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**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

Articles & Other Documents:

**Featured Article: [Nuclear Arsenal in China Much Bigger Than Believed , Says Expert](#)**

1. [China To Lead Talks On Nuclear Definitions](#)
2. [China Is 'Severe' Nuclear Threat To Taiwan: Expert](#)
3. [Nuclear Arsenal in China Much Bigger Than Believed, Says Expert](#)
4. [Russian Specialists Involved In Syria Intercepting Turkish Jet, Sources Say](#)
5. [Doubts Cast On Turkey's Story Of Jet Dropped By Syria](#)
6. [Hezbollah Could Blockade Sea In Future War](#)
7. [UN Publishes Report On Iran Arms Trade With Syria](#)
8. [US Naval Forces In Region Within Reach Of Iranian Vessels: IRGC Commander](#)
9. [Iran: We'll Introduce Missile Against Iron Dome](#)
10. [Iran Threatens To Wipe Israel 'Off The Face Of The Earth'](#)
11. [China Opposes Unilateral Sanctions Against Iran](#)
12. [The Story Behind the Korea-Japan Military Pact](#)
13. [Korean Ex-Military Official Warns Of Nuclear Threat From North](#)
14. [Panetta Pleads For Missile Defense Dollars](#)

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**Issue No.1012, 3 July 2012**

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REUTERS

## **China To Lead Talks On Nuclear Definitions**

By Arshas Mohammed

June 29, 2012

China will lead talks among the five original nuclear-armed states to define arms control terms, the group said on Friday, a first for Beijing and a step that might ultimately bring greater clarity about its nuclear arsenal and strategy.

A working group of the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China is expected to launch talks this summer on a glossary of nuclear terms, an arcane but necessary step for wider talks on disarmament.

Of the five original nuclear-weapons states within the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, China is the most secretive about its arsenal, its stockpile of fissile material and its nuclear doctrine, analysts say.

Under the treaty, which entered into force in 1970, the five committed to pursuing disarmament while the other signatories committed not to develop or acquire nuclear weapons.

Rose Gottemoeller, the acting U.S. under secretary of state arms control and international security, said the United States and Russia have a far better grasp of each other's nuclear posture than they do of China's.

China's leadership of the so-called P5 group, described in a statement issued by the five nations on Friday at the end of a three-day conference, could signal its greater interest in cooperating on these issues.

A U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity said this was the first time China had chaired such a P5 group on nuclear issues.

"It's a very good step," Gottemoeller told Reuters. "The fact that they are shouldering the responsibilities for this working group, I think, is a good sign of their interest of developing more mutual cooperation of this kind, leading to greater predictability and greater mutual confidence."

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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Gottemoeller stressed the group's aim was to achieve greater openness about all five countries' programs.

"For over 40 years with the Soviet Union and now the Russian Federation we have been talking about important issues of nuclear doctrine, strategy and then some of the technical nitty-gritty that goes into an arms control treaty," she said.

"We really have a lot of history with the Russian Federation but certainly with China, we do not have that same depth."

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association nonprofit group, said the United States has been the most transparent about its nuclear capabilities and Britain, France, Russia and especially China "have a long way to go."

"China ... has been the least forthcoming," he said. "With transparency comes greater knowledge, greater understanding and more stability, more predictable reactions (by) others."

According to Arms Control Association estimates, the United States has about 5,000 warheads, Russia 5,500, China about 240, France fewer than 300 and Britain up to 225.

Stephen Rademaker, a former senior State Department official under President George W. Bush, said the United States may hope that the talks on definitions could be a first step toward greater clarity on China's capabilities.

"The United States for a long time has tried to initiate a comprehensive dialogue with China about nuclear matters and, unfortunately, China has resisted discussing those kinds of issues in any level of detail," he said.

"I am sure that the United States hopes that as part of this ... process, the kinds of conversations that have not ... made much progress bilaterally can finally begin," he added.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/06/30/us-usa-nuclear-china-idUSBRE85T01420120630>

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

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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TAIPEI TIMES

## China Is 'Severe' Nuclear Threat To Taiwan: Expert

Byt William Lowther

June 30, 2012

Taiwan faces a “very severe” nuclear threat from China, a Washington forum was told on Thursday.

Adjunct professor at Georgetown University Phillip Karber made the assessment after releasing a paper by Russian General Viktor Yesin titled China’s Nuclear Potential.

The paper, published last month in a Russian military journal and recently translated into English, concluded that China has up to 1,800 nuclear warheads. Previous estimates of China’s nuclear arsenal have generally put the warhead figure at a few hundred.

“This new paper is of enormous importance,” said forum organizer Rick Fisher, who is a senior fellow at the International Assessment and Strategy Center.

Karber said the paper showed that China was now fielding three missiles — the DF-11 the DF-15 and the DH-10 — with nuclear warheads that could strike anywhere in Taiwan.

There was an assumption, he said, that some of the warheads used enhanced radiation technology which would kill people, but leave infrastructure intact so that Taiwan could subsequently be occupied.

Yesin estimated that some of the DF-11, DF-15 and DH-10 missiles had single nuclear warheads ranging from 5 kilotonnes to 20 kilotonnes each.

Taiwan was the “cork” in the first island chain, Karber said.

“If that cork gets reversed, that is if Taiwan comes under the PLA [People’s Liberation Army] and they start military operations from the island, it will be a very serious issue,” he said.

Such a development, Karber said, would change the “entire equation” and the defensibility of Asia would “shift dramatically.”

“We have got to be careful with these friends of ours. If we are not willing to go to their aid and go quickly they become more vulnerable,” he added.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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Yesin, a former chief of staff of Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces, is currently a professor at the Academy of Military Sciences of the Russian Federation.

Yesin is viewed as an authoritative source "closely associated with Russian government positions,"

Karber said.

The paper said China provided no official information about its nuclear arsenal and that Beijing argued that its nuclear weapons were "insignificant in number."

However, Yesin said in the paper that an analysis of the capacity of Chinese factories that supply special fissionable materials indicated that as of last year, they could have produced up to 40 tonnes of weapons-grade uranium and about 10 tonnes of weapons-grade plutonium.

This is enough material for the production of about 3,600 nuclear warheads, but it was likely that half or more of the total was in stockpiles.

Yesin said there were "probably" 1,600 to 1,800 warheads in the Chinese nuclear arsenal. He said the nuclear capability of China had clearly been underestimated by the Western expert community.

"It is necessary to take into account the Chinese factor when considering any of the next – Russian-American agreements on the further reduction and limitation of nuclear weapons,"

Yesin said. "It is time to bring China into multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament."

<http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/front/archives/2012/06/30/2003536596>

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

EPOCH TIMES

## **Nuclear Arsenal in China Much Bigger Than Believed, Says Expert**

By Mathew Robertson

June 28, 2012

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) notoriously opaque nuclear arsenal could be much bigger than the estimates prevalent in the United States—up to 1,800 warheads as opposed to the 300 or 400 currently thought—according to a report authored by a retired Russian colonel general.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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In addition, the report says that the PRC has rail-mounted intercontinental ballistic missiles equipped with nuclear warheads, and nuclear warheads on a series of ICBM (Intercontinental Ballistic Missile) and cruise missiles—statements that contradict dominant understandings of China’s nuclear posture.

Viktor Yesin, the former chief of the main staff of the Strategic Rocket Forces and currently professor at the Academy of Military Sciences, published his view in the military publication *Military-Industrial Courier* in early May.

He writes that Chinese factories that supply fissile material could have as of 2011 produced 40 tons of weapons-grade uranium and about 10 tons of weapons-grade plutonium, enough for a total of 3,600 nuclear warheads.

Yesin reasons that about half of this fissile material would not be used in warheads, but for stockpiles or other uses. Of the 1,600–1,800 warheads that were probably built, in Yesin’s view, perhaps 800–900 would be operationally deployed with the rest in storage, he says.

A translation of Yesin’s journal article, which runs to nine pages in English, was disseminated by Phillip Karber of the Asian Arms Control Project, which focuses on the strategic implications of the PRC’s nuclear weapons buildup.

Karber’s research on the PRC’s network of underground tunnels used for storing nuclear weapons has previously drawn controversy, particularly from the arms control community.

In this case, views of the Russian colonel general’s warhead estimates are no different, where an analysis of the recent report becomes an exercise in examining the wider debate about the PRC’s nuclear posture.

Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Monterey Institute of International Studies, who also blogs on arms control issues, wrote in an email commenting on Yesin’s journal article that the retired general’s views, which he was already familiar with, are “exaggerated” and “alarmist.” Lewis also questioned the veracity and provenance of the information.

On the other side, Richard Fisher, an analyst of the PRC’s military modernization and senior research fellow with the International Assessments and Strategy Center, says, “Gen. Yesin has dropped a nuclear bomb on the hubris of the American arms control community.”



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Yesin is a prominent commentator on strategic issues in Russia, and according to an introduction prepared by the Asian Arms Control Project “is viewed as an authoritative source closely associated with Russian government positions.”

“Over the last 15 years he has been a major adviser to Putin,” Karber says, adding that Yesin would have a close understanding of the PRC’s nuclear arsenal in part due to extensive contacts over several decades between the two powers, and access he may have to classified sources.

Apart from the large estimates of warheads that Yesin gives—which agree with estimates Karber gave in a previous study on the PRC’s underground tunnel network—Yesin’s remarks about rail-mounted ICBMs equipped with nuclear warheads are significant in Karber’s view.

“When you have that degree of mobility you can’t track how many there are. They drive into a rail tunnel and you can’t tell if there are 20 in there or only 1,” Karber said. Such weapons could be used as a first strike against enemy forces or as a second strike capability against cities.

The idea of rail-mounted nuclear weapons and nuclear warheads on ballistic and cruise missiles—hundreds of them at least, according to Karber—upends the assumption that the PRC has a small nuclear force focused solely on deterrence.

The assumption that the PRC does have such a small force is shared by Jeffrey Lewis and others in the arms control community. They say that only insufficient evidence, or in some cases recycled, discredited claims or other misinformation, has been put forward to disrupt these basic assumptions.

A practical issue raised by Yesin’s report is the possibility of a nuclear arms race as countries in the PRC’s periphery seek to gain a semblance of nuclear parity in the face of the PRC’s enormous arsenal.

Those countries, which currently see themselves under America’s security umbrella, could feel that the United States was unable to protect them.

Fisher said, “By building to a level of superiority in nuclear weapons, China could cause the greatest period of nuclear proliferation in the world, as Japan, South Korea, Australia, Vietnam, and others could all rush to develop their own deterrent nuclear forces.”

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china-news/nuclear-arsenal-in-china-much-bigger-than-believed-says-expert-258565.html>

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

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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HAARETZ

## **Russian Specialists Involved In Syria Intercepting Turkish Jet, Sources Say**

July 1, 2012

Diplomatic sources talking to the Sunday Times say Syria shot down the Turkish plane to warn NATO not to intervene in the Syrian conflict.

Russian technicians were involved in the taking down of the Turkish fighter jet by the Syrian military last week, the Sunday Times reported on Sunday.

Sourcing Middle Eastern diplomatic sources the Times reported that the decision to down the Turkish jet was intended to signal a warning to NATO to stay out of the conflict raging in Syria for over a year.

Russia supplied Syria with advanced anti-aircraft missile systems three years ago. It is believed that Russian specialists trained the Syrian forces to use them. According to diplomats that spoke with the Sunday Times some Russian specialists are still stationed at the missile battery control centers.

"We would not be surprised if these Russian experts, if they didn't push the button, at least were beside the Syrian officers who did it," an Israeli air force source told the British paper.

The unarmed reconnaissance jet had briefly entered Syrian airspace on June 22 as it approached land after patrolling the eastern Mediterranean, Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said, but was warned by Turkish radar controllers and immediately left and turned again out to sea.

It then made another approach to land when it was shot down 13 miles off the coast in international airspace, he said, out of the reach of Syria's anti-aircraft guns.

"According to the data in our hands, it points to our plane being shot by a laser or heat-guided surface-to-air missile. The fact our plane was not given an early radar warning, suggests it was not a radar-guided missile," said Arinc.

Turkey shelters the rebel Free Syria Army (FSA) and hosts 32,000 Syrian refugees on its southeastern border with Syria, some 50 km (30 miles) from where the Turkish aircraft was shot down. But it denies providing arms for the insurgents.

Ankara requested a meeting of NATO's North Atlantic Council to discuss the incident, which it has branded an "act of aggression". Damascus said it shot the aircraft down in self-defense after it strayed into Syrian airspace.





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**CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL**  
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

The meeting is only the second time in NATO's 63-year history that member countries have convened under Article 4 of its charter, which provides for consultations when a member state feels its territorial integrity, political independence or security is under threat.

"We may get a statement of solidarity with Turkey," a NATO official said.

Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen was to make a statement around 11:30 a.m. (09:30 GMT) after the talks among NATO ambassadors at alliance headquarters in Brussels.

Analysts said Rasmussen's message was likely to be measured, reflecting Western reluctance to commit to any military action or anything that could trigger a regional sectarian war.

"There is very little appetite from the alliance to undertake what we call a discretionary war," said Clara Marina O'Donnell, a fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Turkey's choice to seek consultation under Article 4, instead of asking for military help under the organization's collective defence provisions, known as Article 5, suggested Ankara was hoping to steer clear of inflaming the conflict.

"This is a signal from Turkey that they are not too keen to go down the military route at this stage. They are trying to de-escalate the situation," she said.

Turkey rejected assertions from Damascus that its forces had no option but to fire on the F-4 jet as it flew over Syrian waters close to the coast on Friday.

In a letter to the UN Security Council, Turkey condemned a "hostile act by the Syrian authorities against Turkey's national security", saying it posed "a serious threat to peace and security in the region".

Syria warned Turkey and NATO against retaliation. EU foreign ministers on Monday urged Turkey to show restraint, saying they would increase pressure on Assad.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/russian-specialists-involved-in-syria-intercepting-turkish-jet-sources-say-1.447981>

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

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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DayPress

## **Doubts Cast On Turkey's Story Of Jet Dropped By Syria**

June 30, 2012

Syria\Turkey- U.S. intelligence indicates that a Turkish warplane shot down by Syrian forces was most likely hit by shore-based anti-aircraft guns while it was inside Syrian airspace, American officials said, a finding in tune with Syria's account and at odds with Turkey.

Damascus has said it shot down the plane with an anti-aircraft battery with an effective range of about 1.5 miles.

But, A Turkish official said he wasn't aware of the American doubts, and reiterated the government's position that a Syrian missile downed the plane in international airspace. "We see no indication that it was shot down by a surface-to-air missile" as Turkey says, said a senior U.S. defense official. Officials declined to specify the sources of their information. The senior U.S. defense official cautioned that much remains unknown about the incident.

The Turkish government, which moved tanks to the Syrian border after the June 22 incident, says the debris fell in Syrian waters, but maintains its fighter was shot down without warning in international airspace. Ankara also has said the jet was hit too far from Syrian territory to have been engaged by an anti-aircraft gun.

The Turkish government has scheduled a special meeting for Saturday morning on Syria. A spokesman for the prime minister said the U.S. intelligence on the incident would likely be discussed.

The downing of the jet spurred fears of a widening regional conflict and led the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), following a presentation on Tuesday by Turkey, to condemn Syria's action.

The use of anti-aircraft fire would suggest the Turkish plane was flying low to the ground, and slowly, U.S. officials said—though Syria said the jet was traveling at 480 miles an hour.

If hit by anti-aircraft fire, the jet likely came closer to the Syrian shoreline than Turkey says, U.S. officials said.

The plane's pilots haven't been found, and the Turkish Navy has continued to search for them. U.S. officials say they believe the pilots perished.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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Some current and former American officials believe Ankara has been testing Syrian defenses. The version of the Turkish F-4 Phantom that was shot down typically carries surveillance equipment, according to U.S. defense officials.

A former senior U.S. official who worked closely with Turkey said he believed the flight's course was meant to test Syria's response. "You think that the airplane was there by mistake?" the former official said.

"These countries are all testing how fast they get picked up and how fast someone responds," said a senior U.S. official. "It's part of training."

The Turkish official said the plane wasn't on a surveillance mission. "All NATO members have condemned the Syrian hostile act and have supported Turkey," the official said.

The emerging discrepancies could prove embarrassing to Ankara and strain continuing discussions between the U.S. and Turkey, a NATO ally that shares a long border with Syria.

Turkey occupies a critical role in the U.S. and Western strategy for dealing with the Syrian crisis. American officials and defense analysts say the U.S. approach depends largely on Turkey's willingness to keep pressure on Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

For their parts, NATO officials said Turkey's presentation on the incident on Tuesday was very detailed, but diplomats didn't closely question the Turks on their version of events. The U.S. backed Turkey and, American officials said, pushed NATO to issue a statement sharply condemning Syria.

The incident has put NATO in a tough spot. Alliance members are eager to back Ankara, but don't want to be dragged into a military conflict in Syria.

If the plane had been struck by a missile, a senior military official said, it would be an indication that Damascus had authorized the action. But the use of anti-aircraft fire may mean a local commander decided on his own initiative to fire at the Turkish plane, according to officials and analysts.

U.S. defense officials said they weren't alarmed by Turkey's movement of forces to its border with Syria. Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, praised Turkey's "very measured" approach. "I've asked them, and they are not seeking to be provocative," Gen. Dempsey said.



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The U.S.-Turkish relationship is unlikely to be affected by the apparent discrepancies in accounts of the downing of the jet. Cooperation between Ankara and Washington has grown closer in recent months, after a period of significant strain in 2009 and 2010.

That marks a turnaround for Turkey, which 18 months ago moved to cultivate relations and trade with neighboring Muslim regimes, including Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's one, while downgrading ties with former ally Israel, raising concerns in Washington.

The revolutions of the Arab Spring, however, upended that policy. In a major change, Turkey agreed last fall to house a NATO missile-defense system, which was designed by the U.S. to contain Iran.

Turkish analysts said the debate in Turkey is now focused on the escalating tensions along the country's 565-mile border with Syria.

"What's important for most Turks is that the government has been seen to respond by boosting troop capacity on the border, which will further pressure Assad," said Atilla Yesilada, a partner at Istanbul-based political risk consultancy Istanbul Analytics.

<http://www.dp-news.com/en/detail.aspx?articleid=124859>

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

Jerusalem Post

## **Hezbollah Could Blockade Sea In Future War**

By YAAKOV KATZ

July 1, 2012

IDF: Lebanese group will target cargo ships within 30-km radius of Israel to try to get them to refuse to sail there during war.

Israel is concerned that in a war with Hezbollah, the Lebanese guerrilla group will try to blockade Israel by attacking civilian cargo ships.

Israel's sea lines of communication span the length of the Mediterranean Sea and around the Magreb region of North Africa, with 99 percent of all goods arriving in the country by sea, including ammunition and military hardware.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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Navy assessments are that Hezbollah will try to attack cargo ships within a 30-kilometer radius of Israel, in an effort to get commercial vessels to refuse to sail there during a war.

During the Second Lebanon War in July 2006, Hezbollah fired a missile at the *INS Hanit* corvette, killing four sailors and causing extensive damage. Another missile sunk a nearby cargo freighter.

“Hezbollah has already proven that it can fire missiles, so the operational capability exists as does the readiness to act,” a senior navy officer said.

The officer warned of the economic ramifications for Israel if Hezbollah succeeded in stopping merchant ships from sailing to the ports of Ashdod and Haifa.

“People have not internalized what it means that 99% of what we import as a country comes by sea,” he said. “Ships stopping to sail here would have economic and security ramifications and is therefore the first and primary challenge we will need to confront.”

Hezbollah is believed to have a significant arsenal of Chinese-developed anti-ship missiles such as the C-802, which is radar-guided and was used to hit the *Hanit* in 2006.

In addition, the navy is concerned with Syria’s recent purchase of the Russian Yakhont anti-ship missile, which could be transferred to Hezbollah. Syria already tested the Yakhont in recent maneuvers and the missile is said to have a range of about 300 km.

“We are closely following what is happening in Syria and if a response is needed, we will know how to respond,” the officer said.

One of the failures that led to the missile strike on the *Hanit* was the navy’s decision to deactivate the vessel’s Barak missile defense system due to an absence of intelligence that Hezbollah was in possession of sophisticated anti-ship missiles.

The navy plans in the coming years to equip its ships with a new missile defense system called Barak-8. The new missile will reportedly feature a more advanced seeker and have a longer range, perhaps a few dozen kilometers.

<http://www.ipost.com/Defense/Article.aspx?id=275912>

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



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CNews

## **UN Publishes Report On Iran Arms Trade With Syria**

By Louis Charbonneau

June 30, 2012

A U.N. Security Council committee has published a report on Iranian sanctions violations, including shipments of weapons to Syria in breach of a U.N. ban on weapons exports by the Islamic Republic.

The Security Council has imposed four rounds of sanctions on Iran for refusing to halt its nuclear enrichment program, which the United States, European Union and their allies suspect is at the heart of a weapons program. Iran rejects the allegation and refuses to halt what it says is a peaceful energy program.

The report appeared on the committee website on Thursday, diplomats told Reuters on Friday. The report, which Reuters reported on last month, said that Syria remains the top destination for Iranian arms shipments.

Iran, like Russia, is one of Syria's few allies as it presses ahead with a 16-month-old assault on opposition forces determined to oust Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Western diplomats said they were pleased the report was made public. Initially they said they feared Russia would block it as it did last year's report on Iran, which has yet to be made public due to Russian objections.

Publication of the report, the diplomats said, will likely add to the pressure on Iran to comply with U.N. demands about curbing sensitive nuclear activities as major powers press ahead with negotiations with the Islamic Republic aimed at convincing it that defiance of international sanctions will be too costly.

The new report, submitted by a panel of sanctions-monitoring experts to the Security Council's Iran sanctions committee, said the group investigated three large illegal shipments of Iranian weapons over the past year.

"Iran has continued to defy the international community through illegal arms shipments," it stated.

"Two of these cases involved (Syria), as were the majority of cases inspected by the Panel during its previous mandate, underscoring that Syria continues to be the central party to illicit Iranian arms transfers," the report said.

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The third shipment involved rockets that Britain said last year were headed for Taliban fighters in Afghanistan.

The kinds of arms that Iran was attempting to send to Syria before the shipments were seized by Turkish authorities included assault rifles, machineguns, explosives, detonators, 60mm and 120mm mortar shells and other items, the panel said.

The most recent incident described in the report was an arms shipment discovered in a truck that Turkey seized on its border with Syria in February. Turkey announced last year that it was imposing an arms embargo on Syria.

## BLACKLIST

The expert panel recommended adding three firms to a U.N. blacklist of companies that have aided Iran's nuclear or missile programs, or have helped it evade U.N. sanctions.

The three firms recommended for blacklisting are airline Yas Air, SAD Import Export Company, and Chemical Industries and Development of Materials group. The report said Yas Air has been involved in illicit arms shipments to Syria.

It was not clear when the Iran sanctions committee would make a decision on whether or not to add the three Iranian companies to the list of entities facing an international asset freeze and banishment from doing business worldwide.

Earlier this year the U.S. Treasury Department imposed U.S. sanctions on Yas Air, which is an Iranian cargo airline, along with three Iranian military officials and a Nigerian shipping agent for supporting illegal arms shipments to the Middle East and Africa.

The 67-page report also discusses Iran's attempts to circumvent sanctions on its nuclear program but notes that the four rounds of punitive measures the 15-nation council imposed on

Iran between 2006 and 2010 are having an impact.

"Sanctions are slowing Iran's procurement of some critical items required for its prohibited nuclear program," it said. "At the same time prohibited activities continue, including uranium enrichment."

<http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/World/2012/06/30/19937746.html>

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

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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XINHUA

## **US Naval Forces In Region Within Reach Of Iranian Vessels: IRGC Commander**

July 1, 2012

A senior commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said Saturday that US naval forces in the region are within an easy reach of the Iranian vessels, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

The United States' huge and slow warships and aircraft carriers are proper hit-and-run targets for Iranian boats, Deputy Lieutenant Commander of the IRGC Ground Force for Operations, General Morteza Miriyan, told Fars on Saturday.

Iran enjoys the needed capability to have tough and serious confrontation against enemy threats at all levels and make them regret for their aggressive act, Miriyan was quoted as saying.

Western countries, including the United States and Israel, suspect the Iranian nuclear activities and claim that the Islamic republic is pushing its nuclear program for weapon-grade activities. Iran has stressed that its nuclear program aims at "peaceful" purposes.

The United States and Israel have not ruled out the possibility to attack Iran's nuclear facilities.

Also, Commander of Iran's Basij (volunteer) forces, Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Naqdi, said Saturday that the weapons supplied by Western powers and their regional allies to the "terrorist" and dissident groups in the region will soon be used against the Zionist regime, Fars reported.

Naqdi described as "fruitless" the support extended by the United States, the West and the regional reactionary regimes to "terrorist" groups in Syria, and said the enemies should not feel happy about the companionship of a number of Syrian youth who have been deceived, because their hopes will fade away soon.

"The enemy should take a lesson from its continuous failures in Lebanon, Gaza, Egypt and the resistance in Syria and realize that sending weapons to break the line of resistance will yield no result but victory of the resistance front," Naqdi was quoted as saying.

UN-Arab League joint special envoy Kofi Annan on Saturday urged world and regional powers to unite in order to find a solution to the Syria crisis as ministers started a close-door meeting in Geneva.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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Annan said in his opening remarks at the Action Group on Syria meeting that relevant countries have to make a clear choice between "either unite to secure your common interests; or divide, and surely fail each in your own individual way" as "an international crisis of grave severity now looms."

He warned of the extreme dangers posed by the conflict to Syrians, to the region and to the world.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/718136.shtml>

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

Ynetnews

## **Iran: We'll Introduce Missile Against Iron Dome**

By Dudi Cohen

July 1, 2012

As the EU's oil sanctions against Iran take effect, the Islamic Republic's Revolutionary Guards announced Sunday that they will hold a three-day surface-to-surface missile exercise, targeting bases modeled after those of foreign armies.

The IRNA agency said Sunday the maneuvers, dubbed "Great Profit 7," would begin Monday in Iran's central desert and last three days.

The report quoted Gen. Ami Ali Hajizadeh, chief of the Revolutionary Guards' airspace unit, as saying that the maneuver is aimed at assessing the accuracy and effectiveness of warheads and systems.

Hajizadeh added that Iran will soon introduce a new missile that can also penetrate the Iron Dome missile defense system, threatening that if Israel plans any attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, "They will provide us a reason to remove Israel from the earth."

He said Israel is not capable of attacking Iran "since it was defeated by Hezbollah" in 2006.

However, in a conflicting report, Fars new agency quoted Hajizadeh as saying that the range of the new missile is only 300 kilometers.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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Iran has reportedly a few hundred surface-to-surface missiles with a range of approximately 2,000 kilometers (1,200 miles), which can reach Israel, southern Europe and other states in the Persian Gulf, where US maintains military bases.

The announcement coincides with the beginning of a European Union oil embargo meant to pressure Iran over its nuclear program. Iran denies Western suspicions that it wants to build nuclear weapons.

The announcement came after US Army General Martin Dempsey said Friday that the United States and Israel are expected to hold a joint military exercise sometime around October or November, after postponing it earlier this year.

In response to the oil embargo, Iranian Central Bank governor Mahmoud Bahmani told Mehr news agency that his country has "plans" to deal with the embargo, and warned that Tehran will confront hostile policies against it. According to Bahmani, Iran has enough hard currency to meet its import needs.

<http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4249815,00.html>

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

Irish Times

## **Iran Threatens To Wipe Israel 'Off The Face Of The Earth'**

July 2, 2012

IRAN ANNOUNCED missile tests yesterday and threatened to wipe Israel "off the face of the Earth" if the Jewish state attacked it, brandishing some of its starkest threats on the day Europe began enforcing an oil embargo and harsh new sanctions.

The European sanctions – including a ban on imports of Iranian oil by EU states and measures that make it difficult for other countries to trade with Iran – were enacted earlier this year but mainly came into effect yesterday.

They are designed to break Iran's economy and force it to curb nuclear work that western countries say is aimed at producing an atomic weapon. It has been shown in recent months that sanctions have already had a significant effect on Iran's economy.

Israel says it could attack Iran if diplomacy fails to force Tehran to abandon its nuclear aims. The US also says military force is on the table as a last resort, but US officials have repeatedly encouraged the Israelis to be patient while new sanctions take effect. Washington said the EU's oil

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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ban might force Tehran to give ground at the next round of nuclear talks, scheduled for this week in Istanbul.

Announcing three days of missile tests in the coming week, Revolutionary Guards general Amir Ali Hajizadeh said the exercises should be seen as a message “that the Islamic Republic of Iran is resolute in standing up to . . . bullying, and will respond to any possible evil decisively and strongly”.

Any attack on Iran by Israel would be answered resolutely: “If they take any action, they will hand us an excuse to wipe them off the face of the Earth,” said Gen Hajizadeh, according to state news agency Irna.

The missile tests would target mock-ups of air bases in the region, he said, adding that its ability to strike US bases in the Gulf protected Iran from US support for Israel. “US bases in the region are within range of our missiles and weapons, and therefore they certainly will not co-operate with the regime [Israel].”

Iran has repeatedly unnerved oil markets by threatening reprisals if it were to be attacked or its trade disrupted. The threat against the Jewish state echoed words Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad spoke in 2005, saying Israel “must be wiped off the page of time” – a phrase often translated as “wiped off the map” and cited by Israel to show how allowing Iran to get nuclear arms would be a threat to its existence

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2012/0702/1224319179464.html>

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

China Daily

## **China Opposes Unilateral Sanctions Against Iran**

By Zhou Wa

June 30, 2012

China reiterated its opposition to unilateral sanctions against Iran, Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei said on Friday, after Washington exempted China and Singapore from sanctions over purchases of oil from Iran.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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US President Barack Obama is keen to persuade all countries around the world to join the US in sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program because Obama is under pressure in his re-election campaign, analysts said.

China is always opposed to one country's unilateral sanctions against another country on the basis of its domestic law. It is even less acceptable for such unilateral sanctions to be imposed on a third country.

Hong made the remarks at a daily news briefing in response to the decision by the US State Department.

China's import of crude oil from Iran through normal channels is to meet the needs of its economic development, Hong said, adding that the import "is completely legitimate and justified".

"This does not violate any UN Security Council resolutions or undermine the interests of a third party or the international community," said Hong.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Thursday announced Washington's decision to exempt China and Singapore from sanctions over imports of Iranian oil because the two countries reduced oil purchases from Iran significantly, according to Xinhua.

With the decision, banks from the two countries can avoid financial sanctions from the US for a renewable period of 180 days, if they handle transactions for Iranian oil in the period.

Saying that major economies were united in pressuring Teheran, Washington did not grant exemptions to smaller-scale importers, said Xinhua.

The US will block foreign financial institutions from accessing its financial market, if their governments purchase Iranian crude oil from Thursday, according to the National Defense Authorization Act signed by Obama in late 2011 to pressure Iran to stop its nuclear project.

But Washington exempted 10 members of the European Union and Japan in March and another seven economies — India, Malaysia, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Taiwan — in early June.

Clinton warned that Iran's continued violation of its international nuclear obligations will carry an enormous economic cost, saying the sharp decrease in Iran's oil exports from some 2.5 million barrels per day in 2011 to about 1.5 million barrels per day at present, means lost revenues of \$8 billion every quarter in real terms, according to Xinhua.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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The US essentially forces all countries around the world to choose between Washington and Teheran over its proposed financial sanctions, said Hua Liming, former Chinese ambassador to Iran.

According to Zhu Feng, a professor of international affairs at Peking University, the economic interests of Chinese enterprises would be strongly harmed if they were subject to financial sanctions from the US.

"Washington attempted to 'kidnap' the international community to stand by it regarding the Iranian issue," Hua said, adding that the US has no right to force other countries to implement its domestic law.

Hua said Obama was under a great deal of pressure over the issue from his Republican rival Mitt Romney, so he had to increase sanctions against Iran.

The UN Security Council imposed four rounds of sanctions on Iran between 2006 and 2010 because it refused to halt its nuclear enrichment program, which, the US and its allies suspect, is being used to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran insists that its nuclear program is for civilian use only, but the US and EU have imposed further sanctions. The EU's full oil embargo of Iran will start on Sunday.

[http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/30/content\\_15538272.htm](http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-06/30/content_15538272.htm)

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

CHOSUNILBO

## **The Story Behind the Korea-Japan Military Pact**

July 2, 2012

Korea and Japan are to sign their first military cooperation pact since the end of Japan's occupation of Korea in 1945. "If things go as planned, the two nations will sign the pact on Friday," Foreign Ministry spokesman Cho Byung-jae told reporters Thursday.

The pact allows Seoul and Tokyo to exchange classified military intelligence on North Korea's nuclear and missile programs as well as information about China's growing military power. Other pacts that have been mooted, on military logistics and equipment sharing, have been put on the back burner given entrenched public resentment of the former colonizers here.

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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Warships from South Korea, the U.S., and Japan take part in trilateral military exercises in international waters south of Jeju Island on June 22. /Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

## **Intelligence on North Korea**

Given the sensitivity of the pact, there were signs that the government tried to smuggle it past public notice. It was brought up and passed in the Cabinet on Wednesday without review at the lower ministerial level, and the government did not mention it in a press briefing immediately after the Cabinet meeting.

But government officials insist the need to share military intelligence is greater than ever in view of North Korea's nuclear and missile threats. Experts believe the real reason is pressure from Washington to forge a closer three-way alliance to keep China in check. "Washington had proposed joint military drills for Korea, the U.S. and Japan for years, and the information sharing agreement is something the U.S. had been asking for in the same context," a government source here said on condition of anonymity. The source added the plans have "strategic significance" vis-a-vis China's growing might.

The bilateral pact provides the legal framework for Seoul and Tokyo to share, protect and manage military intelligence. They will be able to share intelligence not only on North Korean troops, nuclear weapons and missiles, but on Chinese naval movements too.

Military officials here said there is no need to worry since the pact is merely a framework authorizing the sharing of military intelligence and does not stipulate that Seoul must hand over classified information to Tokyo.

But some experts object that the military intelligence Japan has gathered about North Korea is no more sophisticated than the information Seoul has obtained from the U.S. or by its own efforts. "What country in the world has as much intelligence information on North Korea as we do?" said one intelligence expert. "If you look at its benefits and losses, Japan has more to gain."

## **U.S. Pressure**

The U.S. is seeking to strengthen U.S.-Korea-Japan military cooperation as part of its strategy to keep China in check. But Seoul has been less than enthusiastic given strong lingering resentment among Koreans over Japan's past atrocities. Whenever they had the chance, U.S. officials have urged the government here to hold military drills involving all three countries, but the only trilateral military exercise Seoul has agreed to so far has been rescue drills like the one held last week in the East China Sea.



"Japan and the U.S. have shared military intelligence since they signed an information sharing pact, but the U.S. had been frustrated since no such accord exists between Korea and Japan," a government official said. As soon as the Cabinet approved the pact on Wednesday, the U.S. State Department issued a statement welcoming the move.

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta apparently asked Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin during the "2+2" meeting between the foreign and defense ministers earlier this month to rush the accord, but Seoul denies this.

[http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2012/06/29/2012062900980.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/06/29/2012062900980.html)

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

NTD

## **Korean Ex-Military Official Warns of Nuclear Threat from North**

June 29, 2012

A high-ranking former military official in South Korea says nuclear threats from North Korea are much more serious than we think. It comes after North Korea vowed to "bolster its nuclear deterrent" after Friday's US-South Korean military drills near the border.

On the 25th of June 1950, six decades ago North Korean communist armed forces attacked South Korea, starting the Korean War. A cease-fire was agreed to in 1953, but the countries are still technically at war.

The retired high-ranking South Korean military official says South Korean citizens are too relaxed about the potential nuclear threat from North Korea.

Former South Korean Military Official:

"South Korean people don't think that North Korea's nuclear weapons are a big threat, they feel too comfortable about it. But the threat is much more than we think."

China has recently been accused of assisting North Korea with military aid, ignoring UN Sanctions on the country.

Former South Korean Military Official:

"China has continued to be supportive of North Korea. If China is helping North Korea build anything nuclear, we can't solve that problem with our military, we have to deal with it politically. South Korea has to stop China with economic sanctions."



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Meanwhile, the US and South Korea have made an agreement earlier this month to strengthen joint defense ties in response to North Korea's missile development.

The former military official says it will put pressure on the North to help control the communist regime that is frequently threatening the South.

Former South Korean Military Official:

"South Korea has started a missile defense system with the U.S. army in South Korea. If South Korea is perfectly ready for the attack it will put more pressure on North Korea."

A North Korea expert, Dr. Yuseok Seo, agrees.

Dr. Yuseok Seo, Institute of North Korea Studies:

"...Recently South Korea has revealed new types of weapons that can defend or attack North Korea's missiles that could suppress aggression from the North."

[http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv\\_en/news\\_asia/2012-06-29/korean-ex-military-official-warns-of-nuclear-threat-from-north.html](http://english.ntdtv.com/ntdtv_en/news_asia/2012-06-29/korean-ex-military-official-warns-of-nuclear-threat-from-north.html)

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

RT

## **Panetta Pleads For Missile Defense Dollars**

June 28, 2012

US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta urged lawmakers not to renege on their promises to fund NATO's new missile defense system, saying such a decision could jeopardize US relations with its European allies.

MEADS (or Medium Extended Air and Missile Defense System) was to act as NATO's new missile defense shield, designed to replace the Patriot air and missile defenses which form the backbone of the existing system. However, the congress ruled last year that deploying MEADS is impossibly expensive given the budget restraints and economic climate in the US. The funding of the project will stop after the "Proof of Concept" test phase ending in 2013. But even that may run short of cash. Three separate committees have already voted to cut the 400 million dollars from the 2013 US budget needed for the final stage of the project. Now it's up to the

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Senate Appropriations Committee to decide on the matter. Panetta urged the Chairman of the Committee Daniel Inouye not to pull the plug on funding. It is the last chance to approve the funding without risking a White House veto on the decision.

MEADS is being jointly developed by the US, Germany, and Italy, with the US footing 58% of the bill. The system has been in development since the beginning of the 1990's with a cumulative price tag of \$4 billion.

However, the US congress has been frustrated by project overruns and high costs, spending money to develop a theoretical missile defense system that they can't even afford to deploy.

Panetta strongly argued that by funding the project in its last year of the test phase, the US could at least reap the benefits of a 360-degree long-range surveillance radar that would greatly improve missile defense in the future.

In a letter to Senator Inouye, Panetta also stated that failing to fund the final year of the MEADS project would *"be viewed by our allies as reneging on our promises."*

*"A decision by Congress to prohibit any additional funding for MEADS at this late date would diminish the consensus reached in Chicago,"* Panetta said, referring to the agreement to split missile defense costs between Europe and America at the NATO summit in Chicago last May.

*"Failure to meet our funding obligations could negatively affect allied willingness to join future cooperative endeavors" and "would likely lead to a dispute with Germany and Italy."*

US Defense undersecretary for acquisition, technology and logistics Frank Kendall wrote separately that pulling out of its contracts with Italian and German developers would force a heavy restructuring of their agreements, and incur termination, research, and defense costs at a later date that would equal more than the 400 million dollars Panetta is asking for.

Furthermore, he hypothesized the move might encourage Italy and Germany to look to non-US solutions for air defense, and undermine what the US calls collective responsibility for European defense.

Leon Panetta echoed that sentiment, stating *"The United States relies on allies to share the burden of peacekeeping and defense in coalition activities...In this context, I believe that it is important to live up to our commitments to our allies."*

Still, while the panel has recognized the necessity of reaping the technological benefits of completing the program, they still voiced their concerns about *"the historical management of the*

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*program” and the fact “that it has taken the Department three years to conclude the program was simply unaffordable.”*

<http://www.rt.com/news/cut-run-stop-missile-978/>

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

**Issue No. 1012, 3 July 2012**

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