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Articles & Other Documents:

**Featured Article: [Israel Says Clock Ticking After Iran Talks Fail](#)**

1. [N. Korea Vows To Bolster Up Nuke Deterrence](#)
2. [S. Korean, Russian Envoys To Discuss N. Korea's Nuclear Programs](#)
3. [Chinese Shipper May Have Ties To N. Korean Arms Dealer](#)
4. [Iran Attacks World Powers' 'Dishonesty'](#)
5. [Iran Gloats Stuxnet 'Failed' To Stop Nuclear Work, As Virus Reportedly Stops Operating](#)
6. [Israel Says Clock Ticking After Iran Talks Fail](#)
7. [Putin: Israel, Russia Strive For Peaceful Resolution To Iran Nuclear Issue](#)
8. [Egypt's Mursi Keen To Renew Long-Severed Iran Ties](#)
9. [Russian Arms Ship To Make Second Attempt To Deliver Helicopters To Syria](#)
10. [Living With Nuclear Outliers](#)
11. [How Indian Navy is Expanding and Modernising](#)
12. [List of Unexploded Arms in Libya Is Seen as Limited](#)
13. [Rift Between U.S., Pakistan Only Widens](#)
14. [Turkey Threatens Syria With Retaliation Over Jet](#)
15. [Syria To Get More Arms From Russia Soon: Think-Tank](#)

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RTT News

## **N. Korea Vows To Bolster Up Nuke Deterrence**

June 25, 2012

North Korea on Monday denounced the U.S.-South Korea joint military drills as "severe provocation," and vowed to bolster its nuclear deterrence for self-defense.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman issued a statement slamming the largest-ever U.S.-South Korea joint drill on Friday south of the demilitarized zone on Friday, during which shots were allegedly fired at the North Korean flag.

"It is an extremely grave military action and politically-motivated provocation to fire live bullets and shells at the flag of a sovereign state without a declaration of war," the statement carried by the official KCNA news agency said.

The drill once again proved that the commitment which the U.S. made in the February North Korea-U.S. Agreement that they would not antagonize the Communist State was a sheer lie, and the recent hostile policy toward Pyongyang had gone beyond the tolerable limit, the statement said.

The spokesman warned that North Korea would further bolster up its nuclear deterrent for self-defense as long as the U.S. persisted in its hostile policy toward it.

South Korea and the United States on Friday staged their largest ever live-fire drill aimed at checking solid military preparedness and war-fighting capabilities, according to the South Korea's Defense Ministry.

<http://www.rttnews.com/1911318/n-korea-vows-to-bolster-up-nuke-deterrence.aspx?type=gn&Node=B1>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

YONYAP

## **S. Korean, Russian envoys to discuss N. Korea's nuclear programs**

June 25, 2012

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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Senior South Korean and Russian diplomats will hold one-day talks this week in Seoul to discuss possible ways to revive the long-stalled six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons programs, a Seoul official said Monday.

Russia's deputy chief envoy to the six-party talks, Grigory Logvinov, was scheduled to arrive in Seoul later Monday for a three-day visit and hold talks with South Korea's top nuclear envoy Lim Sung-nam on Tuesday, the senior official at Seoul's foreign ministry said.

"During the talks, Ambassador Logvinov and Lim plan to hold in-depth discussions about North Korea's nuclear issue and other overall matters with regard to North Korea," the official said on the condition of anonymity.

They will also discuss "the current state of the Korean Peninsula after North Korea's failed rocket launch and ways to move forward on the North's nuclear issue," the official said.

The visit by Logvinov to Seoul also coincides with the Russian government's move to write off 90 percent of North Korea's Soviet-era debt of US\$11 billion.

Diplomatic efforts to resume the six-party talks, involving the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan, were frozen in April when North Korea defiantly launched a long-range rocket.

The North's failed launch ended a possible deal with the U.S. in which Pyongyang agreed to suspend its nuclear and missile activities in return for food aid by Washington. Such conditions had been considered necessary steps to reopen the six-party talks.

The six-party talks aimed at persuading North Korea to give up its nuclear ambition have been stalled since late 2008. Pyongyang has conducted two nuclear tests, in 2006 and 2009.

In Seoul, the Russian envoy is also expected to discuss an ambitious plan to build a natural-gas pipeline from Russia to South Korea via North Korea, the ministry official said.

The gas project, which has been discussed for about 20 years but never has materialized due in part to security tensions, gained momentum after late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il expressed his willingness to permit the envisioned pipeline to go through the nation during summit talks with then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in August last year.

Kim died of a heart attack last December, and his youngest son, Jong-un, took the helm of North Korea.



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<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/06/25/69/0301000000AEN20120625001300315F.HTML>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Asahi Shimbun

## **Chinese shipper may have ties to N. Korean arms dealer**

By YOSHIHIRO MAKINO

June 25, 2012

A Chinese shipping company that exported to North Korea four large vehicles capable of transporting ballistic missiles last year is suspected of having links to a North Korean arms dealer, sources in the Japanese government said.

The Dalian Qingsong company, based in Dalian, operated several cargo vessels with similar features to the transport ship between China and North Korea, the sources said.

The Japanese government is gathering information on the Chinese shipping company. A U.N. Security Council resolution prohibits the sale of weapons systems to Pyongyang, and Beijing maintains that it has not violated the mandate.

China says that the four vehicles were exported for the civilian purpose of transporting large pieces of lumber, although a detailed export document, seized by the Japanese government, show that they were developed for transporting ballistic missiles.

According to the sources, the North Korean arms dealer could have been involved in the Chinese company's exports from the beginning.

The Chinese shipper operates the Harmony Wish, a 1,999-ton cargo ship that transported the four vehicles to North Korea in August, and several other freight vessels that are similar in size and name.

In addition, the ships are registered with Cambodia, although the crew of each cargo carrier consisted of all Chinese except for a couple of Myanmar crew members.

Each vessel made around 10 calls a year at ports in North Korea, including Wonsan, Chongjin and Nampo, over the past five years.

The name of the Chinese company is very similar to the Qingsong Group, a North Korean arms dealer, one of the targets of economic sanctions announced in May by the U.N. Security Council's North Korea sanctions committee over Pyongyang's nuclear program.

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Qingsong Group was established by 2008 to take over the business of North Korea's Korea Mining Development Trading Corp., which deals in weapons and military equipment, after it was slapped with U.S. sanctions.

Qingsong Group, which is believed to be under the control of North Korea's intelligence services, has branches in Italy, Australia, Malaysia and China.

No details about the Dalian Qingsong shipping company are available, and it has no website.

China refuses to accept any on-site inspection by a panel of experts under the U.N. Security Council sanctions committee.

<http://ajw.asahi.com/article/asia/china/AJ201206250007>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Associated Press

## **Iran attacks world powers' 'dishonesty'**

June 24, 2012

Iran's leaders have accused the West of "enmity" and "bullying" policies after recent nuclear talks with world powers in Moscow ended without progress, according to media reports Thursday.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the sidelines of "Rio+20" U.N. conference on sustainable development in Brazil, and called for the world powers to "return to the legal framework" in talks with Tehran on Iran's controversial nuclear program.

"Arrogant and domination-seeking parties should avoid enmity toward the Iranian nation,"

Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by Iranian state TV. Ahmadinejad defended Iran, saying it had offered "legal, constructive, fair and friendly proposals," during the Moscow talks.

Two days of intensive discussion in Moscow between Tehran and six world powers ended Tuesday, with both sides agreeing only to continue low-level talks in early July. The six \_ the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council plus Germany \_ want Iran to stop enriching uranium to a level that is just steps away from its use as the core of nuclear warheads.

Iran says it does not seek atomic weapons and that it is enriching uranium only to make reactor fuel or medical isotopes, insisting it has a right to enrich under international law.

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With neither side ready to accept what the other brought to the table in the form of inducements to compromise, the talks ended with no headway. The lack of progress in Moscow is sure to be seen by critics as a sign that talks are ineffective in persuading Iran to curb enrichment.

Meanwhile, the chief of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog said Thursday the agency is still trying to gain access to a suspected nuclear testing site at an Iranian military base southwest of Tehran and that dialogue with the Iranians on that issue is ongoing.

The activities at the Parchin military base are a recent concern of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The IAEA last month showed member nations of its board satellite images indicating a cleanup of the site but Iran denied it was trying to remove evidence of nuclear testing. It insists

Parchin is a conventional military base and has turned down IAEA requests to visit the site. Yukiya Amano, director general of the Vienna-based IAEA, said the agency is aware that a cleanup at the base is ongoing, "and we have concerns that this will hamper our verification activities."

In Tehran, influential cleric and former president, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, said world powers showed "bullying" policies and "dishonesty" in Moscow talks.

"The talks proved that the Western side is (not interested) in interaction and they are not honest. They have based their policy on bullying alone," Rafsanjani was quoted by several Iranian dailies.

He also urged Iranian unity to thwart its enemies.

Rafsanjani heads an advisory body to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader, who has final say on all state matters.

Along with recognition of the right to enrich, Iran seeks relief from growing U.N. and other sanctions, including spreading international embargoes on its oil sales. That is something the six world powers are ready to grant only if Tehran agrees to enrichment suspension and related measures.

Iranian state TV ran a commentary blaming the failure of the Moscow talks on the West's refusal to hold a round of preparatory technical discussions between experts beforehand. Iran says it repeatedly asked the West for these preparatory discussions but received no answer.

The newscaster said the West hoped Iran would concede its "nuclear rights" to avoid tightening U.S. and EU sanctions. An EU embargo on Iranian crude starts July 1.

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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Ali Reza Khamesian, an analyst in Tehran, believes the lack of any outcome from the Moscow talks has convinced Iranian leaders that "the West is trying to pin Iran in the corner of the ring in heavy fighting." Khamesian says that Iran sees the talks as "fruitless" but will continue them to lessen "threats."

Iran's arch-foe Israel says Iran is stretching out the talks to move closer to the ability to make weapons, and it has threatened to attack the Islamic Republic as a last resort. Israel may argue that the negotiations are turning into "talks about talks" \_ something the U.S. and its allies have vowed they will not tolerate.

Earlier this month Khamenei warned any Israeli attack would be answered with a "lightning" response by the Islamic Republic and suggested Iran's nuclear program cannot be curtailed by Western sanctions.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2012/jun/24/iran-nuclear>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Hill

## **Iran gloats Stuxnet 'failed' to stop nuclear work, as virus reportedly stops operating**

By Jeremy Herb

June 25, 2012

With the computer virus Stuxnet, which was designed to infiltrate and destroy Iran's nuclear centrifuges, reportedly no longer operating as of midnight Sunday, Tehran is declaring that the cyber effort "failed" to derail its nuclear program.

The software's creators designed it to shut down after Sunday the *Christian Science Monitor* first reported and Iran's semi-official news organization, FARS News Agency, is celebrating the news by claiming that Iran's nuclear program is still going strong.

"At one second past midnight Sunday, the United States' most powerful known cyber weapon will cease to operate after it failed to clandestinely infiltrate and then wreck Iran's nuclear fuel enrichment program," FARS wrote in a story with a headline declaring "no major breakthrough" in deterring Iran's nuclear work.

The White House declined to comment on the *Monitor* report on Stuxnet's alleged termination.

The rest of the FARS story reprints the story from the *Monitor*, but highlights that Iran's nuclear program lives on as Stuxnet dies.

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The virus was linked to both the United States and Israel in a *New York Times* report last month that said the Stuxnet infiltration of Iran's nuclear facility was a cyberattack launched by the United States.

The virus did covertly destroy Iranian centrifuges, but it was discovered in 2010 and ultimately did not completely halt Iran's nuclear activity at its Natanz facility. The virus was put onto the facility's offline computer network via thumb drive, the *Times* reported, but it went public after it got onto the Internet.

The *Monitor* reports that the virus has a self-destruct mechanism, with a "few lines of code" that will "order the program to stop working altogether in a pre-programmed, belated and ultimately unsuccessful bid to prevent it from being detected and deciphered."

At this point, nearly all of the computers that had been infected with the virus have had their software patched and cleaned up, according to the *Monitor*.

Stuxnet was also linked to the Flame virus last week, with both being designed by Israel and the United States for use against Iran, according to the *Washington Post*.

The disclosure of U.S. involvement in the cyberattack — believed to be the first use of offensive cyberweapons by the United States — has drawn outrage in Washington over the leaked information.

Congress has vowed to investigate and write new laws to curb intelligence leaks in the wake of the Stuxnet story, and the FBI and Justice Department are investigating the Stuxnet leak as well as the leak of a double agent infiltrating al Qaeda in Yemen.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/defcon-hill/operations/234529-iran-gloats-as-stuxnet-reportedly-stops-operating>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Reuters

## **Israel says clock ticking after Iran talks fail**

By Jeffrey Heller

June 21, 2012

With diplomacy at an impasse, there is satisfaction among Israeli leaders at what they see as a tough line taken by the West in the negotiations on curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, Israeli political sources said on Thursday.

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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A member of the British negotiating team quietly visited Israel on Wednesday to brief officials on this week's Moscow talks, the sources said, and new U.S. and European sanctions against Iran are due to come into effect in the next two weeks.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak stuck closely to his stated line, without offering any new sense of urgency, when asked by the Washington Post how much more time Israel can allow for diplomacy to work.

"I don't want to pretend to set timelines for the world," he said, "but we have said loud and clear that it cannot be a matter of weeks but it (also) cannot be a matter of years".

Preparations for any strike against Iran, which Israel and Western powers suspect is trying to develop the capacity to build a nuclear bomb, are closely guarded in Israel.

But Barak said that even in the United States, which has counseled against jumping the gun while a diplomatic drive with Iran is under way, "at least on a technical level, there are a lot of preparations".

Iran and six world powers - the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany - failed to secure a breakthrough in Moscow at what was the third round of the latest diplomatic initiative, and set no date for more political talks.

## DEMANDS

Last month, and again in Moscow, the powers asked Iran to close the Fordow underground facility where uranium is being enriched to 20-percent fissile purity, and to ship any stockpile out of the country, demands that come close to Israel's.

Israeli Vice Premier Shaul Mofaz held talks with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington on Wednesday.

"I explained that after the failure of the ... talks in Moscow, the West must impose a full oil embargo on Iran and tough financial sanctions," Mofaz said on his Facebook page, adding: "In parallel, preparations for other options must continue."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has not commented publicly on the Moscow talks. He had complained that the months of talking had given Iran a "freebie" to continue enrichment.

The right-wing leader has been cautioned by former Israeli security chiefs against ordering attacks on Iran, amid skepticism about how effective Israeli air strikes would be.

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Iran, which has called for Israel's demise, says its nuclear program is designed for energy production alone. Israel, widely believed to be the Middle East's only nuclear power, says a nuclear-armed Iran would pose a threat to its existence.

Barak, in the newspaper interview, held out little hope that diplomacy would persuade Iran to bend.

"By the third meeting in a negotiation, you know whether the other party intends to reach an agreement or, alternatively, whether he is trying to play for time to avoid a decision," he said.

"It seems to me that the Iranians keep defying and deceiving the whole world. But it's up to the participants in the negotiations to reach this conclusion. We cannot afford to spend another three rounds of this nature just to allow the Iranians to keep maneuvering."

Weighing into the debate, Israeli President Shimon Peres told an audience in Jerusalem: "There's not much time. If the Iranians ... don't heed the warnings, the calls and the economic sanctions, the world will look to other options."

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/21/us-nuclear-iran-israel-idUSBRE85K00A20120621?feedType=RSS&feedName=topNews&rpc=71>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

HAARETZ

## **Putin: Israel, Russia strive for peaceful resolution to Iran nuclear issue**

By Eli Shvidler

June 25, 2012

Israel and Russia will continue consultations geared at resolving the nuclear standoff with Iran through peaceful means, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in a joint press conference with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, adding that Israel-Russia relations are based on a "deep friendship."

Putin arrived in Israel earlier in the day, in what Israeli officials hoped would be an opportunity to recruit Russia's government to join their efforts against Iran's nuclear program.

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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Speaking following a lengthy meeting between Netanyahu and Putin later in the day, the Russian leader said that he felt he was "among friends," adding that the ties between Israel and Russia were ones of "deep friendship, not something that will pass, and that will endure in the future."

"We held a thorough discussion of the issue of Iran's nuclear program, and, even in the current situation, I estimate that we will continue to consult and work together, and that these issues will be resolved peacefully for the good of all sides," Putin added.

Netanyahu spoke at the press conference for the need to restart peace talks with the Palestinians, saying: "One of two things can happen. Either [Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas comes over here, or I go over there. Either way, we must start talking."

Alluding to the standoff with Iran, Netanyahu said at the joint press conference that there "are those who wish to deny the Holocaust, and there are those who erect monuments to honor the actions of the Red Army, which saved Jews in the Holocaust."

The premier was referring to a visit by Putin to the city of Netanya earlier Monday, where he inaugurated a new memorial to the Red Army.

During a speech given at the memorial, Putin called the Holocaust "the darkest, most shameful chapter in human history," and praised the Soviet Army for being the one to "smash the head of the Nazi monster, allowing all nations to survive."

Putin added that he was "very excited" and thanked Netanyahu, Peres and "all of his Israeli friends" for the establishment of the monument.

President Shimon Peres was the main Israeli representative at the dedication ceremony. He praised the Soviet Union's actions against Nazi Germany, as well as the current Russian government's efforts to promote peace between Israel and the Palestinians

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/putin-israel-russia-strive-for-peaceful-resolution-to-iran-nuclear-issue-1.443847>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Kuwait Times

## **Egypt's Mursi keen to renew long-severed Iran ties**

June 25, 2012

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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DUBAI: Egypt's Islamist President-elect Mohamed Mursi voiced interest in restoring long-severed ties with Tehran to create a strategic "balance" in the region, in an interview published yesterday with Iran's Fars news agency. Mursi's comments are likely to unsettle Western powers as they try to isolate Iran over its disputed nuclear program, which they suspect it is using to develop a nuclear weapons capability. Tehran denies this.

Since former Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak was toppled by a popular uprising last year, both countries have signaled their interest in renewing ties which were severed more than 30 years ago.

"We must restore normal relations with Iran based on shared interests, and expand areas of political coordination and economic cooperation because this will create a balance of pressure in the region," Mursi was quoted as saying in a transcript of the interview.

Fars said it had spoken to Mursi a few hours before Sunday's announcement that declared him the winner of Egypt's presidential election. Asked to comment on reports that, if elected, his first state visit would be to Riyadh, Mursi said: "I didn't say such a thing and until now my first international visits following my victory in the elections have not been determined." Rivalry between Sunni

Muslim Saudi Arabia and Shiite Iran has been intensified by the "Arab Spring" revolts, which have redrawn the political map of the Middle East and left the powerful Gulf neighbours vying for influence.

Iran hailed Mursi's victory over former general Ahmed Shafik in Egypt's first free presidential election as a "splendid vision of democracy" that marked the country's "Islamic Awakening".

Western diplomats say in reality Egypt has little real appetite to significantly change relations with Iran, given the substantial issues the new president already has to face in cementing relations with regional and global powers. "Iran is hoping for Egypt to become a deterrent against an Israeli attack as well as a regional player that Iran can use as a potential counter-balance against Turkey and Saudi Arabia," said a diplomat based in Tehran. "Egypt, at least under present circumstances, would side with either of these against Iran."

## CAMP DAVID REVIEW

In contrast to comments Mursi made in a televised address after his victory was announced on Sunday, Fars news quoted him as saying Egypt's Camp David peace accord with Israel "will be reviewed", without elaborating. The peace treaty remains a lynchpin of US Middle East policy and, despite its unpopularity with many Egyptians, was staunchly upheld by Mubarak, who also suppressed the Muslim Brotherhood movement to which Mursi belongs.

The Sunni Brotherhood, whose Palestinian offshoot Hamas rules the Gaza Strip, is vehemently critical of Israel, which has watched the rise of Islamists and political upheaval in neighboring Egypt



with growing concern. Egypt's formal recognition of Israel and Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution led in 1980 to the breakdown of diplomatic relations between the two countries, among the biggest and most influential in the Middle East. They currently have reciprocal interest sections, but not at ambassadorial level.

Egypt's foreign minister said last year that Cairo was ready to re-establish diplomatic relations with Iran, which has hailed most Arab Spring uprisings as anti-Western rebellions inspired by its own Islamic Revolution. But Iran has steadfastly supported Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad, Tehran's closest Arab ally, who is grappling with a revolt against his rule, and at home has continued to reject demands for reform, which spilled onto the street following the disputed re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2009

<http://news.kuwaittimes.net/2012/06/25/egypts-mursi-keen-to-renew-long-severed-iran-ties>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Telegraph

## **Russian arms ship to make second attempt to deliver helicopters to Syria**

By Adrian Blomfield

June 24, 2012

The MV Alaed, which is carrying helicopter gunships and air defence systems on board, will put to sea within days, military officials in Moscow were quoted as saying.

The vessel, sailing under the flag of the Caribbean island of Curacao, returned to Murmansk after its insurance cover was withdrawn at the behest of the Government. Russia said it feared that British forces would attempt to storm the ship, a step David Cameron is said to have contemplated.

Throwing down an unmistakable challenge to the Prime Minister, Moscow said the Alaed would sail again, this time under a Russian flag - meaning that any attempt to board it could trigger an international incident. It will also be accompanied by at least one other vessel, although not a military one.

Russia says the combat helicopters on board were ones that it had repaired and insists that it is only supplying Syria with weapons that can be used to defend itself from foreign aggression.

The efficiency of Russian-made air defence systems was potently displayed on Friday, when Syria shot down a Turkish fighter jet. The example could serve to deter the West from risking its own aircraft in a military intervention, analysts said.



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Calls for international action have grown as the violence in Syria has worsened. Nearly 700 people were killed last week, according to pro-opposition human rights groups in Syria, making it one of the bloodiest since the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad began 15 months ago. More than 60 are said to have died on Sunday.

More than 150 government soldiers are thought to be among the dead. In a sign that morale in the armed forces is suffering, the Syrian opposition reported the defection of more than 30 soldiers after a rebel attack on an artillery battalion near the city of Aleppo. The defectors took their weapons with them, they said.

Last week, a pilot in the Syrian Air Force -- considered the wing of the armed forces most loyal to Mr Assad -- defected after flying his fighter jet to Jordan.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/9352852/Russian-arms-ship-to-make-second-attempt-to-deliver-helicopters-to-Syria.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times (Opinion)

## **Living With Nuclear Outliers**

By Robert S. Litwak

June 25, 2012

To President George W. Bush, North Korea and Iran were “rogue states,” suggesting that their regimes were irredeemable. President Obama changed that to “outliers,” a label that implied the path was open for Pyongyang and Tehran to rejoin the community of nations if they complied with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Their choice was integration or isolation.

Therein lies the dilemma. The regimes in North Korea and Iran perceive integration into an international community whose dominant power is the United States as a threat to their survival. Integration might yield short-term regime-sustaining economic benefits, but it carries the risk of regime-terminating political contagion.

The nuclear issue is thus a proxy for the fundamental debate by these regimes over what type of relationship they are prepared to have with the United States and the rest of the world.

In dealing with the nuclear defiance in Iran and North Korea, the Bush administration was caught between the precedents set in Iraq, where it had gone to war to change the regime, and Libya, where it had signaled Muammar el-Qaddafi that if he gave up his unconventional arsenal, Washington would eschew the objective of regime change. With Iran and North Korea, Washington

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could not resort to direct military intervention, and it was unwilling to offer the assurance that sealed the Libya deal.

By contrast, in his inaugural address, Mr. Obama offered North Korea and Iran to “extend a hand if you are willing to unclench your fist.” His administration jettisoned regime change rhetoric and gave North Korea and Iran a choice: abide by international norms and gain the economic benefits of greater integration with the international community, or face isolation and punitive consequences.

The outliers rebuffed the extended hand. Pyongyang and Tehran seized on NATO’s 2011 intervention in Libya as evidence that Qaddafi had been duped by the West. Essentially, by taking down regimes in Iraq and Libya, Washington priced itself out of the security assurance market in Pyongyang and Tehran.

Both North Korea and Iran are undergoing potentially significant societal developments. The problem for the United States is that the nuclear crises are immediate, whereas the prospects for political evolution in the two countries are uncertain.

All the options for dealing with the outliers may remain on the table, but none are good. Military action? In North Korea, there is no longer a target; Pyongyang separated and removed the plutonium from its Yongbyon reactor site and now has a small nuclear arsenal. Attacking Iran would at best set back, but not end the nuclear program.

Moreover, the case for a military strike on Iran’s nuclear program rests on an assessment that the theocratic regime is undeterrable and apocalyptic. But that presumption runs contrary to National Intelligence Estimates, which have characterized the clerical regime’s decision-making as being “guided by a cost-benefit approach.” And U.S. intelligence analysts maintain that Iran has not yet decided to cross the threshold from a potential capability to an actual weapon.

In any case, the reality is that the window for full rollback of Iran’s and North Korea’s nuclear capabilities has closed. So the pragmatic path for Washington is to remain open to diplomacy, backed by the coercive pressure of sanctions, to establish limits on their nuclear programs. That would primarily entail curbing their acquisition of additional fissile material.

In effect, that would amount to containment in the classic meaning of that term as devised by George Kennan for dealing with the Soviet Union after World War II. In effect, that is what Mr. Obama is already doing, and will continue doing so long as Iran defers weaponization and North Korea is kept in check.

The trouble is that “containment” as a strategy is increasingly denounced by hard-liners in the U.S. policy debate as tantamount to appeasement, reducing the administration’s political space.

“I do not have a policy of containment; I have a policy to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon,” Mr. Obama declared in a speech to Aipac, the pro-Israel lobby, in March. Mr. Obama has



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also argued that the Tehran regime, under the pressure of crushing sanctions, can make a “strategic calculation” to defer a decision to weaponize.

This is, in effect, containment, and it is the only real option the president has. But his rejection of the term underscores the difficult political waters he is treading. Critics of the administration argue that allowing Iran to retain even a latent capability to acquire nuclear weapons constitutes an unacceptable threat.

Yet containment, in the classic sense, is the only real option the president has.

So long as Iran and North Korea see integration into the international community as a threat to their survival, and so long as they lack any long-term alternative for their economies, they will continue to use their nuclear programs and the ambiguities they generate as a proxy for relations with the world.

Washington, for its part, does not have the option of changing their regimes or compelling their integration by force. And there is no telling how long their regimes will last.

But they will not last forever. So the only real option open to Washington is to maintain stern sanctions and wait for internal forces in the outliers to do their work. In other words, an updated, retooled version of Kennan’s old strategy. It is not a great choice, but it is the best of a bad set of options.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/26/opinion/living-with-nuclear-outliers.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

NDTV

## **How Indian Navy is Expanding and Modernising**

By Nitin GokHale

June 25, 2012

New Delhi: Suddenly, the Indian Navy is the service to watch out for.

Quietly, it has gathered pace in acquisition and modernisation together. Currently it is in the middle of a planned expansion designed to cater to emerging maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region and beyond.

Two weeks ago, Vikramaditya, formerly Admiral Gorshkov, a 45,000-tonne displacement aircraft carrier built in Russia began its sea trials, six months before it is handed over to the Indian Navy on December 4, the Navy Day

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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Last week, four frontline warships finished a port call in Shanghai at the end of a sustained overseas deployment as part of India's 'Look East' Policy. The four Indian Navy ships, Rana, Shivalik, Karmukh and Shakti, under the command of Rear Admiral P Ajit Kumar, Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet are on an operational deployment to the South China Sea and North West Pacific.

Earlier in the deployment, the first bi-lateral maritime exercise between India and Japan 'JIMEX 12' (Japan India Maritime Exercise) was conducted, coinciding with the commemoration of 60 years of diplomatic relations between India and Japan.

According to the Indian Navy, even as the four ships of the Eastern Fleet are in the South China Sea, another ship, INS Savitri is currently in Port Victoria, Seychelles. INS Savitri will participate in the National Day celebrations of Seychelles and thereafter be deployed for about two months to undertake surveillance of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) of Seychelles and Mauritius.

The Indian Navy continues to maintain one Dornier aircraft in Seychelles to provide aerial surveillance for the Seychelles EEZ. Another Dornier aircraft is actively flying from Maldives to meet Maldivian requirements of EEZ surveillance and anti-piracy patrols.

INS Tabar, is on a sustained deployment in the Gulf of Aden on convoy escort and anti-piracy patrol.

Four ships of the Western Fleet have just begun on an overseas deployment to Horn of Africa, Red Sea and the Western Mediterranean under the command of Rear Admiral AR Karve, Flag Officer Commanding, Western Fleet.

For instance, in April, India's latest naval base, INS Dweeprakshak (Island protector) was put into operation at Kavaratti in Lakshawadeep, the tiny island chain, southwest Kerala. Although the Indian Navy has had a small presence on the strategically important islands for the past decade, its decision to open a permanent base emanated from recent incidents of piracy very close to these islands. At least 100 pirates were caught and several piracy attempts foiled in the vicinity by the Indian Navy in recent times.

In a statement, the Navy said: "Indian Navy has been operating a detachment at Kavaratti since early eighties. With the commissioning of INS Dweeprakshak, the island territories would see calibrated strengthening of assets in step with their growing relevance to the security calculus of the Nation. A firmer footing in the islands, which are spread outside some of the busiest shipping lanes of the world, would provide the necessary wherewithal to the Indian Navy to discharge its responsibilities suitably. Indian Naval Warships on patrol would now extend their reach farther with base support from INS Dweeprakshak."

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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The establishment of this base is in keeping with the announcement made by the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Nirmal Verma. "The Navy is also in the process offsetting up Operational Turn Around (OTR) bases, Forward Operating Bases and Naval Air Enclaves along the coast which would enhance the reach and sustainability of our surveillance effort. In 2011, the Navy has provided a renewed impetus and focus towards creation of operational and administrative infrastructure in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the Lakshadweep and Minicoy Islands. These islands are the country's strategic outposts and augmentation of the facilities would enhance our reach and enable extended presence in the area," he had said in December 2011.

The Navy's long-term Maritime Capabilities Perspective Plan in fact has identified a mix of two major roles for the force: One, the traditional blue water operational capability and two, a plan to effectively counter threats closer to the coast.

According to the report of the Standing Committee on Defence, tabled in Parliament in the last week of April, the Navy's short-term plan has the following objectives:

- Augment airborne maritime surveillance, strike, Anti-Submarine Warfare and air defence capability through induction of shore-based aircraft, integral helos, carrier based aircraft, space based AIS and UAVs, along with suitable weapons and sensors.
- Develop ASW (anti-submarine warfare) capability through induction of suitable platforms, weapons and sensors.
- Build adequate standoff capability for sea lift and Expeditionary Operations to achieve desired power projection force levels, influence events ashore and undertake Military Operations Other Than War.
- Induct assets and develop suitable infrastructure to augment forces available for Low Intensity Maritime Operations (LIMO), protection of off-shore assets and Coastal Security framework.
- Induct force multipliers like satellite based global communications, reconnaissance and network enabled platforms to achieve Battle-Space dominance capability and perform network centric operations.
- Induct state-of-the-art equipment and specialised platforms for Special Forces to enhance niche capabilities to conduct Maritime Intervention Operations and other envisaged roles.
- Develop support infrastructure in island territories to support the planned force levels as well as support infrastructure for ships/submarines/aircrafts at ports and airbases.

Given the extensive plans presented to the Parliament, it is evident now that the Indian Navy is in the middle of its most ambitious expansion plan in the past three decades. Senior officers point out that the Indian Navy's perspective-planning in terms of 'force-levels' is now driven by a conceptual shift from 'numbers' of platforms - that is, from the old 'bean-counting' philosophy - to one that

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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concentrates on 'capabilities'.

Naval headquarters says 50 modern ships are currently on order with majority being built in Indian shipyards. The Parliament's Standing Committee on Defence was informed last month that while Indian shipyards have made remarkable progress in building hulls and associated equipment but still lag behind in building and manufacturing weapons and sensors.

Traditionally the Indian Navy has sourced most of its ships from the former Soviet Union but over the past decade, defence planners have leaned hard on Indian shipbuilding yards to deliver a variety of warship for the Indian Navy.

Two stealth ships - INS Shivalik and INS Satpura - commissioned recently have been designed and built by public sector Mazgaon Docks Limited. The order books of India's oldest government-owned shipbuilders are full with the Navy wanting four more such guided missile frigates over the next five years.

There are more acquisitions in the pipeline. They include: four anti-submarine corvettes, four guided missile destroyers, three stealth frigates, six Scorpene submarines (being built at Mazgaon Docks with French technology and help) and two nuclear-powered submarines.

India's conventional diesel-powered submarine fleet is down to single digits right now but with the Russian-built Nerpa class nuclear submarine (leased for a decade) joining service earlier this year, the submarine arm has got a major boost. But the biggest force accretion in recent years has come in the form of Boeing Pi-8 long range maritime reconnaissance (LRMR) plane that gives the Indian Navy a reach and capability to mount surveillance way beyond its traditional areas of influence.

According to its near-term plans, the Indian Navy has ambitions to become a three Battle Carrier Groups force by 2020.

While it's most prestigious acquisition-Russian Aircraft Carrier Admiral Gorshkov, to be renamed INS Vikramaditya - is likely to be inducted into the fleet latest by March 2013, one more carrier being built indigenously will most likely join the service by 2015.

Currently India operates a lone Aircraft Carrier, INS Viraat, a British-built 1960s vintage ship that is on an extended lease of life thanks to the Navy's innovative engineers and planners.

Vikramaditya, once inducted, will give India the much needed edge in its maritime capabilities since it will come with the latest MiG-29 K series of aircraft. Indian Naval Aviators are already hard at work training themselves on the planes but away from the ship.

Defence Minister AK Antony in fact told the Naval Commanders conference last month: "India's

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER  
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strategic location in the Indian Ocean and the professional capability of our Navy bestows upon us a natural ability to play a leading role in ensuring peace and stability in the Indian Ocean Region."

Little wonder then the US wants India and especially the Indian Navy to play a major role in its quest to form new and lasting regional alliances in Asia as articulated by visiting secretary of defence Leon Panetta.

<http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/how-indian-navy-is-expanding-and-modernising-235746>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

## **List of Unexploded Arms in Libya Is Seen as Limited**

By C.J Chivers

June 25, 2012

The release by NATO of a list of unexploded munitions from the alliance's military action in Libya has been both welcomed as a step toward postconflict accountability and criticized as a half-measure that falls short of protecting civilians and specialists trying to rid the country

The United Nations said this month that NATO, in an exchange not publicly disclosed, had shared details of 313 possible sites of unexploded ordnance from the alliance's action against Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi's government last year. The alliance provided the latitude and longitude for each site, the weight of the ordnance and a description of the means of delivery (fixed-wing aircraft, helicopter gunship or naval vessel).

With the widespread use of sophisticated targeting sensors, with which aircrews record infrared video of the impact of a missile or bomb, air forces have a greater capacity than ever to know exactly where weapons struck and when they have failed to function properly. Such data is routinely gathered as part of what militaries call battle damage assessment. It is used to determine whether a target has been destroyed or should be hit again, and to assess the reliability and effectiveness of various missiles and bombs.

The data also presents options for humanitarian and cleanup efforts. When shared, it can allow for governments and mine-clearing organizations to alert residents of specific risks at specific places, and to focus efforts on removing high-explosive remnants of war. Its existence also suggests an opening for Western militaries to adopt a new standard for responsibility in air campaigns.

For these reasons, the United Nations, which had asked NATO for the data last year, welcomed the list, even though it contained limited information.

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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“It is helpful, because at least we know where these are,” said Max Dyck, program manager for the United Nations Mine Action Service in Libya. “We’re not waiting for someone to call up and say, ‘Hey, I have this great big dirty something in my garden.’”

Without such data, weapons containing volatile explosives and, in some cases, toxic propellants stand to be found randomly or in drawn-out surveys, raising the risk of accidental discovery — and detonation — by rubble-clearance crews, farmers’ plows, children or anyone else.

But the data has also been a source of disappointment and irritation, because NATO provided no information about the types of unexploded weapons, or the fuzes used to arm each missile or bomb.

This information, along with what are known as “render-safe procedures” for each type of weapon, is considered essential by ordnance-clearance teams. It is routinely recorded by modern military forces, via so-called bomb-build sheets, in which each component of a weapon is documented as a weapon is armed and prepared for an aircraft.

Colin King, a former British Army bomb disposal officer and an analyst for IHS Jane’s, said he could see no reason for NATO to withhold ordnance-specific details. “If the damn thing didn’t go off, why wouldn’t you share what it was?” he asked. “People are going to find it anyway. It’s going to be lying on the ground, and it might cost someone their life.”

“It is irresponsible,” Mr. King added. “You are not going to give away much in the way of vital intelligence by saying what it was.”

NATO, which said that it “has contributed to the timely removal of these munitions and therefore to the improvement of security for the Libyan people,” declined to answer why the types of weapons and render-safe procedures were not provided. “We do not comment on technical operational details,” Oana Lungescu, the alliance’s spokeswoman, said by e-mail.

NATO has said that its air campaign over Libya resulted in the release of 7,700 missiles or bombs. Almost all of the suspected duds — 303 — that NATO acknowledged were released from warplanes. Six were from helicopters, and four from warships.

The NATO campaign appears not to have involved potentially harmful radioactivity or cluster munitions, which scatter small bombs or mines that typically have high dud rates and are prone to exploding when disturbed.

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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In an e-mail late last year, Col. Gregory Julian, a United States Army officer serving as an alliance spokesman, said NATO and its partners had not used cluster or depleted uranium rounds in Libya.

He also said NATO had not used free-falling “dumb bombs.” All of its airstrikes in Libya, he said, were made with guided missiles and bombs.

The NATO release was the latest development in what mine-clearance teams describe as a slowly evolving process of Western combatants’ sharing airstrike information with nonmilitary ordnance-disposal technicians.

In the 1990s, the United States released extensive data on its bombing of Laos during the Vietnam War, after years of resisting requests from Mines Advisory Group, a nonprofit ordnance-clearance organization in Britain.

The information, made public decades after American pilots carried out the secret bombing campaign, has since been used in a detailed mapping project, as an advocacy tool, and to help with the cleanup of the remnants of a little-covered military action carried out on a vast scale.

After the Kosovo war ended in 1999, NATO released geographic information on its airstrikes there, though mine-clearers said the value of that release was undermined by the inaccuracy of much of the data. (In that case, Mr. King and Sean Sutton, a spokesman for Mines Advisory Group, said ordnance teams went to many sites NATO had said it struck and found nothing, and found areas that had been hit with cluster munitions that NATO had not disclosed.)

The United States military has also provided nonmilitary ordnance-clearance teams limited information about airstrikes in Iraq.

The data release on Libya contained one new element: This was the first time a military force shared dud-specific locations for a campaign, according to Mr. King. In the past, he said, militaries described locations of airstrikes generally, and they did not differentiate between ordnance known to have exploded and ordnance suspected of having failed.

Mr. Sutton said he hoped that combatants in other conflicts would release similar data, but that more information would be included. “Amongst the mine-action actors, obviously we have no political interest in this,” Mr. Sutton said. “It is simply a matter of how quickly and safely we can do our jobs.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/26/world/africa/nato-gives-un-list-of-unexploded-bomb-sites-in-libya.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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Boston Herald (Opinion)

## **Rift Between U.S., Pakistan Only Widens**

By Andrew J. Bacevich

The history of U.S.-Pakistani relations is one of wild swings between feigned friendship and ill-disguised mistrust. When the United States needs Pakistan, Washington showers Islamabad with money, weapons and expressions of high esteem. Once the need wanes, the gratuities cease, often with brutal abruptness. Instead of largesse, Pakistan gets lectures, with the instruction seldom well received.

The events of 9/11 inaugurated the relationship's most recent period of contrived warmth.

Proximity to Afghanistan transformed Pakistan overnight from a pariah — the planet's leading proliferator of nuclear weapons technology — into a key partner in the global war on terrorism.

Prior to 9/11, U.S. officials disdained President Pervez Musharraf as the latest in a long line of Pakistani generals to seize power through a coup. After 9/11, President George W. Bush declared Musharraf a "visionary" leading his country toward the bright uplands of freedom.

But seldom has a marriage of convenience produced greater inconvenience and consternation for the parties involved. Simply put, U.S. and Pakistani interests do not align. Worse, neither do our preferred forms of paranoia. Pakistanis don't worry about Islamists taking over the world.

Americans are untroubled by the prospect of India emerging as a power of the first rank. The United States stayed in this unhappy marriage for the last decade in large part because Pakistan provided the transit route for supplies sustaining NATO's ongoing war in landlocked Afghanistan. In addition to exacting exorbitant charges for this use of its territory, Pakistan has closed that route whenever it wishes to make a point. No more: A recently negotiated agreement with several former-Soviet Central Asian republics creates alternatives, removing Pakistan's grip on NATO's logistical windpipe.

The Obama administration now seems ready to declare this troubled union (once again) defunct. With Pakistan no longer quite so crucial in an Afghan context, and still unable to explain how Osama bin Laden found sanctuary on Pakistani soil, evidence that this erstwhile U.S. ally remains in cahoots with various and sundry terrorist organizations has become intolerable. During a recent visit to India, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta publicly stated that U.S. leaders were "reaching the limits of our patience" with Pakistan.

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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As with most divorces, the proceedings promise to be ugly. Already, the U.S. is escalating its campaign of missile attacks against “militants” on Pakistani soil. U.S. officials dismiss complaints that this infringes on Pakistan’s national sovereignty. “This is about our sovereignty as well,” Panetta has explained, thereby redefining the term to grant the United States the prerogative of doing whatever it wants and can get away with.

In East Asia, the Obama administration touts its proposed strategic “pivot” as the emerging centerpiece of U.S. national security policy. In Washington, however, “pivot” is a code word for “containing China.” The imperative of thwarting China’s perceived (but as yet indecipherable and perhaps undetermined) ambitions elevates the importance of India. In the eyes of aspiring Kissingers, an India aligned with the United States will check Chinese power just as aligning China with the United States once served to check Soviet power. Here too the effect is necessarily to render Pakistan, which views India as its mortal enemy, redundant.

Yet while a certain logic informs the coming U.S. abandonment of Pakistan, there are massive risks as well.

Pakistan is the most dangerous country in the world. Mired in poverty, burdened with a dysfunctional government and weak institutions, dominated by deeply fearful military and intelligence establishments that have little regard for civilian control or democratic practice, it possesses one trump card: a formidable nuclear arsenal. A potential willingness to use that arsenal is what ultimately makes Pakistan so dangerous — and should give U.S. policymakers pause before they give that country the back of their hand, as the United States has done so many times before.

To the extent that foreign policy ends up figuring in the upcoming presidential election, Iran’s putative nuclear weapons program will probably attract some attention.

OK, but that’s a *potential* bomb, not a *real* one. The bomb that will keep the next president up late is not the one that Iran *may* be building but the one that Pakistan already holds in readiness to use. Andrew J. Bacevich is professor of history and international relations at Boston University. This column first ran in the Los Angeles Times.

[http://bostonherald.com/news/opinion/op\\_ed/view/20220625rift\\_between\\_us\\_pakistan\\_only\\_widens](http://bostonherald.com/news/opinion/op_ed/view/20220625rift_between_us_pakistan_only_widens)

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

AP

## **Turkey threatens Syria with retaliation over jet**

By Suzan Fraser and Slobodan Lekic

June 26, 2012

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ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey warned Tuesday that any Syrian military unit approaching its border will be treated as a direct threat, a serious escalation in tensions days after Syria shot a Turkish military plane out of the sky.

Turkey's NATO allies expressed solidarity with Ankara and condemned the Syrian attack but made no mention of any retaliatory action against Syria.

"The rules of engagement of the Turkish Armed Forces have changed," Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a televised speech. "Any military element that approaches the Turkish border from Syria and poses a security risk and danger will be regarded as a threat and treated as a military target."

"No one should be deceived by our cool-headed stance," Erdogan added. "Our acting with common sense should not be perceived as a weakness."

Syria insists the Turkish military plane violated its air space on Friday. Turkey says although the RF-4E reconnaissance jet had unintentionally strayed into Syria's air space, it was inside international airspace when it was brought down over the Mediterranean by Syria. Its two pilots are still missing.

The head of the NATO military alliance called the downing of the jet unacceptable Tuesday after Turkey briefed NATO's North Atlantic Council on the incident. The talks were held under Article 4 of NATO's founding treaty, which allows a NATO member to request consultations if its security has been threatened.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said the alliance condemned the Syrian attack "in the strongest terms" and expressed solidarity with Turkey but did not speak of any possible armed action against Syria.

The Syrian opposition says Syrian President Bashar Assad's crackdown on an increasingly armed popular uprising has killed some 14,000 people since it began in March 2011.

"It's my clear expectation that the situation won't continue to escalate," Fogh Rasmussen told reporters after Tuesday's meeting. "What we have seen is a completely unacceptable act and I would expect Syria to take all necessary steps to avoid such events in the future."

Erdogan said Syria shot down the unarmed plane in international airspace without warning in a 'deliberate' and 'hostile' act. He said border violations in the region were not uncommon and Syrian helicopters had violated Turkish airspace five times recently without a Turkish response. The two countries share a 566-mile (910-kilometer) border.



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Syria said the downing was an accident caused by the "automatic response" of an officer commanding an anti-aircraft position who saw an unidentified jet flying at high speed and low altitude.

Erdogan said Syrian forces also fired on a CASA-type search-and-rescue plane on Friday following the downing of the jet. It was not clear if the second plane was hit.

The downing of the jet has aggravated tense ties between the two neighbors.

Turkey has repeatedly called on Assad to step down as 33,000 Syrians have sought refuge in Turkey, fleeing a government crackdown on a popular uprising. The country is also hosting civilian opposition groups as well as members of the Free Syrian Army, which is fighting against the Syrian regime.

"We will continue to support the struggle of our brothers in Syria at any cost," Erdogan said. Turkey, however, denies harboring armed Syrian rebels.

The public anger in Turkey is largely muted and Huseyin Celik, a senior member of Erdogan's ruling party, said party members are against going to war.

Fogh Rasmussen declined to answer a question about how long the Turkish jet loitered in Syrian air space before heading out to sea again, saying he didn't want to discuss details.

Fogh Rasmussen has repeatedly said NATO would need a clear international mandate and regional support before it embarked on a mission in Syria. Last year, NATO launched air attacks on Libyan government targets only after receiving such a mandate from the U.N. Security Council, along with backing from the Arab League.

But in Syria's case, the Arab League hasn't been able to agree on the need for military intervention. And Russia and China — both veto-wielding members of the Security Council — have consistently shielded Assad's regime from international sanctions over its violent crackdown on protests. They have called on neighboring countries to refrain from provocative actions that could spark a wider war.

<http://www.sddt.com/News/article.cfm?SourceCode=20120626nd&t=Turkey+threatens+Syria+with+retaliation+over+jet>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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Reuters

## **Syria to get more arms from Russia soon: think-tank**

By Thomas Grove

June 26, 2012

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia is expected to deliver air defense systems, reconditioned helicopters and fighter jets to Syria this year worth nearly half a billion dollars despite international pressure to halt arms sales to Damascus, a defense think-tank said on Tuesday.

The report, by CAST, a Moscow-based think tank, is likely to fuel concerns that Russia is supplying President Bashar al-Assad with arms that are being used against protesters taking part in an uprising against him and air defense systems that could be deployed in the event of international military intervention.

Obtained by Reuters before publication, the report shows a series of contracts that were signed between 2005 and 2007 are at the heart of Russia's arms sales to Syria, which has been rocked by a vicious cycle of violence for the last 16 months.

The deals were signed long before the start of the rebellion in Syria and after Moscow wrote off some 70 percent of Syria's \$13.4 billion debt to Russia and the former Soviet Union, a stumbling block that froze Moscow's arms cooperation with Damascus throughout the 1990s.

Russia is expected to start delivering 12 top-of-the-line MiG-29 fighter jets this year and to deliver a batch of repaired Mi-25 attack helicopters, the report said.

It said air defense systems expected to be delivered to Syria this year included the Buk-M2E, which Moscow began delivering in 2010, and Pantsir-S1 armored rocket complexes, which are designed to help protect troops against air attacks.

President Vladimir Putin has said the arms that Russia delivers cannot be used in civil conflicts and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said the supplies are defensive weapons sold in contracts signed long ago.

But U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has said that Russian statements that the weapons are unrelated to the violence inside the country are "patently untrue".

The capabilities of Syria's air defense systems, which are almost completely supplied by Russian manufacturers, are in focus following its shooting down of a Turkish jet last week, an act that

**Issue No. 1010, 26 June 2012**

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increased regional tensions.

## AIR DEFENCE

The \$600 million contract for the MiG-29s includes an option for 12 more to be delivered. At least one prototype was completed by the end of last year.

"According to information we have obtained, the delivery of the first part (and perhaps all 12 airplanes) to Syria is expected at the end of 2012," the report said.

The jets are expected to be equipped with air-to-air and air-to-surface rockets, giving them the capability to flout any "no fly zone" over Syria.

France has said a no fly zone is being considered as part of international efforts to end the crisis in Syria. A no fly zone was also imposed over Libya during the conflict there last year.

"Syria's air defense systems are better than Libya's," said Ruslan Aliyev, one of the authors of the report, which will be published in the group's Moscow Defence Brief later this year.

"On the one hand, Syria has tough, solid air defence systems of many different kinds, but what condition they are in and whether Syria is properly trained to use them is a different question ... the only real way of knowing what shape it's in is to test it," he told Reuters by phone.

Moscow is also obliged to fulfill a contract for 36 of the Pantsir-S1 armored rocket complexes. Twelve have already been delivered and the contract is expected to be fulfilled by 2013.

## CHANGE OF STANCE?

The report did not mention accusations - made by a Syrian defence official who defected as well as by rebels - that deliveries of Russian small arms have increased since the uprising against Assad's 14-year rule began.

The report from CAST, which maintains good relations with Russia's arms industry, also made no mention of contracts between Moscow and Damascus for BMP-2 vehicles, which amateur videos show operating in Homs and other cities during army shelling.

Russia, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council with the power of veto, has been one of Assad's staunchest allies and has shielded Syria from harsher international sanctions.

But the report suggested Russia would be amenable to freezing arms sales if it was convinced it was in its interests to end its relationship with Assad.



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"Arms cooperation with Syria does not carry so much importance for Russia, neither on a commercial nor a defence relationship," it said.

"If there is a break in future deliveries to Syria, it is probable that (state arms dealer) Rosoboronexport would not have any difficulty in giving the arms ordered by the Syrians ... to a third country."

Russia has already frozen the delivery of an S-300 missile system as well as Iskander missiles, the report said, following concerns expressed by Israel that the systems could end up in the hands of the Iranian-backed Islamist movement Hezbollah.

A ship reportedly left Russia on Sunday carrying the delivery of Mi-25 helicopters after a failed attempt earlier this month. The delivery was initially stopped after its insurer withdrew its policy last week

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