new four-story buildings. There's a flat-screen TV in each room and each soldier is given a laptop for daily use.

"Every soldier having a computer is something uncommon in the PLA," said Zhang Yichao.

And even though soldiers can't get on the Internet in their dorm, they can log on to the intranet designed by the brigade.

On the intranet, soldiers can get news, but also computer games and popular TV series for relaxation.

The brigade also opened an Internet cafe that soldiers can use on weekends.

The measures were warmly received by the young soldiers.

"Having a whole Sunday playing my favorite computer games really helped to release pressure after a week's hard training and living with strict discipline," said Yuan Xiaojian, a soldier in his second year with the brigade.

Yuan, who graduated from Zhengzhou University with a bachelor's degree in water conservancy, said the laptop is also helpful because he is teaching himself a computer language.

With their needs met, the brigade also tried to train the young soldiers to become tougher.

Zhang Jichun, the brigade's commissar, said it is wrong for some people to believe that as long as the missiles are advanced, soldiers in missile troops can rely on the weapon and do not need to train their minds or bodies.

The brigade organizes regular physical training exercises to challenge the youngsters.

First, they complete a 5,000-meter run. Then, two soldiers carry logs weighing 60 to 80 kilograms and walk through a ditch of waist-high water. Finally, every soldier carries a 30-kg sandbag and walks through the ditch again.

"I have to launch missiles on a plateau with snow, in deep forests, in deserts. I'm in my 30s, and the training keeps me in the best condition," said Zuo Xiaoshan, a senior sergeant at the brigade.

In a drill in October, soldiers finished their exercises after eating only one meal in 16 hours. Nobody failed the mission, he said.

And because a missile launch is a team effort, soldiers are trained to cooperate and to trust each other.

Special training includes having a soldier fall from a 10-meter platform, trusting his fellow soldiers will get him before he hits the ground.

"If the missiles are a sword, then our soldiers are the sword's hilt. Only when the two work together perfectly can the sword become invincible," Zhang Jichun said.

http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/11/content_15492078.htm

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U.S. News & World Report

Reports: NKorea Missile Launchers Came from China

June 13, 2012

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan has evidence that a Chinese company exported to North Korea vehicles capable of transporting and launching missiles, in possible violation of U.N. sanctions, Japanese media reported Wednesday.

China called the reports inaccurate, and denied violating any U.N. restriction.

Issue No. 1007, 15 June 2012

United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
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The U.S., which has previously said it took China at its word that it was complying with the sanctions, said Wednesday that in recent weeks it has raised with Beijing allegations that Chinese companies assisted North Korea's missile program.

According to the Japanese reports, four of the vehicles were shipped from Shanghai to North Korea last August aboard the *Harmony Wish*, a Cambodian-flagged cargo vessel. Japanese authorities tracked the ship by satellite, and searched it after it had delivered its cargo, when it transited through Japan the following month, the reports said.

Such vehicles — called TELs, for transporter, erector, launcher — became the focus of international attention when North Korea displayed what looked like several of them during a military parade in its capital, Pyongyang, in April.

They are a concern because they could give the North the ability to transport long-range missiles around its territory, making them harder to locate and destroy.

Japan's top government spokesman declined to confirm the reports Wednesday. But he said that if necessary, Japan would work with the international community to determine if U.N. regulations were violated.

In Beijing, Liu Weimin, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, said his country has not violated any restrictions.

"Chinese companies did not violate U.N. and Chinese laws," he said, calling the reports "inaccurate." He did not specifically confirm or deny the vehicles were sold, but said China is opposed to proliferation and is "complying with U.N. laws and regulations."

Although no suspicious vehicles were aboard the ship when it was searched in Japan, authorities found documents detailing the cargo it had unloaded in North Korea, and that included the vehicles, according to the *Asahi*, a major Japanese newspaper. It cited multiple but unnamed government sources.

It said the exported vehicles were believed to have been the ones used in the military parade, which was held shortly after a North Korea rocket launch that was widely condemned as an attempt to develop its long-range missile technology. The rocket, which North Korea claimed carried a satellite, failed soon after liftoff.

NHK, Japan's public broadcaster, and other media later had similar reports, also citing unnamed government sources.

The *Asahi* said the evidence was shared with South Korea and the United States, but claimed that Washington requested it not be made public.

On April 19, after press reports on the possible Chinese origin of the launch vehicle displayed in the military parade, U.S. State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said that China had provided repeated assurances that it was complying with the U.N. sanctions.

"I think we take them at their word," he said.

But at a news conference Wednesday, department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland said the U.S. in recent weeks has raised with Beijing its concerns over allegations of Chinese entities assisting North Korea's missile program. She said the U.S. would continue to work with China and others in the international community on enforcing the sanctions. She refused to give further details as it pertained to intelligence, which the department refrains from commenting on.

Asahi identified the Chinese exporter as Wuhan Sanjiang Import Export Co., a subsidiary of state-owned China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp., and the North Korean importer as Rimmok General Trading, which it said was likely a front company.

Immediately after the parade, private experts said the vehicles probably came from China, citing similarities to Chinese design patterns in the windscreen, the windscreen wiper configuration, the door and handle, the grill, the front bumper lighting configurations, and the cabin steps.

Despite the latest reports, experts say pinning a sanctions-busting charge on Beijing would be difficult because it would be hard to prove that Beijing knowingly approved the exports for military purposes.



With different modifications, the vehicle can also be used in commercial fields. The Asahi report said that China claims the vehicles were to be used to carry lumber.

The U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions against North Korea after its first nuclear test in 2006 and stepped up sanctions after its second test in 2009 to try to derail the country's rogue nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. The sanctions restrict exports of weapons or technology that could be used to boost those programs.

Associated Press writer Scott McDonald in Beijing and Matthew Pennington in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2012/06/13/reports-nkorea-missile-launchers-came-from-china>

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Global Times – China

China Denies Shipping Missile Vehicles to NK

By Global Times - Agencies

June 14, 2012

China yesterday dismissed a Japanese newspaper report that accused it of breaking UN resolutions by exporting missile transportation vehicles to North Korea last year, saying "no Chinese firms have been involved."

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Liu Weimin denied that China exported missile carriers to North Korea in August last year, saying that China has been staying in close communication with relevant countries on the non-proliferation issue.

He said that China has always strictly fulfilled the UN Security Council resolutions and seriously implemented relevant Chinese laws and regulations, adding that Chinese companies have not exported items banned by the resolutions, laws and regulations, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

According to the Japan-based Asahi Shimbun newspaper report, the Japanese government obtained a document in October last year, saying that four vehicles had been exported from China to North Korea.

"The vehicles were transported aboard the 1,999-ton Harmony Wish, a cargo ship registered with Cambodia," the report quoted the Japanese government sources as saying.

"Spy satellites of Japan, the US and South Korea have confirmed the ship left Shanghai on August 1, 2011, and arrived at Nampho in western North Korea on August 4," the report added, saying the move would be a violation of a UN Security Council resolution.

However, top government spokesman Osamu Fujimura declined to confirm the report, saying it was "a matter of intelligence," AFP said.

"It is quite impossible for China to send missile launch vehicles to North Korea, because any moves with regards to supplying the North with vehicles capable of transporting and launching ballistic missiles do not accord with China's interests," Wang Junsheng, a Korean affairs expert from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told the Global Times.

Japan's Asahi Shimbun newspaper also said the government delayed releasing the document that it had obtained in October, because "it fears embarrassing China."

Evidence had been passed on to the US and South Korea, according to the report, which added that Washington had requested the delay in its general release.

Wang said Japan's allegation aims to put more pressure on China, as the three countries believe North Korea's progress on denuclearization depends on China's resolve to pressure the North.

However, they need to know that the US is the key to resolving the problem, since North Korea's precondition for abandoning nuclear programs is asking the US to provide security guarantees in a written document, Wang added.



<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/714846.shtml>

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Times of India – India

PM Takes Stock of Nuclear Arsenal

By Rajat Pandit, Tamil News Network (TNN)

June 14, 2012

NEW DELHI: India's nuclear weapons arsenal, its command and control structures as well as the state of operational readiness came up for a detailed review at a top-level meeting called by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday.

Sources said the "top-secret" meeting of the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), attended by the ministers part of the Cabinet Committee on Security, national security advisor and the three Service chiefs, among others, stressed the need for "faster consolidation" of India's nuclear deterrence.

The "delay" in the long-standing aim to have a fully-operational nuclear triad — the ability to fire nukes from land, sea and air — also figured in the meeting of the "political council" of NCA, which is the country's solitary body that can authorize the use of nuclear weapons.

The NCA meeting, barely held twice a year to assess the steps being taken to "manage" the nuclear arsenal, comes in the backdrop of Pakistan once again brandishing its "tactical nuclear weapons" with another test of its 60-km "Hatf-IX" or Nasr missile last month.

The short-range ballistic missile Nasr — with "shoot and scoot" capabilities for "a quick response" to "evolving threats" — is being touted by Pakistan as a nuclear counter to even conventional military thrusts into its territory by India, in what many see as a reckless escalatory step.

Pakistan has surged ahead in terms of nuclear warheads, with international estimates putting the number as 90-110 compared to India's 80-100. China has more than double that number along with a formidable missile arsenal.

Both countries also do not have a clear-cut "no first-use" nuclear doctrine like India. This is where India's missing third leg of the nuclear triad, in the shape of submarine-launched ballistic missiles, becomes all the more crucial.

A no first-strike policy must be backed by an assured, effective and rapid second-strike capability for robust deterrence. But the country's first indigenous nuclear-powered submarine INS Arihant, which was "launched" by the PM at Visakhapatnam in July, 2009, has still some distance to go before it becomes operational next year.

With the first two legs in the shape of the Agni missiles and fighter bombers, India's nuclear triad can be in place only when the over 6,000-tonne INS Arihant becomes capable of "deterrent patrols" after undergoing extensive sea and missile trials. INS Arihant has four silos on its hump to carry a dozen K-15 (750-km) or four K-4 (3,500-KM) missiles, as reported by TOI earlier.

India is also at least three years away from deploying the over 5,000-km Agni-V missile, tested for the first time in mid-April, which brings the whole of China in its strike envelope. The armed forces so far have Agni-I (700-km) and Agni-II (2,500-km) missiles, which are both basically meant for Pakistan. The 3,000-km Agni-III (under induction), 3,500-km Agni-IV (tested for the first time last November) and Agni-V, in turn, have been designed with China in mind.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/PM-takes-stock-of-nuclear-arsenal/articleshow/14106056.cms>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Confirms G5 Bomber Plans

Issue No. 1007, 15 June 2012



09 June 2012

Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev on Saturday reiterated plans to develop a new, fifth-generation strategic bomber.

"Alongside a fifth-generation fighter there are also plans to develop an advanced long-range aviation complex. I am talking about a new strategic bomber," he said.

Maintenance and modernization of the existing strategic bombers is not enough, he added.

His remarks come days after a senior cabinet member questioned the need for a new bomber.

Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin suggested on Monday that with the current and future air and missile defense systems in place, strategic bombers were no longer relevant and could no longer be relied on to deliver strikes on enemy territory.

Russia announced plans in 2009 to develop a new strategic bomber featuring stealth technology by 2025. The new bomber is expected to replace the Tu-95MC Bear and Tu-160 Blackjack strategic bombers, and Tu-22M3 Backfire long-range bombers currently in service with Russia's strategic aviation.

KAZAN, June 9 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120609/173938424.html

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RT (Formerly, "Russia Today") – Russia

Russia Ready for Arms Race, Prefers to Avoid It – Putin

14 June 2012

While Russia has every capability to adequately respond to the deployment of the US missile defense system in Europe, Moscow would prefer Washington's plans to be reviewed, says President Vladimir Putin.

No matter what terms the American side uses, the missile defense shield "is still an element of an arms race," the Russian leader pointed out.

"We should look into the future and respond in a timely manner (to the advancement of these plans)," Putin said. "Certainly, it would be better for our partners not to do it, because this will evoke our response," he noted, adding that Russia has "every possibility" of providing it.

He named government defense contracts among priorities in that respect.

"We must meet our government defense targets exactly on time, with due quality and at acceptable prices," the president stressed, as cited by Interfax. "If we do, there will be no major threat against us."

The statements were made during Putin's meeting with servicemen from the 393rd air base of the Russian Air Force in the Krasnodar Region.

Earlier in June, during a trip to Paris, Putin reiterated Moscow's stance on the European missile defense plans, saying that it needs legally-binding guarantees that the system would not be directed against Russia.

"Statements like 'Don't be afraid' and 'We promise that nothing will happen' are clearly insufficient in the modern world. This is childish. We need guarantees and serious agreements in the security sphere," he told reporters.

<http://rt.com/politics/putin-missile-defense-response-819/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Putin Calls for New Long-Range Bomber and UAVs

14 June 2012

Russia must start development of a long-range bomber aircraft, President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday at a meeting on defense orders.

"We have to develop work on the new PAK-DA long-range bomber aircraft for Long-Range Aviation. I know how expensive and complex this is. We have talked about this many times with ministers, and with the head of the General Staff. The task is not easy from a scientific-technical standpoint, but we need to start work," Putin said.

If bomber development work is not started soon, Russia might miss the boat, Putin said.

A new long-range cruise missile has already been adopted for these aircraft, he said, adding that the "tactical level" is in need of deep modernization.

The president also said the A-100 airborne warning and control system (AWACS) project should be implemented within the next five years.

The new AWACS plane will have the capability to detect and track long-range airborne and ground-based targets.

Russia operates a mixed fleet of 63 aging Tu-95MS turboprop missile carriers, and just 13 Tu-160 bombers.

Russia must also develop a range of military unmanned air vehicles (UAV) including strike and reconnaissance types, Putin said.

"We need a program for unmanned aircraft. Experts say this is a most important area of development in aviation," he said. "We need a range of all types, including automated strike aircraft, reconnaissance and other types," Putin added. Russia plans to spend around 400 billion rubles (\$13 billion) on UAV development in the next eight years.

Putin's call for a new bomber comes just a week after Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who has responsibility for the military-industrial complex, appeared to pour cold water on the need for a new bomber, in remarks carried in Izvestia newspaper.

KOREVENS, June 14 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120614/174031126.html

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CBS News.com

British Troops Learning of Job Losses

12 June 2012

Associated Press

LONDON — Britain's defense secretary says thousands of troops are being told if they will lose their jobs amid the country's austerity measures.

Philip Hammond said Tuesday that about 4,100 military staff would be lost as the defense ministry conducts a second round of job cuts.

Britain has announced that it will cut a total of 17,000 troops and 25,000 civilian staff. It means the country's army will number about 82,000 by 2015.

A fleet of jets, an aging aircraft carrier and 40 nuclear warheads are also being lost amid an 8 percent cut to the military's annual 37 billion pound (\$58 billion) defense budget over four years.



Prime Minister David Cameron is driving through a four-year program of about 81 billion pounds (\$126 billion) of cuts to government spending.

http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-505245_162-57451154/british-troops-learning-of-job-losses/

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Chicago Tribune

Germany, Italy Urge Funding for Missile Program

By Andrea Shalal-Esa, Reuters

June 13, 2012

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - German and Italian officials warned U.S. lawmakers on Wednesday that their plans to cut off funding for a ground-based NATO missile defense program built by Lockheed Martin Corp would endanger U.S. ties with their countries.

Italian Defense Minister Giampaolo Di Paola urged U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta to ensure continued funding for the Medium Extended Air and Missile Defense System (MEADS) program given its importance to NATO's future plans and transatlantic cooperation and collaboration.

German legislator Ernst Reinhard Beck said in a series of e letters to U.S. lawmakers that withholding funding for the program "undermines the longstanding and trustful MEADS partnership" and would risk wasting hundreds of millions of euros already invested in the air missile system.

Three congressional committees have scrapped the Obama administration's request for \$400 million to complete funding for testing of the new missile defense program, which is jointly financed by the United States, Italy and Germany.

Di Paola urged Panetta to intervene with the fourth committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee, that must still vote on the measure. "We hope and expect that the United States would live up to its (Memorandum of Understanding) commitment," he said in a copy of the letter obtained by Reuters.

Beck said failure by the U.S. Congress to fund the final phase of work on the program would be "perceived by Germany as breaking our transatlantic agreement and memorandum of understanding." It would mark the first time that one of the three partners had terminated a contract and endangered their special relationship, he said.

"The U.S. Congress must be very aware that a pull-out on its final MEADS commitment has broad implications and it will have long-term impacts to other multinational cooperative projects," Beck said in the letters.

The unilateral withdrawal from the joint project would "probably cause significant financial and national security relationship challenge," he wrote.

COULD HARM RELATIONS

The White House has threatened to veto fiscal 2013 defense spending bills over the issue. It has warned lawmakers that failure to fund MEADS would have negative ramifications for U.S. ties to Italy and Germany and "could harm our relationship with our Allies on a much broader basis, including future multinational cooperative projects."

MEADS was intended to replace the U.S. Army's aging Patriot air and missile defense system and has been in development for more than a decade.

Washington announced last year that it would stop funding the program after fiscal year 2013, calling it unaffordable in the current budget climate.

But the Pentagon said it would still fund testing of the program in fiscal 2013 to ensure development of a meaningful capability for Germany and Italy, and to maintain a future option for the United States.



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

U.S. lawmakers like Senator John McCain, the top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, argue that Washington should not spend any more money on a missile defense system it no longer intends to use.

They say Congress told the Pentagon in the fiscal 2012 defense authorization law to either terminate the program or find a way to complete it for the \$390 million appropriated for fiscal 2012.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-lockheed-missilebre85d02n-20120613,0,6155769.story>

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Scotsman.com – Scotland, U.K

Scottish Independence: Dilemma over Future of Faslane

By DAVID MADDIX

Thursday, 14 June 2012

THE FASLANE nuclear submarine base on the Clyde could remain under UK control in an independent Scotland, according to a senior defence minister.

- **Ministry of Defence has no contingency plans for independence as they don't expect it to happen**
- **SNP are publicly committed to removing the Trident nuclear deterrent from the Clyde**
- **Faslane could be handed to the rest of the UK or Scotland forced to share decommissioning bill**
- **Loss of Faslane could lead to loss of 6,000 jobs and economic benefit, says Junior Defence Minister Peter Luff**

Armed forces minister Nick Harvey said the future of Trident would be the biggest issue in negotiations that would follow a vote for Scottish separation.

Mr Harvey told MPs at the Commons Scottish affairs committee: "I would have thought that relocation would be about the least favourite option possible."

With the SNP set on removing "weapons of mass destruction" from Scottish territory, the Liberal Democrat minister warned the "costs of moving the base would be absolutely immense".

But the suggestion Faslane could remain part of the UK was last night dismissed by the SNP, which wants to turn it into a conventional naval base.

Mr Harvey said the most recent upgrade of Faslane was £3.5 billion "in today's money" but added that this figure would be "dwarfed" by relocation costs.

It was also suggested that removing Trident could take as long as 20 years.

Under questioning from Tory MP David Mowatt, Mr Harvey raised the prospect that the base could remain UK territory. The move would create a military enclave north of the Border, comparable with US-controlled Guantanamo Bay in the Caribbean.

Another parallel is the Baltic port of Kaliningrad, which remained Russian after Lithuania broke away from the old Soviet Union in the 1990s.

Mr Mowatt asked what terms the UK government would insist on if the SNP reversed its policy on Trident and permitted UK submarines to remain on the Clyde.

Mr Harvey said: "I think the critical one would be complete freedom of action, complete control and complete sovereignty over the facility."

However, both ministers said there were currently no contingency plans being drawn up for Faslane or defence if Scotland votes for independence, because they do not envisage the scenario happening.

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They said the Ministry of Defence needed to hear from the SNP about its plans, but there had been no discussions with the Scottish Government.

They also said the MoD did not have the resources to look at all the options.

On who would meet the cost of dismantling Faslane, Mr Harvey said a “huge negotiation” would be required.

He added: “If the residual UK taxpayer had to pick up that bill, their ability to pick up any other bills would be proportionately diminished.”

Labour MP Iain McKenzie suggested decommissioning would be included in negotiations after a vote for independence, alongside the division of the national debt.

“A compromise would be made as to who pays for what so both sets of taxpayers would end up paying,” he said.

Mr Harvey replied: “That sounds to me like a sensible characterisation of what I think will probably happen.”

But last night the SNP said Faslane would be Scotland’s conventional naval base, with warships, post-independence.

SNP defence spokesman Angus Robertson said: “Faslane has a tremendous future as a conventional naval base in Scotland after independence.

“For decades arrogant Westminster politicians have foisted nuclear submarines on Scotland,” he added.

“There is no reason to decommission Faslane; it will change its use to something altogether more constructive.”

He said there was a lack of conventional capability in Scotland, which he described as a “total disgrace”.

He said: “The advantage of making better decisions in Scotland is that we can prioritise a non-nuclear defence posture and protect jobs in the conventional military.

“This stands in stark contrast to the UK government, which has been running down conventional defence in Scotland.

“Majority Scottish opinion, our churches, the STUC and civic society all oppose Trident – and the Scottish Parliament has voted against its replacement – yet the UK government wants to use Scottish taxpayers’ money to pay for these weapons of mass destruction, while cutting conventional defence.”

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/scottish-independence-dilemma-over-faslane-1-2352589>

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Washington Post

Sen. Levin: Defense Dept. Could Cut Budget Now to Avoid Severe Reductions Next Year

By Walter Pincus

June 12, 2012

The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee said Tuesday that the Defense Department could head off far deeper budget reductions by preemptively agreeing to cut \$10 billion a year for the next decade.

Sen. Carl Levin, the Michigan Democrat who heads the powerful committee, said “defense has to contribute” to a compromise to head off the across-the-board, \$55-billion-a-year cuts required by the budget compromise that Congress reached last year. The provision, known as sequestration, will be triggered on Jan. 3 if Congress doesn’t come up with a 10-year, \$1.2 trillion deficit reduction plan or a compromise to change the law by the end of this year.

Levin suggested that some cuts could come from the costs of maintaining and modernizing the nuclear stockpile and funding for family housing for troops stationed in South Korea.



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Levin, participating in a National Press Club session, said a signal should be sent on a compromise before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30, because major defense contractors have already sent "warning notices" to employees of possible cuts.

"That kind of instability and uncertainty is what is going to drive us, hopefully . . . to at least take some steps down the path of avoiding that train wreck," Levin said.

David Langstaff, president of defense contractor TASC, told the gathering that the situation "has business standing on the sidelines waiting to see what will happen."

Levin, who is working with other senators to come up with a compromise, called his proposed reduction of \$100 billion from the Pentagon over 10 years "a figure . . . for totally planning purposes when we look at how to come up with plans to avoid sequestration."

He described sequestration as "mindless budgeting," where "automatic reductions, perhaps 8 percent to 10 percent," will take place across the board. Instead, Levin said any cuts beyond the \$487 billion built into the 2011 congressional compromise will have to be "prioritized, prudent, [and] no area can be exempt."

Navy Capt. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman, said Tuesday, "Any cuts beyond those already factored in would require a reassessment of the strategy."

One area Levin described as "ripe for cuts" is the nuclear stockpile. About \$200 billion is being planned to modernize the nuclear weapons-building complex and build a new triad of strategic bombers, missile-launching submarines and land-based ICBMs.

Levin also suggested the possibility of savings in South Korea, where he said the United States cannot afford plans to provide family housing for dependents of American troops assigned there.

Gen. James Cartwright, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who was at the session, said a funding review for U.S. forces in South Korea is called for. "It's time, really, to make an adjustment on the [U.S.] posture," he said.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/sen-levin-defense-dept-could-cut-budget-now-to-avoid-severe-reductions-next-year/2012/06/12/gJQAMjrOYV_story.html

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Fox News.com

Mandated Defense Cuts Could Lead to War, Top US Military Official Says

June 13, 2012

By FoxNews.com

The top U.S. military official suggested Wednesday that scheduled Pentagon budget cuts could lead to war.

Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, testified before a Senate committee Wednesday alongside Defense Secretary Leon Panetta. Both offered dire warnings about the potential impact of the automatic budget cuts, known as sequestration, which will go into effect starting next January unless Congress intervenes.

Dempsey said the cutbacks could lead to the cancellation of weapons systems and disrupt "global operations." In turn, he warned, the U.S. could lose global standing -- opening the door for enemies to test American military might.

"We can't yet say precisely how bad the damage would be, but it is clear that sequestration would risk hollowing out our force and reducing its military options available to the nation," Dempsey told the senators. "We would go from being unquestionably powerful everywhere to being less visibly globally and presenting less of an overmatch to our adversaries, and that would translate into a different deterrent calculus and potentially, therefore, increase the likelihood of conflict."

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Panetta made a similar argument last year when he said the sweeping cuts could weaken the military substantially, and invite "aggression" abroad.

Yet so far, Congress has not averted the planned cuts, which were set in place after lawmakers failed to reach a broader deficit-reduction deal.

The Pentagon would face cuts of about \$500 billion in projected spending over 10 years on top of the \$492 billion that President Obama and congressional Republicans already agreed to in last summer's deficit-cutting budget.

Dempsey said the cuts would mean fewer troops, the possible cancellation of major weapons and the disruption of operations around the world.

Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, called the description "candid but frightening."

Panetta said layoffs of civilian employees were possible and the cuts were certain to hit military contractors, with a possible 1 percent spike in the nation's unemployment rate. The rate ticked up to 8.2 percent in May with the economic recovery still sluggish.

Dempsey said the billions for warfighters in Afghanistan would be subject to the cuts. To avoid that drastic step, the Pentagon would look to offset the reductions with cuts in other accounts, he said. Defense comptroller Robert Hale said the president could exempt military personnel, but the reductions would affect the department's ability to pay for health care.

The Pentagon would be facing a 20 percent cut in weapons systems, training, equipment -- all elements of the budget.

"It was designed as a meat ax. It was designed to be a disaster. Because the hope was, because it's such a disaster, that Congress would respond and do what was right. And so I'm just here to tell you, yes, it would be a disaster," Panetta said.

Last year's failure of a congressional bipartisan supercommittee to come up with \$1.2 trillion in spending cuts set in motion the automatic cuts that would slash domestic and defense programs by \$1.2 trillion over a decade. Republicans and Democrats have struggled to come up with a budget to avert the cuts, and an answer may not emerge until after the November election, in a lame-duck session.

That could prove too late, as the fiscal year begins Oct. 1 and companies that might lay off hundreds or thousands need to notify employees 60 days in advance.

In a message to Republicans and Democrats, Panetta, the former House Budget Committee chairman and director of the Office of Management and Budget, said all elements of the budget must be part of any solution, from entitlement programs such as Medicare and Social Security that Democrats look to protect to revenue from tax increases that Republicans tend to oppose.

While Panetta appealed to lawmakers for help, he also took a swipe at members of Congress who have changed Obama's defense budget request for the next fiscal year. In the initial rounds, the House added billions to the budget, preserved weapons, ships and aircraft that the Pentagon wanted to cut and balked at the reductions in the Army and Marine Corps. The Senate Armed Services Committee, in its version of the budget, rejected the Pentagon's proposed cuts in personnel and equipment for the Air National Guard.

"In reversing difficult decisions and restoring funds to those areas that achieve necessary savings, Congress risks upending the careful balance we sought to achieve in our strategy," Panetta said in his prepared testimony. He added in the open session: "There's no free lunch here. Every low-priority program or overhead cost that is retained will have to be offset in cuts in higher-priority investments in order to comply" with last year's budget agreement.

He implored members of the Senate Appropriations Committee to follow the Defense Department's budget recommendations as it crafts a spending plan for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.



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The Associated Press contributed to this report.

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/06/13/top-us-military-official-defense-cuts-could-lead-to-war/>

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New York Times

June 15, 2012

Senator Urges Bigger Cuts to Nuclear Arsenal

By THOM SHANKER

Page – A8

WASHINGTON — The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee called on the Obama administration on Thursday to seek cuts in nuclear warheads far beyond the requirements of current treaties.

The chairman, Senator Carl Levin, Democrat of Michigan, said the administration “should consider going far lower” than the warhead caps set by the New Start agreement with Russia, to bring the nation’s arsenal in line with a diminished nuclear threat and tighter military budgets.

“I can’t see any reason for having as large an inventory as we are allowed to have under New Start, in terms of real threat, potential threat,” Mr. Levin said during a breakfast meeting with correspondents.

Under the treaty, signed in 2010, Russia and the United States must reduce their deployed strategic warheads to 1,550 each over a six-year period, down from 2,200 under previous agreements. Thousands more warheads can be kept in storage as spares, and the limits do not apply to the hundreds of short-range nuclear weapons that each side has.

“I am very much open to, and want the administration to feel, that they can think through this issue in terms of what numbers are still required, given the state of the world and where our threats are,” Mr. Levin said.

A grave concern today is that nuclear weapons or their fissile components may fall into the hands of terrorist organizations, Mr. Levin said. “The more weapons that exist out there, the less secure we are, rather than the more secure we are,” he added.

President Obama has set a goal of eventually eliminating all nuclear weapons, but the specific steps and timetable remain aspirational. The administration has nearly completed a review of warhead options for the president’s consideration, ranging from a figure near the New Start limits down to just 300 to 400 warheads. A middle option, with an arsenal of about 1,000 warheads, has been gaining support among some government experts. Administration officials say Mr. Obama has not yet made his choice.

Mr. Levin said he supported, in broad terms, the analysis set forth in a recent study by Gen. James E. Cartwright, the retired vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and former commander of the nation’s nuclear arsenal. That study suggested that effective deterrence could be maintained with an arsenal of 900 strategic warheads.

All three legs of the nation’s strategic nuclear triad — bombers, land-based missiles and submarines — are approaching retirement age. Facing an era of restricted spending, Pentagon planners do not want to invest in replacement weapons that may be retired quickly under any new round of negotiations to limit warheads.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/15/us/politics/senator-levin-urges-bigger-cuts-to-nuclear-arsenal.html>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

OPINION/Analysis

Khamenei Adviser: Islamic Countries Need Nukes

Forghani, who formerly called on Iran to annihilate Israel, argues that Islamic Republic needs nukes to repel US threat.

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By JOANNA PARASZCZUK
June 11, 2012

While Iran continues to deny its nuclear program is anything but peaceful, the Islamic Republic's Revolutionary Guards-linked Fars News published an op-ed on Monday arguing that Islamic countries - and Iran - need a nuclear arsenal.

The op-ed, entitled "Nuclear Confrontation: The Islamic World Needs to have the Atomic Bomb", is written in Persian by Alireza Forghani, an analyst and strategy strategist allied with Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

After citing Khamenei, Forghani writes that the "Islamic world should arise and scream that an atomic bomb is our right, and so smash America's and Israel's dreams." In addition to Fars News, Forghani's essay is also posted on a weekly culture magazine website, Rooikard, and on Forghani's own blog, where for wider impact it has been translated into almost incomprehensible English, Arabic and Russian, apparently using Google's machine translate tool.

Notably, Forghani hit the headlines earlier this year when he published another essay urging Iran to launch a preemptive strike on Israel, in which he laid out a detailed strategy and religious-legal case for destroying the Jewish State. In his latest essay, Forghani, who writes in a colorful and colloquial style, emphasizes that the op-ed contains his personal opinions and is not an instruction to the Islamic Republic.

The essay sets out what Forghani says are the religious foundations for Islamic states to stockpile nuclear weapons, and frequently cites Khamenei as well as his predecessor, Ayatollah Sayyed Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini.

Forghani says that the US is the "main enemy of the Islamic Republic" and blames America for using various methods to threaten Iran.

In his essay, Forghani says that to date, the US is the only country that has used a nuclear weapon, when it bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan at the end of World War II.

In setting out his case for Iran to have a nuclear bomb, Forghani poses the rhetorical question of whether Pakistan should be the only Islamic country to be allowed such a weapon, and why the US only allows its allies to have nuclear bombs.

"The Muslims of Syria and Lebanon are forever concerned that if their governments don't cooperate with Israel via the UN Security Council - America's bastard offspring - they will be condemned and then right afterward they'll have to host illegitimate NATO troops," Forghani opined.

He added: "Iran is one of those countries that the US keeps threatening. We've experienced their failed attacks in the past, and there's no doubt that [America] will attack Iran again since it calls us the 'Axis of Evil.'" The Khamenei-linked strategist warned that the US would likely attack Iran again, this time with a nuclear bomb, "like it did in Japan".

"It is the right of the Islamic people to possess nuclear weapons," Forghani wrote, calling on the Islamic world to declare that right to the US and Israel.

"Yeah, possessing nuclear weapons is a 'right'," he added. "If that right did not exist, Israel would have been destroyed 30 years ago and America wouldn't have flaunted itself in Iraq and Afghanistan." The strategist, whose personal website features a prominent photograph of Khomeini, concludes by referring to Iran's Supreme Leader. "According to Imam Khamenei, if we're attacked we should respond at the same level," he wrote. "And that requires a rapid response at the level of an atomic bomb to [an attack with] an atomic bomb."

<http://www.jpost.com/Features/InTheSpotlight/Article.aspx?id=273465>

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The Australian – Australia
OPINION/National Affairs

The West Plays the Cuckold and Ignores Evidence of Iran's Infidelity

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By Emanuele Ottolenghi, *The Australian*
June 12, 2012

AS negotiations over Iran's nuclear program are about to resume in Moscow next Monday, Western leaders insist that Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has yet to make a decision about whether to build nuclear weapons, despite evidence that Iran has been seeking nuclear weapons ever since the beginning of its nuclear program, almost 30 years ago.

Far from being a sign of prudence, this attitude is akin to the story of a suspicious husband who decides to hire a private eye.

After a few days, the investigator reports back.

"Every day," he tells his client, "a distinguished gentleman comes to your home soon after you leave for work. After a few minutes, the lights go on in your bedroom. He walks in with your wife. She dims the lights. He gets undressed. So does she." Horrified, the husband asks: "what happens next?" "That I cannot say conclusively," says the private eye, "because at that point, Madam always shuts the window curtains." "We can't be sure then," says the husband, shaking his head.

The story is a metaphor for Western refusal to see through Iran's delaying tactics. On February 25, for example, the Director of US National Intelligence, James R. Clapper Jr, testified before the US congress that "Iran is keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons, in part by developing various nuclear capabilities that better position it to produce such weapons, should it choose to do so." He added, "We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons."

Three days later, US Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta repeated this view to congress: "They're developing a nuclear capability (but) our intelligence makes clear that they haven't made the decision to develop a nuclear weapon."

There is no reason to doubt the wisdom and knowledge of well-informed senior leaders and their watchful services - after all, their past record spotting nuclear proliferation early on, from Iraq to Syria, India to Pakistan, and Libya to North Korea, speaks for itself!

And yet, one cannot but notice that against their repeated reassurances that Iran has not made a decision yet, there's Iran's constant pulling of the curtain seconds before its cheating act is caught on camera.

Consider the following:

Iran pursued major elements of its nuclear program in secret for at least 18 years, in violation of its solemn Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations.

Iran procured much of its nuclear technology, including plans to build uranium metal hemispheres that can only be used for a nuclear device, from A. Q. Khan. The Khan network supplied Iran and other countries, such as Libya, with sensitive nuclear technology, including blueprints for a nuclear device. Iran never denied having received any of the above. On the contrary, it confirmed that it possessed the Khan documents.

Iran insists that it intends to enrich uranium to feed several nuclear power plants. Apart from Bushehr, however, work has not started on any other plants. And the uranium needed to fuel the Bushehr plant will come from Russia. But the 60,000 sq m centrifuge field at Natanz, constructed deep underground and protected by layers of reinforced concrete, is capable of producing highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons.

All research centres involved in Iran's nuclear program have links to, or are an integral part of, the Iranian armed forces. This would be both inappropriate and unnecessary if the centres were designed for purely civilian purposes. The Revolutionary Guards play key roles in all matters relating to the nuclear program, while Iran's military industry manufactures the uranium-enriching centrifuges.

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According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, "Iran had used undeclared nuclear material for testing and experimentation in several uranium conversion, enrichment, fabrication and irradiation activities, including the separation of plutonium, at undeclared locations and facilities".

Iran's scientists have conducted experiments with high explosives and special triggers that could work in a nuclear device; they have studied the geometry of implosion of the Trinity Test - America's first plutonium nuclear weapons test - and they have refitted long-range missiles to accommodate a non-conventional payload.

The program includes a heavy-water research reactor, whose structure and dimension suggest a military purpose - the enrichment of plutonium - given that Iran's power stations would ostensibly be fuelled by uranium.

Faced with pressure to open Parchin, a military site, to inspections due to mounting evidence of nuclear weapons-related military tests, Iran is trying to sanitise it, much like Syria did with the rubble of its undeclared nuclear reactor after it was destroyed in an Israeli air raid in 2007. As if all of this was not enough, there is the underground enrichment plant at Fordow, whose "size and configuration", as Barack Obama said in 2009, "is inconsistent with a peaceful program".

These are commendably blunt words. For a married woman to be naked in her bedroom with another man is also "inconsistent" with marital fidelity - but much like her husband, it appears that the US President, after exposing a key component of Iran's drive to produce nuclear weapons, insists that, "we can't be sure".

For those who will not be fully satisfied until Western intelligence produces a photograph of a sign saying "welcome to Iran's clandestine nuclear weapons factory", none of these facts will ultimately matter.

But the argument according to which Iran has not made a decision yet, weighed against the evidence of almost 30 years of dogged, relentless and stubborn pursuit of nuclear weapons, sounds like a betrayed husband choosing not to believe what everyone else already knows.

Emanuele Ottolenghi is a fellow at the Foundation for Defence of Democracies and the author of The Pasdaran: Inside Iran's Revolutionary Guards' Corps.

<http://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/opinion/the-west-plays-the-cuckold-and-ignores-evidence-of-irans-infidelity/story-e6frgd0x-1226391570173>

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/Opinion Europe
June 12, 2012

A Good Deal for Tehran

Compromising with Iranian nuclear negotiators inevitably means compromising on our security.

By DANIEL SCHWAMMENTHAL

After the usual games of brinkmanship and lowering expectations, Tehran just raised hopes again ahead of next week's round of nuclear talks in Moscow. On Monday, in a one-hour phone call with European Union High Representative Catherine Ashton, according to her office, Iranian nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili agreed "to engage" on the proposals previously made by the major powers. Before cheering, it's worth discussing the proposals' risks to Western security.

In exchange for technical support and a few eased trade restrictions, the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany (P5+1) demand that Iran, as a first step, stop enriching uranium to 20%; ship abroad its stockpile of 20% enriched uranium; and close the underground Fordow enrichment facility. Faithfully implemented, such a deal would certainly delay parts of Iran's enrichment program. But it would not stop Iran's march toward nuclear-weapons capabilities, and might even offer certain advantages for its atomic plans.

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Particularly troubling is that Iran would be allowed to keep and even grow its stockpile of 3.5% enriched uranium, only this time with de-facto international approval. That would be a significant political and, in the end, military victory for the regime. It would permit Iran to stay much closer to a bomb than the weapons-grade requirement of 90% enrichment suggests. As Olli Heinonen, the former deputy director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has repeatedly pointed out, mastering low enrichment of 3.5% is 70% of the enrichment effort required for an atomic weapon. With 20% enriched uranium, you are 90% there.

Using IAEA and official Iranian data, the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control estimates that by mid-May, Iran had accumulated enough 3.5% to fuel—if further enriched—not one but at least four nuclear weapons. Iran would probably need three to 12 months to produce one bomb's worth of weapons-grade material from its 3.5% stockpile. According to the Wisconsin Project, Iran has also around 100 kilograms of 20% enriched uranium; about 140 kilograms are needed for a bomb's worth of weapons-grade material.

Critically, the deal would do nothing to disrupt the other elements of the regime's nuclear program. As we know from the IAEA's November report, Iran has pursued every major area of nuclear-weapons development, including triggers, computer simulations of nuclear explosions, ballistic missiles and fitting them with nuclear warheads. Partly controlling Tehran's enrichment activities will not halt Iran's ability to move forward in those other areas.

This is why U.N. Security Council Resolution 1929 of June 9, 2010 demands that Iran suspend all of its uranium enrichment activities, not just those below 20%, and requires full access for IAEA inspectors to suspected nuclear sites and the cessation of any illegal activity. If this was the right way forward in 2010, it certainly is the right way forward today.

Both the U.S. and the EU still agree, saying that the deal on the table is only an interim step until a comprehensive agreement is, they hope, reached. But since the time left to prevent Iran from going nuclear is probably measured in months, not years, any interim proposal at this late stage risks becoming final. Tehran could use the accord to make further progress on all elements for a nuclear weapon other than enriching to 20%. Once ready, Tehran could then break out of the interim deal for good and quickly develop a nuclear weapon.

Much of the media and many governments around the world, meanwhile, would likely hail Iran's acceptance of the proposed bargain as a major breakthrough. As a result, international and domestic pressure would probably rise, in Europe and the U.S., to delay or weaken fresh oil sanctions set to go into force July 1. Any appetite for additional economic and diplomatic measures, if Iran then fails to move to a comprehensive agreement, would probably fade.

The proposed deal threatens to make it more difficult to muster the international pressure required to confront Iran's nuclear program—at precisely the time when the oil embargo is set to tighten the screws further on an Iranian economy already weak from mismanagement, corruption, existing sanctions and falling oil prices. Compromising with Iranian nuclear negotiators inevitably means compromising on our security.

Mr. Schwammenthal is the director of the AJC Transatlantic Institute in Brussels.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303901504577462470699064112.html>

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Wired.com

OPINION/Danger Room

Iran Swears It's Building Nuke Subs

By Robert Beckhusen

June 12, 2012

It can be hard to tell which announcements from Iran are true, which ones are wish-fulfillment, and which ones are simply Iran trying to keep up with the Joneses. Consider that when you hear the news that Iran is planning to build nuclear submarines.



According to Iran's semi-official Fars news agency, Rear Adm. Abbas Zamini said that Iran is "at the initial phases" of this sub-making venture. The news agency also noted the admiral's recognition of Iran's "astonishing progress in developing and acquiring civilian nuclear technology for various power-generation, agricultural and medical purposes," which allows Iran to "think of manufacturing nuclear-fueled submarines." Read: this is still in the conceptual stage. Zamini also said that all countries have the right to manufacture nuclear-powered submarines for peaceful purposes. And Iran wouldn't violate any international treaties by doing so — unlike, say, if it built the bomb.

In other words, it's a military program involving nuclear energy, but with enough distance from a nuclear weapons program to give Tehran freedom to build it.

If Iran can pull it off, that is. It's possible, though it'll be difficult and take a long time. First, Iran will have to miniaturize the country's nuclear technology into a safe and working power plant capable of powering a sub. Second, one does not just install a nuclear plant onto a submarine. Iran will have to build a new sub from scratch around the future sub's nuclear plant.

"I'm sure the Iranians are in the early stages of SSN development, if indeed they're serious about this," Jim Holmes, an associate professor of strategy and policy at the Naval War College, tells Danger Room. (SSN is a naval abbreviation for nuclear-powered attack subs.) "It is relatively easy to install nuclear propulsion in a carrier, chiefly because you have lots of space to work with. By contrast, you in effect construct the submarine hull — a tube — around the nuclear plant. This poses huge problems, simply because the confines of a submarine are very cramped."

They'll also need lots of enriched uranium.

"There's a lot of variation in how 'highly' enriched the fuel needs to be. It depends on the design, the ship type, and the navy," Holmes says. This means Iran would possibly "need to enrich an excess of fuel for their first naval reactor — if only because they're bound to make mistakes and be less efficient than they would be after going through the experimentation and learning process. Not an easy thing with [International Atomic Energy Agency] inspectors occasionally snooping around."

Though Iran may not have to worry. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which limits nuclear weapon states to five countries (not including Iran), also removes IAEA safeguards for nuclear materials used for "non-explosive military purposes such as naval propulsion," according to Cole Harvey of the Monterey Institute of International Studies. This means Iran could theoretically move nuclear materials into its propulsion program, before refashioning the material into "bomb cores in a cheating or breakout scenario," Harvey wrote in an article for the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Iran has no tradition of manufacturing their own subs, aside from around a dozen or more mine-laying miniature vessels. (Iran's three diesel-powered *Kilo* class attack submarines were bought from Russia.) And according to Iranian state media, Iran is only now capable of repairing the *Kilo* on their own. "So, the Iranians can't do what our navy did with the *Nautilus* in the 1950s — i.e., take a working conventional submarine and retrofit a nuclear plant to it," Holmes said, referring to the world's first nuclear-powered submarine.

Iran's navy also operates primarily in the Persian Gulf, which is too shallow for nuclear subs. But nuclear subs could allow Iran to operate more effectively in the Gulf of Oman, as a way to challenge U.S. ships before they reach the Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most vital oil shipping corridors — and before they reach Iran's coast.

"It's not impossible," said Holmes. "But it seems hard to believe this would be a high priority for Tehran considering the financial and engineering barriers to entry. It could be a matter of keeping up with the Joneses. Nuclear-driven warships are a token of great power, and tokens are something aspiring great powers like the Islamic Republic covet."

Iran's conventional submarines are nothing to dismiss either. All it takes is one mine exploding in the Persian Gulf to drive up insurance costs for international shipping, and the risk for U.S. commanders that an armed enemy sub could be anywhere, even right below you, can have an outsized effect compared to surface ships.

That's reason enough for why the U.S. is doubling its Persian Gulf minesweeper fleet and boosting its compliment of MH-53 "Sea Stallion" helicopters, which can hunt mines.



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Iran's announcements also need to be taken with a grain — or grains — of salt. In April, Iran's Fars news agency announced that Iran was continuing with a blockade of the Strait and inspections of all ships passing through it. That would be news to the American aircraft carriers that sail through the Strait on the regular.

Those carriers are nuclear-powered, by the way.

Robert Beckhusen is a Wire magazine contributor and member of the editorial team.

<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2012/06/iran-subs/>

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Arms Control Association
OPINION/Arms Control Now

Dumping the ABM Treaty: Was It Worth It?

In retrospect, the Bush administration should not have fielded its national missile defense system. The technology was not ripe; the threat had not materialized; and the opportunity cost was too high.

June 12, 2012

By Tom Z. Collina

Ten years ago this week, the United States withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, becoming the first nation since World War II to exit a major arms control agreement. At the time, the George W. Bush administration's decision was highly controversial, sidelining a treaty that had guided U.S.-Russian strategic relations for three decades. With the benefit of hindsight we can now ask, was it worth it?

From a national security perspective, the answer is "no." Exiting the treaty, which barred Washington and Moscow from fielding nationwide defenses against long-range or "strategic" ballistic missiles, allowed the Bush administration to field a rudimentary system in late 2004, just before the November election. Today, the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) system has 30 interceptors in Fort Greely, Alaska, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.

The GMD system, however, is widely considered to be ineffective. Despite the billions of dollars spent, the system has not had a successful intercept test since 2008, with two failures in 2010. A recent report by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences found that, "The current GMD system has serious shortcomings, and provides at best a limited, initial defense against a relatively primitive threat."

To fix it, the National Academy suggests a new two-stage Ground-Based Interceptor (GBI) that is smaller and faster (6 km/sec) than the current version and a new "more capable" kill vehicle. In other words, the system needs to be completely redesigned, which would take significant time and money. And even then, no design has yet been proven effective against decoys, which, according to the U.S. intelligence community, would be within the technical reach of any nation that could field a long-range ballistic missile.

The irony is that the necessary development work could have been carried out within the confines of the ABM treaty, which banned deployment but not testing of a land-based system limited to 100 interceptors at one site. The other main missile defense program, the ship-based Standard Missile-3 (SM-3), has yet to be tested against a long-range missile target, and thus would not have violated the ABM treaty either. Other systems that could have violated the ABM treaty, such as the Airborne Laser, have been cancelled.

Moreover, the Bush administration argued that the U.S.-Russian nuclear rivalry was obsolete and the ABM Treaty hindered the development and deployment of missile defense programs to deal with potential missile programs from "rogue" states, such as North Korea and Iran. But, despite fear-mongering by pro-missile defense camps in the late 1990s that both North Korea and Iran could have a long-range missile capability by 2003, neither country has yet fielded such a weapon. During the last 14 years, Pyongyang has conducted four launches of long-range missiles, the last attempt in April; all have failed. Iran has never flight-tested missiles capable of attacking targets significantly beyond the Middle East.

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In retrospect, the Bush administration should not have activated the GMD system. Neither the technology nor the threat was ripe. Instead of withdrawing from the ABM treaty ten years ago, the United States could have stayed in the agreement and continued to test the GMD and SM-3 systems until the technology and threat matured.

Opportunity Costs

The United States and the Soviet Union negotiated the ABM Treaty as part of an effort to control their offensive nuclear arms race. In the treaty preamble, the two sides asserted that effective limits on anti-missile systems would be a “substantial factor in curbing the race in strategic offensive arms.”

The two sides reasoned that limiting defensive systems would reduce the need to build more or new offensive weapons to overcome any defense that the other might deploy. Without effective national defenses, each superpower remained vulnerable, even at reduced or low offensive force holdings, to the other’s nuclear weapons, deterring either side from launching an attack first because it faced a potential retaliatory strike that would assure its own destruction.

While we will never really know how events would have unfolded had the Bush administration stuck with the ABM treaty, we can speculate. The 1993 START II treaty, signed by President George H.W. Bush, never entered into force in large part because of his son’s ABM treaty withdrawal. Both countries ratified START II, but the Russian Duma conditioned its approval on keeping the ABM agreement in place. Russian President Putin announced he would not abide by START II on June 14, 2002, the day after the U.S. unilateral abrogation of the ABM treaty took effect.

START II would have capped U.S. and Russian strategic warheads at 3,500 and banned land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with multiple warheads (MIRVs), widely recognized then and now as the most destabilizing weapons. While the United States is moving away from ICBMs with multiple warheads anyway, Russia now plans to keep its heavily MIRVed missiles.

Moreover, U.S. withdrawal has contributed greatly to Russia’s current distrust of Washington’s intentions regarding its missile defense plans in Europe. As things stand now, U.S.-Russian talks are at a standstill. NATO announced an “interim capability” for its U.S.-built SM-3 interceptor system in Chicago, while Moscow boycotted the summit and has threatened to attack components of NATO’s missile interceptor system, which Moscow fears could become increasingly capable in the years ahead. Future variants of the SM-3 interceptor could be deployed that would be capable of hitting long-range ballistic missiles if such a threat were to emerge.

Russia would presumably be less suspicious of U.S. missile defense plans in Europe today if the ABM treaty were in place, making it more likely that the two sides could agree on missile defense cooperation and the next round of U.S.-Russian strategic weapons reductions, as well as common sense accounting and reductions of the remaining non-strategic (a.k.a. tactical) nuclear weapons left over in Russia and Europe from the Cold War.

For its part, China has responded to U.S. strategic missile defense deployments by modernizing its strategic forces, increasing their mobility and number while improving the survivability of its re-entry vehicles.

Politics Trumps Technology

Despite these strategic costs, many of which were predicted at the time, President George W. Bush chose politics over technology when he decided to dump the ABM treaty in 2002 and announced he would field an interceptor system in 2004. President Bush had made a campaign promise to deploy a national missile defense system, and the ABM treaty stood in the way.

As former Nixon administration legal advisor for ABM treaty negotiations John Rhinelander put it in 2001: “When I was involved in the 1970s, the difficult issues were based 60 percent on technology and 40 percent on politics. At present, key issues are decided 100 percent on politics and zero percent on technology.”

By fielding the GMD system, the United States did not gain any meaningful ability to confidently intercept long-range missiles. But the Bush administration did succeed in allowing Russia to keep its most destabilizing weapons,



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encouraging Chinese nuclear modernization, and complicating current U.S.-Russian arms reduction efforts and missile defense cooperation talks.

The Bush administration's politically-motivated abrogation of the ABM treaty was a strategic mistake, and its consequences are still with us today.

Tom Z. Collina has over 20 years of Washington DC experience in arms control and global security issues. He has held senior leadership positions such as Executive Director of the Institute for Science and International Security, Director of Global Security at the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Senior Research Analyst at the Federation of American Scientists.

<http://armscontrolnow.org/2012/06/12/2969/#more-2969>

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National Public Radio (NPR)

OPINION/Analysis

Iran's Nuclear Fatwa: A Policy Or A Ploy?

By Mike Shuster

June 14, 2012

It's been an article of faith for nearly a decade that Iran's supreme leader issued a fatwa — a religious edict — that nuclear weapons are a sin and Iran has no intention of acquiring them.

President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently made references to this religious commitment from Iran's leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

But with the next round of nuclear talks scheduled to resume on Monday in Moscow, analysts point out that there are serious questions about the nature of the fatwa and whether it's as persuasive as the Iranians would like the world to think.

As far as anyone knows, the fatwa was never written down.

The first time Khamenei proclaimed that nuclear weapons were un-Islamic was in 2003. He has repeated this numerous times since then, notes Muhammad Sahimi, who writes for the website Tehran Bureau.

"Khamenei has been consistently saying at least for the past seven or eight years that the production of nuclear weapons is against Islamic teaching and therefore Iran will never pursue such a path," Sahimi says.

Fatwas 'Changeable By Nature'

In the two rounds of international talks so far this year — Iran on one side, the U.S., Europe, Russia and China on the other — Iranian officials have argued that the fatwa should persuade the world that Iran has no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons.

But this fatwa — or any fatwa — is not inscribed in stone, says Mehdi Khalaji of the Washington Institute on Near East Policy.

"Fatwa is changeable by nature and the Shia theology gives this freedom to be flexible and go for the most updated interpretation and circumstances," Khalaji says.

Iran's supreme leader understands, says Sahimi, that circumstances in the world are always changing and thus fatwas must face scrutiny.

"Once it is issued, it doesn't imply that it can never be changed," he says. "The conditions can change and therefore a new fatwa can be issued that would basically nullify the previous one regarding the same issue."

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There are other concepts in Shiite Islam — lying to protect the life of Muslims or expediency to guard the interests of the state — that Iranian leaders could cite to reverse a fatwa.

Both Obama and Clinton have made reference to the nuclear fatwa. Obama sent a verbal message to Iran's supreme leader earlier this year that acknowledged it, and Clinton mentioned it earlier this month.

"They have also made it clear in many statements," Clinton said, "most recently in the fatwa that was issued by the supreme leader that they don't seek nuclear weapons, that they have no such program."

Ultimately A Political, Not Religious, Issue

Both Obama and Clinton were obviously trying to use the supreme leader's words to make progress at the bargaining table, which is a smart approach, according to Khalaji.

"It's very wise for the administration to raise the political cost of producing a nuclear bomb," he says.

In Khalaji's view, the Iranians' repeated references to the nuclear fatwa make it harder and harder for them to consider reversing course on the bomb.

But Nader Hashemi, an Iran analyst at the University of Denver, cautions that the supreme leader is first and foremost a political leader, despite the influence of religion in Iran, even if the fatwa cites religion as the basis for its authority.

"One of the problems here is this assumption that Iranian foreign policy is somehow driven, motivated and directed by a religious, ideological agenda," Hashemi says, "thus elevating the importance of this fatwa as a way of understanding the inner workings of the Iranian regime."

Hashemi argues that just like all other political leaders around the world, the supreme leader's decisions and utterances are fundamentally political.

"Iranian foreign policy, specifically on the nuclear question, is not motivated by religious ideology but by reasons of state and by the desire of this regime to survive," he says.

Diplomats should keep that in mind, Hashemi says, when they sit across the table from the Iranians once more next week in Moscow.

Mike Shuster is an award-winning diplomatic correspondent and roving foreign correspondent for NPR News. He covers issues of nuclear non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and the Pacific Rim.

<http://www.npr.org/2012/06/14/154915222/irans-nuclear-fatwa-a-policy-or-a-ploy>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency
OPINION/Valdai Club

Iran's Nuclear Program: Far from Peaceful Atoms

14 June 2012

By KHRAMCHIKHIN, Alexander

Since 2003, the P5+1 group of international mediators (Russia, UK, China, U.S., France and Germany) and the IAEA have been trying to convince Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment program, which, they fear, could undermine the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Talks on Iran's "peaceful" nuclear program have lately become a fixture of global politics, with the latest round scheduled for June 18 and 19 in Moscow.

It's fairly clear that Iran has agreed to talk with the P5+1 and put forward various initiatives as a means to buy time to proceed with its nuclear program. Likewise, there is little doubt that the program in question is both civilian and military, as indicated by Iran's accelerated development of missiles that would make no sense militarily as a vehicle for

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conventional arms. Tehran needs nuclear weapons in order to avert a U.S.-Israeli attack, to boost its influence and prestige in the Islamic world and as an effective form of leverage over Arab countries.

By all appearances, Tehran views Moscow as a “useful idiot” that can help it drag out talks for as long as possible. Russia, too, needs Iran as a deterrent against its enemies in the region, the Arab monarchies led by Saudi Arabia. China, the main purchaser of Iranian oil, seems to be covertly facilitating the Iranian missile and nuclear program, or at least mediating between Iran and the DPRK in this matter.

Where the Western nations are concerned, they don’t want an attack on Iran, as this would send oil prices skyrocketing and cause a surge in terrorism. Apart from that, Iran is effectively holding hostage the entire U.S.-NATO contingent in Afghanistan, an anti-insurgent force incapable of waging war against the large, if somewhat outmoded, Iranian army. The Europeans are basically unprepared for any kind of war against Iran. The U.S. is certainly capable of launching a large-scale air operation in order to destroy Iran’s military and nuclear industry and its main military facilities. But an operation of this sort will be an extremely costly affair with unpredictable political and economic consequences. Israel would have attacked Iran long ago, but it has very limited military capabilities, having no strategic bombers or long-range cruise missiles and very few tanker aircraft. Besides, Israel is unwilling to risk even a single Israeli pilot ending up in Iranian captivity.

For these reasons and more, everyone stands to benefit from talks at this point. The negotiations will continue until Iran makes a breakthrough in its quest for a nuclear weapon. If some incontrovertible evidence that Iran is close to acquiring a nuclear weapon surfaces before this point, Israel appears likely to strike Iran without asking for Washington’s blessing and regardless of its own limited capabilities. America will have no choice then but to join the strike.

Moscow will, until the last moment, foster the illusion that it can actually influence Tehran’s position and that Iran is keen to know its views. To be sure, this is an illusion and nothing more. No peaceful compromise is possible as this would contradict Tehran’s understanding of its interests. And the liberalization or downfall of the current Iranian regime seems all but impossible at this point.

Alexander Khranchikhin is Deputy Director, Institute for Political and Military Analysis.

The Valdai Discussion Club provides a global forum for the world’s leading and best-informed experts on Russia to engage in a sustained dialogue about the country’s political, economic, social and cultural development.

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