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Articles & Other Documents:

Featured Article: China's Missile Advances Aimed at Thwarting US Defenses, Analysts Say

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United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
Phone: 334.953.7538 | Fax: 334.953.7530

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The Daily Star – Lebanon

IAEA Head "Not Optimistic" on Access to Iran Military Site

August 22, 2012
By Ritsuko Ando & Fredrik Dahl

HELSINKI/VIENNA: The U.N. nuclear watchdog chief played down chances of a breakthrough when talks with Iran resume on Friday but said the agency would pursue access to a military site that diplomats say may have been cleansed of evidence of illicit nuclear activity.

Visiting the Parchin complex has become a priority for the International Atomic Energy Agency as it seeks to end what the West sees as Iranian stonewalling of an IAEA investigation into allegations that Tehran has sought to design a nuclear weapon.

"I cannot be too optimistic ... We have been making our best efforts in a constructive spirit to work out an agreement between Iran and IAEA, but so far we have not been successful in reaching agreement," agency Director General Yukiya Amano told reporters on Wednesday during a visit to Finland.

"I have no indication this will change very soon," he said.

Citing satellite images, Western diplomats say Iran has demolished some small buildings and moved earth at Parchin in an apparent attempt to purge incriminating evidence from a site where the IAEA believe tests in a steel chamber relevant to nuclear arms were carried out, possibly a decade ago.

Amano said the IAEA still wanted access, but that apparent efforts to sanitise Parchin could impede the agency's inquiry.

"Through the satellite imagery we think that Iran is moving soil, demolishing buildings, using water, removing fences, doing landscape activities. We think this would hamper our verification activities," he said, echoing previous comments.

"Nevertheless we keep on requesting Iran to give us access to the building at the site of Parchin."

Iran denies accusations that it wants to develop nuclear arms technology, saying it is after civilian atomic energy only.

But its refusal to open up its nuclear work to unfettered IAEA inspections that could pin down whether it is purely peaceful or not has led to tougher international sanctions against Iran and heightened speculation that Israel, Tehran's arch-enemy, might bomb its nuclear sites as a last resort.

"I have heard that there is currently a lot of clean-up going on at Parchin," one diplomat accredited to the IAEA said, who like others said such activity came to light only after the IAEA mentioned Parchin in a detailed report late last year.

Another diplomat told Reuters that he believed the Islamic Republic would not allow access to Parchin "unless they are extremely confident that there will be nothing found".

A U.S. think-tank, the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), said this month that satellite imagery of Parchin showed "what appears to be the final result of considerable sanitisation and earth-displacement activity".

Iran says Parchin, about 30 km (20 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran, is a conventional military site and has dismissed allegations aired about it as "ridiculous".

URANIUM PARTICLES?

Friday's IAEA-Iran talks in Vienna could offer a last-minute chance for Tehran to influence the content of a pending agency report on Iran if Iranian authorities were to offer concessions regarding access to sites, documents and officials.

The latest quarterly report will be submitted to the agency's 35-nation governing board, which convenes on Sept. 10-14 with Iran likely to again dominate the agenda.

Amano said the IAEA had not drawn any conclusions yet.

"We are not saying Iran has nuclear weapons, we are not saying Iran has made a decision (to that end)," he said.

"(But) because pieces of information do indicate activities..., we would like Iran to engage with us to clarify these issues," he said, alluding to suspicions of possible military dimensions to Tehran's atomic programme.

The IAEA made clear in earlier rounds of talks this year that its overriding request is to go to Parchin.

Iran, for its part, says it must first agree a framework for the IAEA's inquiry before possibly allowing access - a stance dismissed by Western diplomats as delaying tactics.

Even if Iran did grant a visit to Parchin, U.N. inspectors would probably uncover no hard evidence of nuclear arms-related work, according to proliferation expert Mark Fitzpatrick at the International Institute for Strategic Studies think-tank.

"The clean-up probably could not totally remove uranium particles, but they wouldn't be enriched and Iran would be able to offer exculpatory explanations," Fitzpatrick told Reuters.

http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Aug-22/185371-iaea-head-not-optimistic-on-access-to-iran-military-site.ashx#axzz24JEoCSY1

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Los Angeles Times

U.S. Has Plans in Place to Secure Syria Chemical Arms

The contingency plans call for sending U.S. special forces into Syria to protect or destroy any unguarded stockpiles to keep them from militants, officials say.

By David S. Cloud and Shashank Bengali, *Los Angeles Times*

August 22, 2012

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has made contingency plans to send small teams of special operations troops into Syria if the White House decides it needs to secure chemical weapons depots now controlled by security forces loyal to President Bashar Assad, senior U.S. officials said.

President Obama warned this week that any effort by Assad to move or use his arsenal of chemical munitions in the country's conflict would cross a "red line," implying it could prompt swift U.S. intervention.

But Pentagon planners are more focused on protecting or destroying any Syrian stockpiles that are left unguarded and at risk falling into the hands of rebel fighters or militias aligned with Al Qaeda, Hezbollah or other militant groups.

Securing the sites would probably involve stealthy raids by special operations teams trained to handle such weapons, and precision airstrikes to incinerate the chemicals without dispersing them in the air, the officials said. U.S. satellites and drone aircraft already maintain partial surveillance of the sites.

U.S. intelligence agencies believe Syria has over the years produced or acquired hundreds of tons of sarin nerve agent and mustard gas, a blister agent, and has sought to develop VX, another powerful nerve gas. The toxicity of some chemical agents degrades significantly over time, so it is unclear how lethal the stockpiles are.

Experts say the chemical agents are stored in bunkers and other sites around the country. Four production facilities are near the cities of Aleppo, Hama and Homs, all tinderboxes in the 17-month uprising, as well as the coastal city of Latakia, an area considered a stronghold for Assad's Alawite religious sect.

An unclassified report by the director of national intelligence this year said Syria's chemical agents "can be delivered by aerial bombs, ballistic missiles and artillery rockets." But Syrian rockets, including Scud missiles procured from North

Korea, are notoriously inaccurate, making them ineffective for delivering a heavy concentration of toxic chemicals to a specific target.

They can be very effective, however, at creating chaos.

"The actual killing may be less important than the panic they would induce," said Leonard Spector, who heads the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Although he did not make an explicit threat, Obama's comments at the White House on Monday were widely seen as a direct warning to Assad that the U.S. would take military action if necessary to stop the use of chemical weapons. But officials said later that no large-scale U.S. intervention is likely unless it is part of an international coalition.

"You shouldn't interpret what Obama said to mean that there would be automatic military action, but rather that we would respond as part of an international effort," said one senior official.

Officials said Obama could make a unilateral decision, however, to order special forces teams to stop weapons of mass destruction from falling into the wrong hands.

Pentagon officials and senior military officers said the Syrian stockpiles seem well guarded for now, and they stressed that the White House has not ordered detailed planning of operations aimed at securing the facilities.

"We have done contingency planning but we're not doing detailed planning — identifying numbers [of troops], units and platforms — until the White House tells us we need a specific plan for this," a senior officer said.

Although U.S. officials said they are closely monitoring the unconventional weapons sites, they also acknowledge the stockpiles are large enough that some materials, such as small artillery shells filled with chemical agents, could be relocated without their knowledge.

U.S. officials told reporters last month that they had evidence Syrian forces were moving some chemical arms, apparently to keep them away from areas of fighting.

Assad's government has said it will not use chemical munitions against the Syrian people, though it has implied they could be used if foreign troops sought to intervene in the war.

"Any chemical or bacterial weapon will never be used — and I repeat will never be used — during the crisis in Syria, regardless of the developments," Jihad Makdissi, a Syrian government spokesman, told reporters last month. "These weapons are stored and secured by Syrian military forces and under its direct supervision and will never be used unless Syria faces external aggression."

Analysts say it's unclear how much of the chemical arsenal could be deployed, and they note that the agents, particularly VX and sarin, may have weakened if the regime isn't regularly refilling its stocks. U.S. intelligence officials have said that Syria, which is under international sanctions, relies heavily on foreign sources for chemicals and other key parts of its weapons program.

The VX stockpiles maintained by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's government had a shelf life of about six months, and the sarin less than two years, the EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, a network of European think tanks, said in a report last month.

"To keep those sorts of quantities replenished, you have to have a very robust program," said Charles P. Blair, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Federation of American Scientists, a Washington-based group.

In response to a reporter's question Monday, Obama mentioned Syria's biological weapons program. But that appears a minor concern at this point.

In 2008, Army Lt. Gen. Michael D. Maples, then director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, testified before Congress that Syria had "a program to develop select biological agents as weapons" and that the program was "in the research and development stage."

U.S. officials no longer appear to believe that Syria is actively pursuing a biological weapons program. The unclassified U.S. intelligence report this year said only that Syria had the infrastructure to support the development of biological weapons.

http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-us-syria-20120823,0,6157005.story

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Kansas City Star

AP NewsBreak: Nuke Agency Forms Special Iran Team

By GEORGE JAHN, *Associated Press (AP)*
Thursday, August 23, 2012

The U.N. nuclear agency is forming a special Iran team, drawing together sleuths in weapons technology, intelligence analysis, radiation and other fields of expertise as it seeks to add muscle to a probe of suspicions that Tehran worked secretly on atomic arms, diplomats tell The Associated Press.

Creating a unit focused on only one country is an unusual move for the International Atomic Energy Agency, reflecting the priority the U.N. nuclear watchdog is attaching to Iran amid fears that it is moving closer to the ability to make nuclear weapons. It also indicates frustration by top agency officials over Iran's refusal to cooperate with IAEA experts who are trying to follow up on suspicions that Tehran was — or is — secretly working on an arms program.

Iran says such allegations are based on evidence fabricated by the United States and Israel and insists its nuclear program is meant only for making reactor fuel, medical isotopes and peaceful research. But it refuses to give up uranium enrichment, which can produce both reactor fuel and the core of nuclear warheads, despite offers of fuel from abroad. And its stonewalling of the IAEA probe has increased concerns that it has something to hide.

The agency's move comes at a crucial time. With both the agency and international diplomatic efforts stalemated in attempts to engage the Islamic Republic on its nuclear program, fears are growing that tensions could spill over into armed conflict.

Israeli leaders have been loudly expressing impatience over Western diplomatic and economic moves to deter Iran and increasingly talk of attacking its nuclear facilities, though some analysts believe the saber-rattling is a bluff to increase pressure on Tehran. Iranian leaders have rejected Israel's warnings, threatening punishing retaliation.

The four diplomats, who demanded anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the restructuring plans, spoke ahead of a renewed attempt Friday by the agency to breach Iranian resistance to its requests for access to sites, documents and people linked to the suspected secret weapons-related work.

One of diplomats likened the restructuring plan to the agency's Iraq "Action Team" — the squad of experts who uncovered components of Saddam Hussein's fledgling nuclear-weapons program in the 1990s.

That unit, however, had broad on-the-ground access under U.N-mandated inspections. That's lacking in the case of Iran, which allows agency inspectors access only to its known nuclear activities and has for years blocked its attempts to probe alleged evidence of secret nuclear weapons research and development.

Asked for reaction on the IAEA plans, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's envoy to the IAEA, said: "I have not heard of such a thing, and I cannot comment." IAEA spokeswoman Gill Tudor said the agency had no immediate comment.

Danny Danon, deputy speaker of the Israeli Knesset and a member of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party, told the AP in a phone interview Thursday that Israel was "preparing for all scenarios." He also was dismissive of the agency's new Iran squad.

"We are getting close to the point where the window of opportunity will be closed to us, and that's why you hear all those voices," he said when asked about the war rhetoric. "We have seen too many teams, too many summits, too much talk. It is about time to take action."

Instead of focusing only one country, agency experts up to now have been tasked with following dozens of nations as they look for signs indicating secret attempts to make nuclear weapons.

Some IAEA officials feel that means that they often spend an inordinate amount of time monitoring countries that are unlikely to engage in such activities — Western European nations for instance — meaning that not enough attention is paid to potential proliferators.

Under the planned reorganization, said one of the diplomats, a "dedicated team" of about 20 experts will be drawn from the main IAEA pool to focus solely on the agency's Iran investigation.

The United States and other nations on the IAEA's 35-nation board that are suspicious of Tehran's nuclear activity are expected to welcome the move.

But two of the diplomats spoke of opposition by board member Russia, which has supported diplomatic efforts to nudge Iran toward a nuclear compromise while strongly opposing harsh sanctions as a means of achieving that goal.

They said senior agency officials had met recently with ranking Russian representatives in efforts to dispel Moscow's fears that the reorganization would place too much weight on intelligence gathering — an agency function viewed with suspicion by the Russians.

At the Friday meeting, senior IAEA officials are expected to press Iranian representatives for access to a site at the Parchin military complex southeast of Tehran that they suspect was used for nuclear-weapons-linked experiments.

Tehran says a visit is possible only after extensive planning and a detailed outline of procedures. IAEA officials in turn privately describe that caveat as a stalling tactic, citing satellite photos apparently showing a major clean-up effort at the site.

Iran has repeatedly turned down IAEA requests for access and agency chief Yukiya Amano was downbeat ahead of Friday's talks.

"I cannot say that I am optimistic about the outcome of the coming meeting," he told reporters in Helsinki, Finland, on Wednesday. "I cannot say when we can reach agreement."

http://www.kansascity.com/2012/08/23/3775543/ap-newsbreak-nuke-agency-forms.html

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Bloomberg News

Atomic Investigators Meet with Iran over Access to Sites

By Jonathan Tirone
August 24, 2012

United Nations atomic investigators are meeting with Iranian officials to try to gain access to disputed documents, people and sites allegedly linked to the Persian Gulf nation's nuclear work.

Today's meeting in Iran's embassy in Vienna is the first face-to-face discussion since talks over a so-called structured approach to the atomic investigation broke down in June.

"We are here today to continue our discussions with Iran and seek agreement on a structured approach to resolve all the outstanding issues," Herman Nackaerts, the IAEA's top atomic inspector, told reporters as he arrived at the embassy. "Of course we will also ask Iran where they are with their responses to our request for access to Parchin and other questions."

The IAEA, which said earlier this week it was skeptical that a deal will be reached, is preparing to issue its quarterly report on Iran's nuclear work. The Islamic Republic has steadily increased its supply of enriched uranium, the key ingredient for atomic power and weapons, since beginning the industrial process in 2006.

The last meeting between Iran and the IAEA collapsed on June 8. Inspectors want access to sites, including the Parchin military complex, beyond what is mandated by the agency's agreements with the country. While Iran's declared nuclear facilities have been subject to 4,000 man-days of inspections since 2003, the IAEA has said it cannot ensure inspectors have seen the full scope of the country's atomic work.

New Centrifuges

Iran has installed hundreds of new centrifuges at its mountainside Fordo facility in recent months and may be accelerating production of nuclear fuel, the New York Times reported, citing unidentified diplomats. The IAEA said in June that Iran had already installed pipes and casings for hundreds of additional machines beyond the 500 in operation. The Fordo complex is built to house 3,000 centrifuges, the IAEA said.

While Iran says its nuclear work is for peaceful purposes, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said today that the latest reports on the country's activities are further proof it's intending to create atomic weapons.

"Just yesterday we received additional evidence that Iran is making accelerated progress toward achieving nuclear weaponization in total disregard of the demands of the international community," Netanyahu said, according to a text message from his office.

Sixth Round

Mariano Grossi, the IAEA's assistant director general for policy, was due along with Nackaerts to attend today's talks. Iran's IAEA envoy, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, was heading his country's negotiating team, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported on its website.

It's the sixth round of talks since the IAEA and Iran began negotiations over widening access to suspect facilities. IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano announced an agreement on May 22, only to have the breakthrough fall apart two weeks later amid Iranian accusations of spying.

Commercial satellite images show Iran has completed cleanup activity at a suspected nuclear weapons-related site, the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security wrote in a July 31 report. The IAEA received intelligence information from member states that allegedly show Iran built a blast chamber at Parchin that could be used to test nuclear-bomb components.

http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-08-24/atomic-investigators-meet-with-iran-over-access-to-sites.html

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

North Korea Could Have Fuel for 48 Nuclear Weapons by 2015

North Korea will have been able to build as many as 48 nuclear weapons by 2015 unless the international community is able to make sanctions already imposed on the regime work.

By Julian Ryall in Tokyo
20 August 2012

The stark warning about Pyongyang's nuclear stockpile was issued by The Institute for Science and International Security, which projected three scenarios for North Korea's atomic weapons programme.

In the best-case scenario for the next four years outlined by the researchers, North Korea will have been able to use the centrifuges at its Yongbyon nuclear plant to produce sufficient low enriched uranium for a maximum of 25 nuclear weapons.

That figure is an increase of only two warheads from its estimated nuclear arsenal at present.

The 40-page report, jointly authored by David Albright, head of the Washington-based institute, and Christina Walrond, a research institute, is based on scientific and statistical data for its conclusions and offers a more worrying worst-case scenario.

"If North Korea has two centrifuge plants, however, it could produce a much larger quantity of WGU (weapons-grade uranium)," the analysts concluded. "It could have 37-48 nuclear weapons, or an increase of 25 weapons, most of which would be produced in 2015 and 2016."

To date, North Korea's research has been focused on plutonium weapons and the regime carried out nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

Those tests, along with the test firing of a nuclear-capable missile in April, triggered international condemnation and the tightening of sanctions, but Pyongyang remains defiant.

Analysts believe that North Korean scientists are now focusing their research on uranium and its potential as a weapon.

Pyongyang has a minimum of six – and potentially as many as 18 – plutonium bombs, while another recent ISIS study predicted that North Korea will complete construction of a new light-water reactor at Yongbyon in late 2013.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/9487574/North-Korea-could-have-fuel-for-48-nuclear-weapons-by-2015.html

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Tuesday, August 21, 2012

NKorea Completes Key Step in Reactor Construction

The Associated Press (AP)

SEOUL, South Korea — A new satellite image shows North Korea has completed a key step in the construction of a light-water reactor at its main nuclear complex, though it may take several more years before it is fully operational, an analyst said Tuesday.

North Korea says the reactor being built since 2010 at its Yongbyon complex is for electricity generation. But some experts have questioned the North's intention since the reactor would give the country a reason to enrich uranium that could be used in nuclear bombs at higher levels.

North Korea revealed an industrial-scale uranium enrichment facility in 2010 and has vowed to bolster its nuclear capability, citing what it calls hostile U.S. policies toward the country.

The satellite images taken by the GeoEye-1 satellite on Aug. 6 show a dome has been hoisted on top of the reactor building, Allison Puccioni at IHS Jane's Defence Weekly said in a statement provided to The Associated Press.

"The emplacement of the dome is a significant development, although it may take several more years for the facility to be completed and brought into full operation," Puccioni said. The dome had been lying on the ground beside the building for a year, she said.

A U.S.-based institute said in May that satellite images showed that North Korea had resumed construction of the reactor after months of inactivity. An image from a commercial satellite dated April 30 showed progress in construction of the containment building for the reactor, according to the U.S.-Korea Institute at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

International disarmament talks on North Korea's nuclear program were last held in December 2008. North Korea walked away from the negotiations in 2009 and later exploded its second nuclear device.

http://www.ajc.com/news/nation-world/nkorea-completes-key-step-1503170.html

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Boston Herald

US: Missile Defense for NKorea Threat, Not China

By Associated Press (AP)
Thursday, August 23, 2012

WASHINGTON — The United States is in discussions with close ally Japan about expanding a missile defense system in Asia, the top U.S. general said Thursday.

Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was commenting on a Wall Street Journal report that the U.S. is discussing positioning an early warning radar in southern Japan, supplementing one already in place in the country's north, to contain threats from North Korea and to counter China's military.

The State Department, however, said the missile defense system is not directed against China.

Dempsey said no decisions have been reached on expanding the radar.

"But it's certainly a topic of conversation because missile defense is important to both of our nations," Dempsey told reporters at the start of a meeting with his visiting Japanese counterpart, Gen. Shigeru Iwasaki, at the Pentagon.

Japan has worked closely with the U.S. for several years on missile defense, and has both land- and sea-based missile launchers.

North Korea's ballistic missiles are considered a threat to security in the Asia-Pacific region because of the risk of conflict erupting on the divided and heavily militarized Korean peninsula, and because of the secretive North's nuclear weapons program. The long-range rockets it is developing have been test-fired over Japan and potentially could reach the U.S.

The North conducted its latest long-range rocket launch in April, defying a U.N. ban. The North said the launch was intended to send an observation satellite into space but it drew international condemnation as the rocket technology is similar to that used for ballistic missiles. The rocket disintegrated soon after takeoff.

U.S. defense planners are also concerned about China's military buildup, including its missile capabilities. The U.S. wants to enhance its longstanding military presence in the region as part of a rebalancing of its forces after a decade of fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. China views this as part of a strategy to contain its rise.

To avoid misunderstandings, the U.S. has sought to boost exchanges with China's military, including a visit this week by the People's Liberation Army's deputy chief of general staff, Lt. Gen. Cai Yingting.

Cai is visiting U.S. Army bases in Texas, Missouri and Hawaii, as well as the Pentagon, in order to "see Army capabilities and discuss issues of mutual interest with senior military and defense leaders," Pentagon spokeswoman Cathy Wilkinson said in an e-mail to The Associated Press.

"Transparency and reciprocity are the foundation of a sustained, reliable and meaningful military-to-military relationship," Wilkinson said.

Cai's visit follows one in May by Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Liang Guanglie.

The State Department said the U.S. is taking a phased approach to missile defense in Asia, as it is in Europe and the Middle East.

"These are defensive systems. They don't engage unless missiles have been fired," department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told a news conference. "In the case of Asian systems, they are designed against a missile threat from North Korea. They are not directed at China."

She said the U.S. has broad discussions with China through military and political channels about the systems' intent.

http://news.bostonherald.com/news/international/general/view/20120824us_missile_defense_for_nkorea_threat_not_china/srvc=home&position=recent

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Washington Free Beacon

Chinese Missile Tests Continue

China conducts third long-range missile test in 4 weeks
By Bill Gertz
August 23, 2012

China's military continued its string of strategic missile flight tests on Monday by firing off a third intercontinental ballistic missile in four weeks, according to U.S. officials.

U.S. military sensors detected the latest flight test, which took place in the early morning hours at China's Wuzhai Missile and Space Test Center, near the town of Wuzhai in northwestern Shanxi province, about 267 miles southwest of Beijing.

The missile was tracked to impact range in the western Chinese desert and was identified as a CSS-4 Mod 2 silo-based ICBM.

It followed the first flight test of a new road-mobile DF-41 multiple-warhead missile on July 24 and the test firing of a new submarine-launched ballistic missile, the JL-2, which is also assessed to be capable of carrying multiple warheads.

It could not be learned if the CSS-4, also called the DF-5A, was assessed to have tested or was configured for multiple warheads or dummy warheads used to fool missile defenses.

U.S. intelligence analysts have said that China is expected to field multiple warhead missiles in the near future. One reason for upgrading from single warhead missiles is China's concern that U.S. missile defenses in the future could render the single-warhead arsenal impotent.

For example, a recently translated Chinese military report stated that U.S. plans to develop multiple kill vehicle anti-missile interceptors "poses a new threat to defense penetration by ballistic missiles." The report called for increasing missile warhead penetration by using stealth warhead designs and adding warheads or dummy warheads that can confuse missile defense targeting sensors.

The Pentagon did not confirm the three flight tests publicly due to restrictions on discussing intelligence matters, a military spokesman said.

But a senior defense official said the tests aren't "ringing alarm bells. And it's not at all certain that … the Chinese have exactly perfected all of their missile technologies. That may explain some of the recent testing."

It is not known if the three recent flight tests were successful, but officials said initial indications from sensors were that the missiles did not fail in flight.

A third U.S. official said the tests highlight China's growing strategic missile arsenal, forces that remain shrouded in secrecy and appear to be moving in the direction of developing a "first strike" attack capability.

China officially has claimed its nuclear forces are mainly "second strike" weapons that would be used to respond to a nuclear attack on China.

China's communist rulers have said China would not be the first to use nuclear weapons in a conflict.

However, that policy has been questioned by the Pentagon due to statements from Chinese military officials who have discussed the use of nuclear weapons against the United States that were not a response to a U.S. nuclear attack, such as long-range, precision, conventionally armed cruise missile strikes.

By contrast, defense officials have said unusual Air Force delays in conducting a U.S. strategic missile test is a sign that policy officials in the Obama administration may be putting off the missile tests for political, rather than technical, reasons.

A U.S. Minuteman III ICBM was set for earlier this year in California. But the test was delayed three times, ostensibly for technical and range safety concerns.

A defense official said political interference and concerns about Chinese and Russian reactions to the Minuteman test were behind the delays, not just the technical problems.

Spokesmen at the Air Force Global Strike Command, which is in charge of the Minuteman III test, disputed that political factors were behind the test delay and said technical and range safety issues were the reason. The missile test is now set for Nov. 14.

Russia, too, is building a new long-range missile and has not hesitated to carry out tests of both submarine-launched missiles, which have had problems, and a missile that Russian officials have said is designed to penetrate U.S. missile defenses.

The Chinese missile flight tests coincide with the visit to the Pentagon this week by Chinese Lt. Gen. Cai Yingting, deputy chief of the general staff of the Communist Party-controlled People's Liberation Army, and four other generals. It could not be learned if Cai will be questioned on the missile tests during meetings with senior Army and defense leaders.

Analysts said the most recent ICBM test was significant.

"It is likely that a CSS-4 Mod 2 or DF-5 Mod 2 would be the same as the DF-5B, which was said to me in 2010 to be the multiple warhead version of the DF-5," said Richard Fisher, a Chinese military affairs specialist.

"So it is possible that in just one month's time the PLA has tested two new multiple warhead land-based ICBMs and one submarine launched SLBM that could eventually carry multiple warheads," said Fisher, with the International Assessment and Strategy Center.

"At a minimum, the PLA wants to tell us that it will be pointing more nuclear warheads our way and faster."

Hans M. Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the private Federation of American Scientists, said the CSS-4 test indicates that the Chinese plan to keep their older, liquid-fueled missiles in the arsenal instead of replacing them with solid-fuel missiles that are more rapidly fired.

Kristensen also said the CSS-4 is a likely candidate for multiple warheads.

"The U.S. intelligence community has stated for more than a decade that China for years has had the capability to develop and deploy multiple warheads, if it decided to do so, and that the CSS-4 would be the most likely carrier," he said.

"One of the factors that has the potential to trigger such a decision would be a U.S. missile defense system that, combined with advanced conventional strike capabilities, could weaken Chinese leaders confidence in the reliability of their retaliatory nuclear force," Kristensen said.

China's current deployment of mobile, more survivable DF-31 and DF-31A ICBMs "probably makes it less likely that China would see a need to deploy multiple warheads on their missiles, although deployment of penetration aids or decoys might be more likely," he said.

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http://freebeacon.com/chinese-missile-tests-continue/

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Times of India – India

China's Missile Advances Aimed at Thwarting US Defenses, Analysts Say

By KEITH BRADSHER, NYT News Service
August 24, 2012

HONG KONG: China is moving ahead with the development of a new and more capable generation of intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched missiles, giving it a greater capability to hit targets in the United States and to overwhelm any missile defense systems, military analysts said this week.

China's steady improvements in its military capabilities have caused concern in Congress and among American allies in East Asia, particularly as the improvements have coincided with a more assertive Chinese position regarding territorial claims in the East China Sea and South China Sea.

The Global Times, a newspaper directly controlled by the Chinese Communist Party, reported on Wednesday that China was developing the capability to put multiple warheads on intercontinental ballistic missiles, or ICBMs. But the newspaper disputed a report in Jane's Defense Weekly that the latest Chinese ICBM, the Dongfeng-41, had already been tested last month.

Larry Wortzel, a former US military intelligence officer and retired Army colonel who is now a commissioner of the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a panel created by Congress, said that China was developing the capability to put as many as 10 nuclear warheads on an ICBM plus a series of dummy warheads. The dummy warheads would have heat and electromagnetic devices designed to trick missile defense systems into perceiving them as being as threatening as the actual warheads, he said.

"The bigger implication of this is that as they begin to field a force of missiles with multiple warheads, it means everything we assume about the size of their nuclear arsenal becomes wrong," he said.

China has separately tested submarine-launched missiles as well in recent weeks, and could use these to outflank American missile detection systems, Colonel Wortzel said. Most of the radar arrays that the United States has deployed to detect ballistic missiles were built during the cold war to detect attacks over polar routes.

Sun Zhe, a professor of international relations at Tsinghua University in Beijing and a frequent commentator on US-China relations, said that China was developing its military forces only to respond to continued efforts by other countries, particularly the United States, to continue improving their own forces.

"We have again and again said that we will not be the first country to use nuclear force," he said. "We need to be able to defend ourselves, and our main threat, I'm afraid, comes from the United States."

The United States has been mulling where it can best place additional high-tech radar systems designed to track ballistic missiles. American forces currently have one in northern Japan and others that are deployed from time to time at sea. The Wall Street Journal reported this week on discussions of whether to put two more on land, in southern Japan and in Southeast Asia.

American officials have said repeatedly that their main concern is North Korea, which has been testing long-range missiles and developing nuclear weapons. But Chinese officials and experts have been deeply suspicious that American missile defense systems are aimed at their country's forces as well.

"I have no doubt that the one of the goals of the missile defenses is to contain threats from North Korea, but objectively speaking, a high-tech expansion of US military biceps impacts China, too," said Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations at Renmin University in Beijing, adding that discussions have taken place in China on whether to develop missile defense systems as well.

http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/Chinas-missile-advances-aimed-at-thwarting-US-defenses-analysts-say/articleshow/15633897.cms

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India Broadcasting Network (IBN) Live – India

Agni-III Test Fire: India Puts China on Target

August 19, 2012

Balasore: In a bid to induct its first long-range 'China-specific' missile in the armed forces, India is contemplating a fresh test-firing of 3,500-km range nuclear-capable Agni-III missile from a defence base off the Odisha coast.

Defence sources said preparation for the launching of the country's most potent missile, Agni-III, has already begun at the Wheeler Island. The missile is expected to be flight-tested anytime in the first week of September.

The test follows the successful user trials of two Agni variant missiles __ Agni-I and Agni-II __ by the Indian Army. Both the 'Pakistan- specific' missiles have already been inducted in the armed forces.

While this will be the fifth experimental trial of Agni-III missile, its success would pave the way for its induction and propel the DRDO to go for user trials in the limited stock production (LSP) series.

"If the missile meets all mission parameters, the DRDO would definitely go for its induction by the end of this year," a defence scientist said.

The test is significant for the DRDO, which is plagued by cost and time over-runs of many indigenous projects. The missile had crashed into the Bay of Bengal just seconds after its blast-off from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) during its maiden test in 2006.

Programme director of Agni missiles and Chief Controller (Missiles and Strategic Systems) Avinash Chander told 'The Express' that the missile was planned for a fresh test, but the exact date of trial had not been fixed.

"The developmental flights of two more Agni variant missiles are also on the cards," he said.

Agni-III, which has a velocity of 5 km per second, is a short and stubby, two-stage missile that weighs 48.3 tonnes and is 16.7 metres tall with an overall diameter of 1.8 metres. It can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads weighing around 1.5 tonnes. It is propelled by solid fuels, facilitating swifter deployment compared to missiles using a mix of solid and liquid fuels.

The first test of the missile on July 9, 2006 was a failure though its second trials on April 12, 2007 and third on May 7, 2008 were successful. While its proposed trial in 2009 was put off for unknown reasons, the weapon's fourth test on February 7, 2010 was a copybook success.

"Though it is said to be ready for induction, it will still require one or two more tests before it can go for limited series production trials by the armed forces. However, two years more will be required for its operational deployment," a defence analyst said.

http://ibnlive.in.com/news/agniiii-test-fire-india-puts-china-on-target/283446-3.html

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India Broadcasting Network (IBN) Live – India

India Not to Give Up Nuclear Arms till Universal Disarmament

August 21, 2012
Press Trust of India (PTI)

USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

New Delhi: Making it clear it will not give up nuclear arms until universal disarmament is achieved, India on Tuesday said the weapons had ended attempts by global powers to blackmail it to toe a particular line.

"Nuclear weapons today are integral part of our national security and will remain so, pending non-discriminatory and global nuclear disarmament," External Affairs Minister SM Krishna said.

India's "hard-headed" leadership had fought "explicit or implicit threat" by global powers to change its "behaviour, National Security Advisor Shivshankar Menon said addressing a national conference on global nuclear disarmament to commemorate the 24 years of the Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan for a nuclear weapons free world order.

"On at least three occasions before 1998 other powers used the explicit or implicit threat of nuclear weapons to try and change India's behaviour," Menon said without elaborating.

The global powers did not succeed in changing India's behaviour because of the "hard-headed leadership we were fortunate to have," he told the conference that was attended by 1500 students from 30 institutions of higher education.

"Since we became a declared nuclear weapons state in 1998 we have not faced such threats," Menon said.

The NSA made it clear that India will continue to have nuclear weapons till universal nuclear disarmament becomes a reality.

"We do think that we would be more secure in a world that is truly free of nuclear weapons. But until we arrive at that happy state, we have no choice, and a responsibility towards our own people, to have nuclear weapons to protect them from nuclear threats," Menon said.

Observing that nuclear weapons make a contribution to the country's security in an uncertain and anarchic world, Menon said, "The possession of nuclear weapons has, empirically speaking, deterred others from attempting nuclear coercion or blackmail against India."

In an apparent reference to Pakistan, he said unlike certain other nuclear weapon states, India's weapons were not meant to redress a military imbalance, or to some perceived inferiority in conventional military terms, or to serve some tactical or operational military need on the battlefield.

Krishna, whose message was read out at the conference, said India has maintained voluntary and unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosive testing and was prepared to negotiate a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva.

"We are committed to working with the international community to advance our common objectives of non-proliferation, including through strong export controls and membership of the multilateral export regimes," he said.

"As a nuclear weapon state, India s support for global, non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament has not diminished," Krishna said listing out steps such as presenting a Working Paper on Nuclear Disarmament in the UN General Assembly.

Vice President Hamid Ansari said negotiations on FMCT have been deadlocked in the CD at a time that is more favourable since the onset of the Cold War to working towards meaningful disarmament.

Ansari said now that India has become a state with nuclear weapons, its credibility to raise the issue of global nuclear disarmament was even higher.

"India has thus become the first and thus far only nuclear power to be in the forefront of unambiguously advocating a detailed, eminently practical and comprehensive roadmap to rid the world of the danger of instant annihilation," he said.

http://ibnlive.in.com/news/india-to-keep-narms-till-universal-disarmament/284262-3.html

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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Moscow Recaps Its Missile Defense Posture

20 August 2012

Moscow warned on Monday that the implementation of the European missile defense project could become a throwback to the Cold War era.

The United States says the shield is designed to protect against "rogue states" such as Iran and North Korea.

"Any unilateral and unlimited buildup of the missile capability by one state or a group of states would lead to the preservation of Cold War hangovers, damaging strategic stability in violation of all the OSCE members' obligations not to strengthen their security at the expense of others," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said.

The project is a test of Western sincerity about its commitment to equal security in Europe, he said, reiterating Russia's demand for "legally binding guarantees" that the system will not be used against it.

These guarantees should be verifiable, he stressed.

Negotiations between Russia and NATO member states on the U.S.-led missile defense project have deadlocked over the West's reluctance to give Moscow such guarantees.

The United States scrapped plans in September 2010 for an anti-ballistic-missile defense system in the Czech Republic and Poland. Moscow welcomed the move, and then-President Dmitry Medvedev said that Russia would drop plans to deploy Iskander-M tactical missiles in its Kaliningrad Region, which borders NATO members, Poland and Lithuania.

Last year, however, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced Washington's plans to deploy a missile interceptor site in Poland by 2018.

HELSINKI, August 20 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.ria.ru/mlitary_news/20120820/175331451.html

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ITAR-TASS – Russia
21 August 2012

Russia to be Through with Chemical Weapons Elimination in 2015

MOSCOW, August 21 (Itar-Tass) — Russia will be through with the elimination of its chemical weapons stockpiles in 2015, the chief of the federal directorate for the safe keeping and elimination of chemical weapons, Colonel Vladimir Mandych told a news conference on Tuesday.

"The deadline for ridding Russia of chemical weapons stockpiles is December 31, 2015," he said.

At present Russia is implementing the federal program for the elimination of chemical weapons stockpiles adopted back in 1996. The elimination work consists of four stages. Mandych said Russia had completed three phases and was now working on the fourth.

"There have been no fundamental problems with financing it," he said. "The program's costs stand at 371 billion rubles. So far 226 billion rubles has been spent."

As the deputy chief of the chemical weapons elimination directorate has said, Russia has eliminated 26,500 tonnes of chemical weapons – about 66 percent of the total amount.

Russia is in the fourth, last chemical weapons elimination phase, which is also the most complex one.

"We are to do away with the most dangerous pieces of ammunition of complex design," Mandych said. "Their elimination is very costly and risky."

Besides, the 7,000 pieces of ammunition in substandard condition pose great risks.

As the deputy chief of the chemical weapons disposal directorate said there is no alternative to eliminating chemical weapons.

"At present chemical weapons cannot be used as a deterrent," he explained.

In its chemical weapons elimination effort Russia relies on assistance from 15 countries, including EU members and the United States.

"Basically, they provide equipment or fund the construction of disposal facilities," Mandych said.

Russia has four operational chemical weapons disposal facilities. Two have been closed down and one is still under construction.

http://www.itar-tass.com/c32/500955.html

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Navy 'Running Out of Sailors to Man Submarines'

Britain's nuclear deterrent is at risk because the Navy does not have enough sailors to man its submarines, Ministry of Defence officials admit.

By Thomas Harding, Defence Correspondent
20 August 2012

Internal documents warn that a lack of recruits for the Submarine Service may leave attack submarines and boats carrying the Trident nuclear missile stranded in port.

A separate threat comes from a predicted 15 per cent shortfall in engineers by 2015.

One in seven posts for weapons officers at the rank of lieutenant will also be vacant, raising operational questions over the boats equipped with nuclear and cruise missiles.

Many submariners are being poached by the civilian nuclear sector and those who remain are being forced to go to sea for longer and more frequently.

Adml Lord West, the former First Sea Lord, said the situation was "very worrying" and he hoped the Navy had mechanisms in place to make up for the shortfall.

The gaps facing the Submarine Service are disclosed in the Risk Register of the Defence Nuclear Executive Board.

Under the "Risk" heading of "Submarine Manpower", the MoD's internal safety watchdog said: "There is a risk that the RN will not have sufficient suitably qualified and experienced personnel to be able to support the manning requirement of the submarine fleet."

The Navy has a fleet of six attack submarines and four Vanguard boats that carry the Trident nuclear missile, but the personnel issues could mean they cannot be deployed.

The report found that the recruiting and retention of submariners was also threatening operations. "Inability to recruit, retain and develop sufficient nuclear and submarine design qualified personnel will result in an inability to support the Defence Nuclear Programme," the document said.

It also questioned whether industry can deliver the Trident replacement, warning of the "erosion of manufacturing capability, cost growth, time delay, and poor performance of contractors". The Navy is carrying out a senior officer

manpower review looking at ways to improve “quality of life” for submariners. It is understood that some submarines are putting to sea with only 85 per cent of their full complement.

Submariners are subsequently being forced to deploy more frequently and do more jobs. When the hunter-killer HMS Triumph returned home earlier this year it had been at sea for 13 out of the previous 17 months. There are 5,000 submariners in the Navy, but with deployments lasting four months or more continuously under the surface it is proving difficult to attract recruits.

A “dearth of experienced mid-career people” is threatening the Service and would continue “into the next decade”, warned the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator annual report.

Lord West said: “There’s no doubt that recruiting and keeping highly qualified nuclear engineers has been tough. Nuclear engineers have also become highly sought-after by the civil industry as this country has not trained enough.” A redacted copy of the Risk Register was provided to the Nuclear Information Service. Peter Burt, the director of NIS, which promotes nuclear safety awareness, said: “These risks highlight major pitfalls ahead and that Trident replacement is far from a forgone conclusion. How effective we are at mastering these risks will determine whether Britain can remain in the nuclear weapons business.”

A Navy spokesman said: “To ensure that the Royal Navy continues its excellent nuclear safety record, we review the nuclear propulsion programme to identify and manage any possible future risks; this report is part of that process.”

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/9486226/Navy-running-out-of-sailors-to-man-submarines.html

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San Francisco Chronicle

Livermore Lab Ignition Facility's woes

Livermore lab very likely to miss another deadline
By David Perlman, San Francisco Chronicle's science editor
Friday, August 17, 2012

Scientists who have worked for more than a decade on a multibillion-dollar project to mimic the energy of the hydrogen bomb in experiments at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory have encountered so many difficulties, they have already missed their deadline and are unlikely to achieve success soon, government experts warn.

The lab's National Ignition Facility was designed to be a substitute for underground tests of nuclear weapons, which had become a political impossibility by the early 1990s. Without testing, the nation has no way to determine the safety and reliability of its aging arsenal of atomic weapons.

The National Ignition Facility opened at Livermore to great fanfare in 1995, and two years later its leaders said they would solve the staggering scientific problems involved in controlled thermonuclear fusion by 2010 or 2011. When those deadlines came and went, facility leaders set a new goal for the end of 2012.

But a new report by the U.S. Department of Energy, which oversees the Livermore lab, now concludes that the probability that National Ignition Facility leaders can meet this deadline is "extremely low."

The report, summarizing the views of more than a dozen outside experts with access to classified insider data, says facility scientists have made progress in resolving some technical problems in replicating the effects of a hydrogen bomb blast. But other crucial and difficult experiments, the government experts say, are only half to one-third complete.

Deadline 'unrealistic'

A second report from the National Ignition Facility's own technical review committee warns that deadlines for such complex experimental efforts are "unrealistic" because the project is working in a realm filled with many scientific unknowns.

The facility's goal is to achieve what's called ignition - re-creating the exploding heart of an H-bomb in the contained and self-sustaining explosion of a single tiny pellet of hydrogen fuel hidden inside a capsule no bigger than a BB shot.

That miniature blast would be ignited by the Livermore facility's array of 192 high-energy laser beams, all focused with a precision never achieved anywhere in the world. In effect, it would re-create the blazing energy of the sun and stars inside a laboratory.

Replacing testing

Its purpose is to understand the complex physics of thermonuclear weapons so completely that the safety and reliability of America's weapons stockpile can be assured, without returning to the era of underground nuclear testing that ended 20 years ago.

The Department of Energy study, led by David Crandall, the agency's adviser on national security, noted that computer codes based in part on past nuclear weapons tests are "critical tools" for guiding National Ignition Facility scientists toward more experiments needed before they can achieve ignition. But so far those codes have proved to be only "of limited utility," the experts warn.

The committee proposed a number of highly technical steps to improve the chances of the Livermore facility's eventual success, and said several members of the group "expressed optimism about achieving ignition within a few years."

Panel sees progress

The technical review committee for the National Ignition Facility, headed by physicist Alvin Trivelpiece, retired director of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, said the Livermore scientists had indeed made progress since the panel's most recent review in February 2011.

"The NIF is operating in a stable, reliable, predictable and controllable manner," the committee said, and has made "extraordinary progress toward challenging goals."

But the Livermore scientists won't reach the "milestone" of achieving ignition this fiscal year, the experts said, and added: "The committee is concerned that this milestone ... may not be the best way to manage this program.

"A deadline imposed on an experimental discovery science program to achieve a particular result by a particular time at a particular cost is often unrealistic," the report said.

And the National Ignition Facility is indeed costly: When the project began in 1995, its estimated cost was $1.1 billion, with completion set for 2002 . The price tag later rose to $2.8 billion and then to $3.5 billion by the time the facility's building was completed in 2009.

Since then, Congress has appropriated more than $450 million a year for the effort's experiments, and some estimates predict that the costs could eventually reach more than $8 billion.

'Grand challenge'

Ed Moses, longtime director of the Livermore project, has been enthusiastic about the project from the start. "It's a grand challenge, and I'm confident of getting ignition," he said five years ago, "and whether it's 2010 or 2011, I'm sure we'll achieve it."

A Livermore lab spokesman said Moses and other facility leaders were unavailable this week to respond to the latest reports. But the spokesman e-mailed The Chronicle an unsigned statement that could be "attributed" to Moses, which

said the facility "continues to make extraordinary progress toward its goal. ... The capabilities needed to achieve ignition are in place."

It added, "In the last year of precision experiments, NIF has successfully resolved most of the major physics concerns necessary to achieve ignition. The current campaign is working to resolve the remaining few and integrate all the pieces together."

http://www.sfgate.com/science/article/Livermore-Lab-Ignition-Facility-s-woes-3797461.php

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Business Insider

The US Is Investigating Claims That Power Plants Are Vulnerable To Hackers

By Jim Finkle, Reuters
August 22, 2012

BOSTON (Reuters) - The U.S. government is looking into claims by a cyber security researcher that flaws in software for specialized networking equipment from Siemens could enable hackers to attack power plants and other critical systems.

Justin W. Clarke, an expert in securing industrial control systems, disclosed at a conference in Los Angeles on Friday that he had figured out a way to spy on traffic moving through networking equipment manufactured by Siemens' RuggedCom division.

The Department of Homeland Security said in an alert released on Tuesday that it had asked RuggedCom to confirm the vulnerability that Clarke, a 30-year-old security expert who has long worked in the electric utility field, had identified and identify steps to mitigate its impact.

RuggedCom, a Canadian subsidiary of Siemens that sells networking equipment for use in harsh environments such as areas with extreme weather, said it was investigating Clarke's findings, but declined to elaborate.

Clarke said that the discovery of the flaw is disturbing because hackers who can spy on communications of infrastructure operators could gain credentials to access computer systems that control power plants and other critical systems.

"If you can get to the inside, there is almost no authentication, there are almost no checks and balances to stop you," Clarke said.

This is the second bug that Clarke, a high school graduate who never attended college, has discovered in products from RuggedCom, which are widely used by power companies that rely on its equipment to support communications to remote power stations.

In May, RuggedCom released an update to its Rugged Operating System software after Clarke discovered that it had a previously undisclosed "back door" account that could give hackers remote access to the equipment with an easily obtained password.

The Department of Homeland Security's Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Team, which is known as ICS-CERT, said in its advisory on Tuesday that government analysts were working with RuggedCom and Clarke to figure out how to best mitigate any risks from the newly identified vulnerability.

EASILY AVAILABLE KEY

Clarke said that problem will be tough to fix because all Rugged Operating System software uses a single software "key" to decode traffic that is encrypted as it travels across the network.

He told Reuters that it is possible to extract that "key" from any piece of RuggedCom's Rugged Operating System software.

Clarke obtained RuggedCom's products by purchasing them through eBay.

He conducted the original research in his spare time with equipment spread out on the bed of his downtown San Francisco apartment. Earlier this year, he was hired by Cylance, a firm that specializes on securing critical infrastructure and was founded by Stuart McClure, the former chief technology officer of Intel Corp's McAfee security division.

Marcus Carey, a researcher with Boston-based security firm Rapid7, said potential attackers might exploit the bug discovered by Clarke to disable communications networks as one element of a broader attack.

"It's a big deal," said Carey, who previously helped defend military networks as a member of the U.S. Navy Cryptologic Security Group. "Since communications between these devices is critical, you can totally incapacitate an organization that requires the network."

So far there have been no publicly reported cases of cyber attacks that have caused damage on U.S. critical infrastructure.

The Stuxnet virus was used to cripple Iran's nuclear program in 2010, causing physical damage to a uranium enrichment facility in that nation. Researchers recently found pieces of another virus known as Flame that they believe been used to destroy data in facilities in Iran.

The report on the RuggedCom vulnerability is among 90 released so far this year by ICS-CERT about possible risks to critical infrastructure operators. That is up from about 60 in the same period a year earlier, according to data published on the agency's website.

"DHS works closely with public and private sector partners to develop trusted relationships and help asset owners and operators establish policies and controls that prevent incidents," said DHS spokesman Peter Boogaard. "The number of incidents reported to DHS's ICS-CERT has increased, partly due to this increased communication."

Editing by Bill Trott.

http://www.businessinsider.com/flaw-in-us-computer-software-may-allow-hackers-to-control-nuclear-power-plants-2012-8

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Hindustan Times – India
OPINION/Editorial

Stop Talking, Start Acting

Hindustan Times
August 19, 2012

What is worrying about the August 16 militant attack on the Minhas airbase in Pakistan is that far from being an one-off event, it was the third such attack on this military facility. The truth is that Islamicist militant attacks on Pakistani military facilities are frequent and have been able to penetrate even the most sensitive installations. The Minhas attack can be deemed a failure by the Tehreek-e-Taliban. It got through only the first security perimeter and does not seem to have done more than minor damage to one Pakistani military aircraft. But this has not always been the case. The so-called Pakistan Taliban had stormed two of the country's most-sensitive military facilities: the Army General Headquarters in 2009 and the Mehran naval base in 2011.

There are two reasons why the ability of groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban to attack Pakistani military facilities is alarming. The first is that similar facilities are home to Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. Though there is no evidence that militants have specifically sought to obtain a nuclear weapon, at least two nuclear-related facilities — the Wah military

complex where weapons are manufactured and the Sargodha nuclear storage facility — have been attacked in the past. The second concern is the increasing evidence of Islamicist penetration of the Pakistani military's rank and file. The attack on the general headquarters was done by militants who had access to uniforms, military ID cards, security licence plates, maps of the premises and layouts of the security systems. Some of the attacks have been plotted in safe houses only blocks away from the bases. Much of this points to the presence of sympathisers in the ranks of the military. The extent to which this has gone can be seen in the attempted assassinations of then Pakistani president, Pervez Musharraf, in a plot that included military officers.

We can take only mild satisfaction in knowing that the Taliban fighters who are attacking the Pakistan military today are a product of the same army's patronage of militants whose original target was India. The same elite Special Services Group, which for years trained Kashmiri insurgents, is now finding that the same training is being imparted to the Tehreek-e-Taliban. Cross-border militancy will pale in comparison to the threat India will face if Pakistan's nuclear facilities are compromised. Rawalpindi follows every attack with strong statements about the security of its nuclear deterrent. But given the present record of base attacks, the fact that Pakistan is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal for no obvious reason and that an estimated 70,000 people work for its nuclear programme, it is time Pakistan recognises that these statements reassure nobody.

http://www.hindustantimes.com/editorial-views-on/Edits/Stop-talking-start-acting/Article1-916308.aspx

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Washington Post
OPINION/Editorial

Exploding Costs

By Editorial Board
August 19, 2012

A WORLD FREE of nuclear weapons is an appealing dream, but the reality is that the atomic bomb will not disappear soon. As long as the United States possesses a nuclear arsenal and needs to deter threats, the warheads and bombs must be kept safe, secure and, if deployed, effective. This is a goal of a major U.S. effort to refurbish and extend the life of its existing weapons.

One of the oldest of them is the B-61 gravity bomb, first designed in the 1960s to be dropped over a target by airplane, either as a strategic weapon carried by long-range bombers, or as a tactical or short-range nuclear weapon in Europe. The Energy Department’s National Nuclear Security Administration has been gearing up for a “life extension” program for the B-61, which will replace old parts and add security systems and controls.

The B-61 life extension was estimated two years ago to cost $4 billion. Sen. Diane Feinstein (D-Calif.), who chairs the Senate appropriations subcommittee that oversees the program, announced July 25 that the cost has doubled to $8 billion, according to a new administration estimate. What’s more, Ms. Feinstein said, an independent Pentagon cost estimate is $10 billion. The project is still at an early phase, but it looks to be ambitious and complex, combining four versions of the weapon into one by 2017. The Air Force separately wants to add a new tail assembly to improve the bomb’s accuracy.

Cost overruns are nothing new, but this one raises some difficult questions. The number of refurbished weapons that will result is classified. Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists estimates that 400 will be made, of which about 200 would replace tactical B-61s now deployed with NATO allies at bases in Belgium, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Turkey. These forward-based tactical nuclear bombs were intended to deter a Soviet land invasion of Europe. That threat has gone, and so has the military mission for the bombs. If a nuclear deterrent is needed on the continent, the United States has other options. The sole remaining value of stationing the gravity bombs in Europe is political, to demonstrate that non-nuclear members are sharing in the alliance defense burden. Even that is being debated within the alliance.

Moreover, the tactical nuclear weapons could well be eliminated in a future arms control treaty with Russia, which possesses a much larger arsenal of them.

Congress and the administration should weigh the escalating costs against the mission of the B-61. Nuclear weapons have not been used in combat for 67 years — they are intended to deter. Who will be deterred by the refurbished B-61? Is the symbolism of deploying the nuclear gravity bomb in Europe worth the billions of dollars? Does it make sense to embark on a $10 billion program to refurbish a weapon that could be put on the table in negotiations with Russia a few years from now? In an age of scarce resources, such questions can't be slighted.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/exploding-costs/2012/08/19/467245aa-e7be-11e1-a3d2-2a05679928ef_story.html

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Defpro.com
OPINION/Commentary

Spending Billions on B-61 Nuclear Bomb Upgrades Doesn't Make Sense

By Mia Steinle
August 22, 2012

We've told this story dozens of times before: as experts and the public urge the government to reign in nuclear weapons spending, the cost of nuclear weapons projects skyrockets by hundreds of millions—or billions—of dollars.

As the Washington Post editorial board wrote this weekend, it's the same old story with the government's planned refurbishment of the B-61 gravity bomb. The "life extension program" of this nuclear weapon was estimated to cost $4 billion a couple of years ago. Now the price is a staggering $10 billion, the Post reported.

The Project On Government Oversight sent a letter to the Department of Defense in February questioning why U.S. taxpayers are spending billions of dollars to refurbish the 200 or so B-61 bombs that the United States deploys in Europe as part of NATO's nuclear deterrent. As the Post noted, the justification for this deterrent is shrinking:

> "These forward-based tactical nuclear bombs were intended to deter a Soviet land invasion of Europe. That threat has gone, and so has the military mission for the bombs. If a nuclear deterrent is needed on the continent, the United States has other options. The sole remaining value of stationing the gravity bombs in Europe is political, to demonstrate that non-nuclear members are sharing in the alliance defense burden. Even that is being debated within the alliance."

Under the New START agreement, the United States and Russia are currently reducing their arsenals of deployed nuclear weapons. And the tactical B-61 bombs and Russia's tactical weapons could be next on the chopping block, as the Post points out. It questions:

> "Who will be deterred by the refurbished B-61? Is the symbolism of deploying the nuclear gravity bomb in Europe worth the billions of dollars? Does it make sense to embark on a $10 billion program to refurbish a weapon that could be put on the table in negotiations with Russia a few years from now?"

Simply put, the B-61 refurbishment could end up being a colossal waste of money, and it shouldn't fall squarely on the shoulders of U.S. taxpayers—as we argued in our "Spending Even Less, Spending Even Smarter" recommendations to Congress, if B-61 refurbishment happens at all, it should be a shared NATO responsibility. Now more than ever, these "exploding costs" are not something the United States can afford.

Mia Steinle is an investigator for the Project On Government Oversight (POGO), a nonpartisan independent watchdog that champions good government reforms.

http://www.defpro.com/news/details/38522/?SID=01fec57b37f34b467edf48f14e4d357e

USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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Federation of American Scientist (FAS)
OPINION/Strategic Security Blog

STRATCOM Commander Rejects High Estimates for Chinese Nuclear Arsenal

August 22, 2012
By Hans M. Kristensen

The commander of U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) has rejected claims that China's nuclear arsenal is much larger than commonly believed.

"I do not believe that China has hundreds or thousands more nuclear weapons than what the intelligence community has been saying, […] that the Chinese arsenal is in the range of several hundred" nuclear warheads.

General Kehler's statement was made in an interview with a group of journalists during the Deterrence Symposium held in Omaha in early August (the transcript is not yet public, but was made available to me).

General Kehler's statement comes at an important time because much higher estimates recently have created a lot of news media attention and are threatening to become "facts" on the Internet. A Georgetown University briefing last year hypothesized that the Chinese arsenal might include "as many as 3,000 nuclear warheads," and General Victor Yesin, a former commander of Russia's Strategic Rocket Forces, recently published an article on the Russian web site *vpk-news* in which he estimates that the Chinese nuclear weapons arsenal includes 1,600-1,800 nuclear warheads.

In contrast, Robert S. Norris and I have published estimates of the Chinese nuclear weapons inventory for years, and we currently set the arsenal at approximately 240 warheads. That estimate – based in part on statements from the U.S. intelligence community, fissile material production estimates, and our assessment of the composition of the Chinese nuclear arsenal – obviously comes with a lot of uncertainly and assumptions, but we're pleased to see that it appears to fit with the "several hundred" warheads mentioned by General Kehler.

Like the other nuclear weapon states, China is modernizing its nuclear arsenal, but it is the only one of the five original nuclear powers (P-5) that appears to be increasing the size of its warhead inventory. That increase is modest and appears to be slower than the U.S. intelligence community projected a decade ago. Those who see an interest in exaggerating China's nuclear developments thrive on secrecy, so it is important that China – and others who know – provide some basic information about trends and developments to avoid exaggerated estimates. The reality is bad enough as it is.

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http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/2012/08/china-nukes.php

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WMD Junction – James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS)
OPINION/Analysis

From Dyad to Triad: What India's Nuclear Developments Mean for Pakistan

How will Pakistan respond to India's deployment of nuclear-armed submarines?
By Shane A. Mason
22 August 2012

With the induction of the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) *INS Arihant* scheduled for the first half of 2013, and with plans to add at least three more indigenously-built SSBNs to India's naval forces by 2025, New Delhi is poised to begin a gradual strategic shift toward the Indian Ocean.[1] The formal induction of the *Arihant* is a powerful first step towards establishing a sea-based nuclear deterrent, whereby the Indian armed forces—currently able to deliver nuclear weapons via fighter aircraft and surface-to-surface missiles—will add the capability of firing submarine-launched ballistic and cruise missiles.

Such an arrangement will go a long way towards reinforcing India's already robust second-strike capability, and places it in a small group of states with maritime nuclear forces. It may take a full decade, and the acquisition of at least three or four more submarines, until India has a true operational maritime nuclear capability, but this is clearly a new strategic direction.

Ultimately, and most importantly for regional stability, the completion of India's maritime deterrent skews the India-Pakistan nuclear competition in favor of India. But how, specifically, will the deployment of *Arihant*, and India's future fleet of nuclear-capable submarines, impact Pakistan's strategic calculus in both short- and long-term planning?

Consequences for Pakistan

In the immediate future, Pakistan will have to act fast to counter the strategic advantages India will gain with the induction of the *Arihant* and other SSBNs. Pakistan has been working to integrate the French-built *Khalid*-class submarines into its strategic forces for several years, but significant hurdles remain. Specifically, missile tubes have to be modified to handle nuclear-capable missiles like the Babur cruise missile, and the navy needs to be integrated into the country's existing nuclear command and control architecture, which is currently dominated by the army.

While India will be able to deploy nuclear-propelled submarines over the next few decades, no credible evidence suggests Pakistan has made plans to do the same. Instead, naval planners have focused on acquiring more sophisticated conventional submarines, like the recently announced purchase of six submarines from China with modern air-induced propulsion systems.[2] Pakistan's focus on conventional submarines underscores the country's financial constraints when it comes to military procurement, especially for the historically overlooked Pakistani Navy.

Once deployed, the *Arihant* and future Indian SSBNs will increase India's strategic depth—something that Pakistan currently lacks, vis-à-vis its eastern neighbor. Virtually undetectable and able to stay underwater for months at a time, nuclear submarines are nearly invulnerable to even the most modern anti-submarine warfare technology and offer a qualitative advantage to a country's nuclear deterrent. Sea-based delivery platforms reinforce a country's ability to retaliate after absorbing a nuclear first strike, and likely dissuade an adversary from attempting a dangerous preemptive attack against its nuclear assets. Assuming a survivable command, control, and communications network, the future fleet of Indian SSBNs will add depth to the country's nuclear deterrent.

India's nascent nuclear monopoly in the Indian Ocean is likely to force officials in Pakistan's National Command Authority to temper their recently emboldened outlook toward nuclear doctrine and strategy. Recent missile developments suggest at least some officials in the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) believe its forces can use nuclear weapons without necessarily evoking a nuclear response from Delhi. In particular, Pakistan's recent addition of nuclear-capable, tactical ballistic missiles like the Nasr signal Islamabad's confidence that a counterforce nuclear strike—say, against Indian troops who had crossed the international border as part of India's conventional "Cold Start" doctrine, which envisions limited, punish-and-withdrawal operations against targets inside Pakistan—would not escalate to higher levels of retaliation. This logic hinges on the assumption that a defensive nuclear attack against foreign troops on its own soil would be protected by international law, thereby profoundly complicating India's decision to respond with a nuclear strike of its own. While such thinking would have been risky before, India's nuclear submarines, equipped with nuclear-capable missiles, render such logic even more dubious.

How Pakistan Can Respond

In the medium- to long-term, Pakistan will feel forced to counter India's SSBNs in order to reestablish strategic balance in the Indian Ocean. Pakistan can choose to respond to India's sea-based deterrent in a number of possible ways. First,

Pakistan can acquire SSBNs from friendly countries, or build them indigenously. China, an historical ally with decades of experience in maritime nuclear technology, would be a likely partner in any Pakistani effort to acquire nuclear submarines. Although such cooperation would be deeply unsettling in New Delhi and Washington, and China's own struggles operationalizing SSBNs represent a significant hurdle, Beijing would welcome the opportunity to reinforce Pakistan's deterrent posture, while also increasing its own strategic presence on India's western flank. Considering the desperate state of the Pakistani economy, however, cost constraints appear to rule out this possibility, and most certainly preclude an indigenous program in the foreseeable future.

The most likely Pakistani response, and the policy option it seems poised to pursue, is to equip newly purchased conventional submarines with nuclear-capable cruise and ballistic missiles. In addition to the aforementioned purchase of six Chinese submarines, reports indicate that Pakistan has been in talks with Germany for several years over the acquisition of three nuclear-capable submarines.[3] In this way, Pakistan would follow the same trajectory as Israel, whose German-built, *Dolphin*-class submarines are an integral dimension of its strategic force posture.[4]

At the same time, Pakistan continues to develop its missile program, particularly in the field of cruise missiles. In the last year, Pakistan twice tested its newest cruise missile—the Babur—which it is also reconfiguring to have submarine-launch capabilities.[5] With a range of 750 kilometers, the Babur could evade India's nascent missile defense systems, and would signal a significant step forward in the sophistication of Pakistan's delivery systems.

Pakistan may be able to reestablish strategic equilibrium vis-à-vis India by acquiring a new fleet of conventional submarines, but this would take time. While conventional submarines lack the prestigious cachet of SSBNs and their ability to remain submerged for extended periods of time, they are much less expensive to build and maintain than their nuclear-powered counterparts. Islamabad will first need to make tough choices about its force posture, delivery systems, and the financial price it is willing to pay to narrow the strategic gap it will have with India on the high seas. How Pakistan responds to the forthcoming induction of India's strategic submarines over the next decade will have repercussions for both regional and international security.

Shane A. Mason is a graduate research assistant at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Notes

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Kashmir Watch – Belgium
OPINION/Commentary

Conspiracy to 'Denuclearise' Pakistan

22 August 2012
By Sajjad Shaukat

Brave personnel of Pakistan Air Force and Pak Army's Special Service Group (SSG) of Commandoes foiled the assault on Kamra Base on August 16 by killing all the terrorists who were disguised in security forces' uniform, equipped with latest guns and rocket launchers.

Unlike the past wars between two state actors, in the present era, rival countries employ lethal and non-lethal weapons such as suicide attacks, bomb blasts, targeted killings, and other tactics of guerilla warfare including a deliberate propaganda campaign in order to achieve their desired goals. Double game is also being played in this respect. As part of the new warfare, these tactics are being employed by the US, India and Israel to 'denuclearise'Pakistan.

The terror attack at Kamra Base coincided with the statement of US Defence Secretary Leon Panetta who said on the same day,"There is a danger of nuclear weapons of Pakistan, falling into hands of terrorists."

Panetta's misperception was also shared by a baseless report, published in the New York Times on the same day, which said that suspected militants attacked a major Pakistani Air Force base where some of the country's nuclear weapons were considered to be stored in the early hours of the militants' attack. The report also presumed, "The base is part of Pakistan s nuclear stockpile, estimated to include at least 100 warheads."

Notably, US top officials have accelerated their pressure on Islamabad to launch joint military operations against the Haqqani network, based in North Waziriran. In this regard, on August 15, US State Department spokeswoman stated that the US was in talks with Pakistan and Afghanistan on joint action against Haqqani group. Besides, a recent report of The Telegraph, quoting the US Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta said that "Pakistan military is planning to start an operation against militants in North Waziristan."

On the other side, after his recent meeting with Gen. James N. Mattis, Commander US CENTCOM, on August 17, Chief of Army Staff Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani categorically dispelled the speculative reporting in foreign media, regarding joint operations in North Waziristan. He reiterated, "We might, if necessary, undertake operations in NWA, in the timeframe of our choosing and requirements." It will never be a result of any outside pressure.

Although, like the recent subversive activities in other cities of Pakistan, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed the responsibility for the attack at Kamra Base, yet this terror attempt cannot be seen in isolation.

In fact, the US, India and Israel are in collusion to weaken Pakistan because it is the only nuclear country in the Islamic World. Based in Afghanistan, these countries' secret agencies CIA, RAW and Mossad have been supporting bomb blasts, suicide attacks, abductions, target killings, ethnic and sectarian violence in various cities of Pakistan through their affiliated militant groups in order to fulfill secret strategic designs against Pakistan. While backing similar subversive activities in Balochistan, these agencies have also been assisting Baloch separatist elements. Their agents are penetrated in militant groups such as Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and Jundollah (God's soldiers). Particularly, RAW has hired the services of many Indian Muslims. Posing themselves as militants, they have joined the ranks and files of the TTP and other extremist outfits.

Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik and top civil and military officials have repeatedly disclosed that training camps are presence in Afghanistan, and supply of arms and ammunition to the Baloch separatists and Pakistani Taliban continue by the foreign elements as part of a conspiracy against Pakistan. In this context, intermittent cross-border terrorism in Pakistan from Afghanistan's side also keeps ongoing in wake of a deliberate propaganda against the country. However, all these anti-Pakistan developments are interrelated as US-led India and Israel intends to create unrest in Pakistan.

It is mentionable that misperceptions of American high officials and other hostile countries including their media about Pak nukes are not new ones. In this respect, when militants had attacked on Pakistan's Naval Airbase in Karachi on May 23, 2011, US-led some western countries including India and Israel, while manipulating the situation had intensified their campaign against the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

In this regard, on May 24, last year, the head of NATO in Afghanistan, Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated that the security of "Pakistan's nuclear weapons has become a matter of concern, the day after the worst assault on a Pakistani military base." On May 25, Indian Defence Minister AK Antony also stated that India was concerned about the safety of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

Some reliable sources suggested that there is solid evidence that RAW had conducted terror-attack at the Karachi naval base with the tactical support of CIA and Mossad.

Particularly, US is playing a double game with Islamabad by employing shrewd diplomacy. In this context, in 2009 when the heavy-armed Taliban entered Swat, Dir and Buner, on April 23, 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had stated that Pakistan's nuclear weapons could fall into the hands of terrorists. But when Pakistan's armed forces ejected the Taliban insurgents out of the affected areas by breaking their backbone, then American high officials including Ms. Clinton had admired the capabilities of Pak Army.

During his recent visit to the US, DG of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt. Gen. Zaheerul Islam emphatically told the CIA Director David Petraeus to end predators' strikes on Pak tribal areas, which are counterproductive.

Besides, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar and ambassador to the US, Sherry Rehman repeatedly pointed out that Pakistan and America would resume broader talks on other issues, especially drone attacks in the wake of an agreement to reopen NATO supply lines to Afghanistan.

While, Hillary Clinton and Leon Panetta have repeatedly stated that America wants stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and their country needs Islamabad's help for this purpose. They also remarked that the US seeks Pakistan's assistance for withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan, which will commence in 2013 and will be completed in 2014. These forces will adopt Pakistani route for the exit strategy. US top officials, especially Ms. Clinton also requested Pakistan to play its role as a facilitator for peace deal with the Afghan Taliban.

However, all this shows American duplicity with Islamabad because quite opposite to positive statements of its top officials and expectations from Islamabad, CIA-operated unmanned aircraft killed more than 22 people in North Waziristan on August 18 and 19.

US aims behind such strategy is to provoke the tribal people against the Pakistani government, causing more recruitment of militants in FATA, and more subversive attacks inside the country and assaults on the security forces. Another purpose is also to create a rift against the civil and military rulers on one side, and opposition including religious parties on the other. In the recent past, Pakistan's political and religious parties conducted rallies and processions against the resumption of NATO transport routes, especially drone attacks.

Nevertheless, at this critical juncture, when US and Pakistan are repairing their damaged relations by resolving other issues, without bothering for public backlash against the drone attacks, America has itself been weakening this country.

Now, under the pretext of Talibanisation of Pakistan and lawlessness in the country, which has been accelerated by the CIA, RAW and Mossad, US wants to show to other western countries that militants can possess Pak nukes. It seeks to compel Islamabad to hand over its nukes to the US. Therefore, it is preparing ground to'denuclearise' Pakistan by propagating in the world that Pakistan's nuclear weapons are not safe.

In response to US-led continued propaganda, Pakistan's military and civil leadership has repeatedly pointed out that Pak nukes are fully secured and are under tight security arrangements.

Sajjad Shaukat writes on international affairs and is author of the book: US vs Islamic Militants, Invisible Balance of Power.

http://kashmirwatch.com/opinions.php/2012/08/22/conspiracy-to-8216-denuclearise-8217-pakistan.html

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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

The Economist – Singapore
OPINION/ Banyan

Nuclear Profusion

The build-up of nuclear arms in South Asia remains terrifying
August 25th, 2012, (from the print edition)

THE militant attack early on August 16th on the Minhas air-force base in Kamra, just 40km (25 miles) outside Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, involved an intense gunfight but was beaten back without much difficulty. Yet probably not before it had rattled nerves in the White House. According to a new book ("Confront and Conceal") by David Sanger of the *New York Times*, late last year Barack Obama told his staff that his "biggest single national-security concern" was that Pakistan might disintegrate and set off a scramble for its nuclear weapons.

Inevitably Pakistan denied that Minhas held any of its nuclear warheads, believed to number about 100. In any event the country's security arrangements, it claims, are "perfect". As for the fear of "disintegration", officials are used to pooh-poohing the overheated fears of foreign doom-mongers. Even if bearded fanatics entered the presidential palace and proclaimed a new caliphate, they would dismiss it as a minor upset and offer a cup of tea.

Yet Mr Obama is right to worry that Pakistan's warheads and fissile material could end up in the wrong hands. He should also fret about their future in the "right" hands. Fourteen years after India and Pakistan became declared nuclear powers, the world has become rather blasé about the risks of a subcontinental nuclear confrontation.

The history of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal gives at least three reasons for concern. First, no country has such an appalling record as a proliferator of nuclear know-how—and the proliferator-in-chief, A.Q. Khan, remains a national hero. Second, parts of the Pakistani establishment seem to sympathise with militant Islamist movements. It is hard to believe that no senior official or army officer was aware of the late Osama bin Laden's comfortable sojourn in Abbottabad, a stone's throw from an elite military academy. As Mr Sanger reported in an earlier book ("The Inheritance"), in August 2001 a nuclear scientist, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood, met bin Laden. Mr Sanger quotes an American spook as saying that Mr Mahmood "was our ultimate nightmare. He had access to the entire Pakistani programme. He knew what he was doing. And he was completely out of his mind."

Third is the risk of terrorists breaching Pakistan's defences. Al-Qaeda and other militant groups are known to be desperate to get their hands on fissile material or an assembled warhead. As Pakistan is apparently increasing its arsenal as fast as it can and investing in smaller and more easily waylaid weapons, the risks are mounting. This was the fourth attack by extremist groups on Minhas alone. Five other sites linked to the nuclear programme have also been targets.

Pakistan is not at imminent risk of a fundamentalist takeover. But the long-term trends are in the wrong direction. That is why America has given it hundreds of millions of dollars to keep its nuclear weapons safe, even though their very existence is an affront to the non-proliferation doctrine. In an irony typical of the United States-Pakistan "alliance", the chief threat Pakistan now perceives to its arsenal is from America itself. Just after the American raid on Abbottabad in 2011 that killed bin Laden, Pakistan stepped up efforts to secure its nuclear weapons, by dispersing bits of them around the country. One way it does this, apparently, is in unobtrusive civilian vans that can get stuck in traffic.

Perhaps even Pakistani generals accept that this is not an ideal disaster-avoidance plan. Fear of capture or pre-emptive destruction of their nuclear defences seems to be one reason why they are determined to develop a third leg, after air- and land-based delivery systems, to Pakistan's nuclear "triad": nuclear-armed ships and submarines. As Iskander Rehman of the Carnegie Endowment, a think-tank, observes in a recent paper*, Indo-Pakistani nuclear rivalry is drifting "from the dusty plains of the Punjab and Rajasthan into the world's most congested shipping lanes." "It is only a matter of time," he argues, "before Pakistan formally brings nuclear weapons into its own fleet."

Other reasons for expecting this include a perceived need to match India's own development of sea-based systems, missiles and missile defences, and fear that a future government in Afghanistan might be hostile. Pakistan has always felt the need for "strategic depth" in any conflict with India. In the nuclear age this has meant the ability to scatter

defences around its western neighbour. Unlike India, Pakistan has never adopted a "no-first-use" nuclear doctrine. Huge fans of their bombs, Pakistani strategists argue that deterrence works. They point to Pakistan's incursion in Kargil in 1999 and repeated terrorist attacks since then blamed on Pakistan. None provoked full-scale war. Three wars were fought between 1947 and 1971. So this is progress, of a sort.

Hot finish?

Naval nuclearisation makes this analysis look recklessly complacent. India has been working on "Cold Start", a plan for a blitzkrieg invasion of Pakistan that would not provoke nuclear war. India might think Pakistan is bluffing in its professed willingness to use tactical nuclear weapons against Indian ground troops on Pakistani soil. Weapons at sea could lower the threshold. Pakistan might be less loth to use battlefield nuclear weapons against an aircraft-carrier strike force than soldiers on its own soil.

As nukes move to sea, "dual-use" platforms that can be used for both conventional and nuclear weapons create an even more hazardous ambiguity than they do on land. What India sees as a prudent defensive response to China's naval build-up might easily be taken by Pakistan as aggressive. A competitive arms race beckons—with the added twist that the navy, which would be in charge of seaborne nuclear weapons, is thought to be the branch of Pakistan's armed forces most infiltrated by extremists.

**"Drowning Stability". Naval War College Review, Autumn 2012, Vol. 65, No. 4*

http://www.economist.com/node/21560877

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Voice of Russia – Russia
OPINION/Op-Ed

China, US to Begin New Arms Race?

August 23, 2012
By Ilya Kharlamov

China intends to significantly increase its missile potential. According to the influential Jane's Defence Weekly, China has successfully test-fired the Dongfeng-41 (DF-41) intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of reaching any spot on US territory. Beijing denied the information, but admitted that it is developing a new-generation ICB capable of destroying targets all across the world.

Beijing seems to start placing its stake on an alternative cooperation with the United States, China's main economic partner. It's clear the two countries' trade and economic ties will dominate for years to come. At the same time, instability in various parts of the world and the US' ever-increasing ambitions prompt China to consider taking a spate of the military containment-related steps.

On Thursday, Washington signaled its readiness to deploy elements of the US missile shield in Asia and the Far East, something that is almost certain to prod China to further expand its regional clout by notably beefing up its military might. Alexander Larin is expert of the Moscow-based Far East Institute.

"It is only natural that China continues to strengthen its army's defense capabilities," Larin says. "We, however, should take into consideration the unfolding competition between China and the US over a spate of areas in Eastern Asia, a zone of China's vital interests. Beijing is trying to oust the US from these areas and undermine its influence there, something that spreads to a military sphere and makes China start an arms race."

According to the Jane's Defense Weekly, the DF-41 was test-launched from the Wuzhai Missile Test Center in the central Chinese province of Shanxi a month ago. Washington Free Baconalso reported the launch, referring to the US intelligence sources which said, in particular, that the DF-41 has a range of up to 15,000 kilometers and is equipped with 10 nuclear warheads. The Pentagon has already dubbed the DF-41 a "first-strike weapon", designed to cover the entire US territory.

Russian defense experts have, meanwhile, expressed surprise about the turmoil surrounding the DF-41 given that many countries knew about this ICBM missile before. They were echoed by Moscow-based military expert Viktor Baranets.

"China began to develop the Dongfeng, or Eastern Wind, ICBMs back in the 1980s, and there are several modifications of these missiles, including the DF-41, which has already been put on service," Baranets says. "China is just test-firing the DF-41's missile carrier, something that has been tracked by the US Missile and Space Intelligence Center," he concludes.

Right now, China has 70 ICBMs and 410 warheads, an arsenal that, of course, yields to that of the US. Sources in the secret services claimed that the missiles that are currently on service in China are capable of reaching just separate regions of the US Pacific Coast, as well as India and part of Russian territory. If the DF-41's technical characteristics are confirmed, this will drastically change the situation.

Beijing has repeatedly expressed frustration about Washington's plans to beef up its military presence in Asia and the Far East. Earlier this year, the Pentagon signaled readiness to deploy its missile interceptors on the territories of Australia, South Korea and Japan, a move that the Pentagon attributed to a threat emanating from North Korea. In February 2012, Russian and foreign experts predicted that Washington's attempts to deploy the US interceptors near the Chinese border are all but sure to infuriate Beijing. Their forecasts came true in August which saw the publication of the facts that neither China nor the US wanted to reveal.

http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_08_23/China-US-to-begin-new-arms-race/

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/China Real Time Report
August 24, 2012

China's Ballistic Missiles: A Force to be Reckoned With

By Andrew Erickson and Gabe Collins

China dislikes U.S. ballistic missile defense (BMD) developments, existing and potential. Ballistic missiles have long represented one of China's greatest military strengths, and it does not want them, or the nuclear weapons that they can deliver, negated. Resigned to the fact that the U.S. cannot be forced to halt development of its missile defense systems or reduce its focus on the Asia-Pacific, Beijing appears to be offering selective reminders that its missile forces are growing too strong to contain.

On Thursday, The Wall Street Journal reported that the U.S. plans to enhance its missile defense systems in the Asia-Pacific. Notably, a day prior to that report, images appeared on Chinese government web portal purporting to show a possible new ICBM, termed the DF-41. The website cited a U.S. article claiming that China tested the DF-41 on July 24.

This may be part of a growing pattern in which Chinese entities engage in selective transparency concerning emerging weapons systems to rally citizens at home and deter potential opponents abroad.

Another recent example includes claims in a popular newspaper that a conventional ballistic missile with a range of 2500 miles, sufficient to strike Guam, will be "ready for service" by 2015, and that the carrier-targeting DF-21D anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM) is already deployed. While the first missile's status cannot be verified, Taiwan's annual defense report confirms that "a small quantity of" DF-21D ASBMs "were produced and deployed in 2010." Meanwhile, an article posted on the website of China's Ministry of National Defense states that the "PLA should foster offensive defense thinking in developing long-range strike weapons."

These explicit examples and implicit claims of Chinese missile prowess hardly represent paper tigers or empty talk. Building on a foundation of focused missile development since the late 1950s, Beijing is backing these data points up with substantive action. According to the latest U.S. National Air and Space Intelligence Center report on foreign

ballistic and cruise missile capabilities, China is "developing and testing offensive missiles, forming additional missile units, qualitatively upgrading certain missile systems, and developing methods to counter ballistic missile defenses." The U.S. Department of Defense's 2010 unclassified report on China's military states that "China has the most active land-based ballistic and cruise missile program in the world." While this year's report was disappointing in its lack of detail, Chinese activities of late have only reinforced the Defense Department's assessment.

Most distinctive in independent deployment potential and significant in overall capability are China's nuclear and conventional ballistic missiles, which are controlled by the Second Artillery Force. With armament of the Chinese navy's three deployed Type 094 ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) awaiting final testing of the JL-2 submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), land-based ballistic missiles are currently the sole delivery system for China's nuclear weapons. As such, Beijing is determined to ensure their ability to penetrate the defense systems of potential opponents.

The goal is to ensure a secure second-strike capability that could survive in the worst of worst-case conflict scenarios, whereby an opponent would not be able to eliminate China's nuclear capability by launching a first strike and would therefore face potential retaliation. As the U.S. Defense Department's Ballistic Missile Defense Review points out, "China is one of the countries most vocal about U.S. ballistic missile defenses and their strategic implications, and its leaders have expressed concern that such defenses might negate China's strategic deterrent." In Beijing's view, maintaining second strike capability can deter other powerful militaries from pressuring or attacking China in the first place.

In addition to homeland defense, specific roles envisioned for China's ballistic missiles include preventing Taiwan from pursuing independence, maximizing Chinese leverage in territorial and maritime disputes, and discouraging the U.S. from intervening in regional crises or conflicts stemming from these or other issues.

Modest investment in ballistic missile defense offers the U.S. valuable technology development, general deterrence and some level of protection against dangerous regimes possessing limited ballistic missile capabilities, such as those of North Korea and Iran.

But while useful for other purposes, missile defense encourages, rather than dissuades, Chinese improvement of strategic nuclear forces.

Beijing can build so many missiles, at such an affordable cost, as to exceed the interception capability of any conceivable missile defense system. Attempting to overcome this reality would risk entering the U.S. into a race that it could not afford to wage, let alone win. China's military overall still has weaknesses such areas as training and real-time coordination of sensors, but the SAF enjoys particular strengths in these respects as well and should not be underestimated.

Ballistic missile defense cannot be used to deny China secure second-strike—a capability that Beijing is determined, and able, to achieve. In fact, U.S. senior leaders frequently emphasize to Chinese leaders that U.S. missile defense systems do not have the technical capacity to do anything but stop a few missiles (and not even of the variety that China deploys), and are not aimed at preventing China from achieving secure second strike.

"Today, only Russia and China have the capability to conduct a large-scale ballistic missile attack on the territory of the United States, but this is very unlikely and not the focus of U.S. BMD," the Ballistic Missile Defense Review explains. "Both Russia and China have repeatedly expressed concerns that U.S. missile defenses adversely affect their own strategic capabilities and interests. The United States will continue to engage them on this issue to help them better understand the stabilizing benefits of missile defense."

China and Russia remain worried about whether or not they can believe or rely upon these assurances. Reasons include not only strategic distrust of the U.S. generally, but also possible advances in technology and—from their perspective, at least—the uncertainty surrounding whether a future U.S. administration of a different political persuasion might adopt a very different approach. Moreover, political actors in both China and Russia derive benefits from ignoring these assurances and exploit these issues for political gain.

Even with ongoing concerns and enduring differences in national interests, it behooves Washington and Beijing to attempt over time to enhance discussion of the sensitive and important subject of strategic deterrence. To be sure, dialogue is a two-way endeavor and will only be as productive as the sum of the efforts that both sides invest in it. Yet, as disappointing as results have been so far, the alternative to continued efforts at substantive discussion—the risk of misperception through disengagement—is far worse.

Andrew Erickson *is a professor at the U.S. Naval War College, a research associate at Harvard's Fairbank Center and Co-founder of* China SignPost. **Gabe Collins** is a co-founder of China SignPost and is a J.D. candidate at the University of Michigan Law School.

http://blogs.wsj.com/chinarealtime/2012/08/24/chinas-ballistic-missiles-a-force-to-be-reckoned-with/

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