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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Saturday, October 6, 2012

Iran 'Confidence' Bid Shifts Uranium to Fuel Stock

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI, *Associated Press*

TEHRAN, Iran — In a bid to ease international concerns over its nuclear program, Iran has converted more than a third of Tehran's most highly enriched uranium into a powder for a medical research reactor that is difficult to reprocess for weapons production, experts and U.N. monitors say.

The work — noted in a technical report by the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency in late August — suggests Iran is trying to display enough goodwill to restart nuclear talks with world powers, while aiming to soften demands by the U.S. and others to halt Tehran's top-level uranium enrichment.

An influential Iranian parliament member, Hossein Naqavi, said the country was taking a "serious and concrete confidence-building measure" by converting some of the 20 percent enriched stockpile into U3O8, or uranium oxide, in the form of powder.

The move also appears to be part of a wider strategy to seek relief from tightening Western sanctions in exchange for step-by-step plans to scale back uranium enrichment, which Washington and its allies fear could lead to weapons-grade material. Iran insists it only has peaceful nuclear ambitions.

But it has offered no substantial concessions to cut into Iran's stockpile of 20 percent enriched uranium, the highest level acknowledged by the Islamic Republic. Iran already has enough to provide fuel for its Tehran research reactor for years and labs are equipped to make more material at that level, said Olli Heinonen, former director-general at the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency who headed the organization's Iran file until 2010.

So far, Iran's proposals have met with resistance from the West as the economic toll from the embargos take a toll, including protests this week after the nation's currency shed nearly 40 percent of its value.

Iran's 20 percent enrichment program is among the core disputes. That's because it can be boosted to weapons-grade far more rapidly than the 3.5 percent-enriched uranium used for Iran's lone energy reactor.

Iran says it needs this degree of enrichment for its medical research reactor, which can produce isotopes for cancer treatment. It also has announced plans to build more such reactors. The U.S. and allies want Iran to halt the 20 percent production and ship the rest of the material outside the country.

The impasse has put talks on hold between Iran and a six-nation group, the permanent Security Council members plus Germany.

Iranian officials repeatedly insist they will never give up the capacity uranium enrichment. But tightening Western sanctions and growing public outcry could open Tehran's leadership to more deal-making.

The U.N.'s IAEA confirmed in its Aug. 30 report Iran had made U3O8 — uranium oxide — from 71.25 kilograms (157 pounds) of its total of 190 kilograms (nearly 419 pounds) of 20 percent enriched uranium produced until mid-August.

U3O8 is effectively off the table as a material for possible weapons production, experts say.

The powder is turned into fuel plates for the reactor, but it is complicated and dangerous to try to change the radioactive powder back into a gas state needed for the enrichment centrifuges, said an Iranian nuclear scientist, Rasoul Sediqi Bonabi, a professor at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran.

And, more importantly, Iran doesn't possess the technology even to make an attempt, he added.

"Once converted into U3O8, it's not usable for producing bomb grade uranium and of little proliferation concern," Bonabi told The Associated Press.

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Iran insists it does not seek atomic weapons and is only using nuclear technology for energy production and medical applications.

Naqavi, spokesman of the parliament's security committee, said the move is expected to facilitate talks between Iran and the world powers and pave the way for a diplomatic solution over Tehran's nuclear activities.

"Iran has demonstrated" its rejection of nuclear arms, said the lawmaker Naqavi, spokesman of the parliament's security committee.

But the former IAEA official, Heinonen, estimated Iran is still producing about 15 kilograms (33 pounds) of 20 percent enriched uranium a month. That could rise to 20 kilograms (44 pounds) a month if Iran expands work at an enrichment facility in Fordo, which is dug deep into a mountainside south of Tehran.

Some experts say Iran would need 200 to 250 kilograms of 20 percent uranium to turn into one nuclear warhead. Others say anything above 170 kilograms is enough.

Mark Fitzpatrick, director of the Nonproliferation and Disarmament Program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said Iran's decision to produce U308 is "slightly reassuring."

"It tends to confirm that there is a civilian purpose in enriching to this level," he said in an emailed statement.

But Fitzpatrick and another American nuclear scientist disputed Bonabi's assertion that Iran doesn't have the technology to reconvert the material.

Iranian engineers have the know-how to convert the U308 powder back to gas for the enrichment centrifuges, Fitzpatrick said.

"It would not take long to set it up," he said, noting the procedure is similar to the existing conversion line of uranium ore concentrate — known as yellowcake — to a gas known as UF₆ that is the feedstock for enrichment.

Matthew Bunn, an associate professor at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, also said Iran has the ability to reconvert the oxide into uranium gas.

"It is possible ... Iran has the technology," he said.

Heinonen noted, however, that any debate about Iran's conversion to the U308 powder "might not really be an issue" since it already has a critical mass of 20 percent enriched uranium.

"And the stocks are likely growing," he said

Associated Press writer George Jahn in Vienna contributed to this report.

<http://www.ajc.com/ap/ap/general/iran-confidence-bid-shifts-uranium-to-fuel-stock/nSWkb/>

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Tehran Times – Iran

Iran Denies Claims it Offered 'Nine-Step Plan' on Nuclear Issue

By the Political Desk

Sunday, 07 October 2012

TEHRAN – The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council on Saturday denied the news reports claiming that the Islamic Republic has offered a "nine-step plan" to help resolve the country's nuclear issue.

"No new proposal outside the framework of the negotiations with the 5+1 group (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) has been presented, and claims made by certain American media outlets in this regard are unfounded," SNSC Secretary Saeed Jalili said.

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The New York Times reported on Friday that Iranian officials have begun to describe what they call a “nine-step plan” to defuse the nuclear crisis with the West by gradually suspending the production of the uranium that would be easiest for them to convert into a nuclear weapon.

The newspaper claimed that the Iranian plan is based on a proposal made to European officials in July. It essentially calls for a step-by-step dismantling of the sanctions while the Iranians end work at one of two sites where they are enriching what is known as “20 percent uranium.” Only when the Iranians reach step No. 9 — after all the sanctions are gone and depressed oil revenues have begun to flow again — would there be a “suspension” of the medium-enriched uranium production at the deep underground site called Fordo.

The United States has not put a formal offer on the table. But the outline of a way to a solution they described to Iranian officials before the summer is almost the mirror image of the alleged Iranian nine-step proposal.

Under the American vision, Iran would halt all production of its 20 percent enriched uranium immediately, ship the existing stockpile out of the country, and close the Fordo plant.

Then the United States and its allies would offer some cooperation on civilian nuclear projects, and would agree not to add new sanctions at the United Nations Security Council. But the sanctions on Iran would remain in place until a final deal is reached.

Iran waiting for 5+1 response to its proposals

SNCS Deputy Secretary Ali Baqeri also said on Saturday that Iran is waiting for the six major powers’ response to the proposals it put forward at the Baghdad talks on May 23 and 24 and elaborated on at the Moscow talks on June 18 and 19.

He also said, “The 5+1 group’s constructive response to the proposals can pave the way for a new round of talks between Iran and the 5+1 group.”

“The framework of Iran’s proposals has not changed from what was presented in Moscow,” he added.

The main points of Iran’s package of proposals are as follows:

- (1) Negotiations must be purposeful. The starting point and the end point of the talks must be made clear. Therefore, it is necessary that a framework be developed for talks and their principles and purposes be determined.
- (2) Negotiations must be effective and must be based on a step-by-step approach.
- (3) The framework of talks should be determined, and it must be made clear when and how the talks will end and what path should be taken.
- (4) and (5) The negotiating countries must recognize Iran’s right to enrichment under the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty). Iran’s nuclear rights should not be reduced and no obligations beyond the NPT should be imposed on it. If these points are clarified, the legal status of the United Nations Security Council sanctions can be determined.

The UN Security Council has approved four rounds of sanctions on Iran in order to pressure the country over its nuclear program.

<http://tehrantimes.com/politics/102118-iran-denies-claims-it-offered-nine-step-plan-on-nuclear-issue>

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Iran 'Could Make Nuclear Bomb within 10 Months'

Iran could produce enough weapons-grade uranium to make an atom bomb within two to four months and then would need an additional eight to 10 months to build the device, experts said on Monday.



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By Agence France-Presse (AFP)
09 October 2012

The authors of a new report on Iran's nuclear programme say Tehran has made progress in its uranium enrichment effort but that the United States and UN weapons inspectors would be able to detect any attempt at a "breakout" – at least for the moment.

The report, released by the Institute for Science and International Security, offers estimates on uranium stockpiles and enrichment rates based on figures from inspections of Iran's programme by the UN watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

To amass the 25 kilograms of highly-enriched uranium needed for one nuclear weapon, Iran "would require at least 2-4 months," the report said.

To reach that goal, Iran would have to draw on its uranium enriched to 3.5 per cent as well as stocks of 20 per cent enriched uranium, it said.

The report appears roughly in line with the US government's view that once Iran made a decision to make a bomb, Tehran could be months away from generating sufficient amounts of weapons-grade material and then additional months would be required to construct a device.

The findings confirm comments made to AFP last month by one of the authors, David Albright, a leading expert on Iran's nuclear project.

Once Iran had generated enough highly-enriched uranium, it could take about eight to 10 months to construct a nuclear weapon, Albright told AFP on Monday.

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on September 11 that the United States would have about a year to take action if Iran decided to build a nuclear weapon.

The time needed for Iran to quit the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and "dash" or "break out" to make the bomb would give the United States and its allies time to react if necessary, the report said.

"Although Iran's breakout times are shortening, an Iranian breakout in the next year could not escape detection by the IAEA or the United States.

"Furthermore, the United States and its allies maintain the ability to respond forcefully to any Iranian decision to break out. During the next year or so, breakout times at Natanz and Fordow (facilities) appear long enough to make an Iranian decision to break out risky," it said.

But as Iran's supply of 20 per cent enriched uranium increases, the time needed to produce enough material for a bomb or bombs will decrease, it said.

Iran's expanding network of centrifuges could make it increasingly difficult for inspectors to spot Tehran's progress, it said.

"Iran may be seeking the ability to produce sufficient WGU (weapons grade uranium) faster than the IAEA inspectors could detect it," the authors wrote.

Despite repeated accusations from Western countries and critical findings from UN inspectors, Iran insists its nuclear programme is designed purely for peaceful purposes.

The United States is under pressure from Israel to set a precise deadline for military action but prefers for now to pursue a course of ever tighter sanctions to try to force Tehran to the negotiating table.

Iran denies it is seeking atomic weapons, maintaining that its nuclear program is for civilian energy purposes.

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Once Iran possesses enough weapons-grade material for a bomb, it would be extremely difficult for UN monitors or outside countries to determine if Tehran had built a nuclear device, the report said.

"If Iran successfully produced enough WGU for a nuclear weapon, the ensuing weaponisation process might not be detectable until Iran tested its nuclear device underground or otherwise revealed its acquisition of nuclear weapons," it said.

"Therefore, the most practical strategy to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons is to prevent it from accumulating sufficient nuclear explosive material."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9595505/Iran-could-make-nuclear-bomb-within-10-months.html>

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Press TV – Iran

Report: US, Israel Plan Joint Strike on Iran

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

The U.S. and Israel are considering a joint "surgical strike" against Iran's nuclear facilities, according to an article by David Rothkopf published on Foreign Policy magazine website.

Rothkopf, who served under the Democratic administration of President Bill Clinton in the 1990s, cited sources "close to the discussions" now taking place between Washington and Tel Aviv over the issue.

Making clear that the United States would play the main role in an attack, he wrote that Israel did not have the resources to attack the Iranian enrichment plants.

The article claimed such a strike would send "an unequivocal message to Russia and China, and assures American ascendancy in the region for a decade to come."

The writer attempted to downplay the significance of such an attack, claiming that the most likely action would be a short strike against Iranian nuclear enrichment facilities. He claimed that "in the best case," this might involve "a day or two" of air attacks by bombers and drones.

Iran insists that its nuclear energy program pursues peaceful purposes only and has warned that it will harshly respond to any foreign attack. Iranian officials say they will reply to U.S. aggression by bombing all American bases throughout the Middle East.

A recent report by the Iran Project, a group of U.S. diplomats and military officials, concluded that U.S. strikes would provoke a war that would last years and cost the U.S. at the very least hundreds of billions of dollars per year.

In his article, Rothkopf admitted that an attack against Iran, in the wake of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, would be deeply unpopular with the American people.

The U.S. and some of its Western allies allege that Iran's nuclear program may be aimed at producing nuclear bombs. Tehran categorically denies the accusation as baseless and politically-motivated.

Iran, as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, says the nation is entitled to develop nuclear technology for civilian use.

<http://www.presstv.ir/usdetail/265888.html>

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Times of Israel – Israel

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Israel Should Not Fear an Iranian Nuke, Russian FM Says

Knesset speaker, in Moscow, retorts that only Kremlin can prevent Tehran from going nuclear

By Ilan Ben Zion

October 11, 2012

Tehran is not necessarily developing a nuclear weapon, but even if it had one it would not use it against Israel, Russia's foreign minister said Thursday.

The statement by Sergey Lavrov, in a meeting with Knesset speaker Reuven Rivlin in Moscow, seemed aimed at calming Israel over fears that Iran's nuclear program poses an existential threat.

"Russia believes that Iran does not plan to attack Israel with a nuclear weapon," Lavrov told Rivlin .

Rivlin responded that Russia is the only country capable of stopping Iran's nuclear program without imposing additional sanctions or resorting to military action.

"The friendship between Russia and Iran gives Moscow the opportunity and obligation to prevent Iran [from obtaining] a nuclear weapon," Rivlin told Lavrov, Israel's Channel 10 news reported.

"We do not automatically back Iran," Lavrov said, and rejected Israel's claim that Iran's nuclear threat is credible. "Until now it is not clearly proven that Iran intends to develop nuclear weapons. Russia estimates that Tehran does not plan to attack Israel with nuclear weapons, especially considering the demographic make-up of Israel, which includes millions of Arabs and Muslims," Lavrov said.

Lavrov on Wednesday cautioned against military action against Iran, saying, "Time and again we hear threats that if there is no progress on Iran's nuclear program only one option will remain — the use of force. We hope that will never happen."

He added that attacking Iran would undermine "efforts to resolve all outstanding issues" regarding Tehran's nuclear program.

Russia has consistently thwarted Western efforts to impose sanctions on Tehran at the United Nations, in part because of its economic interests at stake.

Russia built and partly operates Iran's nuclear power plant at Bushehr, and Moscow has sold Tehran billions of dollars in military equipment. In 2010, a political analyst estimated that sanctions levied against Iran would cost Moscow \$13 billion from the arms trade alone, RIA Novosti reported. According to a Russian think tank cited by the paper, Iran's \$25 billion, 25-year rearmament program launched in 2001 relied heavily on Russian weapons.

Iranian-Russian bilateral trade stood at \$3.4 billion per year in 2010.

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/russia-iran-wont-nuke-israel/>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

Iran's Laser Technology Stirs Nuclear Fears

Iran says it "possesses" laser know-how but won't use it; Enrichment firm says laser method key to US "energy security"

By Reuters

October 11, 2012

VIENNA - A new way of making nuclear fuel with lasers may help cut costs and ensure energy security but could also make it easier for rogue states to secretly build nuclear weapons if they got hold of the know-how.

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Iran, whose underground centrifuge plants and history of hiding nuclear work from UN inspectors have raised Western suspicions of a covert atom bomb program and prompted Israeli threats to attack Iranian nuclear sites, says it already has laser technology but experts doubt Tehran has mastered it.

Uranium can provide the explosive core of a nuclear warhead if refined to a high fissile concentration, explaining why any country or other actor interested in obtaining nuclear arms might be eager to learn about technical advances in enrichment.

Some nuclear proliferation experts worry that plants enriching uranium with lasers could be smaller - and therefore even harder to discover - than the traditional facilities with rows and rows of centrifuge machines.

Lasers could also refine fuel-grade uranium to possible weapons grade in fewer steps than centrifuges, they say.

Those features could make laser enrichment an attractive option for any state wanting to develop covertly the capability to produce nuclear weapons, which the West is accusing Iran of doing with its centrifuge-based program.

"The smaller physical footprint and lower energy requirements would make a clandestine laser facility more difficult to detect," said Jim Walsh, a research associate at MIT's Security Studies Program.

Tehran - which only disclosed the existence of its Fordow subterranean centrifuge site in 2009 after learning that Western spy services had spotted it - denies any nuclear bomb designs.

But Olli Heinonen, a former UN chief nuclear inspector, says that embarking on laser enrichment for energy purposes in the United States would probably not cause the technology to spread elsewhere.

"Technology holders have been fairly good in recent years in protecting their secrets. Proliferation mainly took in place in the 1970s and 1980s due to poor export controls and legislation," said Heinonen, now at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs.

His former employer, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), has tried in vain to get more information about a 2010 statement by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that Tehran "possessed" laser enrichment technology but would not use it.

"Iran had its own laser program, and they have got a good understanding about the process," Heinonen said, referring to methods used before newer technology now being developed for energy purposes.

But laser enrichment is more difficult to master than centrifuges and the equipment used in Iran's research has been dismantled and placed in storage under IAEA monitoring, said the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) think tank.

"Based on the IAEA assessment it appears unlikely that Iran's laser enrichment program represents a serious proliferation threat," IISS said in a 2011 report.

Laser technology still not perfected

Centrifuges increase the ratio of the fissile isotope U-235 by spinning at supersonic speed, enriching up to 5 percent for power plants and 90 percent concentration for bombs.

Laser beams can also separate uranium isotopes, but MIT's Kemp said the technology had been pursued unsuccessfully for decades. "Indeed we do not yet know whether" the technique being developed by General Electric will work or not, he added.

General Electric said Global Laser Enrichment (GLE) - the GE-Hitachi company which would build a plant utilizing the new laser technology in North Carolina - had "met - and in many cases exceeded - all regulations pertaining to safeguarding this technology."

GLE head Chris Monetta said the laser method "could be one of the keys to the nation's long-term energy security."



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Laser enrichment could produce half the refined uranium the United States needs each year for its nuclear reactors, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

But Tom Clements of the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, a non-governmental US-based group, said such advantages also held nuclear proliferation risks.

The NRC's approval of the license without a specific proliferation assessment "may well be a green light for the eventual spread of what could be a dangerous technology which has nuclear weapons applications," Clements said.

<http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=287489>

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Los Angeles Times

U.S., Allies Girding for Worst-Case Scenario with Syria's WMD

October 12, 2012

By Carol J. Williams

During a week that witnessed deadly artillery exchanges between Syria and Turkey and a tense showdown over a plane purportedly ferrying munitions from Russia, the arrival of 150 U.S. troops in Jordan was likely to be viewed as token support for an ally coping with a refugee influx from Syria's civil war.

The deployment, though, may be a response to mounting concerns at the Pentagon and among European and Middle East allies that Syria's stockpile of chemical weapons could fall into the hands of hostile forces if the embattled regime of Syrian President Bashar Assad is eventually toppled.

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta disclosed little about the special-forces mission to Jordan when he confirmed it at a meeting of NATO defense ministers in Brussels on Wednesday. But he noted that the United States has been working closely with Jordan to keep track of Syria's weapons of mass destruction as the 19-month-old rebellion grinds on.

Unlike a decade ago, when bad intelligence on Iraq's alleged chemical and biological weapons spurred a clamor for U.S. military intervention, defense strategists appear to be approaching the suspected stockpiles of mustard and nerve gases in Syria with more collaboration and caution.

The resistance to preemptive action isn't just a consequence of lessons learned in Iraq. Syria is believed to have one of the world's largest chemical weapons arsenals, with commercial satellite surveillance and intelligence reports suggesting as many as 50 production and storage sites as well as missiles that could carry the deadly agents beyond its borders. Jane's Intelligence Review reported in 2009 that Damascus had embarked on a major upgrade of its chemical weapons facilities, transforming its Safir site near Aleppo, now the scene of intense fighting, into a credible deterrent to any threat from nuclear-armed Israel.

The scope of the Syrian chemical weapons program and the international community's failure to craft a cohesive plan to stop the fighting confront Western military strategists with the need to plan for a worst-case scenario rather than act to prevent it, analysts say. That means preparing allies in the region to launch a massive rapid-deployment operation after the Assad regime collapsed but before Al Qaeda-aligned fighters or rogue elements of the Syrian rebels could get their hands on the WMD.

The U.S. special forces sent to Amman are probably training Jordanian troops in containment techniques and checking their equipment and chemical-biological hazard protection and practices, said Steven Bucci, a former Army Green Beret officer and senior Pentagon official who is now a research fellow in defense and domestic security at the Heritage Foundation.

"They will probably be running them through training procedures for dealing with this stuff to secure it and get it under control or to respond to it if it gets used" in a calamitous last battle, said Bucci. "This is about the best use of our military we could have now, and hopefully we're also helping out the Turks."

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Bucci testified to Congress in July that even a limited operation to secure Syria's chemical weapons would require more than 75,000 troops -- and many more if launched amid the civil war now raging.

It is "not a viable option" to commit masses of U.S. ground troops to such an operation, Bucci told the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Trade. Any effective force, he said, would have to involve troops from allied Muslim countries also at risk of attack with Syria's chemical weapons.

That's why, he said in an interview Thursday, it is essential for the United States to coordinate with Syria's neighbors now to prepare a post-Assad operation that can prevent terrorist groups or smugglers from making off with the WMD.

Raymond Zilinskas, director of the chemical and biological weapons program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, points out that assessments of Syria's chemical weapons program are largely unverified. But he, too, says the United States and its allies should be girding for the worst.

"From what I understand, these depots are pretty well guarded by the Syrian regime's forces, and they would probably be the last to give up their guarding duties," Zilinskas said. "But if there is a total collapse, there would of course be a threat of jihadists getting these weapons."

Talk of airstrikes to remove the threat is nonsensical, Zilinskas said. Syria has formidable anti-aircraft defenses built with Russian assistance, and the international community lacks crucial information on the precise locations, quantities and containment of the gases to be able to bomb them without risking spreading the deadly substances.

"Sarin is pretty volatile. If all these other problems could be resolved, the sarin would probably be destroyed or would be so volatile that it would disappear quickly," Zilinskas said. "But that's not necessarily the case with mustard gas. It's much less deadly but much more persistent. And if the Syrians turn out to have VX, which is a persistent nerve gas, that could cause real problems. That is the worst-case scenario they have to prepare for."

http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/10/as-syria-conflict-spills-borders-fears-of-chemical-warfare-mount.html

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
October 8, 2012

S. Korea to Deploy 550-km, 800-km-Range Missiles in 5 Years: Source

By Kim Eun-jung

SEOUL, Oct. 8 (Yonhap) -- South Korea plans to complete the deployment of new ballistic missiles with ranges of 550 and 800 kilometers in five years, a government source here said Monday, a follow-up measure for a revised missile agreement with the United States aimed at deterring threats from North Korea.

The latest move comes after Seoul announced Sunday that it has reached a landmark agreement with the U.S. to extend the range of its missiles by more than twice the current limit to 800 km, while maintaining the maximum payload at the current level of 500 kilograms.

Under the new guideline, the military will push to deploy 550-km and 800-km range missiles in five years, with a 2.4 trillion won (US\$2.1 billion) budget set aside for the 2013-2017 defense plan aimed at bolstering its missile defense system, the source said, asking anonymity as he is not allowed to talk about military information.

The budget was included in a 61.4 trillion won 2013-2017 defense spending plan, which mainly called for bolstering the nation's missile system to defend against the North, which it said had developed missiles that could reach the peninsula.



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"The military has asked the government to spend 500 billion won for this plan from next year," the official said. "As next year's budget bill was submitted to the National Assembly, it depends on whether the parliament accepts it or not."

Although the defense ministry has not yet decided when to deploy the new ballistic missiles, Seoul officials say it won't take long to develop the ballistic missiles that can fly up to 800 km.

"We have constantly pursued missile technology to prepare future and accumulated technology quite close to the level," Shin Won-shik, a ministry official in charge of the defense policy, said in a Sunday briefing. He said the deployment will be decided in "an appropriate time" depending on the budget and other circumstances.

On Monday, Gen. Jung Seung-jo, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the new guideline would allow the South Korean military to more "flexibly" handle North Korean provocations, noting related agencies have accumulated expertise in developing longer-range missiles.

"From the Joint Chiefs of Staff's point of view, (the agreement) is satisfactory because it would allow (South Korea's missile system) to cover all parts of North Korea from the southern area," Jung said during a parliamentary inspection held at the defense ministry. "The South Korean military is considering a pre-emptive strike if North Korea shows signs of using nuclear weapons in time of war."

Jung also said that the threat of the North forcibly occupying the islands near the Yellow Sea border between the two Koreas has reached a "serious" level but the military is well prepared to deal with any such case.

"In case that the islands are forcibly occupied by the North, we will surely have to take them back and we now have proper countermeasures in place," he said.

Defense ministers of the two sides will further discuss how to integrate the major military command C4I system with the Korean Air and Missile Defense System using information collected by the U.S. satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles in the upcoming Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) slated for later this month in Washington, according to officials.

In April, Pyongyang unsuccessfully fired off a long-range rocket, which the international community condemned as a disguised test of its missile technology.

South and North Korea share the world's most heavily fortified border. The two sides are still technically at war since the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a cease-fire, not a peace treaty. About 28,500 American troops are stationed in South Korea to help deter North Korean aggression.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/10/08/34/0301000000AEN20121008001852315F.HTML>

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CNTV - China

DPRK Central TV Warns US and S. Korea

Source: CNTV.cn

October 10, 2012

BEIJING, Oct. 10 (Xinhuanet) -- The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) says it will bring the US mainland within the target range of its strategic rocket forces. The warning follows South Korea's announcement that plans to extend the range of its missiles.

Nuclear for nuclear, missile for missile.

A spokesman for the National Defense Commission of the DPRK vowed to launch all-out efforts to match the US and South Korea.

Issue No. 1028, 12 October 2012

United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education / Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
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According to the DPRK central television, the country is equipped with strategic rocket forces now able to place the US mainland territory, South Korea, Japan and Guam within its target range.

DPRK Central Television anchor said, "South Korea's missile range will cover the whole of the DPRK territory. The DPRK army and people will do everything possible to strengthen the military response to the current situation. The DPRK army will take South Korea, the US bases in South Korea and even Japan, Guam, and the United States into its target range. The DPRK will no longer hide."

The announcement came after Seoul announced on Sunday that it will develop ballistic missiles with a tripled range of 800 kilometers under a revised pact with the US. The new range could cover the entire peninsula.

The DPRK spokesman accused the US of creating a strategic siege network in Asia and said the DPRK would show the real bitterness of a war that the world has never known or imagined.

South Korea said its missile plans were to counter threats from the DPRK.

Critics said South Korea's extension plan runs counter to its commitment as a member of the global arms control agreement, known as the Missile Technology Control Regime, that aims at curtailing the spread of systems that could deliver weapons of mass destruction.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/video/2012-10/10/c_131897477.htm

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New York Times

North Korea Says a Long-Range Missile Test Is Now More Likely

By CHOE SANG-HUN

October 11, 2012

Page – A10

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea said on Wednesday that it felt freer to test a long-range missile now that Washington has agreed to let South Korea nearly triple the reach of its ballistic missiles, putting all of the North within its range.

The warning, in a statement from a spokesman for the North's Foreign Ministry, came a day after the North Korean government claimed to have missiles capable of striking targets on the American mainland.

The American-South Korean missile agreement, which was announced on Sunday, "poured cold water on all efforts to stabilize the situation on the Korean Peninsula and in the region, including our restraint from launching long-range missiles," the statement said. "Now, the United States will have nothing to say even if we launch a long-range missile for military purposes."

Since 1998, North Korea has launched several rockets, saying that it was trying to put scientific satellites into orbit. But Washington and its allies said the North's true purpose was to test intercontinental ballistic missile technology. The most recent such launching, of a rocket called the Unha-3 in April, led to the unraveling of a February agreement with the United States in which North Korea had promised a moratorium on nuclear and missile tests in return for food aid.

All the North Korean rockets have exploded in midair or failed to put satellites into orbit, according to American and South Korean officials, casting doubt on the North's ability to deliver a warhead on a long-range missile.

On Wednesday, North Korea said that the South's new agreement with the United States, which allows the South to increase the range of its ballistic missiles to 800 kilometers, or 500 miles, had hardened the North's conviction that the United States plans to invade the North, and said it was "only natural for us to do everything we can to strengthen our capabilities of striking the base of aggression with missiles."



Security analysts, citing satellite images, have reported in recent months that North Korea was building a new launching pad at the Musudan-ri missile test site on the northeastern coast designed for rockets bigger than the Unha-3 tested in April. The analysts said the North was also refurbishing the site's existing launching pad.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/11/world/asia/north-korea-says-a-long-range-missile-test-is-now-more-likely.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

India Modifies Brahmos Missile with New Nav System

9 October 2012

India has uprated its BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles by installing the advanced satellite navigation systems from Russia's Kh-555 and Kh-101 strategic long-range cruise missiles, adding GPS-GLONASS technology to the existing doppler-inertial platform, Izvestia reported on Tuesday quoting sources in the military-industrial complex.

The integration of the navigation systems from Kh-555 will turn BrahMos, a supersonic cruise missile, into a "super-rocket" with almost a sub-strategic capability above its normal tactical range, capable of hitting targets over 180-300 miles (300-500 km), from sea, land and air launchers, and capable of being armed with a nuclear warhead, the source said.

The installation of the advanced navigation system is optimised for the new air-launched version of BrahMos, which will be carried by India's Russian-built Sukhoi Su-30MKI strike fighters. India plans to deploy over 200 of the advanced aircraft by 2020.

Analysts say the addition of satellite-based navigation systems will improve the weapon's accuracy.

"Conventional Doppler INS has an inherent drift, so the longer the range of the weapon, the larger the relative error," said Douglas Barrie, air warfare analyst at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies. "Introducing satellite navigation improves the missile's positional accuracy. From an investment stand-point it also makes sense to re-use sub-systems that have already been developed."

Former Royal Navy Weapons Engineering officer Hugh Price agreed. "Satellite navigation means the missile will now be accurate to within a few meters," he said.

The combination of air-launched BrahMos with the Su-30 will give India a long-range strike capability similar to Russia's Tu-95MS and Tu-160 strategic bombers, said aviation analyst and editor of Vzlet magazine Vladimir Sherbakov.

"This missile is an important element in the military power of the Indian armed forces and our Indian partners have placed a lot of faith in it," he said.

India's main potential adversary, Pakistan, does not have modern air defenses capable of engaging targets outside BrahMos range, a source in Russia's High Command told the paper.

The Indian Navy carried out a successful test-firing of the sea-launched variant of the weapon on October 7 from the frigate INS Teg off the coast of Goa, the New Indian Express reported.

BrahMos can reach a speed of Mach 2.8 at levels as low as 30 feet (10 m) or fly high-profile diving attacks. The missile was jointly developed by Russia and India, based on the NPO Mashinostroyeniye 3M55 Onyx (NATO SS-N-26).

MOSCOW, October 9 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121009/176500812.html

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Economic Times – India



BrahMos Missile to Test Anti-Ship Variant from Submarine Platform

12 October 2012

By Press Trust of India (PTI)

MOSCOW: In a critical test, an anti-ship version of the BrahMos, the Russian-Indian supersonic cruise missile, will be launched from a submarine platform by year-end, the Russian partner company in the project said today.

"We need a test-launch by the end of the year," Alexander Dergachev, Deputy General Director of the Russian partner company NPO Mashinostroyeniye, said.

"A decision will be made on whether the weapon can be accepted for service with the Indian Navy, dependent on the outcome," he was quoted by RIA Novosti news agency as saying.

The test will be a single demonstration firing from a submerged raft, Dergachev said.

"When an operational carrier has been chosen, then further trials will continue," he said.

BrahMos, set up in 1998, produces three variants of the BrahMos missile, based on the NPO Mashinostroyeniye 3M55 Yakhont (NATO SS-N-26) supersonic cruise missile already in service with Russia's Armed Forces.

The Indian Army has already taken delivery of the land-launched variant. The Navy already has the ship-launched missiles on ten vessels, Dergachev said.

The Indian Air Force will also use the weapon, from an upgraded batch of 42 Sukhoi Su-30MKI strike fighters it is expected to order later this year, Russia's Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said earlier.

"The missile had a range of 300 kilometres, and will be vertically-launched by a gas generator in its launch container, which will eject the weapon by gas pressure, after which it will reach Mach two," he said.

BrahMos can fly as low as 30 feet (10 m) or attack its target from a high angle, combined with supersonic speed and evasive maneuvering. BrahMos can carry a conventional warhead of up to 300 kg (660 lbs).

Earlier this week the Indian Navy successfully test-fired a highly-maneuvrable version of the 290-km range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from a warship off the Goa coast.

The missile was fired without a warhead, hit the target ship after performing intricate manoeuvres.

BrahMos is a stealth supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or land.

It is a joint venture between India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya who have together formed BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics/nation/brahmos-missile-to-test-anti-ship-variant-from-submarine-platform/articleshow/16784762.cms>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Quits Nunn-Lugar Program

10 October 2012

The US proposals on extending a decades-old bilateral program aimed at dismantling weapons of mass destruction are out of synch with Moscow's concept of cooperation in that area, the Russian Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

"We have received an American proposal on extending the 1992 Agreement, which is due to expire in June 2013," ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashovich said, referring to the Nunn-Lugar Agreement.



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“Our American partners know that their proposal is at odds with our ideas about the forms and basis for building further cooperation in that area.”

“A more modern legal framework” is needed for such interaction, he added.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Russian daily Kommersant quoted sources in the US State Department as saying Russia is no longer interested in the Nunn-Lugar program - also known as the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program (CTR) - which dates back to the early 1990's and helped decommission scores of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

US officials told the paper that their Russian counterparts informed them during a recent meeting that Moscow no longer needs the financial assistance, emphasizing instead the importance of safeguarding state secrets.

The move is the latest in Moscow's review of its relationship with Washington, and comes after Russia stopped the United States Agency for International Development from working in the country earlier this month.

It also follows comments last week by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov that the “reset” policy between Russia and the United States “cannot last forever.”

The CTR program began in 1991, and was extended twice – in 1999 and 2006. The current terms expires in 2013. The United States has reportedly spent an estimated \$8 billion on CTR programs.

The program included measures to increase safety at nuclear plants in the former Soviet Union and generating alternative work for former institutes and production facilities which had been involved in making weapons of mass destruction, the CTR website says.

MOSCOW, October 10 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20121010/176527879.html

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Deccan Chronicle – India

Nukes Must Be Eradicated, US Ignoring the Issue: Gorbachev

October 9, 2012

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Vienna: Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev called for the eradication of nuclear weapons and pointed a finger of blame at the US for doing too little, in an interview published on Monday.

“When we talk about nuclear weapons and what’s to be done about them, the answer is to get rid of them,” he said in a video interview with the Vienna-based Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO, an organisation seeking to ban nuclear testing.

“The country with super-armament, ie. military superiority over all others, is still America. And they are avoiding that issue... setting it aside,” he added.

The interview, in Russian with English subtitles, was posted on the Prep Comm’s website ahead of the anniversary of a key 1986 Reykjavik summit between Gorbachev and then US President Ronald Reagan, where the Cold War opponents discussed nuclear disarmament.

Today, nuclear powers have an estimated 20,000 warheads, the former Soviet President said in the video, made on September 4.

“It’s enough to bury our civilisation in a few days, literally.”

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“The current situation must not be allowed to continue... the treaty on the complete cessation of nuclear testing must become effective,” he urged.

Close to 200 states have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), but the document still lacks ratification from key nuclear weapons states such as the US, China, India, Iran and Israel to come into force.

In Reykjavik on October 11-12, 1986, Reagan and Gorbachev met for the second time and “came close to abolishing all nuclear weapons”, according to the Prep Comm.

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/channels/world/europe/nukes-must-be-eradicated-us-ignoring-issue-gorbachev-546>

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Journal of Turkish Weekly – Turkey

Russia to Salvage Sunken Nuclear Subs - Media

Thursday, 11 October 2012

The Russian Defense Ministry is planning to raise and scrap two sunken nuclear submarines in the northern Barents and Kara seas in order to prevent potential radioactive pollution of the area, the Izvestia newspaper said on Thursday.

The ministry will announce an international tender, which may include companies from the France, the Netherlands, South Korea and United States, as the Russian Navy does not have the necessary equipment to carry out deep-sea salvage operations, Izvestia said, citing a military source.

The B-159 (K-159), a November class nuclear submarine, sank in the Barents Sea in August 2003, 790 feet (238 m) down, with nine of her crew and 1760 lbs (800 kg) of spent nuclear fuel, while being moved for dismantling.

The K-27 was an experimental attack submarine built in 1962 and decommissioned in 1979 due to its troublesome nuclear reactors. Her reactor compartment was sealed and the submarine was scuttled in the eastern Kara Sea in 1982 at the depth of 220 feet (75 m).

After the sinking of the Kursk nuclear submarine in 2000, Russia has bought a number of deep-sea submersibles from the UK and Iceland, but these vessels are designed for search-and-rescue operations rather than salvage work.

Two Dutch companies, Mammoet and Smit International, contracted by the Russian government, salvaged the Kursk in 2001.

Meanwhile, the wreck of another sunken submarine, the Komsomolets, will most likely forever remain at the site where it sank in a 1989 accident, as a salvage operation would be too costly and dangerous.

The K-278 Komsomolets nuclear submarine sank in the Norwegian Sea on April 7, 1989, south of Bear Island. The submarine sank with its active reactor and two nuclear warheads on board, and lies at a depth of 5,560 feet (1,685 m).

RIA Novosti

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/143434/russia-to-salvage-sunken-nuclear-subs-media.html>

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Russia Today (RT) – Russia

Washington Looks to Extend WMD-Disarming Pact with Moscow

12 October 2012

By Robert Bridge, RT

Issue No. 1028, 12 October 2012

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The US has expressed a desire to extend its agreement with Russia to dismantle weapons of mass destruction left over from the Soviet era. Moscow said it may scrap the program.

"We greatly value the ongoing Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program," US State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland told reporters in Washington on Thursday. *"We believe there is a lot of future work for the US and Russia to do together in the CTR space."*

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced this week that US proposals to extend the decades-long Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program do not meet Moscow's current policy goals.

"We have received an American proposal on extending the 1992 Agreement, which is due to expire in June 2013," ministry spokesperson Alexander Lukashevich said. *"Our American partners know that their proposal is at odds with our ideas about the forms and basis for building further cooperation in that area."*

The program has overseen the deactivation of more than 7,500 nuclear warheads, heightened security at nuclear storage facilities, neutralized chemical and biological weapons and safeguarded radioactive materials.

Despite these successes, Nunn-Lugar is up for renewal at a time of increased Russian scrutiny, and even suspicion, of US-funded activities in Russian territory. Last month, Moscow informed the offices of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) that it would not be permitted to continue operating in Russia.

According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, the US agency was acting beyond the guidelines of its mandate and attempting to manipulate Russia's electoral processes.

"The character of the agency's work...did not always comply with the declared aims of cooperation in bilateral humanitarian cooperation," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on its website. *"We are talking about issuing grants in an attempt to affect the course of the political processes in the country, including elections at different levels and institutions in civil society."*

Another contentious issue is the US missile defense system planned for Eastern Europe. The US and NATO refused to include Russia in the ambitious project, which has the potential to disrupt the balance of nuclear forces and possibly spark another arms race. Washington and Brussels also refused to provide Moscow with written guarantees that the system will not be used against Russia.

Amid these heightened tensions, Washington said it is prepared to hold talks with Moscow over revisions to Nunn-Lugar.

"They have told us that they want revisions to the previous agreement," Nuland said. *"We are prepared to work with them on those revisions, and we want to have conversations about it."*

"This is a program that has paid dividends for the Russian people, for the American people; it's paid dividends globally, and we hope to be able to continue it," she added.

Moscow is demanding that any new agreement be signed *"based on the principles of equality and mutual respect,"* a source in the Russian Foreign Ministry told Kommersant, adding that the current program is *"discriminative toward Russia,"* and fails to take into account changes that have taken place in Russia since the agreement was signed in the 1990s.

Russian officials are also concerned that the US could exploit the program to acquire *"sensitive data"* about Russia's nuclear arsenal, the source said.

CTR began in 1991, and was extended in 1999 and 2006. The United States has reportedly spent about \$8 billion funding CTR programs.

<http://rt.com/politics/us-russia-nunn-lugar-putin-259/>

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Herald Scotland – Scotland, U.K.

Sunday, 07 October 2012

Scottish Constitution would Ban Nuclear Weapons

By Tom Gordon, Scottish Political Editor

ALEX Salmond plans to draft a new constitution for an independent Scotland which explicitly bans nuclear weapons from the country.

The move is an attempt to reassure those in the SNP who doubt that Trident can be removed from the Clyde for good.

If Scots vote Yes in 2014, the nation's founding constitutional document will include a clause declaring weapons of mass destruction illegal on Scottish soil and in Scottish territorial waters.

The ban would give the Scottish Government extra leverage in negotiations with London and the US on Trident, as refusal to remove the submarines and warheads from Faslane and Coulport would be regarded as a breach of sovereignty and provoke international condemnation.

Such a move has been tried before by other nations. As part of its constitution, the Philippines has a "policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory", while Austria, Mongolia and New Zealand have passed laws banning their use or storage.

At their conference yesterday, the Scottish Greens also voted for a ban on nuclear weapons to be part of the constitution.

Although in line with longstanding SNP opposition to nuclear weapons, Salmond's proposal is timed to avoid an embarrassing defeat at the party's conference on October 21. Salmond and defence spokesman Angus Robertson face growing opposition to their plans to end the party's 30-year-old policy on leaving Nato.

To counter Unionist claims an independent Scotland would be left poorly defended, Robertson is pushing for Nato membership subject to an agreement to expel Trident in future. His pro-Nato motion has the support of Salmond and other Cabinet secretaries.

But many SNP members, including a dozen MSPs, are fiercely opposed to staying in Nato, as they see it as synonymous with nuclear weapons.

The mutual defence agreement between Nato's 28 member states extends to the use of nuclear arsenals held by the US, the UK and France. Sceptics fear if Scotland joined Nato the alliance would stall for years over whether or not to remove Trident – something which happened to other Nato members wanting rid of US weapons on their soil.

Given the lack of an alternative site for Trident outside Scotland, its expulsion would effectively disarm the rest of the UK, a development Nato might well resist.

To defeat Robertson's conference motion, Cumbernauld MSP Jamie Hepburn has tabled a rival amendment, which if adopted would see the SNP keep its policy of quitting Nato.

Robertson and Salmond had expected to win the vote with ease. But they have been taken aback by a groundswell of opposition among SNP branches, many of which recently mandated their conference delegates to oppose any change in the Nato policy.

The idea of a constitutional ban, developed by Robertson, is meant to reassure activists Trident would be expelled even if Scotland stayed in Nato, and help Robertson and Salmond win the vote at conference.

A senior party source said: "There would be a constitutional provision that weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, would be illegal under the terms of the constitution.

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"It underlines the absolute commitment of the SNP to removing nuclear weapons. Angus wants to underline the point that Nato membership would be conditional on Scotland not having nuclear weapons."

However, the face-saving exercise may not work. Sceptics last night insisted that, while a constitutional ban was a good plan, it did not end the arguments over Nato, its weapons and its operations.

Hepburn told the Sunday Herald: "I think it's a great idea, but it's not entirely relevant to the debate about whether or not we remain in Nato after independence.

"Are we against nuclear weapons just because they happen to be in Scottish territory, or are we against them in principle? Are they a mistake here but okay in Germany or Holland? Nato would continue to possess nuclear weapons through its other member states."

Skye SNP MSP Dave Thompson added: "I would expect [a no nuclear weapons clause] to happen in any case. It does not address the Nato issue."

The SNP last proposed a constitution for an independent Scotland in 2002. It did not mention nuclear weapons.

John Ainslie, Scottish CND co-ordinator, welcomed the proposal for a constitutional ban on nuclear weapons. "It helps makes the process for removing Trident as substantial as possible. Governments come and go and things change, and although it's always possible to change constitutions, it's far harder. It means [Scotland's non-nuclear status] is established as a firm principle."

Jane Tallents, of disarmament group Trident Ploughshares, said: "We would be delighted for this to be written into the constitution. But it's dispiriting that the SNP also wants to be in an alliance where nuclear weapons are fundamental. Morality doesn't stop at the border."

Leonna O'Neill, of the No To Nato Scotland Coalition, said a constitutional ban would be welcome, but would be hypocritical if an independent Scotland signed up to Nato.

She said: "I would support anything the SNP produces that sets a ban in a legal framework to get rid of Trident, but it's unacceptable to join Nato regardless. It's like saying you won't carry a knife, but you still hang about with a gang of other people carrying knives."

<http://www.heraldscotland.com/politics/referendum-news/scottish-constitution-would-ban-nuclear-weapons.19078977>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

NATO Members to Discuss Alliance's Nuclear Policy

09 October 2012

NATO's senior body on nuclear matters will hold a ministerial meeting on Tuesday to review the Alliance's nuclear policy in the light of new developments, NATO press service said.

The Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) is chaired by the Secretary General of NATO and is composed of members of the national delegations of all member countries, except France.

The NPG meets several times a year to discuss aspects of NATO's nuclear policy, planning and force posture, and matters concerning the safety, security and survivability of nuclear weapons.

Once a year the meetings are held at the level of Ministers of Defense.

NATO's nuclear policy is based on the concept of nuclear sharing, which involves basing nuclear weapons on the territories of non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS).

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Three NATO members – the United States, the United Kingdom and France – possess nuclear arsenals.

However, Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Turkey all host an estimated 200 US nuclear tactical weapons on their territory.

In the new Strategic Concept adopted by Allies at the Lisbon Summit at the end of 2010, NATO committed to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons.

The concept states that “any further steps” to reduce nuclear weapons in Europe “must take into account the disparity with the greater Russian stockpiles of short-range nuclear weapons.”

It also affirms that, “in any future reductions, [NATO’s] aim should be to seek Russian agreement to increase transparency on its nuclear weapons in Europe and relocate these weapons away from the territory of NATO members.”

BRUSSELS, October 9 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121009/176495133.html

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Knoxville News Sentinel

Cook Says He's Confident NNSA Will Meet W76 Commitments to the Defense Dept.

Frank Munger’s Atomic City Underground
October 8, 2012

The U.S. Dept. of Energy’s Inspector General last week released a report suggesting that the National Nuclear Security Administration is at risk of not meeting its Defense Dept. commitments to refurbish and extend the life of W76 (Trident) warheads by 2018. The report said the NNSA would have to significantly up its production rate, which would necessitate reducing costs in order to get that production in what are expected to be tight budgets in years ahead.

The day after that report was released, Dr. Don Cook, the NNSA deputy administrator for defense programs, was in Knoxville for a Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board hearing, and I asked Cook about the IG’s findings and if he thought the NNSA could meet its W76 commitments.

He said he believes the NNSA will get the W76 work accomplished and meet its commitments to the Defense Department.

"I have read the IG report summaries at this point," he said. "We've taken actions . . . The IG pointed specifically to the projected cost reduction, the unit cost of each one of the W76s," he said.

In order to meet the limited budgets?

"Right. If you look to what they said, they said they don't believe the NNSA will achieve the -- I think it was a 35 percent unit cost reduction -- but believe we have plans in place to achieve a 25 percent cost reduction. So, you know, the devil's in the details. If you look at the issues from a few years ago to where we are, we have gotten through some of the early issues."

Like the Fogbank issue?

"Yeah, there were a number of technical issues -- three or four -- and we've gotten through each of those. We've gotten to the point where full rate production, the rate we want to be at, too. We believe we can sustain that now through the end of the W76 build. We're meeting all the Navy's operational requirements."

Through 2018?

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"Through the end of '18 and into '19, and depending on the number of warheads, right now, the build will actually go out to 2021. But you're right, the builds from '19 to '21 are really for the hedge. The operational requirements really conclude at the end of 2018.

What level of confidence do you have that you can meet the Defense Dept. commitments?

"I believe it's very high."

<http://blogs.knoxnews.com/munger/2012/10/cook-confident-nnsa-will-meet.html>

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Washington Times

Inside the Ring: New WMD Threats

By Bill Gertz, *The Washington Times*

Wednesday, October 10, 2012

A Pentagon-sponsored report warns that the United States faces new threats from mass destruction weapons in the form of cyber, electronic and financial attacks, in addition to more well-known dangers from nuclear, chemical and biological WMD arms.

"In addition to the prolific conventional [weapons of mass destruction] threats posed by a vast network of state and non-state actors, the U.S. must also contend with emerging threats that are not conventionally recognized as WMD," said the report produced last month for the office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence.

"Very few of America's adversaries will attempt to challenge the unmatched strength of the U.S. military in a traditional conflict, but they may employ alternative asymmetric approaches.

"It is therefore necessary to consider emergent, nontraditional threats, such as cyber, electromagnetic pulse (EMP), and economic attacks, in a comprehensive discussion of WMD threats."

On financial warfare, the report mentions the 1999 Chinese military book, "Unrestricted Warfare," which advocates that China's military utilize stock-market crashes, computer viruses and currency manipulations.

"Essentially, any threat to the U.S. economy is a threat to the country as a whole, and the potential impact of an economic attack is considered increasingly significant," the report said.

The new Pentagon report appears to build on one produced for the Pentagon in 2009 by financial consultant Kevin Freeman, who stated that the United States' 2008 financial crash may have been deliberate sabotage by terrorists or foreign states.

That study was criticized by senior Obama administration officials, including the Pentagon's special operations policymaker, Michael Vickers, who is currently undersecretary of defense for intelligence. U.S. officials said Mr. Vickers blocked further study into possible financial warfare behind the economic crisis. Mr. Freeman wrote a book on the issue called "Secret Weapon."

The new Pentagon report said the May 6, 2010 "flash crash" when markets fell by 10 percent "may have been caused by an economic attack by one or a combination of methods," including the manipulation of computer algorithms that control trading or exchange traded funds that allow traders to short sell mass quantities of stock quickly and anonymously. It also could have been the result of covert currency-manipulation by the holder of a significant U.S. debt — such as China — designed to intentionally weaken the value of the dollar by preventing the United States from selling its debt to others.

On cyber-WMD, the report said that in an age when 2 billion people use the Internet, "a coordinated cyberattack could compromise national security, shut down commerce and destroy the U.S. power grid."

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According to the report, China currently has some 180,000 cyberspies; and, during attacks in 2007 and 2009, they hacked into Pentagon networks and “stole several terabytes of data, including the blueprints for U.S. F-35 and F-32 joint-strike fighter planes, essentially compromising America’s defense technology.”

Russia conducted cyberattacks in 2008 against the Republic of Georgia prior to its military strikes. The cyberattacks disabled Georgia’s national network “effectively eliminating the chance to mount an appropriate response to the attack.”

Another emerging WMD threat is an electromagnetic pulse, or EMP, attack — the up to 1,000-mile-wide disruption of all electronics produced by a nuclear burst or a high-tech EMP weapon.

“The detonation of an EMP weapon would cause the disruption or destruction of electrical-based systems, which would lead to chaos by impoverishing or neutralizing a society, rather than annihilating it outright,” the report said.

The United States’ heavy reliance on electronics means an EMP attack would be devastating.

The report concludes that economic vitality is key to U.S. national security; but, with the global economy, the country is facing significant vulnerabilities.

The report urged the U.S. government to develop a national strategy and capability to defend the U.S. economy from every form of economic attack.

The September report, “Weapons of Mass Destruction: An Evolving Threat,” was produced by contractor Universal Strategy Group, Inc., for the undersecretary of defense for intelligence and its Combating Terrorism Support Office.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/oct/10/inside-the-ring-new-wmd-threats/?page=all#pagebreak>

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Kansas City Star
Friday, October 12, 2012

Panetta: Cyberthreat from Iran Has Grown

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

U.S. authorities believe that Iranian-based hackers were responsible for cyberattacks that devastated Persian Gulf oil and gas companies, a former U.S. government official said. Just hours later, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said the cyberthreat from Iran has grown, and he declared that the Pentagon is prepared to take action if American is threatened by a computer-based assault.

The former official, who is familiar with the investigation, said U.S. authorities believe the cyberattacks were likely supported by the Tehran government and came in retaliation for the latest round of American sanctions against Iran.

Before Panetta's remarks on Thursday, U.S. officials had said nothing publicly about the Gulf attacks or the investigation. But Panetta described them in a speech to business leaders in New York City, saying they were probably the most destructive cyber assault the private sector has seen to date.

Panetta did not directly link Iran to the Gulf attacks, but he said Tehran has "undertaken a concerted effort to use cyberspace to its advantage." And, he said the Pentagon has poured billions into beefing up its ability to identify the origin of a cyberattacks, block them and respond when needed.

"Potential aggressors should be aware that the United States has the capacity to locate them and hold them accountable for actions that harm America or its interests," said Panetta in a speech to the Business Executives for National Security.

A current U.S. official acknowledged Thursday that the Obama administration knows who launched the cyberattacks against the Gulf companies and that it was a state actor.

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U.S. agencies have been assisting in the Gulf investigation and concluded that the level of resources needed to conduct the attack showed there was some degree of involvement by a nation state, said the former official. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is classified as secret.

While Panetta chose his words carefully, one cybersecurity expert said the Pentagon chief's message to Iran in the speech was evident.

"It's not something where people are throwing down the gauntlet, but I think Panetta comes pretty close to sending a clear warning (to Iran): We know who it was, maybe you want to think twice before you do it again," said cybersecurity expert James Lewis, who is with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "I think the Iranians will put two and two together and realize he's sending them a message."

He said Panetta's remarks were an important step by the U.S. because the Iranian cyberthreat "is a new dimension in 30 years of intermittent conflict with Iran for which we are ill-prepared. It's really important to put them on notice."

The cyberattacks hit the Saudi Arabian state oil company Aramco and Qatari natural gas producer RasGas using a virus, known as Shamoon, which can spread through networked computers and ultimately wipes out files by overwriting them.

Senior defense officials said the information was declassified so that Panetta could make the public remarks. The officials added that the Pentagon is particularly concerned about the growing Iranian cyber capabilities, as well as the often discussed threats from China and Russia. The two officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the cyberthreats publicly.

In his speech, Panetta said the Shamoon virus replaced crucial system files at Aramco with the image of a burning U.S. flag, and also overwrote all data on the machine, rendering more than 30,000 computers useless and forcing them to be replaced. He said the Qatar attack was similar.

Panetta offered no new details on the Pentagon's growing cyber capabilities or the military rules of engagement the department is developing to guide its use of computer-based attacks when the U.S. is threatened.

He said the department is investing more than \$3 billion a year in cybersecurity to beef up its ability to defend against and counter cyberthreats, including investment in U.S. Cyber Command. And the Pentagon is honing its policies so that any actions comply with the law of armed conflict.

"Our mission is to defend the nation. We defend. We deter. And if called upon, we take decisive action to protect our citizens," he said.

He added, however, that the Defense Department will not monitor American citizen's personal computers, or provide for the day-to-day security of private or commercial networks.

Panetta used the Persian Gulf attacks in his remarks as a warning to business community that it must embrace stalled legislation that would encourage companies to meet certain cybersecurity standards. And he is endorsing a planned move by President Barack Obama to use his executive powers to put some of those programs, including voluntary standards, in place until Congress acts.

"These attacks mark a significant escalation of the cyber threat," Panetta said. "And they have renewed concerns about still more destructive scenarios that could unfold."

U.S. authorities have repeatedly warned that foreign Internet hackers are probing U.S. critical infrastructure networks, including those that control utility plants, transportation systems and financial networks.

"We know of specific instances where intruders have successfully gained access to these control systems," Panetta told the business group. "We also know that they are seeking to create advanced tools to attack these systems and cause panic and destruction, and even the loss of life."



Business leaders, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, opposed the legislations, arguing it would expand the federal government's regulatory authority over companies already struggling in the tough economy. The bill also encourages more information sharing between the government and private companies.

Panetta pressed the group to support the stronger cybersecurity measures, warning that failure to do so could have catastrophic consequences.

"Before September 11, 2001 the warning signs were there. We weren't organized. We weren't ready. And we suffered terribly for that lack of attention," said Panetta. "We cannot let that happen again. This is a pre-9/11 moment."

<http://www.kansascity.com/2012/10/12/3863805/us-hackers-in-iran-responsible.html>

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New York Times
OPINION/Editorial

A Big Laser Runs Into Trouble

Sunday, October 7, 2012

Page – SR12

After spending more than \$5 billion to build and operate a giant laser installation the size of a football stadium, the Energy Department has not achieved its goal of igniting a fusion reaction that could produce energy to generate power or simulate what happens in a nuclear weapon.

The latest deadline for achieving ignition was last Sunday, Sept. 30, the end of fiscal year 2012, but it passed amid mounting concerns that the technical challenges were too great to be mastered on a tight time schedule.

Congress will need to look hard at whether the project should be continued, or scrapped or slowed to help reduce federal spending.

The idea of using lasers to trigger fusion reactions to produce energy dates back many decades, but the idea of using laser fusion for weapons research became more important when underground nuclear testing was curtailed by treaty in the 1990s.

The new laser facility, built between 1997 and 2009 and known as the National Ignition Facility, uses 192 lasers to fire light beams at tiny targets, smaller than peppercorns, filled with hydrogen atoms. The resulting compression and heat are supposed to fuse the atoms into helium, releasing bursts of thermonuclear energy. But technical reviews this year of the experiments conducted so far have made it clear that the scientists in charge do not fully understand how the process is working and may not be able to achieve ignition quickly.

Scientists at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, in Livermore, Calif., which operates the facility, cite numerous technical advances gained in more than 1,000 experiments, including firing the world's most powerful laser bursts and developing unsurpassed diagnostic instruments to measure what happens under intense heat and pressure. The review panels cite scientific and technological progress but also say that progress has been slower than anticipated.

As William Broad reported in The Times last Sunday, there is a sharp split among experts on whether the project — one of the most expensive federally financed projects ever — is worth the money. Just operating it costs roughly \$290 million a year.

The laboratory's supporters say the facility deserves continued funding because it conducts advanced research and will play an important role in assessing whether fusion will someday become a feasible energy source. They also say that it keeps highly talented weapons designers at work on important national security issues.



If the main goal is to achieve a power source that could replace fossil fuels, we suspect the money would be better spent on renewable sources of energy that are likely to be cheaper and quicker to put into wide use.

Even if ignition is achieved in the laboratory in the next several years, scaling up to a demonstration plant will cost billions and may ultimately show that fusion is not a practical source of power.

The fallback argument — that laser fusion allows scientists to simulate conditions at the core of a nuclear explosion and verify the reliability of the nation’s nuclear stockpile without having to test a weapon — is disputed by some experts who think the stockpile will be reliable for decades.

Congress will need to look hard at whether these “stockpile stewardship” and long-term energy goals can be pursued on a smaller budget.

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/07/opinion/sunday/a-big-laser-runs-into-trouble.html?_r=0

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Time U.S.

OPINION/Battleland

Subway

By Mark Thompson

October 8, 2012

The Navy is beginning to make the case more openly that the nation needs to get serious about replacing its fleet of *Ohio*-class ballistic-missile submarines.

“We have to have that submarine,” Rear Admiral Barry Bruner, the Navy’s director of undersea warfare, told the *New London Day* last week. That’s the hometown paper of General Dynamics’ Electric Boat, the lone U.S. shipyard building Navy subs.

The \$90 billion program will refurbish only one of the nuclear triad’s three legs (the other two, both operated by the Air Force, deliver their nukes via land-based missiles and bombers, both of which also need replacing).

The nonprofit Ploughshares Fund released a study Monday estimating the cost of maintaining, operating and retooling the nuclear triad will cost close to \$400 billion over the coming decade.

Yet we’re getting less bang for the buck, if you will. The Natural Resources Defense Council has noted the declining number of warheads per platform since the Cold War’s end:

1991: 7.5 warheads per delivery vehicle (9,300 warheads on 1,239 delivery vehicles)

2001: 5.8 warheads per delivery vehicle (6,196 warheads on 1,064 delivery vehicles)

2009: 2.6 warheads per delivery vehicle (2,200 warheads on 850 delivery vehicles)

The military argues that the triad remains necessary to ensure that if an enemy wipes out two legs, the third leg will survive to retaliate (why this doesn’t argue for a *quadad* or a *pentad* – or, for that matter, a *dyad* — has never been made clear).

The Pentagon’s fear of concentrating all of its nuclear eggs in one basket certainly doesn’t apply to its ammo production, according to a 2010 article in *Army Sustainment*, the in-house journal of Army guys who worry about such things:

It’s clear that nuclear theology has its own sacraments that don’t apply to bullets, but 20 years after the end of the Cold War it may be time to ask why.



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The triad remains a trinity to the U.S. nuclear priesthood. Originally created as a way to outfox the Soviet Union – with a trio of delivery devices, Moscow could never deliver a bolt-out-of-the-blue strike that would destroy all U.S. nuclear weapons. That was the Cold War nuclear theology.

But the dogma has changed. Think of it as a kind of atomic Vatican II.

Battleland has been asking military officials for years how much the U.S. nuclear arsenal has to shrink before continuing to invest in the triad's subs, missiles and bombers no longer makes sense.

"Good question," Air Force Secretary Michael Donley said when we asked him in April.

"The more complex the global environment becomes," Donley said, "the more flexibility you want between land, sea, and air-based capabilities."

Battleland: So when we get down to three nukes we'll still have a triad?

Donley: I wouldn't forecast what levels are the break points here, but I do think it's important to maintain the flexibility and the options for the President going forward. There's no doubt in my mind that the international strategic environment is much more complex than it was when we developed this concept and capability back in the '50s and '60s.

So there you have it: the triad was vital in the simple superpower world. It's even more critical today, in the complex, post-Cold War world.

Pulitzer Prize-winner Mark Thompson has covered national security in Washington since 1979, and for Time since 1994.

<http://nation.time.com/2012/10/08/subway/>

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Foreign Policy

OPINION/The E-Ring

America's Nuclear Tab Nearing \$660 Billion, New Report Says

By Kevin Baron

Monday, October 8, 2012

The cost of American's nuclear arsenal is projected to reach as much as \$661 billion over the next decade, a new report claims.

The report, released Oct. 7 by Ploughshares Fund, a group that advocates nuclear disarmament, says its estimate ranges from \$620 billion, if defense spending stays below inflation, to as high as \$661 billion if defense spending keeps pace with inflation.

A closer look at those numbers, though, shows that nuclear costing is more art than science, given factors like the secretive nature of the field, unknowable future costs in fuel or aircraft, and the budgetary whims of Congress.

Last year, the Washington Post fact-checker gave Ploughshares "two Pinnocchios" for estimating that nuclear weapons would cost the United States \$700 billion over the coming decade, a figure some nuclear hawks rejected.

The new report acknowledges the difficulty in coming to a solid estimate. "It's not easy to know how much our nation pays for our nuclear weapons programs," Ploughshares says, in this year's release. "There is no official nuclear weapons budget. Instead, government spending accounts are often opaque, poorly defined and always spread out over several government agencies."

The new estimate claims over the next decade the United States is looking at spending \$370 billion for its "nuclear forces," including the triad of long-range bombers, nuclear submarines, and intercontinental ballistic missiles, in addition to the laboratories charged with maintaining weapons and dismantling them. A \$100 billion tab will pay for

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associated environmental and health care costs; \$97 billion for missile defenses against incoming nuclear warheads; \$63 billion for nuclear threat reduction initiative programs to dismantle and mothball the shrinking Cold War arsenal; and \$8 billion for nuclear “incident management.”

Ploughshares claims in this year’s materials that its estimate is “a conservative attempt” at combining the known costs to taxpayers for maintaining a nuclear arsenal that follows President Obama’s defense spending plan at near-flat real growth.

“Our estimate includes costs to maintain and modernize our existing nuclear arsenal, pay for missile defense programs, support the environmental and health costs associated with past and current nuclear weapons programs, and continue nuclear threat reduction programs.”

What the report cannot calculate, the group says, are intelligence costs and other operating costs, such as aerial refueling missions.

That, it argues, is why the U.S. needs more transparency.

The E-Ring will find out more on what the Pentagon thinks about it, later this week.

Kevin Baron reports on the people and policies driving the Pentagon and the national security establishment in The E-Ring.

http://e-ring.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/10/08/america_s_nuclear_tab_nearing_660_billion_new_report_says

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Korea Times – South Korea

OPINION/Commentary

October 10, 2012

Nukes in the Cupboard

By Gwynne Dyer

The major powers have all had their nuclear weapons on permanent alert, ready to launch in minutes or hours, for the past 40 years. Changes in the level of political risk, even the end of the Cold War, have had little or no effect on that. But wouldn’t it be safer and cheaper to “simply put (the nuclear deterrent) away in a cupboard and keep it as a contingency in case there were ever to be a deterioration in the global security picture”?

In terms of orthodox strategic thinking, that is heresy. But the man who made that heretical suggestion was Sir Nick Harvey, until last month the defense minister in charge of the British government’s nuclear capability review.

Replaced in the recent cabinet reshuffle, Harvey is now free to speak his mind. At last week’s Liberal Democratic Party conference, he did precisely that, saying that he “wanted his legacy to be bringing the United Kingdom down the nuclear ladder” — although, he admitted, “we might struggle to persuade the British public to get off the ladder altogether.”

It isn’t just the British public that loves its nukes. The American, Russian and French publics would be equally reluctant to give up their nuclear deterrent forces, even though they face no plausible threat of a nuclear war. (The Chinese public isn’t really paying attention yet.) But maybe you could at least persuade the great powers to put the damned things away, and Britain would be a good place to start.

The orthodoxy still says that every self-respecting great power must have its nuclear weapons on permanent alert, in order to deter a surprise attack by some other nuclear power. Nuclear “Pearl Harbours” allegedly lie in wait around every corner. But, as Harvey told The Guardian newspaper, “If you can just break yourself out of that frankly almost lunatic mindset for a second, all sorts of alternatives start to look possible, indeed credible.”

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What drove Harvey into this bold assertion was the fact that Britain can no longer afford its nuclear deterrent. It will have to replace its current fleet of four Trident II ballistic-missile submarines by 2028, and the estimated cost is \$20-\$30 billion. That's less than two weeks' worth of American military spending, but for Britain it would mean cutting deeply into every other area of the defense budget.

The British army is "driving around in vehicles which are literally about to fall to pieces," he said. The navy needs a new fleet of frigates, and the air force is committed to buying the joint strike fighter. They can't have it all, and some senior officers are asking: "Is the opportunity cost of having a new generation of nuclear weapons too high, in terms of what it would prevent us doing on other fronts."

So what are the alternatives to eternal hair-trigger readiness for an attack nobody really expects to come? You could just get rid of all your nuclear weapons, of course, and you'd probably be just as safe as you are now. But if you can't get your head around the idea of nuclear nakedness, you could at least store your magical cloak in the closet, safely out of the reach of foolish children.

What Harvey was actually proposing was that Britain should get rid of its missile-firing submarines when they get too old, and rely on a few cruise missiles with nuclear warheads to keep everybody else honest. Store them somewhere safe, and don't even take them out unless the international situation has got dramatically worse.

In fact, why not do that right now? Those "boomers" — nuclear-powered submarines carrying long-range ballistic missiles with multiple nuclear warheads — were really designed for "retaliation from the grave" if all the owner's cities, military bases, ports and hamburger stands were destroyed in a massive surprise nuclear attack. Does anybody expect such a thing in the current era? Well, then...

And the best thing about putting the nukes in the cupboard is that you eliminate the risk of ugly accidents. In 2009 two boomers, one British and the other French, actually collided underwater. Even at a time unprecedented in world history, when no great power fears attack by any other, it would have been a frightening event if those two submarines had been American and Chinese.

So put the toys away, boys. Don't expect the Israelis, the Indians and the Pakistanis to follow suit, because they live in parts of the world where full-scale war with a powerful enemy is still a possibility. But together they have only about 500 nuclear weapons; the five nuclear-armed great powers have around 11,000.

Somebody has to start, and Britain is the likeliest candidate of the five. Sir Nick Harvey lost his job in the cabinet reshuffle, but the "nuclear capability review" is still underway.

Even Britain's generals think that another generation of fully deployed missile-firing submarines would deprive them of most of the other new weapons they want, so the issue will stay on the table. Dumping the boomers and locking the remaining nuclear warheads in the cupboard would be a useful halfway house on the way to getting rid of them entirely.

Gwynne Dyer is an independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/opinion/2012/10/137_121928.html

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Federation of American Scientist (FAS)

OPINION/FAS Strategic Security Blog

DOD: Strategic Stability Not Threatened Even by Greater Russian Nuclear Forces

October 10, 2012

By Hans M. Kristensen

A Department of Defense (DOD) report on Russian nuclear forces, conducted in coordination with the Director of National Intelligence and sent to Congress in May 2012, concludes that even the most worst-case scenario of a Russian

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surprise disarming first strike against the United States would have “little to no effect” on the U.S. ability to retaliate with a devastating strike against Russia.

I know, even thinking about scenarios such as this sounds like an echo from the Cold War, but the Obama administration has actually come under attack from some for considering further reductions of U.S. nuclear forces when Russia and others are modernizing their forces. The point would be, presumably, that reducing while others are modernizing would somehow give them an advantage over the United States.

But the DOD report concludes that Russia “would not be able to achieve a militarily significant advantage *by any plausible expansion of its strategic nuclear forces, even in a cheating or breakout scenario under the New START Treaty*” (emphasis added).

The conclusions are important because the report came *after* Vladimir Putin earlier this year announced plans to produce “over 400” new nuclear missiles during the next decade. Putin’s plan follows the Obama administration’s plan to spend more than \$200 billion over the next decade to modernize U.S. strategic forces and weapons factories.

The conclusions may also hint at some of the findings of the Obama administration’s ongoing (but delayed and secret) review of U.S. nuclear targeting policy.

No Effects on Strategic Stability

The DOD report – *Report on the Strategic Nuclear Forces of the Russian Federation Pursuant to Section 1240 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012* – was obtained under the Freedom of Information Act. It describes the U.S. intelligence community’s projection for the likely development of Russian nuclear forces through 2017 and 2022, the timelines of the New START Treaty, and possible implications for U.S. national security and strategic stability.

Much of the report’s content was deleted before release – including general and widely reported factual information about Russian nuclear weapons systems that is not classified. But the important concluding section that describes the effects of possible shifts in the number and composition of Russian nuclear forces on strategic stability was released in its entirety.

The section “Effects on Strategic Stability” begins by defining that stability in the strategic nuclear relationship between the United States and the Russian Federation depends upon the assured capability of each side to deliver a sufficient number of nuclear warheads to inflict unacceptable damage on the other side, even with an opponent attempting a disarming first strike.

Consequently, the report concludes, “*the only* Russian shift in its nuclear forces that could undermine the basic framework of mutual deterrence that exists between the United States and the Russian Federation is a scenario that enables Russia to deny the United States the assured ability to respond against a substantial number of highly valued Russian targets following a Russian attempt at a disarming first strike” (emphasis added). The DOD concludes that such a first strike scenario “will most likely not occur.”

But even if it did and Russia deployed additional strategic warheads to conduct a disarming first strike, *even significantly above the New START Treaty limits*, DOD concludes that it “would have *little to no effects* on the U.S. assured second-strike capabilities that underwrite our strategic deterrence posture” (emphasis added).

In fact, the DOD report states, the “Russian Federation...would not be able to achieve a militarily significant advantage *by any plausible expansion of its strategic nuclear forces, even in a cheating or breakout scenario under the New START Treaty*, primarily because of the inherent survivability of the planned U.S. Strategic force structure, particularly the OHIO-class ballistic missile submarines, a number of which are at sea at any given time.”

Implications



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These are BIG conclusions with BIG implications. They reaffirm conclusions made by DOD in 2010, but the new report is important because it comes *after* Russia earlier this year announced plans to produce “over 400” nuclear missiles over the next decade.

In the real world, however, Russian nuclear forces are not increasing. Even with Putin’s missile production plan, simultaneous retirement of older missile will continue the downward trend and result in a net reduction of Russian strategic nuclear forces over the next decade and a half.

This fact has not stopped some from arguing against additional U.S. nuclear reductions. Their argument is that reductions are unwise at a time when Russia and others are modernizing their nuclear forces. Others have even argued that Russia could break out of the New START Treaty by cheating and presumably achieve some strategic advantage.

Even the U.S. Senate’s advice and consent resolution that in 2010 approved the New START Treaty required that “the President should regulate reductions in United States strategic offensive arms so that the number of accountable strategic offensive arms under the New START Treaty possessed by the Russian Federation *in no case exceeds the comparable number of accountable strategic offensive arms possessed by the United States to such an extent that a strategic imbalance endangers the national security interests of the United States*” (emphasis added).

A similar obsession with numbers was echoed in the 2012 report by the State Department’s International Strategic Advisory Board on future U.S.-Russian “Mutual Assured Stability,” which concluded that it requires some “rough parity” of nuclear forces. (A similar number obsession has evolved with NATO about non-strategic nuclear weapons, but that’s another story).

But the DOD report appears to conclude that such warnings and parity requirement are missing the point. Strategic stability and deterrence today are provided by a secure retaliatory capability, primarily ballistic missile submarines. In fact, although ICBMs and bombers also play a role in the U.S. nuclear posture, they seem oddly absent from the report’s description of what is required to maintain strategic stability based on a sufficient secure retaliatory capability.

Retaining that capability, it seems, does not even require the ballistic missile submarines to be on alert (although the report doesn’t explicitly say so). It only requires that a sufficient number of submarines “are at sea” and secure at any given time – or perhaps even only in a crisis. Likewise, the conclusion that a Russian disarming first strike “will most likely not occur” may be obvious to most but, if formal, seems to remove the need for having ICBMs on alert, as long as a sufficient number of submarines are at sea to provide the basic deterrence that underpins strategic stability.

Putting “an end to Cold War thinking,” as President Obama pledged in his 2009 Prague speech, is a long and tedious process that requires peeling off layers of deeply ingrained planning principles and assumptions developed over decades of Cold War with the Soviet Union. Opposition is still widespread within parts of the Pentagon and Congress. Just how far the targeting review will be able to bring us down the road of ending Cold War thinking remains to be seen. But the DOD report to Congress provides important conclusions that could help forward the process. Let’s just hope that the lawmakers bother reading it.

Hans M. Kristensen is director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists.

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<http://www.fas.org/blog/ssp/2012/10/strategicstability.php>

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The Heritage Foundation
OPINION/The Foundry

Despite Arms Reduction Treaty, Russia Is Increasing Its Nuclear Capability

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By Michaela Bendikova
October 10, 2012

About a year and a half ago, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) entered into force. The Obama Administration ensured the American people and the Senate that the treaty would contribute to strategic stability between the United States and the Russian Federation.

The treaty was touted as a crown jewel of the Administration's "reset" policy, but yet another State Department data declaration confirms that the treaty is hopelessly biased in the Kremlin's favor and that the "reset" policy is in shambles.

The treaty, in fact, undermines strategic stability. The State Department's data show that Russia lowered the number of its intercontinental-range ballistic missiles (ICBM), submarine-launched ballistic missiles—or bombers—by three (compared to the March 1, 2012, data declaration).

At the same time, the country *increased* the number of its accountable warheads by seven (if the March 1, 2012, data declaration is taken as a baseline of comparison). This means that the Russians are putting more nuclear warheads, or Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs), on each of their delivery vehicles. The process is also known as MIRVing and has been considered destabilizing for decades because it is said to incentivize the other side to strike first.

The Obama Administration recognized this in its 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and ordered all U.S. ICBMs be deployed with one nuclear warhead to "enhance the stability of the nuclear balance by reducing the incentives for either side to strike first." The Administration, however, did nothing to negotiate a ban on MIRVing in New START, and the Russians are taking the advantage of this loophole. Currently, Moscow out-MIRVs the U.S. by one per each accountable deployed delivery system.

To exacerbate the disparity, the U.S. is the only state with nuclear weapons without a substantive nuclear weapons modernization program. Since New START entered into force, the Russians have announced the most massive nuclear weapons build-up since the end of the Cold War. Over time, if the U.S. does not change its policy or Russia adopts a fundamentally different strategic posture, Washington policymakers will be left with a qualitative and quantitative disadvantage vis-à-vis Moscow and potentially other nuclear-armed states.

President Obama touted New START as an essential step on the road toward a world free of nuclear weapons—U.S. nuclear weapons, that is, because the assumption that if the U.S. unilaterally disarms, others will follow, is just not true.

Historically, South Africa gave up its nuclear weapons while the U.S. built up and tested its nuclear weapons. North Korea and Pakistan emerged as new nuclear weapons players, while the U.S. reduced its nuclear weapons and stopped testing them.

Countries base their nuclear weapons programs on their respective perceptions of threats, not on steps taken by the United States. In a world with many nuclear-armed players, it is important that the U.S. adopts a "protect and defend" strategic posture comprising offensive and defensive systems. Such a posture would allow the military to defend the American people, territories, institutions, and infrastructure from actors who mean the country and its allies harm.

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<http://blog.heritage.org/2012/10/10/despite-arms-reduction-treaty-russia-is-increasing-its-nuclear-capability/>

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National Defense Magazine
OPINION/Analysis
October 10, 2012

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Analyst: Use of Conventional Global Strike Weapons Not Likely to Spark Nuclear War

By Dan Parsons

Neither proliferation concerns nor fear that Russia may mistake them for nuclear weapons should deter U.S. development of conventional prompt global strike weapons, Tom Scheber, vice president of the National Institute for Public Policy, said Oct. 10.

"The general concept to doing more with conventional rather than nuclear has been a goal of both Republican and Democrats for decades," Scheber said at a Washington, D.C., forum hosted by the National Defense Industrial Association and the Air Force Association.

"Technology has been the main limitation, not to mention money. But technology has advanced in this regard," he said.

A decade ago, when the concept of conventional global strike was first introduced, technological limitations hampered its adoption as a strategic weapon system. At the time, the only vehicles capable of delivering a prompt strike anywhere in the world at a moment's notice were the same systems designed to deliver nuclear weapons. "Nuclear ambiguity" — the worry that a conventional strike could be mistaken for a nuclear offensive — derailed efforts to outfit legacy nuclear delivery systems with conventional warheads.

An initial 2003 plan to equip Trident missiles with conventional warheads and base them on ballistic missiles submarines was scuttled for that reason, Scheber said. If a conventional weapon were launched from a submarine with a ballistic trajectory, Russian satellites could detect it but would be unable to distinguish the missile from a nuclear launch without prior notification.

Technology has since progressed to a point where nuclear ambiguity can be managed, Scheber said. Basing conventional strike missiles far away from nuclear weapons and using new hypersonic front-end and terminal delivery systems with distinguishable trajectories, ambiguities can be eliminated, he said.

"These three characteristics determine the applicability of arms control limits and provide observable differences from nuclear weapons," Scheber said. "Each of these the Russians can observe and use to quickly determine" whether a strike is nuclear or conventional.

Several non-nuclear global strike systems are under development. Most are what Scheber called "notional" concepts. All are sea- or land-based hypersonic missile systems less likely to be mistaken for nuclear weapons, he said. Air-delivery or space-based systems are "outside the realm of what's near-term" and are not feasible at present, Scheber said.

The only concept being actively pursued as a program of record is the "conventional strike missile," which would be based on land within the United States, Scheber said. Its first-stage rocket would be a modified Peacekeeper missile booster with a hypersonic delivery vehicle as its terminal stage.

The vehicles, being developed by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Army and Air Force, are capable of reaching speeds of 13,000 miles per hour. DARPA and the Air Force are developing the Hypersonic Test Vehicle 2 under the so-called Falcon Program. The program seeks a conventional weapon that strike anywhere in the world within one hour. A prototype was successfully tested over the Pacific Ocean in August 2011.

The Advanced Hypersonic Weapon, which the Army is developing at Redstone Arsenal, Ala., can reach speeds of at least 3,600 miles per hour. A prototype of that vehicle was successfully test flown in November 2011 from the Pacific Missile Range Facility, Kauai, Hawaii, to the Reagan Test Site in the Marshall Islands.

Either would be readily identifiable as a conventional weapon that flies without a ballistic trajectory at one-eighth to one-tenth the altitude of a nuclear launch, Scheber said.

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Even a Trident missile armed with a conventional warhead, which has the lowest distinguishing profile of any concept, the National Academy of Sciences concluded that nuclear ambiguity was “entirely manageable,” he said.

Unlike worries about Russia, there is little concern that the Chinese would mistake a conventional weapon for a nuclear strike, Scheber said. China doesn’t have advanced radars and other sensors that can see U.S. missile launches, a capability in which the Soviet Union invested heavily during the Cold War.

There is, however, a concern that U.S. sensors would not be able to tell whether a Chinese missile launch was nuclear or conventional. Recent reports have shown that China stores both types of weapons at the same facilities and inside the same missiles, Scheber said.

With new weapon designs, nuclear arms control treaties are less of a barrier to fielding prompt global strike capabilities. The Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty bans only ground-launch ballistic and cruise missiles. Hypersonic, non-ballistic weapons would not fall under that document.

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which limits the number of nuclear weapons a country can deploy, would only have an impact on U.S. arsenals if the conventional Trident concept were adopted, Scheber said. It would not preclude the use of those missiles, only curtail the number that could be fielded and would require a deactivation of some nuclear weapons in turn, he said.

Given these advances, “the rationale for prompt global strike remains valid,” Scheber said.

They allow quick reaction to regional threats anywhere in the world, especially places where other forces or weapons could not be deployed in a timely manner.

“The need is we might not have forces in range in time, if forces are in range,” Scheber said. “They might have the wrong capabilities ... and might be vulnerable to defenses.”

The weapons also make enemy nuclear installations less valuable because the United States could strike them with conventional weapons, which should not provoke nuclear retaliation, he said. The systems also can be seen as a more potent deterrent than nuclear arms by sidestepping reluctance to use nuclear weapons except as an act of last resort, Scheber said.

Conventional global strike weapons also reduce the overall role of nuclear weapons in national security, he said.

The adoption of conventional global strike weapons could spur innovation in rocket boosters, guidance systems and other high-tech sectors that were traditionally associated with the delivery of nuclear weapons, Scheber said.

Dan Parsons is a Staff Writer at National Defense Magazine

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=920>

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Foreign Policy

OPINION/The World of Threats

The End of Nunn-Lugar?

By David E. Hoffman

Thursday, October 11, 2012

It's no mean feat to destroy an artillery or missile shell filled with a chemical weapon like VX, sarin, or soman. Very delicate operations are needed to drain the shell, then destroy the agent without harm to workers or those living nearby. Imagine the challenge of destroying 1.9 million shells in 110 buildings holding 5,400 metric tons of the deadly stuff.

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That's what confronted Russia after the Soviet collapse at the chemical weapons storage site at Shchuchye, 100 miles from Russia's southern border. Today, those shells -- many of them stored for years in wooden warehouses with corrugated metal roofing -- are being dismantled and destroyed, and one important reason is the foresight of two senators 20 years ago.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, it left behind a vast arsenal of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and materials. Much of it was vulnerable. The Soviet system had controlled this stuff by strict rules and punishment of people, but when the party-state imploded, the physical protections were not foolproof. A lot of materials were kept secure by no more than a lock on the door and, perhaps, a wax-and-string seal.

Given Soviet secrecy, the condition of these industrial plants and storage facilities wasn't widely understood in Washington in late 1991 and early 1992, at the time of the fall. President George H.W. Bush, who took pride in his foreign policy accomplishments, was facing a difficult re-election campaign at home at a time of growing unease over a mild recession. People in his administration were loathe to consider aid to the former Soviet Union -- one of them said that the Russians should be allowed to go into "free-fall." Cold War thinking ran deep.

But Sen. Sam Nunn (D-Ga.) was alarmed by the nuclear security problems. He had witnessed first-hand the chaos and insecurity from his own visit to Moscow the previous summer, right after the failed coup attempt, and his concerns were amplified by his contacts in Moscow. Rep. Les Aspin (D-Wisc.) was also worried, although more about humanitarian disaster. Their first effort to craft a bill for Soviet aid failed to gain much traction on Capitol Hill. But Nunn did not give up, and when he joined with Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) they managed to rally Congress to approve legislation that would transfer \$400 million from other defense accounts to a new effort to secure nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union.

Over the years, this program proved its worth, helping Russia, which had an empty treasury, dismantle and destroy missiles, submarines and chemical weapons facilities, among other things -- including the construction of a huge chemical weapons destruction facility at Shchuchye. The program has since grown to \$1 billion a year and expanded well beyond the former Soviet Union.

On Wednesday, the Russian Foreign Ministry confirmed a report that it does not intend to extend the umbrella agreement for Nunn-Lugar when it expires next year. Sen. Lugar, who is leaving the Senate at the conclusion of this session, was recently in Moscow hoping to persuade them to continue the agreement, perhaps with amendments. Now it looks like the future of Nunn-Lugar faces more serious hurdles.

Russia was never comfortable with accepting foreign assistance like Nunn-Lugar, but it was also clear to many diplomats, scientists, engineers, and military people in Russia that their government could not do this alone in the turbulent years of the 1990s. Russia's treasury was nearly empty, and cooperation with the United States made sense in the face of dangers which the Russians understood all too well. Whatever wounded pride they harbored was swallowed in the face of more urgent needs.

Today, a resurgent Russia can easily afford to carry on the dismantlement and clean-up with its own money. That is one reason for their decision to end the agreement. Another one surely has to do with pride and the desire to shed dependence on the United States for anything. President Vladimir Putin has also recently kicked out the United States Agency for International Development, which was funding pro-democracy programs. Putin wants to project a Russia standing on its own two feet.

What will matter now is whether, without U.S. assistance, Russia has the willpower and the determination to continue the mission on its own. There will be a temptation to slacken off, to keep the old weapons just in case, and to devote resources to building new ones. In the Foreign Ministry announcement, there was a suggestion that Russia might be open to a new agreement that would better fit Russia's situation today. No telling what will go into such a deal, or whether it is even possible given the recent tensions, but it is worth a try. Nunn-Lugar proved quite durable during many ups-and-downs in relations with Moscow, and with a new agreement, there is still work to be done.



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http://hoffman.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/10/11/how_dangerous_is_the_end_of_nunn_lugar

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Gazeta – Russia

OPINION/Editorial

Editorial: Weapons Do Not Forgive

12 October 2012

By Gazeta.ru editorial

The explosion of four thousand tons of ammunition on October 9 at the Donguzskiy military site in the Orenburg region has been traced to the guilty party. Soldier Alexander Kasatkin admitted that it was his careless smoking that led to the accident.

The soldier who, according to some media, was tortured by conscience confirmed the theory that was originally put forward by investigators.

Earlier the military prosecutor of the Central Military Command (CVO) Yevgeny Ivanov listed the causes which might have caused the explosion. Among them he mentioned smoking and careless handling of fire, as well as violation of munitions.

Russian Chief Military Prosecutor Sergei Fridinsky said that his staff had previously warned the Central Military District Command of the threat of unauthorized bombings in the Donguz district and even addressed court so that it would ban all explosive works there.

But as a matter of fact, everything in Russia happens according to the Russian saying "until the thunder breaks," that is nothing is done unless something really bad happens. And even when bad things happen, all the authorities do is try to find the guilty party, forgetting to eliminate the cause of the accident.

In November 2009 two ammunition explosions happened in one of the military sites in the city of Ulyanovsk, killing several. After that tragedy, then-president Dmitry Medvedev sacked four high-ranking military officials. In May 2012 an explosion took place at the Ashuluk site in the Astrakhan region. Three weeks earlier ammunition exploded at the Milino military site in Nizhegirdskiy region. Several days later an artillery warehouse caught fire in the Spassky district of Primorskiy region ...

And after each explosion we found out that soldiers smoked near the shells, and officers were not controlling anything.

There are mountains of weapons in Russia, but unfortunately military staff has not learnt how to get rid of them properly.

In this sense the military reform which is usually assessed and criticized from the position of army's military, has failed in the imposition of the elementary regulations of order. The control over ammunition utilisation does not differ from managing, say, the flooding in the Krasnodar region where 10 years after a devastating flood with hundreds of victims, nothing was done to prevent the tragedy in Krymsk.

Russia cannot independently and safely make use of its own weapons. At the same time it refuses any foreign aid. In addition to this, Moscow has announced plans to stop the U.S.- led program "Nunn-Lugar" to eliminate Russia's nuclear weapons, "Kommersant" paper reported recently.

According to the paper's source in the State Department, Russia has declared that it no longer needs financial aid from the USA and that it can take all financial responsibilities to get rid of its nuclear arsenal.

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According to Russia, while running the Nunn-Lugar program there were "important information" leaks to the USA. At the same time Russia's Defense ministry admitted that the program "helped save a lot of money."

From 1992 to 2012, the U.S. spent more than \$ 8 billion to help Russia in the utilization of its weaponry. During that period of time, it deactivated more than 7.5 thousand strategic nuclear warheads, eliminated about 1 thousand intercontinental ballistic missiles, and hundreds of other types of missiles, more than 100 bombers and hundreds of launchers, nearly three tons of chemical weapons.

One could say that the Americans had direct military and political interest, but the Russian authorities do not finance themselves enough to adequately dispose of nuclear weapons, at least, according to the Defense Ministry.

If Russia cannot properly eliminate common artillery ammunition just like it was in the Orenburg region, there can be no guarantees that a far more frightening tragedies will not happen.

A basic sloppiness against aggressive foreign policy rhetoric of the Russian authorities, and activating searches of foreign agents in the country becomes a explosive mix for Russia - sometimes literally.

http://en.gazeta.ru/opinions/2012/10/12/a_4809825.shtml

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