



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

Articles & Other Documents:

Featured Article: [Britain Will Lose Nuclear Capability for 20 Years if Scotland Votes for Independence](#)

1. [Iran Foreign Minister Denies Direct Negotiations with US](#)
2. [France: Iran Seems on Track for Nukes by Mid-2013](#)
3. [Iran, P5+1 May Hold Talks in November: Salehi](#)
4. [Obama Opens Door to Bilateral Negotiations with Iran](#)
5. [Iran Weighs Tougher Line in Stalled Nuclear Talks](#)
6. [Iran Filling Nuclear Bunker with Centrifuges: Diplomats](#)
7. [Iran Military Action Not 'Right Course at This Time', Downing Street Says](#)
8. [S. Korea Plans Third Rocket Launch Bid Friday](#)
9. [US Not Swayed by NK's Armament Threats: Official](#)
10. [N. Korea Mends Nuke Test Tunnel after Flood Damage, Satellite Photo Shows](#)
11. [North Korean Army Minister 'Executed with Mortar Round'](#)
12. [North Korea May Be Expanding Their Nuclear Arsenal More Than Anyone Imagined](#)
13. [S. Korea, U.S. Agree to Set N. Korean Nuclear Deterrence Policy by 2014](#)
14. [Denuclearizing NK 'Perhaps Impossible': Ex-US Envoy](#)
15. [N. Korea Slams U.S. Envoy's Calls for Commitment to 2005 Nuclear Accord](#)
16. [Panetta Says No Signs of N. Korea's Imminent Nuke Test Yet](#)
17. [India's DRDO Preparing for Hypersonic Test](#)
18. [Putin Flexes Muscle in Big Test of Russia's Nuclear Arsenal](#)
19. [Russia to Commission First Borey Class Nuclear Sub in 2013](#)
20. [Russia Successfully Tests New intercontinental Ballistic Missile](#)
21. [Nuclear Weapons 'Outlawed' in an Independent Scotland, Says Salmond](#)
22. [Britain Will Lose Nuclear Capability for 20 Years if Scotland Votes for Independence](#)
23. [BioWatch Technology Couldn't Detect Lethal Germs, Tests Found](#)
24. [Widespread Culpability Seen for Nuclear Bomb Cost Hike](#)
25. [U.S. Military Hypersonic Aircraft Trial Set for 2013](#)
26. [US Military Tests Missile Defense Capability](#)
27. [North Korea Improves Cyber Warfare Capacity, U.S. Says](#)
28. [Libyan Suspected in Attack on Benghazi US Consulate Reported Killed in Cairo](#)
29. [New Poll: Egyptians Turning Toward Iran, Want Nuclear Weapons](#)
30. [Japan: Joining the Nuclear Weapons Club? It Could.](#)
31. [Mutually Absurd Destruction](#)
32. [Iran Is Closer to a Weapon than Joe Biden Asserts](#)
33. [North Korea's Nuclear War Plan: "Go Nuts" and "Dig in"](#)
34. [WHY IT MATTERS: Missile Defense](#)
35. [Gulf Pawn in New 'Great Game'](#)

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Issue No.1030, 26 October 2012

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Press TV – Iran

Iran Foreign Minister Denies Direct Negotiations with US

Sunday, October 21, 2012

Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi has denied a new report published in a US newspaper over direct negotiations with the United States.

"There is no such an issue as 'negotiations with America' and on the other hand we are not responsible to answer whatever they [US media] say," Salehi said at a press conference with his Central African counterpart Antoine Gambi on Sunday, IRNA reported.

"We are negotiating in the form of the P5+1 group, if they mean nuclear talks, it is ongoing with the P5+1, but we don't have any discussions other than that," he added.

On Saturday, the New York Times, quoting unnamed U.S. administration officials, claimed that Iran and the United States would talk following the U.S. November presidential election.

The White House also denied that a final agreement had been reached .

"It's not true that the United States and Iran have agreed to one-on-one talks or any meeting after the American elections ",Tommy Vietor, a White House spokesman, said Saturday evening.

Iran and the P5+1 comprises -- Britain, China, France, Russia, and the US plus Germany -- have held several rounds of talks over the Iranian nuclear energy program.

<http://presstv.com/usdetail/267984.html>

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

Boston Herald

France: Iran Seems on Track for Nukes by Mid-2013

By Associated Press

Sunday, October 21, 2012

PARIS — France's foreign minister says Iran appears on track to reach the ability to produce a nuclear weapon by the first half of next year.

France is one of six countries that have negotiated with Tehran over its nuclear program, which Iran insists is peaceful.

Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius told Europe-1 radio Sunday that unspecified experts "have established in an absolutely indisputable way" that Iran has compiled a full array of centrifuges that "apparently will allow the ability to go toward possession of the nuclear weapon by the first half of next year, the end of the first half." He did not elaborate.

Western nations fear Iran may turn its uranium enrichment program toward making weapons, a growing concern as Tehran expands the number of machines it uses to enrich uranium.

http://bostonherald.com/news/international/middle_east/view/20121021france_iran_seems_on_track_for_nukes_by_mid-2013

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

Press TV – Iran

Iran, P5+1 May Hold Talks in November: Salehi

Sunday, October 21, 2012

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi says the next round of negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 group will probably be held next month.

Speaking at a joint press conference with his Central African counterpart Antoine Gambi on Sunday, Salehi noted that the meeting will probably be held in late November.

He added, however, that the venue for the talks has not been decided yet.

European Union Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton said on October 15, 2012 that negotiations between Iran and five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany (P5+1) could move forward "very soon."

Iran and the P5+1 comprising -- Britain, China, France, Russia, and the US plus Germany -- have held several rounds of talks over the Iranian nuclear energy issue.

The United States, Israel and some of their allies have accused Iran of pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran rejects the allegations, arguing that as a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it is entitled to develop and acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/10/21/267956/iran-p51-may-hold-talks-in-nov/>

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

London Guardian – U.K.

Obama Opens Door to Bilateral Negotiations with Iran

President appears to endorse nuclear talks, despite dismissing report of direct discussions

By Julian Borger, diplomatic editor

Tuesday, 23 October 2012

President Obama has said the Iranian nuclear crisis could be resolved by bilateral negotiations between Washington and Tehran.

In the course of the last of three presidential debates – which chiefly served to underline the striking similarities in the foreign policies of the president and his challenger, Mitt Romney – Obama appeared to open a new route towards a negotiated settlement to the worsening impasse over Iran's nuclear programme.

For the past few years, talks with Iran have been handled by a group of six major powers: the five permanent members of the security council together with Germany. The US has had occasional meetings with Iranian officials alongside multilateral talks but the Iranians, hamstrung by deep internal divisions in Tehran, have shied away from such public encounters over the past three years.

During Monday night's debate in Florida, two weeks before what is expected to be a close election, Obama dismissed a New York Times report over the weekend that the US and Iran were exploring the possibility of holding direct bilateral nuclear negotiations after the election. But a few minutes later, he appeared to contradict himself, in what was possibly an unguarded remark made out of irritation that Romney had taken to echoing many of his administration's policies and presenting them as his own.

"I'm pleased that you now are endorsing our policy of applying diplomatic pressure and potentially having bilateral discussions with the Iranians to end their nuclear programme," he said, although Romney had made no mention of such discussions.

While the White House has rejected the New York Times report, it has not specifically denied that American and Iranian officials have been holding secret meetings in parallel to the public multilateral negotiations, since soon after Obama came to office in 2009.

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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Mark Fitzpatrick, a former state department expert on proliferation at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said: "I have been hearing for some time that they had been having private discussions, and now it is starting to become public."

Western officials say that within a few weeks of the US election, a new round of talks are expected between the six powers and Iran at which the offer put on the table in return for curbs on Iran's uranium enrichment would be "reformulated".

The six powers (US, UK, France, Russia, China and Germany) will make it clearer to Iran that relief from the current severe sanctions regime will be available if Iran stops producing 20%-enriched uranium – a particular proliferation concern as it could easily be turned into weapons-grade uranium should Iran take the decision to make a bomb.

US officials have said they expect that meeting to go ahead, but President Obama signalled on Monday night it could be a springboard to a new bilateral negotiating track to run separately or in tandem with the broader talks.

"There will be a new round of talks before the end of November, and I think what the Iranians have agreed to is to meet bilaterally with US officials at the margins of those talks," Fitzpatrick said.

"Ultimately, this is something that has to be resolved between the US and Iran. They are the two main protagonists. Whatever they agree to, the others will go along with."

The prospect of a new phase in the negotiations possibly opens up a significant difference in outcomes in foreign policy as a result of the 6 November elections, where otherwise the differences are relatively minor.

It is not at all clear whether Romney would enter such talks without a full policy review, and his close relationship with the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, suggests he would pay more heed to Israeli reservations about such negotiations, which are likely, if successful, to leave Iran with a limited right to uranium enrichment. It is also far from assured that, if presented with such an opportunity, Iran's elderly and infirm supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, would have the confidence to embrace it.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/oct/23/obama-iran-negotiations-presidential-debate>

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

Bloomberg Businessweek

Iran Weighs Tougher Line in Stalled Nuclear Talks

By Ali Akbar Dareini, Associated Press (AP)

October 24, 2012

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran is weighing a more confrontational strategy at possible renewed nuclear talks with world powers, threatening to boost levels of uranium enrichment unless the West makes clear concessions to ease sanctions.

Such a gambit — outlined by senior Iranian officials in interviews this week — could push Iran's nuclear program far closer to the "red line" set by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for possible military options.

But it also suggests that economic pressures and diplomacy have pushed Iran to the point of considering an ultimatum-style end game in efforts to seek relief from the U.S. and European sanctions, which have targeted Iran's vital oil exports and its ability to use international banking networks.

Mansour Haghshatpour, deputy head of Iran's influential National Security Committee in parliament, told The Associated Press that the hardline negotiating formula under consideration would put Western negotiators on notice that failure to ease sanctions could open the way for uranium enrichment above 20 percent — currently the highest level acknowledged by the Islamic Republic.

That would mark a dramatic move toward the threshold for warhead-grade material at about 90 percent and certainly bring a sharp escalation in calls for military action from Israel and others in the West. Iran denies it seeks nuclear

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weapons, but there have been suggestions it could ramp up uranium enrichment for future projects such as nuclear-powered submarines.

"The West now has a chance to strike a deal with Iran," Haghighatpour told the AP in an interview. "Perhaps we may need to produce nuclear fuel for large commercial vessels that need 60 percent purity."

There are no immediate plans to resume nuclear talks between Iran and a six-nation group including both Tehran's foes and allies: the permanent U.N. Security Council members plus Germany. Full-scale negotiations have been on hold since the last round ended in stalemate in June.

At the time, the West stuck to its major demands: Iran must stop enriching uranium to 20 percent purity, shut down its underground Fordo enrichment site and ship its 20 percent stockpile out of the country. In return, Iran was offered civilian plane spare parts and 20 percent-enriched nuclear fuel for its medical research reactor in Tehran.

But there was no move to ease sanctions — which have grown even tighter since the last negotiating session.

To Iran, the proposed package was a nonstarter. Many compared it to swapping diamonds in return for peanuts.

So far, Iran has publicly repeated its positions that it was willing to bargain over 20 percent enrichment as part of step-by-step moves to lift sanctions. Iran also wants an international pledge that it has the "right" to make its own nuclear fuel — at least at lower levels for its energy-producing reactor.

The tougher line outlined by officials has not been made public, and it's still unclear whether it will be adopted as a negotiating position. But the fact it's under review suggests Iran is eager for a sweeping deal to lift sanctions and could try to jolt the West with a now-or-never choice: Roll back the sanctions or face a stepped up Iranian nuclear program.

"The West feels sanctions are biting and this is forcing Iran to return to the negotiating table. That's wrong. We never left the table. Sanctions have been harmful but will never make us give up our nuclear activities," said lawmaker Hossein Naqavi, spokesman for the parliament's Security Committee. "Pressures, sanctions and military threats won't make us retreat."

The White House has indicated it would be receptive to landmark one-on-one talks with Iran in parallel with the wider diplomatic process. Iranian officials this week said the country had no plans to meet directly with Washington envoys. On Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi predicted the stalled talks with world powers could resume as late November, after the U.S. presidential election.

Haghighatpour, the security committee official, said Iran would have never increased the level of its uranium enrichment from 3.5 percent to 20 percent if the West had provided fuel for the research reactor, which produces isotopes to treat cancer patients.

"Some 850,000 Iranian patients need nuclear medicine every year. We wanted fuel for our research reactor but the West refused. We had no option but to increase enrichment to 20 percent and make it ourselves," he said. "It's the same today. They can reach a deal with us now or face a new situation."

Many Iranian lawmakers and conservative clerics have said in recent months that Iran should enrich uranium to higher levels for proposed vessels such as nuclear-powered oil tankers. Iran currently has no such ships.

Nuclear-powered vessels other than warships are rare, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has said in the past that nuclear-powered merchant ships would be uneconomical.

But Iran's deputy navy chief in charge of technical affairs, Adm. Abbas Zamini, said in June that Iran has begun "initial stages" of designing a nuclear submarine. The West has raised concerns that Iran might cite submarine and other nuclear-powered vessel construction as a justification for producing weapons-grade 90 percent enriched uranium.

Nuclear submarines are powered by fuel ranging from 20 percent purity to more than 90 percent. Many U.S. submarines use nuclear fuel enriched to more than 90 percent, the same level used to build atomic bombs.

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/2012-10-24/iran-studies-tougher-tactics-in-stalled-uke-talks>

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

Daily Star – Lebanon

Iran Filling Nuclear Bunker with Centrifuges: Diplomats

October 25, 2012

By Fredrik Dahl, Reuters

VIENNA: Iran appears to have nearly finished installing centrifuges at its underground nuclear plant, Western diplomats say, potentially boosting its capacity to make weapons-grade uranium if it chose to do so.

Iran only disclosed the existence of the Fordow plant, built inside a mountain to shield it from air strikes, in 2009 after learning that Western spy services had detected it.

The United States and its allies are particularly worried about Fordow because Iran is refining uranium there to a fissile concentration of 20 percent, which Iran says it needs for a medical reactor.

The diplomats said they had heard of indications that Iran had put in place the last 640 or so uranium centrifuges of a planned total of some 2,800 at the site, but had not started running them yet.

"I understand that they have installed all the centrifuges there," one envoy said.

Another diplomat said he also believed that the centrifuges had been placed in position, but that piping and other preparations needed to operate them may not yet be completed.

Twenty percent purity is only a short technical step from weapons grade, and the work goes to the heart of Western fears that a programme that Iran says is purely peaceful is in fact a cover for the development of a nuclear weapons capability.

Any move by Iran to increase output at Fordow would further alarm the United States and Israel, which have reserved the option to use military force to prevent Iran getting the bomb, and complicate on-off diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute.

There was no immediate comment from Iran or the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the U.N. watchdog based in Vienna, which is expected to issue its next report on Tehran's nuclear programme in mid-November.

Diplomacy and successive rounds of economic sanctions have so far failed to end the decade-old row, raising fears of Israeli military action against its arch enemy and a new Middle East war damaging to a fragile world economy.

Iran already has enough low-enriched uranium for several nuclear bombs if it were refined to a high degree, but may still be a few years away from being able to assemble a missile if it decided to go down that path, analysts say.

The IAEA said in its last report in August that Iran had doubled the number of centrifuges at Fordow to 2,140 in about three months.

But diplomats said the number of machines that were in operation, nearly 700, had not changed since early this year.

"The last I heard was that they (the newly installed centrifuges) were not operational," one of the diplomats said.

It was not clear whether Iran was holding back for technical or political reasons. It is also not known whether the centrifuges that are not yet operating will be used for 5- or 20-percent enrichment, or both.

Iran may be able to accumulate up to four 'significant quantities' of weapons-grade uranium - each sufficient for one bomb - in as little as nine months from now, nuclear experts Olli Heinonen of Harvard University's Belfer Center and Simon Henderson of the Washington Institute said in a paper.



"This timetable will shrink as more 20 percent enriched uranium is produced, at which point potential breakout time will be measured in weeks rather than months," they said.

Nuclear experts say any country seeking to become a nuclear-armed power would probably only break out once it could produce at least several bombs.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Oct-25/192710-iran-filling-nuclear-bunker-with-centrifuges-diplomats.ashx#axzz2AKIKKNo5>

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

The London Guardian – U.K.

Iran Military Action Not 'Right Course at This Time', Downing Street Says

Government reiterates its current opposition to military action against Iran after revelation US has requested use of UK bases

By Patrick Wintour and Nick Hopkins, *The Guardian*

Friday, 26 October 2012

The UK government has reiterated that it does not believe military action against Iran would be appropriate at the moment, following the disclosure that Britain has rebuffed US requests to use UK military bases to support the buildup of forces in the Gulf.

Downing Street said: "We are working closely with the US with regard to UK bases" but "the government does not think military action is the right course at this point of time".

David Cameron made a lengthy speech last week urging Israel to show restraint, and pointing to the way in which sanctions are having an impact on the Iranian economy.

The Guardian has been told that US diplomats have also lobbied for the use of British bases in Cyprus, and for permission to fly from US bases on Ascension Island in the Atlantic and Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, both of which are British territories.

The US approaches are part of contingency planning over the nuclear standoff with Tehran, but British ministers have so far reacted coolly. On Friday, Downing Street said such contingency planning was something that was done as a matter of routine.

They have pointed US officials to legal advice drafted by the attorney general's office and which has been circulated to Downing Street, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence.

It states that providing assistance to forces that could be involved in a pre-emptive strike would be a clear breach of international law on the basis that Iran, which has consistently denied it has plans to develop a nuclear weapon, does not currently represent "a clear and present threat".

"The UK would be in breach of international law if it facilitated what amounted to a pre-emptive strike on Iran," said a senior Whitehall source. "It is explicit. The government has been using this to push back against the Americans."

Sources said the US had yet to make a formal request, and that they did not believe an acceleration towards conflict was imminent or more likely. The discussions so far had been to scope out the British position, they said.

"But I think the US has been surprised that ministers have been reluctant to provide assurances about this kind of upfront assistance," said one source. "They'd expect resistance from senior Liberal Democrats, but it's Tories as well. That has come as a bit of a surprise."

The situation reflects the lack of appetite within Whitehall for the UK to be drawn into any conflict, though the Royal Navy has a large presence in the Gulf in case the ongoing diplomatic efforts fail.



The Guardian has been told that a British military delegation with a strong navy contingent flew to US Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida, this summer to run through a range of contingency plans with US planners.

The UK, however, has assumed that it would only become involved once a conflict had already begun, and has been reluctant to commit overt support to Washington in the buildup to any military action.

"It is quite likely that if the Israelis decided to attack Iran, or the Americans felt they had to do it for the Israelis or in support of them, the UK would not be told beforehand," said the source. "In some respects, the UK government would prefer it that way."

British and US diplomats insisted that the two countries regarded a diplomatic solution as the priority, but this depends on the White House being able to restrain Israel, which is nervous that Iran's underground uranium enrichment plant will soon make its nuclear programme immune to any outside attempts to stop it.

Israel has a less developed strike capability and its window for action against Iran will close much more quickly than that of the US, explained another official. "The key to holding back Israel is Israeli confidence that the US will deal with Iran when the moment is right."

With diplomatic efforts stalled by the US presidential election campaign, a new push to resolve the crisis will begin in late November or December.

Six global powers will spearhead a drive that is likely to involve an offer to lift some of the sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy in return for Tehran limiting its stockpile of enriched uranium.

The countries involved are the US, the UK, France, Germany, Russia and China. Iran will be represented by its chief negotiator, Saeed Jalili.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/oct/26/iran-military-action-downing-street>

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

AsiaOne News – Singapore

S. Korea Plans Third Rocket Launch Bid Friday

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Monday, October 22, 2012

SEOUL - South Korea plans to make its third attempt to join the exclusive club of countries capable of placing a satellite in space on Friday with a rocket launch from the Naro Space Center on the south coast.

Science Minister Lee Ju-Ho told reporters Monday that the Korea Space Launch Vehicle (KSLV-I) would blast off as scheduled, barring any last-minute hitches or problems with weather conditions.

"In consideration of preparations and weather conditions, we have confirmed that the launch is possible on October 26," Lee said.

A 3,000-tonne coastguard ship has left for international waters near the Philippines to track the launch, the ministry said, adding the rocket would be transferred to the launch pad on Wednesday.

The ministry had previously set a five-day window for the launch ending October 31.

Two previous launches of the KSLV-I ended in failure. In its first attempt in 2009, the KSLV-I actually attained orbit but faulty release mechanisms prevented proper deployment of the satellite.

A second attempt the following year ended when the rocket exploded in mid-flight.

The first stage of the space vehicle is manufactured by Russia, combined with a solid-fuelled second stage built by South Korea.



Currently, only three Asian countries - China, India and Japan - have successfully launched a satellite into orbit.

North Korea in April conducted a rocket launch that Pyongyang said would put a satellite in space.

Most other countries, however, considered it a disguised ballistic missile test and it was condemned by the UN Security Council.

The rocket disintegrated some two minutes after blast-off.

<http://www.asiaone.com/News/Latest%2BNews/Science%2Band%2BTech/Story/A1Story20121022-379044.html>

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

Korea Times – South Korea

October 22, 2012

US Not Swayed by NK's Armament Threats: Official

WASHINGTON (Yonhap) -- The United States on Sunday dismissed North Korea's continued threats to jettison its denuclearization commitments, reiterating it would be impossible for the communist nation to become a nuclear power.

"The position of the United States with respect to North Korea has not changed," a State Department official said, when asked about Washington's formal response to Pyongyang's recent saber-rattling.

"The international community will never accept the DPRK (North Korea) as a nuclear weapons power. We continue to hold the DPRK to its denuclearization commitments and obligations," the official added, speaking on the customary condition of anonymity.

In a 2005 deal reached at the now-defunct six-party talks, North Korea vowed to abandon all of its nuclear programs in exchange for political and economic incentives from its dialogue partners -- South Korea, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia.

The impoverished North is also required to stay away from nuclear activity under the U.N. resolutions adopted after its underground nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

In a rare meeting with a senior U.S. government official in late September, two North Korean diplomats said Pyongyang would reconsider its policy on the historic nuclear agreement, according to news reports.

Clifford Hart, the Obama administration's special envoy to the six-way talks, met informally with Han Song-ryol, North Korea's deputy ambassador to the United Nations, and Choe Son-hui, the deputy director-general of the North American affairs bureau at its foreign ministry, in the Chinese city of Dalian on the sidelines of the Northeast Asia Cooperation Dialogue.

The North Koreans told Hart that Pyongyang "will not continue on its path to denuclearization, as promised in 2005" until Washington averts its "hostile policy," according to media in the U.S. and Japan.

The State Department official neither confirmed nor denied the reports, while stressing Washington is open to dialogue with Pyongyang.

"We have long made clear we are open to improved relations with the DPRK if it is willing to take clear actions to live up to its international obligations and commitments," said the official.

In July, North Korea's foreign ministry announced "the consistent hostile policy" toward it by the U.S. compels Pyongyang to "totally re-examine the nuclear issue."

The following month, the ministry issued a more strongly worded statement.



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"Should the United States make a wrong choice, our nuclear possession will be prolonged and our nuclear deterrent will be updated and expanded beyond imagination," it said.

On a visit to Seoul last week, the top U.S. point man on North Korea Glyn Davies described Pyongyang's nuclear threats as "troubling."

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/10/120_122808.html

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
October 23, 2012

N. Korea Mends Nuke Test Tunnel after Flood Damage, Satellite Photo Shows

By Lee Chi-dong

WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 (Yonhap) -- North Korea suffered flood damage at its major nuclear test site but it has made good progress in restoration, security experts said Monday, citing satellite photos.

"Satellite imagery of North Korea's underground nuclear test site at Punggye-ri in the country's northeastern corner shows that significant repairs have been undertaken to mitigate damage caused by this summer's floods," said James Hardy and Allison Puccioni, analysts at IHS Janes, a London-based security information firm.

South Korean intelligence sources said earlier heavy rains and floods had caused damage at a tunnel in the site. The reclusive North is believed to have constructed two new tunnels in addition to as many existing ones.

It conducted two underground nuclear tests there in 2006 and 2009, respectively.

"The reports of flood damage at the site have been confirmed by GeoEye imagery taken in October 2012, which, when compared with DigitalGlobe imagery taken in October 2010, shows the effects of severe flash flooding on the site after it was inundated by water draining off the surrounding mountains," the analysts added in a report.

South Korean officials think North Korea has the capability to carry out another nuclear experiment at any time, but no substantial activity has been reported yet.

Meanwhile, North Korea's state media said in August that nearly 170 people were killed, 400 were missing and more than 84,000 left homeless after floods in late June and early July.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/10/23/13/0401000000AEN20121023000100315F.HTML>

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

London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

North Korean Army Minister 'Executed with Mortar Round'

A North Korean army minister was executed with a mortar round for reportedly drinking and carousing during the official mourning period after Kim Jong-il's death.

By Julian Ryall, Tokyo

24 October 2012

Kim Chol, vice minister of the army, was taken into custody earlier this year on the orders of Kim Jong-un, who assumed the leadership after the death of his father in December.

On the orders of Kim Jong-un to leave "no trace of him behind, down to his hair," according to South Korean media, Kim Chol was forced to stand on a spot that had been zeroed in for a mortar round and "obliterated."

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The execution of Kim Chol is just one example of a purge of members of the **North Korean** military or party who threatened the fledgling regime of Kim Jong-un.

So far this year, 14 senior officials have fallen victim to the purges, according to intelligence data provided to Yoon Sang-hyun, a member of the South Korean Foreign Affairs, Trade and Unification Committee.

Those that have fallen from favour include Ri Yong-ho, the head of the army and Ri Kwang-gon, the governor of the North Korean central bank.

Analysts suggest that Mr Kim, who took over as head of state after the death of his father late last year, is acting to consolidate his own power base and deter any criticism of his youthfulness and inexperience. Mr Kim is believed to be either 28 or 29.

"When Kim Jong-un became North Korean leader following the mourning period for his father in late December, high-ranking military officers started disappearing," a source told the Chosun Ilbo newspaper. "From information compiled over the last month, we have concluded that dozens of military officers were purged."

It also appears that Mr Kim ordered his loyal officials to use the excuse of misbehaviour during the mourning period for his father to remove any potential opponents.

Other officials have been executed by firing squads, including Ryu Kyong, a senior intelligence expert.

Since being elevated to second-in-command of the nation by his father in September 2010, Kim has reportedly been behind the dismissal of at least 31 senior officials.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/9630509/North-Korean-army-minister-executed-with-mortar-round.html>

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

Business Insider

North Korea May Be Expanding Their Nuclear Arsenal More Than Anyone Imagined

By Joshua Berlinger

October 24, 2012

North Korea might be increasing the "size and sophistication," of its nuclear arsenal, according to a report published on 38 North.

The report, authored by David Albright and Christina Walrond of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), evaluated three different explanations as to why North Korea might be upping its nuclear capabilities.

The first explanation says that North Korea is creating nuclear reactors called "Civil Light Water Reactor" which it produces low-enriched uranium and does not produce plutonium for weapons.

The second explanation says that North Korea is using its plutonium in a "Militarized Light Water Reactor," which would be optimal for making weapon-grade plutonium.

The final explanation is that North Korea is dedicating its centrifuge capacity to making weapon-grade uranium, which would also strengthen its nuclear arsenal.

All of these projections "show an increase in North Korea's nuclear weapons arsenal."

Because there are "significant uncertainties" regarding how to analyze how much weapon-grade uranium and plutonium the hermit state has, the report says it is difficult to come to a formative conclusion. But "regardless of these uncertainties, the current North Korean stocks of nuclear weapons may be larger than commonly believed."

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
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The report comes at a crucial time. According to Albright and Walrond, the escalation in the production of nuclear material coincides with the failure of a February 29 reciprocal arrangement between the United States and North Korea aimed at fostering nuclear deterrent.

On Wednesday, U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta met with his South Korean counterpart at the Pentagon for security discussions focused on North Korea.

Panetta highlighted that the subsequent shift of U.S. focus toward Asia was in part geared towards pressuring North Korea.

"The bottom line," he told reporters, "is we still don't know whether or not he will simply follow in the steps of his father or whether he represents a different kind of leadership for the future."

<http://www.businessinsider.com/north-koreas-nuclear-stockpile-2012-10>

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
October 25, 2012

S. Korea, U.S. Agree to Set N. Korean Nuclear Deterrence Policy by 2014

By Kim Eun-jung

WASHINGTON, Oct. 24 (Yonhap) -- The defense chiefs of South Korea and the United States agreed Wednesday to identify specific types of nuclear threats by North Korea and map out joint deterrence strategies tailored to each threat type by 2014.

South Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin and his American counterpart, Leon Panetta, reached the agreement in the annual Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) at the Pentagon at a time of continued military threats from the communist North under its new leader, Kim Jong-un.

"They reaffirmed that any North Korean aggression or military provocation is not to be tolerated and that the U.S. and the Republic of Korea would work shoulder-to-shoulder to demonstrate our combined resolve," the joint communique said, referring to South Korea's official name. "They also urged North Korea to cease all activities related to its nuclear program immediately, and to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs."

In particular, they agreed to develop joint deterrence strategies tailored to specific types of threats posed by North Korea's missiles and nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction by 2014 through the "Extended Deterrence Policy Committee" between the two countries.

Panetta reiterated the U.S. commitment to provide and strengthen extended deterrence for the South, using its full range of military capabilities, including "the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities."

About 28,500 American troops are stationed in South Korea, and the U.S. guarantees a nuclear "umbrella" in case of an atomic attack, but calls for customized deterrence strategies have grown as Seoul prepares to retake wartime operational command from Washington in December 2015.

The Combined Forces Command (CFC), which has long overseen joint operations of the allies, will be dismantled under the transition plan, so the two sides will form a joint working group to establish an alternative system to "continue to refine the future command structure and maximize its military efficiency."

They also stressed the transition should be "implemented methodically" and that the combined defense posture remains "strong and seamless."



The latest agreement came as some in the South question whether the two allies will be able to carry out joint military actions as effectively as before once the CFC is dissolved, and a looser command structure exists between South Korean troops and U.S. Forces Korea.

Kim said the two sides plan to form a working-group later this year to draft a new model for an alternative joint operation body by the first half of next year, Kim said.

"There have been discussions about how to utilize expertise accumulated under the CFC structure even after the transition of wartime OPCON," Kim told reporters after the meeting. "South Korean forces will play a leading role and the U.S. forces will play a supporting role. The issue is how to form a decision making body within the structure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of South Korea."

The ministerial meeting, the first since the announcement of a new missile pact that nearly tripled Seoul's missile range to 800 kilometers (500 miles), also reached an agreement to closely cooperate in developing South Korea's missile defense system. The extension puts the whole of North Korea within reach of Seoul's missiles and drew an angry response from Pyongyang.

The two nations will establish a "kill chain" to detect, track and target North Korean missiles, and a Korean Air and Missile Defense System aimed at intercepting incoming missiles.

If the kill chain is established, it would take less than 30 minutes to target a missile after detection, according to officials.

There has been speculation that Washington expects Seoul to play a role in its missile defense program in Northeast Asia. However, no such agreement regarding the sensitive missile defense issue was part of this year's SCM, Kim said.

Panetta said the two sides will continue to seek ways to strengthen missile defense, without going into details.

"With regards to future missile defense, that's an area we continue to discuss in order to make sure that we have all of the defenses necessary to deal with the missile threat coming from North Korea and whatever steps are necessary to try to make sure that we are prepared for that," Panetta told reporters.

Inter-Korean ties soured after two deadly attacks by the North in the tensely guarded Yellow Sea in 2010 and its failed attempt to launch a long-range rocket in April. A series of minor clashes near the western maritime sea border and the North's fresh warning of a "merciless" attack over a civic group's attempt to send propaganda leaflets further stoked tensions on the peninsula.

The two Koreas are still technically at war since the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a cease-fire, not a peace treaty.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/10/24/58/0301000000AEN20121024006651315F.HTML>

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

Korea Times – South Korea

October 25, 2012

Denuclearizing NK 'Perhaps Impossible': Ex-US Envoy

North Korea's young leader is unlikely to give up his nuclear weapons capability because it is the only achievement by his late father, Kim Jong-il, a former U.S. envoy said Thursday, saying the goal of denuclearizing the North is "perhaps impossible."

James Kelly, a former U.S. assistant secretary of state who led the American delegation at the six-nation talks aimed at ending the North's nuclear weapons program, also expressed skepticism about talks with Pyongyang, even if the six-party talks resume.



"Since the only achievement during the entire period of Kim Jong-il's rule, prior to his death, was the achievement of nuclear weapons," Kelly told Yonhap News Agency in an interview in Seoul.

"Since North Korea has nothing else to be proud of, they are proud of having nuclear weapons, so it can be very difficult to get them to give these up and perhaps impossible," said Kelly, who served as America's top diplomat for East Asia between 2001 and 2005.

In 2002, Kelly visited North Korea and said he had evidence of a then-secret uranium-enriching program that could provide the communist regime with new material to make atomic weapons, in addition to its plutonium-based weapons program.

Eight years later, North Korea revealed an industrial-scale uranium enrichment facility, creating new hurdles to efforts by Korea and the U.S. and other regional powers to reopen the six-party talks which also involve North Korea, China, Russia and Japan.

North Korea has conducted two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009, with concerns persisting that the North might carry out a third underground nuclear test following a failed rocket launch in April this year.

Efforts to reopen the six-party talks, which were last held in late 2008, have been frozen since the April rocket launch, but analysts expect regional powers to resume diplomacy with North Korea sometime next year, after South Korea and China face leadership changes in coming months, along with the November elections in the U.S.

Kelly agreed, saying, "I think it is quite possible that there could be another session of the six-party talks."

Asked whether the six-party talks would still be an appropriate response to resolve the North's nuclear standoff, Kelly replied, "Will they be successful? Not unless judgments in North Korea change."

Some experts have said that South Korea and the U.S. should set a realistic goal of denuclearizing North Korea because Washington's target for "complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization (CVID)" is unachievable due to the North's uranium enrichment program, which makes it impossible for experts to verify the North's words on compliance.

"There is a difference between the realistic goal and the eventual goal which may turn out to be realistic even if conditions make that difficult now," Kelly said.

"I think the American policy remains that nuclear weapons in North Korea are profoundly unstable," he said.

"And so that remains a goal, we want to get there. That's a tough proposition," said Kelly. "Maybe North Korea might sell it, but right now we don't know what the price is, but the return will be very, very high." (Yonhap)

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/10/120_123086.html

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

Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
October 25, 2012

N. Korea Slams U.S. Envoy's Calls for Commitment to 2005 Nuclear Accord

SEOUL, Oct. 25 (Yonhap) -- North Korea on Thursday denounced recent calls by U.S. special envoy for North Korea policy Glyn Davies for the communist nation to abide by its commitments under a 2005 nuclear agreement reached at a six-party meeting.

In an interview with the North's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), an unidentified spokesman for the country's foreign ministry said the remarks were nothing more than "ludicrous statements" that failed to capture the essence of the nuclear issue, according to a KCNA dispatch monitored in Seoul.



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Speaking to reporters in Seoul last Friday, Davies called on Pyongyang to "follow through their obligations and commitments" as contained in the Sept. 19, 2005, joint statement.

In the statement, North Korea agreed to abandon its nuclear weapons programs in return for economic and political assistance from the other five nations in the multilateral forum -- South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the U.S.

The North later reneged on the deal and conducted two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

"It is illogical for the U.S. to urge the DPRK to honor its obligation while it is not complying with what it committed to do in the September 19 joint statement," the spokesman was quoted as saying in a separate English-language dispatch from KCNA.

The DPRK is the acronym of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"The statement specifies the U.S. political, military and economic commitments to fundamentally end its hostile policy toward the DPRK as a chief culprit of the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula," the spokesman claimed. "The U.S., quite contrary to its commitments in the joint statement, wantonly violated the sovereignty of the DPRK and openly and systematically stepped up military threats and economic sanctions against it."

The official also argued Washington's "increased hostile policy" toward North Korea pushed the country into building up its nuclear program "both in quality and quantity."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/10/25/68/0401000000AEN20121025013600315F.HTML>

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

Korea Times – South Korea

October 26, 2012

Panetta Says No Signs of N. Korea's Imminent Nuke Test Yet

WASHINGTON (Yonhap) -- U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said Thursday that North Korea is apparently planning for another nuclear test but there is no indication of any imminent action.

"We always get intelligence that they continue to make plans for this, but I have not seen, at least intelligence that I've noted, that indicates that it's imminent," the secretary told reporters.

After talks with Panetta in Washington on Wednesday, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin said the secretive and unpredictable communist nation may carry out a third atomic weapons experiment.

"In fact, North Korea has been preparing for this for quite a long time," Kim told a joint press availability with Panetta. "And when the time comes for a political decision, it may in fact resort to this third nuclear test."

North Korea conducted underground nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

The U.S. defense chief also expressed concerns over North Korea's long-range missiles.

"We've been dealing with the threat from North Korea for a long time now in terms of their developing intercontinental ballistic missiles that could reach our homeland and could obviously reach other countries in that region," Panetta said. "That's a threat."

Earlier this month, the North's military declared that it has missiles capable of hitting the U.S. mainland.

The threat came in response to the U.S. decision to let South Korea extend its ballistic missile range up to 800 kilometers from the previous 300 km.

The allies have guidelines for missile technology cooperation.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/10/120_123186.html

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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

Jane's Defence Weekly 2012

India's DRDO Preparing for Hypersonic Test

By Robert Hewson, London

October 23, 2012

India is planning to conduct the first flight trial of its Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV) in the next 12 to 18 months, according to Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) officials.

The HSTDV programme aims to produce a hydrocarbon-fuelled scramjet test article capable of Mach 6-7 and autonomously guided flight. The HSTDV will pave the way for a hypersonic cruise missile and platforms that can perhaps be applied to other tasks, such as very high-speed reconnaissance.

According to DRDO sources, initial ground tests with the kerosene-fuelled scramjet (supersonic combustion ramjet) have been completed and the propulsion system is now being integrated with the air vehicle. Roughly 10 engine runs have been completed although the development team has yet to undertake a sustained 20-second burn, which is the operating time required for initial flight trials. This milestone will be achieved "soon", IHS Jane's was told. This contradicts some previous reports that stated the 20-second mark had already been reached.

From its main facility at Hyderabad, the DRDO's Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL) is responsible for the programme's current phases. The HSTDV is one of two high-speed weapons projects now under way in India - the other being the BrahMos II hypersonic missile joint venture with Russia's NPO Mashinostroyeniya.

"The HSTDV project is completely separate from BrahMos II", a DRDO official told IHS Jane's. "We are both developing a hypersonic cruise missile but the HSTDV uses completely indigenous technology. The BrahMos II is being developed with input from Russia and you can't say that you have an indigenous capability until you control all stages of the process."

The HSTDV air vehicle is 5.6 m long and 80 cm wide. It weighs 1,000 kg and will have a payload capacity of 150 kg. It will be ground launched using a solid rocket booster with the initial test objective of reaching 20 seconds of controlled, sustained flight. Ultimate performance goals for the DRDO's future hypersonic platform include 600 seconds of powered flight to cover a distance of 1,500 km carrying a payload of 400 kg.

Specific DRDO research areas for the development of hypersonic vehicles include: air vehicle/propulsion system integration, thermally resistant structures, hypersonic mixed compression air intake (design, development, test), two-phase turbulent reactive flow modelling and supersonic combustion of liquid hydrocarbon fuel.

When it comes to specific hardware for launching the HSTDV the DRDO is working on composite materials for heat shielding, panel and vehicle separation modelling for hypersonic Mach numbers, and the design and development of pyrotechnic and electro-pneumatic actuators.

India's ambitious HSTDV programme dates back more than 10 years and has failed to meet most of the development schedule milestones set out for it so far. Programme officials once predicted a first flight in 2008 and all of the forecast HSTDV launch dates since then have failed to transpire.

<https://janes.ihs.com/CustomPages/Janes/DisplayPage.aspx?ShowProductLink=true&DocType=News&ItemId=+++1526162&Pubabbrev=JDW>

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

Chicago Tribune

Putin Flexes Muscle in Big Test of Russia's Nuclear Arsenal

October 20, 2012



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By Steve Gutterman, Reuters

MOSCOW (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin took a leading role in the latest tests of Russia's strategic nuclear arsenal, the most comprehensive since the 1991 Soviet collapse, the Kremlin said on Saturday.

The exercises, held mostly on Friday, featured prominently in news reports on state television which seemed aimed to show Russians and the world that Putin is the hands-on chief of a resurgent power.

Tests involving command systems and all three components of the nuclear "triad" - land and sea-launched long-range nuclear missiles and strategic bombers - were conducted "under the personal leadership of Vladimir Putin", the Kremlin said.

An RS-12M Topol Intercontinental Ballistic Missile was launched from the Plesetsk site in northern Russia, and a submarine test-launched another ICBM from the Sea of Okhotsk, the Defence Ministry said.

Long-range Tu-95 and Tu-160 bombers fired four guided missiles that hit their targets on a testing range in the northwestern Komi region, it said.

"Exercises of the strategic nuclear forces were conducted on such a scale for the first time in the modern history of Russia," the Kremlin statement said.

"Vladimir Putin gave a high evaluation to the combat units and crews and the work of the Armed Forces General Staff, which fulfilled the tasks before them and affirmed the reliability and effectiveness of Russia's nuclear forces."

The exercises included tests of communications systems and "new algorithms" for command and control, it said.

Russia says it is modernizing a nuclear arsenal that was largely created during the Cold War and will continue to use nuclear weapons as a key deterrent.

In the 2010 New START treaty, Russia and the United States set lower numerical ceilings on the weapons tested in the exercise.

But Putin has made clear further cuts depend, among other things, on Washington assuaging his concerns about anti-missile defenses it is deploying, including a European shield Russia says will make it more vulnerable.

Russian and American leaders say nuclear war between the Cold War rivals is now unthinkable.

But critics say Putin - in power since 2000 and back as military commander-in-chief since his return to the Kremlin in May after four years as prime minister - is exaggerating potential threats from the West to bolster support at home.

Editing by Andrew Roche.

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-10-20/news/sns-rt-us-russia-nuclear-putinbre89j0ej-20121020_1_new-start-treaty-nuclear-weapons-president-vladimir-putin

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

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Commission First Borey Class Nuclear Sub in 2013

22 October 2012

Russia's first Borey class strategic nuclear submarine will be commissioned in 2013, Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said on Monday.

The Yury Dolgoruky submarine was expected to join the Russian Navy by the end of this year, but tests carried out during the latest sea trials revealed a number of technical flaws. Software glitches in the automated launch control system prevented further tests of the Bulava ballistic missile, the submarine's main weapon.

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“We are expecting the Yury Dolgoruky submarine to enter service in 2013,” Serdyukov told Russian lawmakers at a meeting on defense issues.

The second Borey class submarine, the Alexander Nevsky, could join Russia’s Pacific Fleet in 2014, the minister said.

The Borey class submarines are expected to form the core of Russia's strategic submarine fleet, replacing the aging Project 941 (NATO Typhoon class) and Project 667 class (Delta-3 and Delta-4) boats. Russia is planning to build eight Borey and Borey-A class subs by 2020.

Two more Borey class submarines are under construction at the Sevmash shipyard in the White Sea port city of Severodvinsk.

A Borey class strategic submarine is 170 meters (580 feet) long, has a hull diameter of 13 meters (42 feet), a crew of 107, including 55 officers, a maximum depth of 450 meters (about 1,500 feet) and a submerged speed of about 29 knots.

All the Borey class strategic submarines will carry the Bulava ballistic missiles, up to 16 ballistic missiles with multiple warheads.

VILYUCHINSK (Kamchatka), October 22 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121022/176820897.html

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

Voice of Russia – Russia

Russia Successfully Tests New intercontinental Ballistic Missile

October 25, 2012

By Voice of Russia, TASS

A test launch of a new intercontinental ballistic missile has been successfully performed from Russia’s Kapustin Yar missile testing site, spokesman for the Russian strategic missile forces Colonel Vadim Koval said.

According to the spokesman, the prototype of a new missile with a mobile launcher was launched at 22:28 Moscow time from the Kapustin Yar testing ground in the Astrakhan region,” he said. “The missile’s model warhead hit the hypothetical target at the Sary-Shagan testing pad in Kazakhstan.”

The key task of the test launch was to verify correctness of technological solutions used in the new missile. Apart from that, the launch confirmed its operability and specified technical characteristics of its systems and units. Moreover, elements of missile warheads were tested.

“The missile is being created based on maximum use of new technological solutions of the fifth-generation missile systems,” Koval noted. “These solutions considerably reduce production time and cost.”

The new missile will be used by Russian strategic missile forces to get through anti-missile systems.

According to Koval, the Kapustin Yar missile testing site has unique facilities to test elements of missile warheads.

http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_10_25/Russia-successfully-tests-new-intercontinental-ballistic-missile/

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

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) News – U.K.

21 October 2012

Nuclear Weapons 'Outlawed' in an Independent Scotland, Says Salmond

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The leader of the SNP has said that if his party won power in an independent government it would make nuclear weapons illegal.

Alex Salmond told the BBC's Andrew Marr Show that Trident, which currently resides at Faslane Naval base on the Clyde, would have to go.

He also said a go-alone Scotland would remain a member of the European Union.

Mr Salmond was being interviewed from Perth where his party has been holding its annual conference.

The first minister was asked by the broadcaster to respond to UK government suggestions that moving Trident from Scotland would be "prohibitively expensive".

He said: "The UK government has two choices - they either relocate Trident to another part of the rest of the UK or alternatively they could use nuclear facilities in America or France."

Mr Salmond made a further point that it was possible for a UK government to decide a "much better policy" and decommission its weapons system.

He added: "That would be a matter for the London government. That doesn't mean we think it reasonable to lease out part of Scottish territory to what you [Andrew Marr] describe as a Cyprus situation. If Scotland, by majority, doesn't want nuclear weapons, the SNP proposition is to write that into the constitutions of the state.

"So, that would make the possession of nuclear weapons illegal."

The SNP leader was being interviewed after a decision by his party to back joining nuclear-based military alliance Nato in the event of an independent Scotland.

Following his appearance on the Andrew Marr Show, Mr Salmond reiterated SNP policy to outlaw nuclear weapons during an interview on the Sunday Politics Scotland programme, hosted by Isabel Fraser.

She quizzed him on whether an independent Scotland would prevent nuclear weapons-carrying warships doing exercises in Scottish waters.

Mr Salmond said: "The issue about visiting warships, etc, no country ever confirms the existence of nuclear weapons on its warships - that is well known.

"This is an issue all non-nuclear countries have to face up to within Nato and out of Nato and we will do exactly the same thing."

The first minister's BBC appearances follow a deal reached earlier this week between the Scottish government and UK government on the rules governing a Scottish independence referendum in two years' time.

Mr Salmond and Prime Minister David Cameron signed the Edinburgh Agreement in which it was decided there would be a one-question referendum to be held before the end of 2014.

Sturgeon speech

On the subject of Scotland's membership of the EU in the event of an independence, Mr Salmond told the Andrew Marr Show that it would not lead to "vexed negotiations".

He said: "We are part of the EU, we have been part of it for 40 years. We would be negotiating our positions from inside the EU. I don't think there is any doubt about that. I don't think it will be a vexed negotiation at all.

"There is a large amount of good will toward Scotland in the rest of the EU."

The SNP conference will finish later with a speech by deputy leader Nicola Sturgeon.

She is expected to say that UK Chancellor George Osborne should use the opportunity presented by his forthcoming Autumn Statement to increase capital spending for the UK, including Scotland.

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-20020839>

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

London Daily Telegraph – U.K.

Britain Will Lose Nuclear Capability for 20 Years if Scotland Votes for Independence

Britain would lose its nuclear deterrent for two decades if Scotland votes for independence because it would no longer have the capability to house Trident submarines.

By Simon Johnson, Scottish Political Editor

24 October 2012

Scottish independence will force the remainder of the UK to abandon nuclear weapons for at least two decades, according to report by MPs published today.

The Commons Scottish Affairs select committee said it would be possible to move Trident submarines and their missiles from their base on the Clyde within two weeks of separation.

However, the construction of replacement facilities south of the Border could take up to 20 years, they said, effectively forcing the UK Government into “unilateral nuclear disarmament”.

The Continuous At Sea Deterrent, whereby at least one of the submarines is patrolling the UK’s shores around the clock, would stop as a result.

The MPs said it was extremely unlikely a separate Scotland would allow Trident to remain permanently, while basing the submarines abroad would be politically fraught.

A possible solution would be a gentleman’s agreement that would allow the UK to continue basing the submarines in Scotland while they found a suitable alternative elsewhere and built the necessary facilities.

But, although there are several potential sites in England and Wales, the committee said all have drawbacks that render them unsuitable or expensive to convert for the nuclear deterrent.

Devonport in Plymouth has too large a population in the surrounding area to safely store nuclear warheads, MPs said, while the approach to the Barrow naval base in Cumbria is too shallow for the submarines to regularly dock.

Defence ministers told their inquiry they have made no preparations if Scots vote for separation in autumn 2014 and are pressing ahead with plans to move the Royal Navy’s entire submarine fleet north of the Border by 2017.

But the committee urged both the UK and Scottish governments to publish contingency plans for removing Trident before the referendum so voters understand the consequences.

The naval base at Faslane that houses the submarines is on course to employ 7,500 people by 2022, making it Scotland’s largest worksite, while the missiles and warheads are stored at nearby Coulport.

Replacing them south of the Border is expected to cost well in excess of £3.5 billion, a cost the MPs said would be divided between taxpayers in Scotland and the remainder of the UK as part of the separation deal.

Ian Davidson, the committee’s chairman and the Labour MP for Glasgow South West, said: “The full details of how and when Trident would be removed from Scotland and the full consequences of that plan must be worked out before any referendum is held.”

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/9630951/Britain-will-lose-nuclear-capability-for-20-years-if-Scotland-votes-for-independence.html>

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

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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Los Angeles Times

BioWatch Technology Couldn't Detect Lethal Germs, Tests Found

Scientists say the U.S. biological defense system relied on kits that were far less able to help detect lethal germs than officials thought.

By David Willman, *Los Angeles Times*

October 22, 2012

WASHINGTON — For two years, the nationwide BioWatch system, intended to protect Americans against a biological attack, operated with defective components that left it unable to detect lethal germs, according to scientists with direct knowledge of the matter.

The federal official who oversaw installation of the components was quietly shifted to a position with no responsibility for BioWatch, and the entire episode was kept out of public view.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which oversees BioWatch, opened an internal investigation, whose status remains confidential.

In more than 30 cities, BioWatch samplers located atop buildings, in train stations and in other public places suck air through dry filters around the clock. Once a day, the filters are taken to public health laboratories to be analyzed for traces of smallpox, anthrax, plague and other pathogens.

Lab technicians extract genetic material from the filters and then use kits, called assays, to release fluorescent dyes into it. When a laser is shined through the mixture, the dyes are supposed to light up if one of the pathogens targeted by BioWatch is present.

The labs originally used a series of separate assays, each designed to detect a specific germ. In 2007, Homeland Security equipped most of the labs with new kits intended to screen for multiple pathogens at the same time.

The aim was to reduce personnel costs and enable faster detection of a biological attack, and thus a speedier response.

But the new components, called "multiplex" assays, triggered false alarms, a recurring problem with BioWatch since the system was put into operation nationwide in 2003.

After scientists at many of the labs voiced concerns, Homeland Security officials, in consultation with microbiologists from other federal agencies, ordered testing of the new assays.

The tests, conducted in secrecy at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory in Washington state and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, found that the kits were unsuitable for BioWatch, scientists familiar with the matter said. They spoke on condition of anonymity, citing the sensitivity of the information.

The multiplex assays could not distinguish between the bacterium that causes tularemia, a potentially deadly condition also known as rabbit fever, and similar but benign organisms called "near neighbors" that are abundant in outdoor environments.

The original assays had exhibited the same problem. But the multiplex assays had an additional shortcoming, scientists said: They were found to be far less sensitive to the presence of actual pathogens than Homeland Security officials had presumed.

In late 2009, Homeland Security officials removed the new assays and returned to using kits that searched for pathogens one at a time.

Peter Boogaard, a Homeland Security spokesman, declined to respond to written questions about the matter. Jeffrey Stiefel, the department official responsible for installing the ill-fated assays, said he was not authorized to comment.

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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Some of the scientists familiar with BioWatch said the multiplex assays were put into use without adequate testing to validate their effectiveness.

The assays were designed at the CDC and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and were built to Homeland Security's specifications by a private company, the scientists said.

Richard F. Meyer, a microbiologist who helped develop the multiplex assays while at the CDC and later supervised their installation as a contractor for Homeland Security, defended the kits.

Meyer said the original assays "were past their life cycle and in constant need of repair." Data collected by Livermore scientists, he said, "supported the use of the [new] technology."

Meyer acknowledged that he lost his contracting role with Homeland Security because of dissatisfaction over how the multiplex assays performed once installed.

"When you don't agree with those in charge you get pushed aside," he said in an email.

A spokesman for Livermore, Steve Wampler, declined to discuss the lab's role in developing assays for BioWatch.

The failure of the multiplex assays is one in a slew of problems that have beset BioWatch since President George W. Bush unveiled the system during his State of the Union address in January 2003.

Bush said BioWatch would "protect our people and our homeland" against a germ attack by terrorists. In subsequent years, presidential appointees in Homeland Security have repeatedly assured Congress that BioWatch was functioning effectively.

The Los Angeles Times reported in July that BioWatch has been unable to distinguish between dangerous and benign organisms, and that as of 2008, federal agencies had documented 56 false alarms.

In one of those incidents, during the 2008 Democratic National Convention in Denver, BioWatch units signaled the presence of the tularemia bacterium, triggering tense deliberations among local, state and federal officials over what steps should be taken to protect the public.

After follow-up tests found no traces of the germ at the convention site, officials decided not to take emergency measures, and that evening Barack Obama accepted his party's nomination for president on an outdoor stage, as scheduled, before a crowd of more than 80,000 people.

Not once have public health officials had enough confidence in a BioWatch alarm to evacuate an area, dispense antibiotics or take any other emergency action.

After considering the potential disruption from false alarms, federal aviation officials shelved plans to install air-sampling units inside the nation's major airports.

In response to The Times' reporting, congressional Republicans and a senior Democrat have written to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano seeking documents and explanations. Although Napolitano has not commented publicly, the department's chief medical officer, Dr. Alexander Garza, has staunchly defended BioWatch.

In a statement, Garza said in July that the system had never generated a false alarm. "The detection of commonly occurring environmental agents," he wrote, "is not a 'false positive.'" Asked to elaborate while appearing before a congressional panel Sept. 13, Garza said each detection by BioWatch was "a true positive."

The notion that such events — which Homeland Security calls BioWatch Actionable Results, or BARs — are not false alarms was earlier considered and rejected by a committee of experts appointed by the National Academy of Sciences.

In its report in October 2010, the committee said that "all BARs to date have been 'BAR false positives,' meaning they have signaled the potential occurrence of a terrorist attack when none has occurred."



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The committee warned that "repeated false alarms may eventually create a sense of skepticism or complacency that could delay or hinder an appropriate response to a true bioterrorism event."

One of the committee members, Northern Arizona University geneticist Paul Keim, said in an interview that the detection of a benign organism could not be considered a "true positive."

"That's why we call them near neighbors," Keim said. "If they cause disease, we call them a pathogen."

Garza, in his recent congressional testimony, said that the existence of the near neighbors had come as a surprise to Homeland Security and that the department was now seeking "more specific assays."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-biowatch-faulty-assays-20121023,0,2818080,full.story>

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

Global Security Newswire

Widespread Culpability Seen for Nuclear Bomb Cost Hike

October 24, 2012

The National Nuclear Security Administration in a newly released report appeared to fault Sandia National Laboratories for drastically exceeding by billions of dollars an earlier budget target for a project to extend the life of B-61 nuclear gravity bombs, the *Albuquerque Journal* reported on Tuesday.

However, issue experts believe some of the blame also lies with the Pentagon and the semiautonomous Energy Department nuclear agency for calling for a fancier redesign of the gravity bomb than was needed.

An early NNSA estimate of the project to refurbish hundreds of the tactical warheads, which are decades old, came in at \$4 billion. However, after Sandia finished its initial blueprints for the redesign, the price tag had gone up to \$10 billion.

The projected expense for carrying out the Sandia refurbishment plan "significantly exceeded the president's budget and the initial Sandia estimates provided in FY2010 and FY2011," states the NNSA assessment, which was completed late last year but released only recently under federal open government laws.

Congressional investigators contended in a 2011 report it was not fair to put all of the fault for the cost overrun on just the New Mexico nuclear weapons laboratory. Analysts said the cost increase was brought about because officials decided pursue a "Cadillac" refurbishment option -- adding many modifications to the weapon that are not necessary for ensuring its continued operability.

The Nuclear Weapons Council -- which is made up of NNSA and Defense Department officials and issues guidance on the country's atomic stockpile -- set out an "ambitious scope" for the life-extension project that did not entirely take into account how it would affect costs and a timeline for completion, the auditors found.

Sandia spokesman Jim Danneskiold said a "thorough reexamination of the requirements of the B-61" is in the works and is anticipated to produce "significant reductions" in the final price tag of the project.

Neither NNSA nor Sandia personnel would disclose the latest price tag projections for the warhead life-extension project.

"Design and engineering are continuing, so it is premature to assign a formal baseline cost," NNSA spokesman Josh McConaha said in provided comments on Monday.

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/nnsa-faults-sandia-budget-b-61-revamp/>

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

Chicago Tribune

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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U.S. Military Hypersonic Aircraft Trial Set for 2013

* *Craft designed to fly at six times the speed of sound*

* *Predecessor broke up during test flight in August*

October 24, 2012

By Mary Slosson, Reuters

Oct 24 (Reuters) - The last of four unmanned experimental U.S. military aircraft designed to fly at six times the speed of sound is expected to be tested next year, the program manager said on Wednesday, months after its predecessor broke up during a trial.

The third test flight of the craft, known as the Waverider or X-51A, broke apart over the Pacific Ocean seconds into a test flight in August. U.S. Air Force officials said at the time they did not know if or when their fourth aircraft would fly.

Preliminary results from an investigation into what went wrong during the August flight indicate that a "random vibration issue" caused one of the control fins to deploy early, the X-51 program manager at the Air Force Research Laboratory, Charlie Brink, told reporters on a conference call.

"I can't say conclusively that's it, but it's looking more and more like the cause," Brink said, adding that investigators quickly ruled out a software or power malfunction as a cause of the aircraft's break up.

The Waverider was designed to reach speeds of Mach 6 or above, six times the speed of sound and fast enough to zoom from New York to London in less than an hour.

Analysts say the military has its eye on using the Waverider program to develop missiles with non-nuclear warheads that could strike anywhere in the world within an hour.

Results from the investigation into the third aircraft's failed test flight are expected to be complete in mid-December, Brink said.

"I'm fairly confident that in the next couple of months we'll have the investigation complete and we'll move on. We're already preparing the fourth flight vehicle. We're doing those things in parallel," he said.

Engineers are already modifying the final test X-51A to be ready in late spring or early summer of 2013, he said.

PROGRAM DETAILS CLASSIFIED

The aircraft is known as the Waverider because it stays airborne, in part, with lift generated by the shock waves of its own flight. The Boeing Co's Phantom Works division performed design and assembly on the aircraft, according to the military.

Four X-51A aircraft were built for the military, one of which flew for more than three minutes at nearly five times the speed of sound during a 2010 test flight, the Air Force said.

The experimental aircraft are expected to crash at the end of test flights in any case, and are not considered retrievable.

Pratt & Whitney Rocketdyne designed the X-51A's "scramjet" engine, which uses the forward motion of the craft to compress air for fuel combustion, according to a description of the project from the military.

After being dropped from a B-52 bomber, a solid-rocket booster is used in the initial phase of the plane's flight to bring it up to speeds that can allow its engine to take over, by drawing in air through the craft's forward momentum.

The cost of the experimental aircraft has not been disclosed because many details of the program are classified.

In 2004, NASA reached a speed of Mach 9.6, or nearly 7,000 miles per hour, with a jet-powered aircraft. But that vehicle, known as X-43, only flew for a few seconds and its copper-based engine was not designed to survive the flight.

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Engineers have hoped to see the hypersonic X-51A travel for five minutes of powered flight. For protection from extreme heat, it uses insulation tiles, similar to those on the NASA space shuttle orbiters, according to a 2011 military description of the project.

Hypersonic flight is normally defined as beginning at Mach 5, which is five times the speed of sound.

Editing by Tim Gaynor and Christopher Wilson.

http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-10-24/business/sns-rt-usa-hypersonicflight1e8lootz-20121024_1_charlie-brink-waverider-program-x-51a

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

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

US Military Tests Missile Defense Capability

26 October 2012

The US Missile Defense Agency (MDA) has successfully conducted its largest and most complex missile defense flight test ever, involving the simultaneous engagement of five ballistic missile and cruise missile targets.

The test in the western Pacific this week “stressed the performance of the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD), THAAD, and PATRIOT weapon systems,” the agency said on Thursday.

The targets included one medium-range ballistic missile, two short-range ballistic missiles and two cruise missiles.

The Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system successfully intercepted a medium-range ballistic target while PATRIOT Advanced Capability-3 (PAC-3) near simultaneously destroyed a short range ballistic missile and a low flying cruise missile target.

The Aegis system aboard the USS Fitzgerald, an Arleigh Burke class destroyer, successfully intercepted a cruise missile over water but apparently failed to destroy a short-range ballistic missile with an SM-3 Block 1A interceptor.

Ballistic Missile Defense System programs have completed 56 successful hit-to-kill intercepts in 71 flight test attempts since 2001, the MDA said.

All three tested missile defense systems are expected to become part of the planned US missile shield in Europe by 2020, apart from protecting the continental part of the United States and vital US assets in other regions of the world.

WASHINGTON, October 26 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121026/176926700.html

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

Bloomberg News

North Korea Improves Cyber Warfare Capacity, U.S. Says

By Tony Capaccio

October 22, 2012

North Korea’s government has a “significant” cyber warfare capability that it continues to improve, the top U.S. commander on the Korean peninsula said.

The capability is part of an unconventional arsenal that the North Koreans possess, along with what the U.S. says is the world’s largest special operations force of 60,000 personnel, Army General James Thurman said yesterday in Washington.

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Thurman, commander of U.S. forces in South Korea, didn't elaborate on the cyber capabilities during his address at an event sponsored by the Association of the United States Army. He listed them along with North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and improving ballistic missiles, as well as its continued investment "in developing a deliverable nuclear weapon."

Pentagon officials since 2010 have increasingly warned of a global cyber warfare threat. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta this month said the Pentagon and U.S. intelligence agencies are seeing an increase in threats that could become as devastating as the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks if they aren't stopped.

Panetta said in a Oct. 11 speech that Russia and China have advanced cyber capabilities, and that Iran is undertaking a "concerted effort to use cyberspace to its advantage." He didn't mention North Korea.

In March testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, Thurman said "North Korea employs sophisticated computer hackers trained to launch cyber infiltration and cyber attacks."

'Making Changes'

"Such attacks are ideal for North Korea" because they can be done anonymously, and they "have been increasingly employed against a variety of targets including military, governmental, educational and commercial institutions," Thurman said. At that time, he didn't characterize North Korea's cyber capabilities as "significant."

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is "making changes" as he consolidates power since succeeding his father, the late Kim Jong Il, in December, Thurman said yesterday.

"He is aggressive and more assertive" than his father, Thurman said of Kim Jong Un, who he said is 29 years old.

"There is much speculation as to what changes he is making," Thurman said. "But currently we are not certain of what they are. He is an unpredictable ruler."

Thurman also outlined the latest information on North Korea's conventional military arsenal: 13,000 artillery systems; more than 4,000 tanks, and more than 2,000 armored personnel carriers. Its air force has 1,700 aircraft and its navy has more than 800 surface vessels.

"More than 70 percent of this combat power is positioned within 90 miles" of the Demilitarized Zone that separates North from South, Thurman said.

North Korea's long-range artillery "are capable" of hitting the South Korean capital, and an attack of any scale "could cause significant damage to" the greater Seoul metropolitan area, he said.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-10-23/north-korea-improves-cyber-warfare-capacity-u-s-says.html>

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

Tripoli Post – Libya

Libyan Suspected in Attack on Benghazi US Consulate Reported Killed in Cairo

Thursday, 25 October 2012

It has been reported from the Egyptian capital, Cairo, that a Libyan by the name of Karim Ahmed Essam el-Azizi, suspected by Egypt of having been involved in the September 11 attack on the US Consulate in Benghazi that killed four Americans, including the US ambassador Christopher Stevens, has himself been killed during a raid by Egyptian security forces in Cairo.

An Egyptian security official said that el-Azizi was killed on Wednesday along with other militants in an attack by Egyptian security in the eastern district of Nasr City on suspicion that they had links to al Qaeda. Four other Egyptian militants were reportedly detained in the operation.



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The official has been reported saying that el-Azizi was killed during the raid by a bomb he had tried to use against the security forces.

The security official, told *Reuters* that Azizi had been living in an apartment in Nasr City for the past three months. The official who the news agency said asked not to be named, said after raiding the Libyan's apartment police had found 15 bombs and various weapons, including assault rifles.

It was not immediately clear what role Azizi had played in the September 11 assault on the US consulate during what at the time had been regarded as a protest over an anti-Islam film produced in the US. The video also sparked violence against US diplomatic missions in various Muslim countries, including Egypt and Tunisia.

The attack on the Benghazi consulate has become a highly politicised issue in the US presidential election campaign, with President Barack Obama and other US officials acknowledging that the attack was a "terrorist" act by militants with suspected links to al Qaeda affiliates.

Meanwhile, Ali Harzi, a Tunisian who was arrested in Turkey earlier this month also with reported links to the attack on a US consulate in Benghazi has been returned to Tunisia where he is facing terrorism charges.

Harzi's lawyer was reported saying Wednesday that his client was repatriated to Tunisia on October 11 by authorities in Turkey, and a judge issued his arrest warrant. The lawyer, Ouled Ali Anwar told *AP* that his client was told by a judge Tuesday that he has been charged with "membership of a terrorist organisation in a time of peace in another country."

Harzi, one of two Tunisians arrested October 3 in Turkey when they tried to enter the country with false passports, is being linked to the September 11 attacks on the US consulate in Benghazi.

<http://www.tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=9379>

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

Foreign Policy
OPINION/*The Cable*

New Poll: Egyptians Turning Toward Iran, Want Nuclear Weapons

By Josh Rogin
Friday, October 19, 2012

A poll of Egyptians conducted last month shows that they have increasingly positive views of Iran, believe that both Iran and Egypt should obtain nuclear weapons, and still trust their own military more than any other institution in Egypt.

The poll of 812 Egyptians, half of them women, was conducted in a series of in-person interviews by the firm Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and sponsored by the Israel Project, a pro-Israel advocacy organization with offices in Washington and Jerusalem. According to the poll, Iran is viewed favorably in Egypt, with 65 percent of those surveyed expressing support of the decision to renew Egypt-Iran relations and 61 percent expressing support of the Iranian nuclear project, versus 41 percent in August 2009.

Sixty-two percent of those polled agreed that "Iran and its president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, are friends of Egypt," though 68 percent held unfavorable views of Shiite Muslims.

Iran's deputy defense minister said recently that the Iranian regime is seeking more military cooperation with Egypt. "We are ready to help Egypt to build nuclear reactors and satellites," he said on the occasion of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsy's meeting with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad last month. Morsy's office has said the two didn't discuss military cooperation.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents want Egypt to have its own nuclear bomb.

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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Israel Project CEO Josh Block told *The Cable* that the statistics show the effect of Morsy's outreach to Iran and the danger of regional proliferation of nuclear weapons if Iran is successful in obtaining a nuclear bomb.

"Very scary to people opposed to proliferation of nuclear weapons, let alone to unstable countries in the world's most turbulent part of the world, is the 87 percent who want Egypt to build nuclear weapons," he said. "Morsy's dangerous embrace of Iran is leading a surprising shift in favor support for Tehran, which has for decades been seen by Egyptians as their top threat, as well as for their work on nuclear weapons."

Egyptians are overwhelmingly focused on the dire state of their domestic economy. Only 2 percent of those polled said that "strengthening relations with other Muslim countries" should be one of Morsy's top two priorities, and 45 percent agreed with the statement that "Egypt needs to focus on things at home and should be less involved in regional politics."

Nevertheless, 74 percent of those polled said that disapprove of Egypt having diplomatic relations with Israel -- an increase from 26 percent in August 2009 -- and support for a two-state solution to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is at only 30 percent. Seventy-seven percent agreed that "The peace treaty with Israel is no longer useful and should be dissolved."

Block blamed that result at least partially on the stance of leading Egyptian politicians like President Morsy, who has indicated recently he does not plan to abrogate the Israel-Egypt peace treaty but whose Muslim Brotherhood party identifies Israel as a racist and expansionist state.

"The fact that Morsy and other leading politicians in Egypt regularly express disdain for the peace treaty leads to such decay in public attitudes," Block said. "Then again, nearly half the public voted for a presidential candidate who openly declared his intent to travel to Israel and support for the Camp David accords."

Block was referring to retired Air Force general Ahmed Shafiq, who served as prime minister under Hosni Mubarak and was defeated narrowly in a runoff election earlier this year.

The poll found that 64 percent of Egyptians still feel warmly about the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, which ran Egypt in the interim period before Morsy was elected, and 81 percent approve of the job they are doing. Forty-nine percent of Egyptians polled felt warmly about Morsi, and 43 percent felt warmly about the Muslim Brotherhood.

Forty percent felt warmly about the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, but only 11 percent felt warmly about the Salafist Nour Party, a hard-line Islamist party that fared well in the parliamentary elections.

American politicians fared poorly in the poll, but among them Secretary of State Hillary Clinton was the most popular at 25 percent favorability. President Barack Obama scored 16 percent and Republican nominee Mitt Romney only 8 percent, although only half of Egyptians polled knew who Romney was. (Ahmadinejad's favorability rating? Forty-three percent.)

Most Egyptians don't seem to buy Romney's line that Obama has "thrown Israel under the bus," but they're not too happy about his handling of the region, either.

Asked, "Do you think that President Barack Obama is more on the side of Arabs or more on the side of Israel?," 68 percent of Egyptians said Israel, and 60 percent said that Obama's presidency had been "a negative thing" for the Arab world.

39% of the Egyptians polled expressed interest in learning more about Israel, especially it's political system. The Israel Project runs an outreach program to the Arab world, focusing on social media. Its Facebook page is called "Israel Uncensored."

Josh Rogin reports on national security and foreign policy from the Pentagon to Foggy Bottom, the White House to Embassy Row, for The Cable.



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http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/10/19/new_poll_egyptians_turning_toward_iran_want_nuclear_weapons

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

The Diplomat – Japan
OPINION/The Naval Diplomat

Japan: Joining the Nuclear Weapons Club? It Could.

By James R. Holmes
October 22, 2012

Conventional wisdom holds that Japan is what nonproliferation specialists call a "threshold" nuclear weapon state -- a country that could stage a nuclear breakout virtually overnight should its electorate and leadership resolve to do so. Estimates commonly bandied about run from six months to a year. Toshi Yoshihara and I take aim at such assumptions in *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age*. Japanese bombmakers *might* manage a crude device within that timeframe, but that's a far cry from a weapon ready for battlefield use.

Despite Japan's renown for high-tech wizardry and long experience operating nuclear power plants, it would take Tokyo far longer than a year to deploy a working nuclear arsenal. We're talking many years. As J. C. Wylie defines it, strategy is a plan for using available resources and assets to accomplish some goal. Strategy goes no farther than those implements can carry it -- and strategists cannot simply conjure them into being.

Toshi and I see a variety of impediments to a Japanese breakout. Let's catalogue just a few. Consider the politics. It is certainly true that nuclear weapons are no longer the third rail of Japanese politics -- a topic officials and pundits dare not touch lest it strike them (politically) dead. But Japan's painful past experience as a target of atomic warfare, its ardent sponsorship of nonproliferation accords, and the fury with which pacifist-leaning citizens and Japan's Asian neighbors would greet evidence of a bombmaking program add up to a forbidding political barrier.

That barrier is hardly unbreachable, but it would demand quite a feat of political persuasion on Tokyo's part. As the learned strategist Mike Tyson points out, "everyone has a strategy 'til they get punched in the mouth." Memo to nuclear-weapons advocates: duck!

Nor are the strategic, operational, and technical challenges less daunting. A nuclear triad -- land- and sea-based missiles combined with weapons delivered by manned bombers -- holds little promise in light of Japan's lack of geographic depth and the vulnerability of surface ships and aircraft to enemy action. That means fielding an undersea deterrent would be Tokyo's best nuclear option. But doing so would be far from easy. The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force operates an impressive fleet of diesel submarines but has no experience with naval nuclear propulsion. And that leaves aside the difficulty of developing sea-launched ballistic missiles and their nuclear payloads.

Such engineering challenges are far from insoluble for Japan's scientific-technical complex but cannot be conquered overnight. A force of nuclear-powered ballistic-missile subs, or SSBNs, thus looks like a remote prospect for Japan. As an interim solution, the JMSDF might construct cruise missiles resembling the U.S. Navy's old TLAM-Ns, or nuclear-tipped Tomahawks. JMSDF boats could fire such missiles through torpedo tubes, the easiest method. Or, shipyards could backfit Japanese subs with vertical launchers -- much as the U.S. Navy installed Tomahawk launchers in its fast attack boats starting in the late Cold War.

The problem of constructing nuclear weapons small enough to fit on a missile would remain -- but nuclear-armed diesel boats would represent a viable course of action should Japan decide to join the nuclear-weapons club. Years down the road, then -- not overnight -- a modest Japanese nuclear deterrent might put out to sea. Will Tokyo proceed down that road? I doubt it. But the prospect no longer appears unthinkable.

James R. Holmes is a defence analyst for The Diplomat and an associate professor of strategy at the US Naval War College where he specializes in US, Chinese and Indian maritime strategy and US diplomatic and military history.

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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<http://thediplomat.com/the-naval-diplomat/2012/10/22/japan-joining-the-nuclear-weapons-club-it-could/>

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

The Moscow Times – Russia
OPINION/Commentary

Mutually Absurd Destruction

22 October 2012

By Alexander Golts

Many people might not have noticed, but there was a nuclear war last week. Well, not really a war, but a simulation of one. On Friday, Tu-160 and Tu-95 strategic bombers launched four cruise missiles that successfully hit their targets on a range in the northwestern Komi republic. In addition, an RS-12M Topol ballistic missile was launched from the Plesetsk pad in northern Russia and hit its target in the Kamchatka region, and a submarine-launched intercontinental missile from the Sea of Okhotsk hit its target in the Arkhangelsk region.

The exercises, which the Kremlin spun as the largest nuclear command maneuvers in recent history, were a test run for a full-scale nuclear war, something Russia has been rehearsing regularly since NATO forces bombed Yugoslavia in 1999. The exercises indicate that the Kremlin still believes that a full-scale attack against this country, presumably from the United States, is possible and could be stopped only by a nuclear counterattack. This scenario calls for initial nuclear strikes against relatively unpopulated targets on enemy territory, to be followed by full-scale nuclear war, if necessary.

Notably, the tests, which involved all three components of the nuclear triad — land- and sea-launched long-range nuclear missiles and strategic bombers — were conducted "under the personal leadership of Vladimir Putin," as the Kremlin proudly said in a statement. It would seem that Putin used the occasion to test his "nuclear briefcase," the device that enables him to destroy the planet at a moment's notice. At a time when U.S.-Russian relations are strained, Putin decided to remind Washington that there is still one country in the world capable of destroying the U.S. This is especially important for Putin because he continues to believe that the United States is the root cause of all of his problems.

Yet the whole idea of Putin trying to intimidate the United States by flexing Russia's nuclear muscles has a serious flaw: Washington does not believe Putin is crazy enough to ever use his nuclear weapons against the U.S. Both sides understand perfectly well that such a move would be suicidal. By pressing the button in his nuclear briefcase, Putin would destroy much more than the U.S. He would also destroy his own privileged lifestyle, including his private swimming pool and mansions, not to mention his made-to-order tvorog sent to his residence daily by the patriarch.

At the same time, however, Putin would like to convince his overseas counterparts that he may be slightly off his rocker — or, at the very least, impulsive. And to his credit, Putin has done a good job fulfilling this task. The latest proof was Russia's demonstrative announcement that it would not continue its participation in the Nunn-Lugar program after it expires in May. That program funds safety enhancement efforts at nuclear weapons sites, the dismantling of nuclear submarines and the elimination of chemical weapons. For almost 20 years, U.S. taxpayers have spent on average \$500 million yearly on a range of ways to help Russia protect its nuclear arsenal, from alarm systems and fire extinguishers to the transportation of dangerous munitions to plants where they could be dismantled.

Of course, Washington had its own strong incentive to fund the program. Nunn-Lugar began in 1992, when Russia lacked funds and expertise to ensure the security of its nuclear arsenal and the West feared nightmarish scenarios unfolding that would make the Chernobyl explosion look like child's play. By helping Russia destroy its extraneous and outdated weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. protected itself and the world from a global catastrophe.

Thus, the U.S. Congress would have no doubt continued to fund the program for another 20 or more years, but Russia is too proud to accept the aid. At the same, however, widespread fears that Russia will now largely ignore the problem of destroying old nuclear and chemical weapons are unfounded. So are concerns that the military brass will order inexperienced 18-year-old conscripts instead of highly qualified specialists to dismantle nuclear warheads. Critics like

Issue No. 1030, 26 October 2012

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to cite this scenario, particularly given the widely publicized cases of negligence among officers and conscripts in dismantling conventional weapons. Indeed, there have been almost two dozen accidental explosions over the past 10 years. The most recent incident occurred earlier this month, when 4,000 tons of shells exploded in the Orenburg region. While it is true that basic security guidelines are often ignored with respect to conventional weapons, this cannot be said for nuclear and chemical weapons.

According to media reports, the Defense Ministry has asked the Finance Ministry to allocate hundreds of millions of dollars to enable it to maintain Russia's nuclear arsenal. Actually, this might be the real motive behind the Kremlin's nuclear strategy: to make the Americans sweat it out every day, worrying about the fate of Russia's nuclear warheads. In other words, nuclear deterrence, Russian-style.

Alexander Golts is deputy editor of the online newspaper Yezhednevny Zhurnal.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/mutually-absurd-destruction/470249.html>

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

Wall Street Journal

OPINION/Letter to the Editor

Iran Is Closer to a Weapon than Joe Biden Asserts

October 22, 2012

Page - A20

Regarding your editorial "Biden's Intelligence" (Oct. 13): I'm writing to clear up the nuclear misinformation spouted by Vice President Joe Biden which was not rebutted during the Oct. 11 debate. Iran's nuclear program is going critical.

Mr. Biden said, in effect: Don't worry. Even if Iran gets fissile material, it needs something to put it in.

But the facts are quite different. Once any nuclear wannabe gets 160 pounds of uranium enriched to 80% U-235 (the enrichment level of the Hiroshima bomb and of South Africa's Melba) he has a weapon. "Little Boy," the bomb dropped on Hiroshima, did not need to be tested; we knew it would work. The design is now in the open literature: It is 1940s technology, easy to build.

Iran's first nuke will not be fired at a target, any more than was India's, Pakistan's or North Korea's. A confirmed Iranian nuclear detonation within a mountain or in the desert will let the world know the game has changed.

The Hiroshima design can be carried by air, of course. Even easier, it can be delivered by boat, truck or train.

Thomas C. Reed, Healdsburg, Calif.

Mr. Reed, a former secretary of the Air Force, designed thermonuclear devices while at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390444734804578063090369915764.html>

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

The Diplomat

OPINION/The Naval Diplomat

North Korea's Nuclear War Plan: "Go Nuts" and "Dig in"

By James R. Holmes

October 23, 2012

Because no survey of newcomers to the second nuclear age would be complete without North Korea, it seems fitting to close out this series with a glance at Pyongyang's emerging nuclear strategy and doctrine. Professor Terry Roehrig,

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grand wizard of the Naval War College's Asia-Pacific Study Group, authors a chapter on the subject in *Strategy in the Second Nuclear Age*. He splashes cold water on the idea that the six-party talks or other negotiations will bring about disarmament on the Korean Peninsula. So, let's zero in on the operational dimension of North Korean strategy.

Pyongyang has tested nuclear weapons. It must now miniaturize its warheads sufficiently to fit on missiles. Then, having produced a battle worthy arsenal, how will the North Korean military arrange its precious weapons on the map to safeguard them against preemptive attack? What kind of doctrine will the leadership adopt to deter South Korea and the United States?

Terry raises a couple of intriguing possibilities. Take the second question first. Knowing that a small force is vulnerable to preemption, the North Korean leadership might embrace a launch-on-warning doctrine. Once the military detects signs of an attack, that is, commanders will cut loose against designated targets. Threatening to go nuts at the slightest affront has been a staple of North Korean diplomacy ever since...well, ever since there has been a North Korea. Adopting such a posture—and putting prospective adversaries on notice that Pyongyang *has* adopted such a posture—thus would make Seoul and Washington think twice before essaying forcible counterproliferation.

With regard to force dispositions, Roehrig postulates that Pyongyang could deploy its weapons at hardened sites. It would dig in, taking advantage of the peninsula's mountainous terrain. Deep shelters are notoriously hard to penetrate. Another option would be a road-mobile system by which nuclear-tipped missiles shifted locations randomly to complicate enemy targeting. An undersea nuclear deterrent would be yet another possibility. The former raises security concerns. The latter would depend on North Korea's ability to master advanced submarine and missile technology. Both look like distant prospects. I'm placing my bets on the low-tech option, underground bunkers.

And where missile sites are located matters. Think about it. Emplacing nukes near the Sino-Korean frontier—as Roehrig suggests Pyongyang might—would deliberately entangle North Korean with Chinese deterrence. U.S. forces might strike at these sites with nuclear weapons or conventional bunker busters. Nuclear preemption could well create nuclear effects spilling across the border. Even conventional strikes would take place too close to the frontier for comfort. Either contingency could set loose the cross-border refugee exodus China's leadership so fears. Beijing could not stay aloof from a conflict. Embroiling China, consequently, looks like savvy strategy for Pyongyang.

Last week I pronounced apartheid South Africa nutty to try to coerce a great power into siding with it in times of crisis. But never say never. Such a ploy just might work in this case, when the great power adjoins the theater of action and could suffer direct harm from a clash. If so, Seoul and Washington must factor in the likelihood of third-party intervention in any encounter with Pyongyang.

Such are the joys of making strategy in the second nuclear age.

James R. Holmes is a defence analyst for The Diplomat and an associate professor of strategy at the US Naval War College where he specializes in US, Chinese and Indian maritime strategy and US diplomatic and military history.

<http://thediplomat.com/the-naval-diplomat/2012/10/23/north-korea/>

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

Miami Herald
OPINION/Analysis
Tuesday, October 23, 2012

WHY IT MATTERS: Missile Defense

By DESMOND BUTLER, Associated Press

The issue:

Missile technology is proliferating. It remains unclear how quickly foes such as Iran and North Korea could develop a capability to strike the United States with missiles, but the U.S. says Iran is already capable of hitting Europe. The

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United States is spending nearly \$10 billion a year on missile defense when military budgets are stretched. But the programs have yet to prove that they can reliably knock long-range missiles out of the sky and protect the U.S. from emerging threats.

Where they stand:

Early in his presidency, Barack Obama replaced a George W. Bush-era plan for missile defense in Europe that had roiled relations with Russia. Obama says his four-stage plan would protect Europe and the United States as foes develop more sophisticated missiles. The announcement initially eased tensions with Moscow, which considered the previous plan a threat to its nuclear might. Obama has proposed cutting missile defense spending in 2013 by about 7 percent, to \$9.7 billion.

Republican rival Mitt Romney would reverse Obama's proposed cuts to the program. He wants to maintain Obama's plans in Europe — so long as they work. He argues that part of Obama's plan is based on theoretical technology and was designed as much to appease Russia as to address threats from Iran. Romney has called Russia the top geopolitical foe of the United States.

Why it matters:

Americans have long taken comfort in the distance from tension in Asia and Europe provided by two wide oceans. Intercontinental ballistic missile technology undermines that security by offering foes the ability to strike quickly from great distance with weapons of mass destruction.

Missile defense has been contentious since Ronald Reagan proposed the idea of making ICBMs obsolete in a nationally televised address in 1983. The initiative was dubbed "Star Wars." Critics say that despite about \$150 billion spent since then, the U.S. is far from achieving Reagan's goal. Even supporters claim only a limited capability against long-range missiles. Recent government-commissioned reports by the National Academy of Sciences and other panels have highlighted critical problems with the effectiveness and management of the programs.

Despite those questions, both political parties largely support current missile defense programs. Romney has not proposed any major deviations from Obama's path, but could steer policy in Europe back to a more confrontational approach with Russia.

The United States maintains that missile defenses are aimed at countering attacks from rogue regimes and would be impotent against the arsenals of major nuclear powers such as Russia and China. But Moscow says even a limited capability against its ICBMs could destabilize the balance that deters the United States and Russia from contemplating nuclear confrontation. China has also increasingly raised objections to U.S. and Japanese missile defense assets in Asia.

Although Moscow initially welcomed Obama's shift in missile defense policy, Russian officials have since objected to the latter phases of his four-stage plan. A faster interceptor, still in development, is to be deployed in 2020, theoretically capable of shooting down ICBMs that can reach the U.S. Russians also worry about an increased U.S. military presence in Eastern Europe. And Russian President Vladimir Putin said Romney's identification of Russia as a top foe justifies his concern about U.S. missile defense.

Republicans wonder if the U.S. will roll back the latter stages of the plan. They cite Obama's comment in March to Dmitry Medvedev, then Russia's president, when Obama was unaware he was speaking on an open microphone. Obama told Medvedev he would have more flexibility on the issue after November's election.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/10/23/3063633/why-it-matters-missile-defense.html>

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

Arab Times – U.A.E.
OPINION/Commentary
October 25, 2012

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Gulf Pawn in New 'Great Game'

By Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor

THE pieces of the jigsaw are slowly coming together and from the perspective of Gulf States and Arab Sunnis the emerging picture isn't pretty. The Cold War between Russia and the West has been resurrected by President Vladimir Putin who regrets the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia's loss of superpower status and, in particular, his passive compliance with George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq that cost Moscow dearly from both economic and geostrategic standpoints. That war hit Russia's pocket to the tune of \$8 billion in unfulfilled deals and resulted in the mushrooming of US military bases throughout the Middle East, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Driven also by the encroachment of the EU uncomfortably close to its territory, the Bear has not only broken out of his cage he's on the rampage.

In his determination to muscle back into the region, Putin has few scruples about forging unholy alliances with anti-Western countries on the basis 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' as well as mutual interests and shared ambitions. Unlike most of the world, Moscow has little fear of a nuclear-armed Iran. Indeed, it is one of Tehran's major weapons suppliers and over the years has provided Iran with nuclear and missile technology as well as hardware. Today, it actively supports Iran's nuclear program with knowhow plus nuclear reactor components and benefits from trade deals amounting to more than \$4 billion annually.

Russia constantly warns the West that striking Iranian nuclear sites would be disastrous. And, in August, the Russia Foreign Ministry warned the US not to impose unilateral sanctions against Iran with this message on its website, "Washington should understand that our bilateral relations will suffer considerably if the American restrictions affect Russian economic entities cooperating with partners in the Islamic Republic of Iran in strict compliance with our legislation and UN Security Council resolutions."

Further, Moscow has set itself up as a buffer against any attempt by the international community to use UN sanctions or military intervention to halt the carnage in Syria and actively props-up Iran's closest ally President Bashar Al-Assad, a genocidal monster, responsible for the deaths of over 30,000 of his own people and the destruction of huge swathes of Syrian towns and cities, leveled by Russian-made tanks and attack helicopters. Keeping Al-Assad in power is essential to Iran's ambitions for regional dominance when pro-Shiite Syria acts as a supply route for Iranian proxies.

In this game of one-upmanship between Russia and the US, Putin can now add another notch to his belt - Iraq. This supposed free and democratic nation has been gifted by Western allies to Iran - and, by extension, to Moscow. It's no secret that the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government is made up of Iran's puppets, men who make few decisions without a green light from Tehran or Qom, which is why Iraq is one of just three Arab League member nations that objected to the League's appeal for the Assad regime to step-down.

America's finest political and military minds would have been unbelievably naïve to expect gratitude from Iraqis. But I doubt they predicted that the Al-Maliki government would leap aboard Russia's ship with such alacrity. Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Al-Maliki's recent visit to his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev was sealed with the restoration of bilateral cooperation in numerous fields, including diplomatic, military, aviation energy and trade.

Oct 9 signified an even higher watermark in the blossoming relations between Moscow and Baghdad. On that day, Russia announced the signing of a \$4.2 billion arms contract to include MI-28 attack helicopters and Pantsir-21 surface-to-air missile systems. Since Iraq and Iran are virtually joined at the hip — I've long warned of the potential for an Iranian-Iraqi federation — this move is another nail in the coffin of Gulf States' vulnerability. Mark my words! There will come a time when those weapons will be aimed at us. Together, Iran and Iraq could endanger our very shores.

Iran is becoming ever more belligerent. It's revived an old, debunked territorial claim to Bahrain, has bullied airlines to use the term "Persian Gulf" rather than "Arabian Gulf" and made threats to Gulf oilfields and the Straits of Hormuz. So I wasn't surprised at media reports, quoting an Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, indicating Iran was mulling cutting diplomatic ties with the United Arab Emirates over the UAE's legitimate demands for the return of three islands — Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunb — forcibly occupied by the Shah in 1971.



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My initial thought was ‘What kind of joke is this? Does Iran expect the UAE to roll over and accept its stolen islands are gone forever in return for its ongoing ‘friendship’ and trade relations with Iran? In the first place, Iran is not our ally and never has been; secondly, with Iran’s economy and currency wilting under UN, US and EU sanctions, it needs us — one of its main trading partners — substantially more than we need it. Clearly, somebody high up in the Iranian government thought the same. A day later, the Iranian Foreign Ministry swiftly went into damage control mode by dismissing the reports as untrue.

True or untrue, it’s time that we proved to Iran that the days when it felt free to trample on our dignity are over. What are we waiting for? We should immediately close the embassies of GCC countries in Tehran, bar Iranian aircraft from entering our airspace, instruct our banks to freeze the accounts of Iranian officials and ban all forms of commerce and trade. We should also prevail on our friendly Arab neighbours to do the same.

Such steps would not only be in keeping with the sentiments of the majority of UN Security Council member nations towards Iran, anything that contributes towards Iran’s international isolation will assist in bringing about the Ayatollahs’ downfall from inside. Indeed, recent anti-government demonstrations, triggered by the dramatic currency slide, indicate Iran’s business community is already disillusioned with Ahmadinejad and his government.

Until the Iranian people decide to free themselves from the yoke of oppression and return their country to the community of freedom-loving nations, the GCC should have nothing more to do with this dangerous pariah state. As I’ve said time and time again, Gulf States must unify under a Gulf-wide federation, fortify their joint sea/air/land borders and create a single powerful military capability so we can stand up as main players instead of mere pawns.

Khalaf Ahmad Al Habtoor is a prominent and highly respected citizen of the United Arab Emirates. A self-made man, he’s Chairman of the Al Habtoor Group – one of the most successful conglomerates in the Gulf.

<http://www.arabtimesonline.com/NewsDetails/tabid/96/smId/414/ArticleID/189064/reftab/36/Default.aspx>

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

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