



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 1038, 21 December 2012

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FARS News Agency – Iran

December 16, 2012

Iranian First VP: Atomic Bomb No Point of Dispute

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iranian First Vice-President Mohammad Reza Rahimi dismissed the western claims about the underlying cause of the current dispute between Tehran and the West, saying that the western powers are worried about Iran's astonishing progress and advancement in science and production of nuclear weapons is just an excuse.

"The enemies have a problem with our scientific progress and our glories and these feuds and sanctions are not on atomic bomb," Rahimi said in Tehran on Sunday.

"All the world policy-makers know that we are not after producing atomic bombs and its first and most important reason is that Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution (Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei) has prohibited its production (with his religious decree)," he added.

Analysts believe that the fatwa issued by Ayatollah Khamenei forbidding the production, proliferation and use of nuclear bombs should be considered a political milestone in Iranian history.

Fatwa is a religious decree issued by a Muslim leader against a specific issue and it is incumbent upon all Muslims to abide by it. However, in this particular case, the issuance of the fatwa has religious and political force since the leader in the Islamic Republic is the prime decision-maker.

Referring to the western embargos against Iran imposed under the pretext of the country's nuclear program, Rahimi said, "The reason for these sanctions is not our non-commitment to the laws in producing nuclear energy since we are a part of the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty), but (the reason is that) they cannot see Iranians progressing in scientific fields every day."

Washington and its Western allies accuse Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons under the cover of a civilian nuclear program, while they have never presented any corroborative evidence to substantiate their allegations. Iran denies the charges and insists that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

Tehran stresses that the country has always pursued a civilian path to provide power to the growing number of Iranian population, whose fossil fuel would eventually run dry.

Despite the rules enshrined in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) entitling every member state, including Iran, to the right of uranium enrichment, Tehran is now under four rounds of UN Security Council sanctions for turning down West's calls to give up its right of uranium enrichment.

Tehran has dismissed the West's demand as politically tainted and illogical, stressing that sanctions and pressures merely consolidate Iranians' national resolve to continue the path.

Political observers believe that the United States has remained at loggerheads with Iran mainly over the independent and home-grown nature of Tehran's nuclear technology, which gives the Islamic Republic the potential to turn into a world power and a role model for the other third-world countries. Washington has laid much pressure on Iran to make it give up the most sensitive and advanced part of the technology, which is uranium enrichment, a process used for producing nuclear fuel for power plants.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107127519>

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Press TV – Iran

Iran, IAEA Satisfied with Outcome of Talks in Tehran: Lawmaker

December 16, 2012

Issue No. 1038, 21 December 2012

*United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
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A senior Iranian lawmaker has described the outcome of recent talks in Tehran between Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as satisfactory.

"Although the two sides - Tehran and the IAEA - were satisfied with the results of the negotiations, the US imposed a new round of anti-Iran sanctions which are outside the framework of the UN Security Council resolutions," Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee chief, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, said on Sunday.

"The United States imposes bans on Iran based on its hostile policies against our nation. But the Islamic Republic of Iran has always turned such threats into opportunities, and taken advantage of them," Boroujerdi pointed out.

"The US and the West aim to halt Iran's nuclear energy program with sanctions but our country makes decisions based on the agency's regulations and within the framework of its national interests," he added.

On December 13, top Iranian and IAEA officials including Iran's Ambassador to the IAEA Ali Asghar Soltanieh and the body's deputy director general, Herman Nackaerts, held bilateral talks on the Islamic Republic's nuclear energy program.

Iran and the world body last held talks in the Austrian capital of Vienna on August 24.

Iran has repeatedly voiced its readiness for negotiations based on mutual respect while maintaining that it will never give up its inalienable right to nuclear technology.

<http://www.presstv.com/detail/2012/12/16/278418/iran-iaea-satisfied-with-tehran-talks/>

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FARS News Agency – Iran

December 18, 2012

Salehi: Iran Deeply Distrustful of US Officials' Offer of Direct Talks

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said Tehran cannot trust the US officials' remarks on Washington's willingness to hold bilateral talks with Iran as Iran sees no practical change in the United States' hostile policies.

"My colleagues are constantly and precisely monitoring the United States' declared stances (on Iran) and its performance but no change has been detected in the US hostile policies towards the Iranian nation," Salehi said on Tuesday.

"US officials and administrations have usually acted against their declared stances," he said, adding that Washington has always adopted double-standard approaches towards Iran.

He called for practical change in the US stance on Iran, and stated, "Our experience has taught us that what different US officials say cannot be trusted, but we believe that the US policy should be judged based on the practical moves of the US administration."

Salehi pointed to the recent remarks by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton who had called for immediate talks between Tehran and Washington, and said, "Even if they prove to be honest in their recent claim - although it is suspected - their offer does not match their actions."

Iranian officials say conditions are not ripe for direct talks between Iran and the US, reiterating that Washington should drop its hostile policy against Iran first.

The United States and Iran broke diplomatic relations in April 1980, after Iranian students seized the United States' espionage center at its embassy in Tehran. The two countries have had tense relations ever since, but have shown willingness to attend talks to help resolve regional issues, including security in Iraq. Yet, the two countries have avoided talks on bilateral issues for the last thirty years.

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Earlier this month, Washington reiterated its demand for immediate talks with Tehran, with Clinton saying that the United States is open to bilateral talks about Iran's nuclear program if Tehran is ready.

Responding to a question in a forum attended by a group of officials, experts and diplomats from the United States and the Middle East in Washington at the time, Clinton called Iran the hardest issue she has dealt with as secretary of state, and stressed that the Obama administration is prepared for bilateral talks with Iran.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9107128139>

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Daily Star – Lebanon

Iran Defiant on Enrichment Ahead of Possible Nuclear Talks

December 18, 2012

By Yeganeh Torbati, Reuters

DUBAI: Iran will not stop higher-grade uranium enrichment in response to external demands, its top nuclear energy official was quoted as saying on Tuesday, signalling a tough bargaining stance ahead of planned new talks with world powers.

The West wants Iran to halt enrichment of uranium to a fissile concentration of 20 percent as it represents a significant step closer to the level that would be required to make nuclear bombs. Iran says it needs this higher-grade uranium to run its medical research reactor in Tehran.

Israel has threatened air strikes on Iran if its nuclear work is not curbed through diplomacy or sanctions, raising the spectre of a Middle East war damaging to the global economy.

Iran "will not suspend 20 percent uranium enrichment because of the demands of others," said Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani, head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, the Iranian Students' News Agency (ISNA) reported.

Iran "will produce 20 percent enriched uranium to meet its needs and for however long it is required."

He did not specify what he meant by "needs". Western diplomats say Iran already has made sufficient amounts to fuel its Tehran Research Reactor for several years. Abbasi-Davani has in the past said Iran plans to build another research reactor.

The European Union quickly responded to Abbasi-Davani's comments, saying Iran must come to grips with increasing international disquiet over the ultimate purpose of its uranium enrichment programme to resolve the protracted dispute.

"Iran has to address the immediate key concern, which is the issue of 20 percent enrichment, by taking an initial comprehensive confidence-building step in this area, thereby creating space for more diplomacy and negotiations," the spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said.

In his statements, Abbasi-Davani signalled renewed Iranian defiance in negotiations with world powers expected to resume soon. But he did not appear to categorically rule out that Tehran at some point could shelve higher-grade enrichment.

The powers - the United States, France, Britain, Germany, China and Russia - also want Iran to shut down the Fordow underground site where its 20 percent enrichment is carried out.

Nuclear expert Mark Fitzpatrick, of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said about Abbasi-Davani's comments: "This hard line doesn't bode well for success in the next round of talks, where stopping the 20 percent enrichment is just one of the steps Iran will be asked to take."



But others suggested Abbasi-Davani's comments, and those of other Iranian officials, were intended more for public consumption at home and abroad.

Iranian foreign and security policies are ultimately decided by clerical Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"What matters is not stay-the-course statements like these but whether behind the scenes the Supreme Leader and his entourage, and the Obama White House, step out of their shadow and agree to direct bilateral talks," Mark Hibbs, of the Carnegie Endowment think tank, said.

Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said Iranian and EU officials had held discussions regarding the time and place of the next negotiations between the powers and Iran.

"If there is an agreement, it will be announced," Mehmanparast said in his weekly news conference.

The EU spokesman said the six powers are still waiting for an Iranian answer regarding a possible date for new talks: "We made contact last week and suggested getting together for another round. We are waiting to hear the response."

Though Israel has threatened to bomb Iranian nuclear sites, Vice Prime Minister Moshe Yaalon said the Jewish state had noticed renewed U.S.-led efforts to curb Iran's nuclear work since President Barack Obama's re-election last month, including preparation for possible military action.

He also cited contacts among the powers and Iran about holding new negotiations and ongoing sanctions against Iran.

Iranian media quoted Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi as saying that any calls for direct talks between the U.S. and Iran were meaningless as long as Washington continued to exert pressure on Iran through sanctions and other measures.

In October, the New York Times reported that secret exchanges between U.S. and Iranian officials had yielded agreement "in principle" to hold one-on-one talks. Both Iran and the United States denied that the two countries had scheduled direct bilateral negotiations on the nuclear programme.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2012/Dec-18/198990-iran-defiant-on-enrichment-ahead-of-possible-nuclear-talks.ashx#axzz2FXEcVgLG>

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Trend News – Azerbaijan

Russian Foreign Ministry: Meeting of Six-Party Iran Group may Take Place in January 2013

20 December 2012

Moscow hopes the following meeting of six-party on Iran at the level of Foreign Ministers will be held in January 2013, the information department of Russian Foreign Ministry informed RIA Novosti.

"In fact, negotiations with Tehran concerning venue and date of the next full-fledged meeting of six-party on Iran are in progress. Hopefully, this task will be fulfilled in nearest future and the meeting will take place in January 2013," the department said.

The Russian Foreign Ministry also expressed hope that Tehran will maintain readiness for discussion of suspension of 20% uranium enrichment expressed during negotiations with the six-party this year.

The previous, third round of talks in 2012 with representatives of Islamic Republic was held in Moscow on June 18-19. Moscow round was preceded by Istanbul round (April 14) and Baghdad round (May 23-24). The talks resulted in no breakthroughs. Prior to that, meetings of six-party Iran group were not held in more than a year.

<http://en.trend.az/regions/iran/2101380.html>



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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
December 15, 2012

Panetta Expresses Concern over N. Korea's Unpredictability

By Lee Chi-dong

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 (Yonhap) -- U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta on Friday put North Korea at the top of a list of security challenges facing his country, along with an unfinished war in Afghanistan and al-Qaida-led terrorism.

He pointed out the unpredictability of the secretive communist nation with nuclear weapons and various types of missiles.

"We still have the problem of North Korea and the unpredictability of North Korea," he said during a visit to an air base in Turkey, according to a transcript.

"We just saw that happen this last week when they launched another missile, in violation of all international requirements and rules," Panetta added, "That represents a threat, a threat to the United States."

U.S. officials were apparently caught off guard by North Korea's successful launch this week of a long-range rocket.

Although experts here say North Korea still has a way to go to master intercontinental ballistic missile technology, many agree that its missile capability is continuing to develop.

Panetta said Washington is "going to have force projection in the Pacific in order to confront North Korea, in order to deal with the challenges we face in that Asia-Pacific region, which is so important to our economy and to our future."

The State Department said, meanwhile, the U.S. will keep urging North Korea not to conduct another nuclear test.

North Korea carried out two known underground nuclear experiments, in 2006 and 2009, both in the wake of long-range missile launches.

When asked about the pattern, Patrick Ventrell, a spokesman for the department, had nothing to say specifically.

"But clearly that's something that we have previously discouraged the North Korean government from considering and will continue to do so," he said at a press briefing in Washington.

Ventrell added the U.S. is closely consulting with other nations to hammer out appropriate measures to punish Pyongyang for its latest rocket launch.

"Very clearly, North Korea's one of the most sanctioned countries on earth and will continue to be so," he said. "And we're continuing to work with our partners and looking at all aspects of this."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/12/15/39/040100000AEN20121215000300315F.HTML>

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Xinhua News – China

State-level Lab on Nuclear, Biochemical Disaster Protection Founded

December 18, 2012

BEIJING, Dec. 18 (Xinhua) -- China established a state-level lab in Beijing on Tuesday to develop technologies to minimize the damage of nuclear and biochemical disasters on human health and the environment.

The lab will focus on technologies that can evaluate and monitor damage, protect people, facilities and the environment in the event of nuclear and biochemical disasters, and repair the damage, said Pei Chengxin, the lab's director.



It is attached to an institute under the People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Armament Department, which has developed several key technologies for civilian use in monitoring poisonous gas and biochemical threats, Pei said.

With the support of military research, the lab is expected to develop related technologies for civilian use and train more scientists in this field, he said.

The new lab also merges a state-level laboratory of analytical chemistry, a PLA institute on environmental science and a lab on chemical warfare protection.

However, Pei did not reveal some details such as the size of the lab's staff.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-12/18/c_132049109.htm

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea
December 18, 2012

U.S. Pressing China to Back U.N. Punishment for N. Korea: Source

SEOUL, Dec. 18 (Yonhap) -- The United States is pressing China to support a new round of U.N. sanctions against North Korea's defiant launch of a long-range rocket last week, a Seoul diplomatic source said Tuesday, while Beijing shows no signs of endorsing a tougher U.N. response to Pyongyang.

North Korea's Dec. 12 rocket launch drew swift condemnation from the U.N. Security Council, which has pledged to take an "appropriate action" against North Korea for violating U.N. prohibitions that ban the North from carrying out any long-range missile development.

South Korea and the U.S. are asking the Security Council to adopt a tougher punishment in the form of a resolution, rather than a non-binding measure known as a presidential statement, against North Korea. But, it is unclear whether China, a veto-wielding Security Council member, will back any new sanctions against the North.

"The U.S. has a strong willingness to get the Security Council to adopt a resolution against North Korea's rocket launch even though discussions at the council are delayed until January," said the diplomatic source with direct knowledge of U.N. discussions about the issue.

"The U.S. is also sending a message to China that it will have no choice but to beef up its military readiness against North Korea's threats unless a resolution is adopted at the U.N. Security Council," the source said on the condition of anonymity.

China, which has a track record of hindering tougher U.N. measures against North Korea, expressed "regret" over the North's launch, but said any U.N. response to Pyongyang should be "prudent."

On Monday, senior diplomats of South Korea and China also met in Beijing and discussed about a possible U.N. response to North Korea, but the Chinese side reiterated its resistance, another diplomatic source in Seoul said.

Kim Bong-hyun, Seoul's deputy minister for multilateral and global affairs, held talks with China's Assistant Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu, but there was no official announcement on the results of the Kim-Ma talks.

"The Chinese side repeated its stance that it wants to keep peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula," the source said, referring to China's response at the Monday talks in Beijing.

North Korea is already under U.N. sanctions imposed after its previous nuclear and missile tests.

The Security Council imposed its last round of sanctions in 2009 after North Korea conducted its second nuclear test.



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Last week's successful launch of a long-range rocket, which followed a failed launch attempt in April, is expected to help North Korea's young leader Kim Jong-il assert himself as Pyongyang marked the first anniversary of the death of Kim's father, Kim Jong-il, this week, analysts said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/12/18/93/0401000000AEN20121218006100315F.HTML>

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IBN (Indian Broadcasting Network) Live – India

China Must Not Make Nuclear Aircraft Carriers Recklessly: Expert

December 20, 2012

By Press Trust of India

Beijing: China possesses the ability to build nuclear powered aircraft carriers but should not start 'recklessly' expanding before sorting out issues relating to application of nuclear technology, a defence expert said. The comments followed reports that China plans to build nuclear power aircraft carriers in future to follow up the first carrier, which is not nuclear powered, launched recently converting the hull of a former Soviet ship into a carrier platform.

"China now has the ability to build high-power aircraft carriers but should not recklessly carry out construction," Li, professor with National Defence University told state-run Global Times. "There are a lot of things to think about clearly first, such as nuclear power technology. Before solving all high-end technology issues, it is inappropriate to blindly start construction. China has ability to take the next aircraft carrier to a higher level," Li said.

Some Russian strategic analysts recently spoke of China's plans to build big nuclear powered carriers even as Russia itself is carrying out research to build big nuclear powered carriers which can accommodate 80 fighter planes. About the combat effectiveness of the Chinese army, Li said that China has already made some substantial progress in terms of new equipment, judging from the disclosure of heavyweight equipment since 2006.

"The level of training of the armed forces, especially combat training, has been greatly improved. Nevertheless, we still have to make improvement in terms of understanding the high-tech war," she said. With her experience of long-term research on the development of weaponry worldwide, Li said whatever higher stage that the war may develop into, the essence is still the conquer of high-tech against low-tech, behind which is a more profound kind of competition.

The development of high-tech military technology is a realistic choice for national security, she said. Another story in the Global Times said China's maritime surveillance planes made "new breakthroughs" in technology, equipping with more advanced surveillance equipment, which had been quickly and efficiently applied in patrolling. The air-sea patrols are more advanced than before, Wang Xiaopeng Scholar with Chinese Academy of Social Sciences said without elaborating what exact technology.

Due to institutional problems and lack of advanced technology, the previous patrols were mainly carried out in offshore areas, he said. "They involved in salvage at sea and pollution regulation, rather than maintenance of the territorial sovereignty and administrative jurisdiction," he said.

The plane made a brief appearance over the disputed islands with Japan recently and left before Japanese fighters scrambled into space.

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/china-must-not-make-nuclear-aircraft-carriers-recklessly-expert/311519-2.html>

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Yonhap News Agency – South Korea

December 21, 2012

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S. Korea's Defense Paper Reaffirms Commitment to Western Sea Border, Dokdo

By Kim Eun-jung

SEOUL, Dec. 21 (Yonhap) -- South Korea included a detailed description of the western sea border with North Korea for the first time in its defense "white paper" report released Friday, stating that the line has been the de facto maritime boundary for 60 years.

It has long been an established fact that the Northern Limit Line (NLL) has served as the inter-Korean border in the Yellow Sea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War. But the description's addition is seen as underlining Seoul's commitment to guarding the boundary disputed by Pyongyang.

"It is the de facto maritime boundary between South and North Korea since it was drawn on Aug. 30, 1953. The waters below the NLL are controlled by the Republic of Korea," the defense report said, referring to South Korea by its official name.

Past editions mentioned the NLL without explanation.

Pyongyang does not recognize the line and demands it be drawn farther south. The dispute has made the western waters near the border a flash point and has led to a series of deadly naval clashes between the two Koreas near the sea border.

The maritime boundary issue resurfaced ahead of the presidential election, as leading candidates tried to highlight their capability to lead the country that still confronts the hostile neighbor as the next commander-in-chief.

Political parties debated over whether former liberal President Roh Moo-hyun disavowed the NLL during a 2007 summit with late leader Kim Jong-il. The ruling party's candidate Park Geun-hye, now president-elect, reaffirmed her commitment to strong national defense, while liberal candidate Moon Jae-in accused the conservative party of engaging in negative campaigning.

Lim Kwan-bin, the deputy defense minister for policy, said the latest edition was aimed at raising public awareness of the border issue through official documents.

"As the defense white paper represents (the government's) official position, the definition was included to help people clearly recognize the NLL," Lee said in a briefing.

The paper also made clear Seoul's sovereignty over the islets of Dokdo, which Japan has also claimed as its own.

"Dokdo is an apparent territory of the Republic of Korea geographically, historically and under international law," the paper noted next to a photo of the island.

The government added two photos to the latest edition in addition to a map including the islets in South Korea's territory.

"Our military has a strong willingness to defend Dokdo and has prepared a deterrence posture," according to the paper.

South Korea has kept a small police detachment on Dokdo since 1954.

Relations between Seoul and Tokyo have sunk to one of the worst levels since President Lee Myung-bak made a visit to the islets in August, the first by a South Korean leader. Japan strongly protested the move and renewed its claims to the East Sea islets.

Seoul has flatly rebuffed Japan's demand for taking the matter to the international court for settlement, saying it makes no sense to refer a dispute over what is clearly the country's territory to the court.



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Seoul's latest assessment of the North Korean military, defined as South Korea's "enemy," showed that its total troop levels remained unchanged at about 1.19 million and the number of artillery pieces and main weapon systems were at a similar level as previous years.

The 2012 paper is the first since Kim Jong-un took the helm of the communist state in a third-generation power transition after his father Kim Jong-il died about a year ago.

"Since 2011, North Korea has presented a two-track strategy by raising hostile rhetoric while using manipulative rapprochement tactics at the same time," the paper said, noting the North's warnings of attacks over South Korea-U.S. military drills and civic groups' attempt to send anti-Pyongyang leaflets across the border.

The North has long denounced the joint military exercises between the allies, claiming they amount to a prelude to war. Seoul and Washington have countered that the drills are defensive in nature.

While the paper detailed the North's failed rocket attempt in April, it did not mention its Dec. 12 launch because it was released after weeks of postponement due apparently to concern over its possible political and diplomatic implication ahead of the Dec. 19 presidential vote.

The latest edition said the North has honed its missile technology through several tests since the late 1990s, which is capable of targeting its Asian neighbors as well as the U.S. territory of Guam with its mid-range missiles.

The paper also said Pyongyang's "highly enriched uranium (HEU) program" has been under way and the country is "evaluated to have secured about 40 kilograms" of weapons-grade plutonium by reprocessing spent nuclear fuel rods four times.

It was referencing a new uranium enrichment facility at North Korea's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, which was shown in November 2010 to U.S. nuclear scientist Siegfried Hecker, former chief of the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

North Korean officials at the facility told him that 2,000 centrifuges were operational and producing low enriched uranium for fuel for the experimental light water reactor that was under construction. The uranium enrichment program could give the North a second route to build a nuclear bomb.

Regarding the latest development of the North's nuclear program, a senior intelligence official said satellite images have lately spotted activities around what are believed to HEU facilities.

"According to satellite images jointly analyzed by South Korea and the U.S., such (nuclear) activities are spotted around (HEU) facilities," the senior official said, without elaborating. "Although we have not yet concluded (about the possibility of a nuclear test), we are currently keeping track of the signs."

Following the North's latest rocket launch, South Korea's defense minister Kim Kwan-jin also said that Pyongyang is preparing for another nuclear test so it can be ready when the time is right to hone its intercontinental ballistic missile technology following its attempts in 2006 and 2009.

The two Koreas are still technically at war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in the South, a legacy of the war.

Relations between the divided Koreas deteriorated after the conservative Lee administration cut off the no-strings-attached-aid for the impoverished North and demanded an apology for the deadly provocations in 2010.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/12/21/86/0301000000AEN20121221002251315F.HTML>

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Hindustan Times – India

Nuclear Capable Prithvi-II Missile Test Successful

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Press Trust of India (PTI)
December 20, 2012

Balasore, Odisha -- India on Thursday successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile with a strike range of 350km from a test range at Chandipur near Balasore, Odisha.

The surface-to-surface missile was test fired from a mobile launcher in salvo mode from launch complex-3 of Integrated Test Range at about 9:21 AM, defence sources said.

The launch of the sophisticated missile, conducted as part of operational exercise by the Strategic Force Command (SFC) of the defence services, was successful, they said.

"The missile was randomly chosen from the production stock and the total launch activities were carried out by the specially formed SFC and monitored by the scientists of Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) as part of practice drill," sources said.

The Prithvi-II missile, developed by the DRDO, is already inducted into the Indian Armed forces.

Prithvi, the first missile developed under India's prestigious Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP), is capable of carrying 500 kg to 1000 kg of warheads and thrust by liquid propulsion twin engines, uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory.

The last trial of Prithvi-II was successfully carried out from the same base on October 4, 2012.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/Odisha/Nuclear-capable-Prithvi-II-missile-test-successful/Article1-976877.aspx>

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Voice of Russia – Russia

Russia Designs New Types of Intercontinental Missiles

December 18, 2012

Russia and China are working to modernize their strategic defence capabilities. However, they have chosen different approaches to replacing their key heavy missiles, notes Vasily Kashin, an expert at the Centre for Strategy and Technology Analysis, who compares the latest steps taken by the two countries to increase their missile defence potential.

Sergey Karakaev, commander of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces, announced that Russia is currently designing a minimum of two new types of intercontinental ballistic missile. According to mass media sources, one of the two projects is a giant liquid fuelled rocket called Sarmat, which is to replace the Soviet RS-36M "Voyevoda" system, better known by its Western name "Satan".

The Voyevoda complex has served as an important component in Russia's strategic nuclear forces for many years. These are the heaviest intercontinental ballistic missiles deployed anywhere in the world. Their take-off weight is over 200 tons, while their powerful liquid fuelled engines allow them to carry a payload of up to 10 nuclear warheads and host of anti-missile defence capabilities including false targets. Depending on the combat equipment it carries, the rocket's range can be as much as 11 to 16 thousand kilometres. "In weight the RS-36M compares only to the Chinese intercontinental rocket, DF-5, which weighs 183 tons. The Chinese rocket is less advanced; for example, it requires lengthy preparation before launch as fuelling takes from 30 minutes to two hours, according to different sources. It makes the missile vulnerable to a first strike. However, China maintains about 20 DF-5 missiles as they constitute the only strategic system that would allow China to strike anywhere in the USA", points out Vasily Kashin.

Russia and China have chosen different approaches to replacing their key heavy missiles. In essence, Russia has chosen to revive the RS-36 system with new and advanced technology. The choice of liquid fuel is rooted in the fact that

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compared to a solid fuel rocket, it can carry a heavier payload. Russia expects that in the future the US will start deploying its missile defence in space and will also escalate its missile defence capabilities in Europe. A heavier and more powerful rocket will be guaranteed to circumvent that system.

In addition, according to Sergey Karakaev, commander of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces, a liquid fuelled rocket, with its greater payload potential, will allow Russia "to realize such opportunities as the creation of high precision strategic weapons with non-nuclear warheads and a practically global range". Russia can create non-nuclear, high precision weapons based on intercontinental rockets in the event that the USA also works on designing such a weapon", Karakaev points out.

"Along with the heavy liquid fuel rocket, Russia is also working on a new mobile solid fuel rocket to replace the Topol-M and Yars complexes", says Karakaev. Thus, Russia wants to preserve, for the foreseeable future, its strategic nuclear forces consisting of two main components: mobile rocket systems and heavy, liquid fuelled silo-based missiles.

As far as China goes, it is a known fact that, in addition to the current mobile solid fuel DF-31A missiles, it is working on a heavier solid fuel rocket with multiple warheads. This missile is also a direct response to the increased capabilities of US missile defence systems, but it would be difficult for it to equal the range and payload characteristics of the existing DF-5 rocket.

Such an approach corresponds to the Chinese strategy for developing its nuclear forces. China, from the very beginning, has not aimed for nuclear parity with the USA, but has paid more attention to maintaining a smaller missile group, capable of surviving a first strike and hitting back in retaliation. That approach is now undergoing some changes; it is already clear that China will have to increase the number of its submarine based ballistic missiles and its intercontinental ballistic missiles. "But", thinks Russian expert Vasily Kashin, "conditions for the strategy change are not ripe yet".

http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_12_18/Russia-designs-new-types-of-intercontinental-missiles/

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Xinhua New – China

Russia to Put 100 Strategic Missiles on Service by Yearend

December 18, 2012

MOSCOW, Dec. 18 (Xinhua) -- Russian strategic missile forces will put on service about 100 new Topol-M and Yars missiles by the end of this year, the Defense Ministry said Tuesday.

With the deployment, "the share of modern weapons in the strategic missile forces will approach 30 percent," ministry spokesman Vadim Koval told reporters.

According to the spokesman, the rearmament of Teikovo missile division has been completed. The division, deployed in Central Russia's Ivanovo region, has become the first in Russia which is fully armed with fifth-generation missiles.

Two regiments of Teikovo division have been armed with Topol-M, and two other regiments have received Yars missiles with multiple warheads, according to the ministry.

The Defense Ministry said it was also rearming the divisions stationed in Novosibirsk, Kaluga and Saratov regions with Yars missiles.

After the Saratov-deployed division receives Topol-M missiles by the end of 2012, "the program of re-equipment of the strategic forces with the Topol-M will be completed," Koval said.

Topol-M is a 47-ton solid-fuel missile capable of delivering 800 kiloton nuclear warhead at the range of 10,000 km. Yars is a 36-ton missile with the range of 11,000 km.



Moscow has announced plans to allocate 20 trillion rubles (over 600 billion U.S. dollars) for a massive upgrade of the armed forces until 2020.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-12/18/c_132048981.htm

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Float Out New Borey Class Sub on Dec. 30

19 December 2012

MOSCOW, December 19 (RIA Novosti) – Russia’s Sevmash shipyard will float out a third Borey class strategic nuclear submarine, the Vladimir Monomakh, on December 30, Navy Commander Adm. Viktor Chirkov said on Wednesday.

“The Vladimir Monomakh will be floated out on December 30 and its construction will continue as planned,” Chirkov 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 plans to build eight Borey and Borey-A class subs by 2020.

Two Borey class vessels, the Yury Dolgoruky and the Alexander Nevsky, have been already built and are undergoing sea trials.

The Yury Dolgoruky 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. For instance, software glitches in the automated launch control system prevented further tests of the Bulava ballistic missile, the submarine’s main weapon.

Recent statements by military officials indicated that the commissioning of the Yury Dolgoruky had been postponed until 2013, but Chirkov said on Wednesday it could still happen this year, if all the problems are fixed.

“If the final ongoing tests show positive results, the acceptance act could be signed by December 30,” the admiral said.

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.

The subs will be assigned to Russia’s Northern and Pacific fleets.

Chirkov said that the stage-by-stage construction of infrastructure to accommodate Borey class vessels at the Northern Fleet had been going according to plans.

“It will be ready to receive the first Borey class submarine as early as in 2013,” he said.

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20121219/178267539.html

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Voice of Russia – Russia

Euro ABMs Wipe Russia’s Nuclear Potential Out

20 December 2012

The deployment of the US anti-missile defense system in Europe threatens to wipe out Russia’s nuclear potential, the country’s President Vladimir Putin said during his press-conference Thursday.



Putin added that the US rejected all Russian proposals to adopt legally binding guarantees that the system is not targeted against Russia, so the country could have to resort to countermeasures.

http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_12_20/Euro-ABMs-wipe-Russia-s-nuclear-potential-out/

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Global Security Newswire

Fewer Russian Tactical Nukes Are Battle-Ready than Widely Thought: Expert

December 20, 2012

By Chris Schneidmiller, *Global Security Newswire*

WASHINGTON -- A Russian nuclear arms expert once imprisoned for espionage is arguing that the nation's arsenal of battle-ready tactical nuclear weapons might be roughly half the size than widely assumed.

Igor Sutyagin suggested in a new analysis that Moscow maintains close to 1,000 nonstrategic warheads that could "reasonably be available for use within the constraints of a general nuclear war." Other projections have put the figure closer to 2,000, he said.

"In terms of size and distribution ... U.S. and Russian nonstrategic nuclear stockpiles may be more similar than previously thought," Sutyagin asserted regarding the short-range battlefield weapons.

Estimates are that the United States maintains roughly 200 B-61 gravity bombs at six military installations in NATO states Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey. Russia's short-range weapons are thought to be in storage and assigned to specific delivery systems, Sutyagin said. He said, though, that only a portion of those are actually maintained ready for rapid use.

The arms are holdovers from much larger stocks that have been cut back since the end of the Cold War.

Moscow and Washington have cited the potential for further tactical arms reductions in a possible follow-up agreement to the bilateral New START arms control treaty, which covered only strategic nuclear warheads and delivery systems. There has been no sign of progress on a tactical arms accord, as Moscow and Washington wrangle over ballistic missile defense and other matters.

"The lower numbers suggest that the problem of controlling nonstrategic nuclear weapons, though still challenging, is perhaps not quite as hard as we imagined," Jeffrey Lewis, who heads the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, said on Wednesday by e-mail. He called the new analysis a "substantial improvement" over previous estimates.

Sutyagin had not responded by Thursday afternoon to questions about his report.

The arms control specialist was convicted in 2004 of delivering Russian nuclear submarine data to a British firm thought to be a front for the CIA. Sutyagin said he provided only open-access information, but he spent years in prison before being released in a high-profile 2010 spy trade. He is now a research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute in London.

The findings issued last month are based on publicly available Russian government data for topics including Moscow's threat assessments, past "warhead assignment standards" and existing acquisition and research operations, Sutyagin said.

He said the conclusions rely on several "key definitions and assumptions," among them the understanding that "operationally assigned" warheads are distinct from "reserve" weapons that could not be used on an emergency basis; and that the weapons are assigned to military units rather than to specific delivery systems.



The report estimates that Russia's ground forces hold between 128 and 210 operationally assigned nonstrategic nuclear warheads. Meanwhile, 330 are under navy control, 334 are deployed to the air force, and 68 to 166 are assigned to air-defense forces. That puts the total number of such artillery shells and other weapons between 860 and 1,040, spread across the territory of the nation.

Sutyagin's analysis places the total count of nonstrategic weapons at about 1,900, which would cover roughly 900 weapons that are viable but would not be immediately available for use in a nuclear conflict.

Federation of American Scientists nuclear arms specialist Hans Kristensen noted that Sutyagin's complete estimate essentially echoes his own projections. However, Kristensen raised doubts about the level of certainty in the data, questioning whether the weapons can from the outside be placed into specific readiness categories given the secrecy that surrounds Russian nuclear arms activities.

"We don't feel quite as confident about making such specific assumptions about exactly how the Russian military assigns warheads to each unit, simply because we think there is far too much uncertainty and lack of transparency about how their forces are actually postured," Kristensen told *Global Security Newswire* by e-mail. "So our estimate is more generic."

Sutyagin said his methodology appears to correctly model the reduction of the former Soviet tactical nuclear arsenal estimated at roughly 20,400 weapons in 1988, indicating that his current estimate is also generally accurate.

"Different estimates are politically significant because NATO and the United States have made further reductions in U.S. nonstrategic nuclear forces conditioned on reducing the 'disparity' with Russia's larger inventory of such weapons," Kristensen stated. "If one accepts Sutyagin's estimate, then the disparity is smaller and so there would presumably be less of an issue."

Both Kristensen and Sutyagin asserted that any successful tactical arms control effort by Russia and NATO would have to stretch beyond the short-range weapons themselves.

"Russian air-defense, missile-defense, coastal-defense, [and] naval nonstrategic nuclear weapons are intended to compensate against the superior conventional forces of the United States and NATO," according to Kristensen.

Brussels and Washington would likely need to offer up some concession on their conventional forces, as well as their air-delivered short-range nuclear arms, to convince Moscow to retire some segment of its tactical nuclear arsenal, he said.

Drawing a clear line only between U.S. and Russian tactical stocks fails to address other threats perceived by Moscow, as well, such as the nuclear weapons deployed by France, Sutyagin stated.

"It makes no difference to Russia if the nuclear bomb that destroys Moscow is delivered as a result of a multilateral decision from Brussels, or an independent decision from Paris," he wrote.

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/fewer-russian-tactical-nukes-are-battle-ready-widely-thought-expert/>

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Bloomberg News

U.K. Has 1,000 Developing Trident Successor

By Kitty Donaldson

December 19, 2012

More than 1,000 people are now employed in developing a successor to Britain's submarine-based Trident nuclear deterrent, risking accusations from Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg's Liberal Democrats that the program is being pursued in the face of their opposition.



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“There has been a steady increase in the number of people working on the program at BAE Systems (BA/) shipyard at Barrow-in-Furness” in northwest England, the defense ministry said in a report published today. “The total has now passed 1,000 and will increase further as work progresses.”

Defense Secretary Philip Hammond, from Prime Minister David Cameron’s Conservative Party, has risked inflaming coalition tensions by saying an upgrade of Trident would be cheaper than alternatives being examined by the Liberal Democrats. The government announced in May 2011 it would spend 3 billion pounds (\$4.9 billion) on designing a replacement, at the same time as setting up a review of alternatives headed by the Liberal Democrat chief secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander.

The review, to be published either later this year or early in 2012, will help the Liberal Democrats decide on their position on a replacement for Trident in the run-up to the next general election in 2015.

Hammond pledged 353 million pounds for the development of submarines on Oct. 29. Clegg said some people were “jumping the gun” after U.K. media reported that the investment amounted to a government commitment to retaining Trident.

“We are committed to maintaining the continuous at-sea deterrent,” Hammond said Nov. 1. “Our Trident missiles and the warheads on them have many, many years of life left in them. The question is only around whether we replace the Vanguard Class submarines when they start to go out of service in 2028.”

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-12-19/u-k-has-1-000-developing-trident-successor.html>

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ACT media – Romanian News Agency

Three Documents Implementing Romania-US Ballistic Missile Defence Agreement, Signed on Tuesday

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Romania's Foreign Ministry (MAE) reports that on Tuesday three new bilateral documents required for the implementation of Romania-US ballistic missile defence agreement were signed in Bucharest.

MAE state secretary for strategic affairs Bogdan Aurescu on Tuesday attended a meeting in Bucharest of the Romanian-US Joint Committee in charge with the implementation of the agreement between Romania and the US on the activities of the US troops stationed in Romania.

Under the aegis of the same committee, talks were being held also for the implementation of the ballistic missile defence agreement between Romania and the US.

MAE says that in a speech to the opening of the meeting, Aurescu hailed the signing on Tuesday by chairs of the Joint Committee Sebastian Huluban, a state secretary with Romania's Defence Ministry, and General Mark O. Schissler of the US Forces Europe Command of three new bilateral documents required for the continuation in the implementation of the bilateral agreement on ballistic missile defence.

'It is about two new implementation arrangements, one concerning data on troops, their family members and US defence contractors, and the other concerning data exchanges, along with an amendment to an implementation arrangement already in force concerning communications. These are adding up to five existing implementation arrangements signed this June,' MAE reports.

In his speech, Aurescu also underscored the importance Romania is attaching to participating in the ballistic missile defence project, voicing appreciation for the excellent cooperation in this area with the US, as well as the importance of building the NATO missile defence system. Aurescu indicated that Romania will continue its close cooperation with

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the US and other NATO allies in order to achieve, within the deadlines agreed upon inside NATO, of all the other stages in the allied missile defence system.

'By finalising the bilateral judiciary framework concerning Romania's participation in the bilateral project with the US for ballistic missile defence we are in fact getting prepared for the year 2015, when the NATO missile defence system is expected to become operational, which underscores the increased importance of the Deveselu Base not only in the Romanian-US bilateral context, but also in the context of building the NATO system,' said Aurescu.

Aurescu also emphasised the sustained efforts of the negotiating teams of the two countries in order to agree on the documents for the implementation of the agreement, underscoring that the entire set of demarches by the Romanian and US officials is subscribed to the shared objective of getting operational the ballistic missile defence system's component deployed in Romania by 2015, the agreed deadline.

State secretary for Defence Policy and Planning with Romanian Ministry of National Defence (MApN) Sebastian Huluban said during an official meeting on Tuesday at the National Military Palace that 'Romania is fully committed to meet its side of tasks to create the necessary conditions for the American partner to start the construction works at Deveselu Air Base,' according to a MApN release.

The meeting took place during the meeting of the mixed Romanian-American Committee to implement 'The Agreement between Romania and the US on the activities of the US forces stationed on Romanian territory,' and of the 'Agreement between Romania and the US on placing the missile defence system of the US in Romania.'

According to MApN, major decisions were made during the meeting regarding the next common activities and the current and future situation was analyzed of the works to install the anti-missile American system at Deveselu Air Base. They also discussed topics of common interest on the training activities in 2013, as well as specific activities of multimodal transport from Kogalniceanu Base and Constanta Port.

During the meeting of the mixed committee, the ceremony of signing the two implementing agreements by the two joint chairmen took place, bringing fresh regulations in the field of information and personnel protection, as well as an amendment to the communication implementing agreement.

The mixed committee co-presidency is under state secretary Sebastian Huluban from Romania and general-mayor Mark O. Schissler, director for strategy and policies with the US Commandment in Europe is responsible for the joint-presidency from the US.

State secretary with Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE) Bogdan Aurescu attended the event as special guest.

Representatives of the Romanian Ministry of the Interior and the National Authority for Communication Regulation and Administration were also present.

The US delegation included experts and guests from the US Army Europe, US Air Forces in Europe, the Missile Defence Agency and the US Embassy in Bucharest.

<http://actmedia.eu/daily/three-documents-implementing-romania-us-ballistic-missile-defence-agreement-signed-on-tuesday/43695>

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Global Security Newswire

Iran Missile Work Likely to Impact Rollout of ICBM Interceptor: Ex-U.S. Envoy

December 19, 2012

By Rachel Oswald, *Global Security Newswire*

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WASHINGTON-- Iran's progress in ballistic missile development is likely to figure heavily into a final U.S. decision on placing next-generation missile interceptors in Europe, a former senior Obama administration diplomat said on Tuesday.

The final phase of the Obama plan for European missile defense calls for advanced missile interceptors to be deployed in Poland around 2020 to counter Iran's feared development of an ICBM that could be tipped with nuclear warheads.

However, the conceptual SM-3 Block 2B interceptor has yet to move off the drawing board, in part due to a lack of funding from Capitol Hill. At the same time, congressional researchers recently assessed Tehran was unlikely to develop a continent-spanning high-altitude missile before 2016. This comes as Russia continues to stridently object to the planned fielding of the Block 2B missile, which it fears could undermine strategic stability in Europe.

Ellen Tauscher, the Obama administration's one-time special envoy for strategic stability and missile defense, said "if the threat [from Iran] gets mitigated, lots of things could change."

"We're going to make our deployments. We've said that but you know I'm not too sure the 2B would go to Europe," said Tauscher, who left the administration at the beginning of September.

"I bet if the Iranians are still busily being bad, 2B will be in Europe," she said at a forum organized by the American Security Project. "But, if all of a sudden things change and no long-range rocket, no nuclear weapon out of Iran that changes things" on the merits of deploying the interceptor.

President Obama has "always said the [European missile shield] was adaptive and based around the threat. So we've made this point to the Russians," Tauscher said.

The ballistic missile shield the U.S. is pursuing with NATO allies involves the gradual fielding of increasingly capable missile interceptors in Romania and Poland and on warships home ported in Spain. Washington and Brussels maintain the system is aimed at defending against potential short- and medium-range missile strikes from the Middle East, particularly Iran.

The United States and other Western allies suspect Iran of pursuing a nuclear weapons capability under the cover of its ostensibly civilian atomic energy program. Tehran denies these claims. An increasingly tighter circle of international sanctions against Iran's oil and financial sectors have to date failed to coerce Tehran into giving up its controversial uranium enrichment program.

The SM-3 Block 2B is envisioned as having the ability to destroy medium- and intermediate range ballistic missiles as well as first-generation ICBMs in the early stages of flight. U.S. officials have repeatedly emphasized to Russia that the theoretical interceptor would not be a match for its more advanced ICBMs.

"It would only chase the tail of Russian ICBMs, you could put it on top of it, it would still only chase the tail," said Tauscher, who formerly served as the State Department's undersecretary for arms control and international security. U.S. missile defenses in Europe are "not robust enough to hold their nuclear arsenal at risk. Period," she continued.

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/iranian-missile-work-likely-impact-rollout-european-missile-defense-ex-us-diplomat/>

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Albany Tribune

US Has World's Fastest Supercomputer Used for Nuclear Weapons Simulations and Modeling

By Albany Tribune

December 20, 2012



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As of December 2012, the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) has the world's fastest supercomputer used for nuclear weapons simulations and modeling, said Thursday the State Department, adding that the supercomputer, named Sequoia, is also the second fastest supercomputer in the world overall.

The State Department said that advances in simulation and computing capabilities, aided by investments in the science-based Stockpile Stewardship Program (SSP), provide confidence in the ability to model and evaluate the performance and safety of nuclear weapons without nuclear explosive testing.

Since the end of U.S. nuclear explosive testing in 1992, investments in science-based Stockpile Stewardship have led to dramatic improvements in simulation capabilities, the State Department said.

"Computers have become at least a hundred-thousand times more powerful, and modern integrated design codes now more realistically capture the behavior of real nuclear devices," according to the State Department.

"As a result of these advancements, our modern, integrated nuclear weapon design codes have reduced a number of adjustment parameters, which previously required a nuclear explosive test to be calibrated. Weapons designers can now conduct hundreds of calculations to determine where the results are most sensitive to model uncertainties or fundamental data. This is a critical element to inform expert judgment and guide SSP experiment," said the State Department.

According to the State Department, weapons designers benefit from better simulation tools and computers capable of running highly detailed calculations.

"Successes to date indicate that a cadre of world-class scientists and engineers can employ physics-based simulations, modern experiments, validations against collections of re-analyzed data from previous underground nuclear explosive tests, and peer reviews to support stockpile decisions well into the future without the need to return to nuclear explosive testing," the State Department said.

According to the State Department, these computer simulation advances provide the United States with the ability to monitor and maintain the nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear explosive testing.

<http://www.albanytribune.com/20122012-us-has-worlds-fastest-supercomputer-used-for-nuclear-weapons-simulations-and-modeling/>

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

House Approves Sweeping Defense Spending Bill

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

December 21, 2012

The US House passed a \$633 billion defense authorization bill that includes fresh sanctions against Iran and funds the war in Afghanistan, while offering compromise language on military detention of US citizens.

In addition to covering standard national security expenses, it also provides a 1.7-percent pay raise for the military, authorizes the Pentagon to pay for abortions in cases of rape and incest and lifts a ban on same-sex marriage ceremonies on military bases.

The legislation, which passed 315-107, ended an indefinite restriction on the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to the United States or other countries, instead extending the current restrictions by one year.

The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2013, which began in October, was hammered out by House and Senate conferees in recent days after each chamber voted to approve separate versions of the bill.

Most NDAs pass with broad bipartisan support after conference, and this one is expected to pass the Senate later Thursday or Friday, clearing the way for President Barack Obama to sign it into law.

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The White House last month said Obama could veto the bill out of concern for the restrictions on his handling of Guantanamo detainees and other issues, but Senate Armed Services Committee chairman Carl Levin said this week he did not expect a veto.

House and Senate conferees had to compromise on overall spending figures for the bill, settling on \$527.4 billion for the base Pentagon budget; \$88.5 billion for overseas contingency operations including the war in Afghanistan; and \$17.8 billion for national security programs in the Department of Energy and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

"Overall this is a good bill," congressman Adam Smith, ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, said during debate Thursday.

"Not everyone will be happy... but that's the nature of compromise."

The bill also stripped out an amendment sponsored by Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein and Republican Mike Lee that was designed to limit the president's power to indefinitely detain US citizens as terror suspects.

The measure passed the Senate after fierce debate, but disappeared from the final version of the bill.

In a statement after agreement by conferees, Levin and ranking Republican John McCain said only that existing legislation should not be seen as denying the right to trial "to any person inside the United States who would otherwise be entitled to the availability of such writ or to such rights."

Rights groups had expressed concern with Feinstein's amendment because it referred specifically to US nationals and legal residents, leaving open the possibility that under the rule the military might be used to detain illegal immigrants.

Smith said that the amendment prohibiting for another year the use of US funds for transfer of Guantanamo inmates marked a setback for Obama's efforts to close the detention center at the US Naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The measure "ties the president's hands on how to deal with the people on Guantanamo," he said.

The bill also authorizes \$9.8 billion for missile defense, including funds for a Pentagon feasibility study on three possible missile defense sites on the US East Coast.

The legislation sailed through the House and is expected to do the same in the Senate despite an intensifying partisan row over how to avoid a year-end fiscal crisis.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/327295/house-approves-sweeping-defense-spending-bill>

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Worldcrunch News

December 18, 2012

Has Syria Become Al-Qaeda's New Base For Terror Strikes On Europe?

Exclusive investigation: The terror network in Syria includes dozens of European members, and wants to get its hands on Assad's stockpile of chemical weapons.

By Florian Flade and Clemens Wergin

DIE WELT/Worldcrunch

A photograph from Syria shows a large man in fighting garb, carrying an assault rifle. His head is wrapped in black cloth, and the sign on his armband indicates beyond a doubt that he is an Islamist. But the man is not Syrian; he identifies himself as "holy warrior Abu Ahmad al-Almani" from Germany.

The picture of him was posted on Facebook. The information the man provides about himself says that he was born in Lebanon, and until recently lived in Germany. He left to join the fight against Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad.

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But now "Abu Ahmad" is an *Islamic fighter*, and he's calling for German Muslims to join the cause. "Dear brethren, come join our ranks, fight with our brothers as if we were a wall. Faith is the weapon our enemies most fear."

According to a *Die Welt* investigation, the fighter from Germany is only one of hundreds of foreigners who have associated with Syrian rebels in their fight against the Assad regime. Most of them are young men from North Africa, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. But more and more Europeans are joining the militia fighters.

Western intelligence agencies believe that there are some 100 Muslims with European passports involved in the war in Syria, *Die Welt* has learned. A great many of these are fighters, some are radical Islamists, and see it as their duty to join the "Holy War" against the Syrian strongman.

"There could be many reasons for somebody to travel to Syria," one source told *Die Welt*. "Somebody might want to help their family. Somebody else might aspire to become a martyr. Some only become Islamists as a result of taking part in the fighting."

German intelligence views the travel of radical Muslims to Syria with concern. The assumption is that most of them plan to take up fighting against government troops.

From the standpoint of intelligence agents, the situation of the Syrian opposition remains highly opaque. According to the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND) – the German intelligence service – the biggest problem for foreign jihadists is the chaotic situation of countless warring parties, citizens' militias, and rebel groups. Only very few Islamists coming in from Europe know anything about the group they join up with, or what that group's ideology and goals actually are.

The most radical of the rebel groups is probably Jabat al-Nusra, which has a jihadist orientation and wants to create a theocracy in Syria. Jabat al-Nusra is considered to be a regional branch of al-Qaeda, but the group -- which is said to have about 1,000 fighters -- has deliberately avoided official affiliation with the terror network so far, for reasons of image and strategy. Intelligence operatives believe that Jabat al-Nusra doesn't want to give Assad fodder to nourish his claims that the opposition consists of al-Qaeda fighters.

Egypt's terrain is ripe

Western intelligence operatives say that al-Nusra runs several large training camps in Syria where Islamists with fighting experience – veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan – train new recruits, including Islamists from Western countries. In a situation similar to the al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan in the 1990s, hundreds of Islamists are presently being trained in the use of fire arms, bomb-making and hand-to-hand combat in Syrian camps managed by Jabat al-Nusra.

Al-Qaeda boss Ayman al-Zawahiri is focusing his efforts on Syria and Egypt, trying to build new structures in these two key countries since many of the established al-Qaeda offshoots no longer listen to the network's leadership after the death of Osama Bin Laden, according to information from Western intelligence sources.

Al-Zawahiri's contact in Syria is Abu Muhammad al-Julani, the Jabat al-Nusra leader. In Egypt, Jamal al-Kashef and Sheik Adel Shahato look after al-Qaeda interests. Al-Qaeda's aim is to fight the "heretical regimes" in both countries; to al-Zawahiri the new regime of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi also counts as one of these. In one of his recent speeches, al-Zawahiri called for attacks on the Egyptian military to help bring down Morsi's government.

According to intelligence sources, several al-Qaeda leaders who were originally from Egypt have returned there after years of fighting in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Other leaders and active members have been released from prison by the Morsi government. The al-Qaeda cell in Egypt is thought to have been involved in the attack on the American consulate in Benghazi, Libya.

On October 24, Egyptian security forces however did raid a "safe house" in Cairo that was used by al-Qaeda members under al-Kashef's orders. One al-Qaeda fighter was killed, and others were taken into custody. A large weapons depot and explosives were found at the site. In several other raids over the next few days, 20 more al-Qaeda operatives were



arrested. Egyptian sources said the cell was directly under al-Zawahiri's orders and was working to bring the Morsi government down.

Because of the political turmoil in Egypt, the country has become a stomping ground for global jihadists. A German al-Qaeda fighter, Denis Cuspert, who has threatened attacks in Germany, has gone to Cairo. Many German and European fighters pretend to be going to Egypt to study Islam or Arabic, but then head for al-Qaeda training camps in Egypt, the Sinai or Libya.

Chemical and biological stockpiles

But the most important field of operations for al-Qaeda at the moment is Syria. According to *Die Welt's* information from Western intelligence sources, last year al-Zawahiri sent at least three organizers to Syria to create jihadist groups to carry out his instructions.

Particularly worrying for the West are al-Qaeda efforts to get their hands on chemical and biological weapons. Local al-Qaeda operatives have allegedly already been told to find out where these weapons are stockpiled. Intelligence sources also say that al-Qaeda is looking for experts in Syria to train their fighters in how to use the weapons.

Al-Qaeda's efforts are said to be focused mainly around Deraa in the southwestern part of the country, and Aleppo, where its HQ is thought to be located.

Another major concern for Western intelligence services is al-Zawahiri's intention to train extremists with European passports in Egypt and Syria so that they can build terror cells in Europe, and to see Syria turn into a kind of Waziristan – a remote part of Pakistan where members can move about pretty much unhindered.

For future attacks in Europe, extremists with European passports are particularly valuable – men like the Spaniard Rachid Wahbi who arrived in Syria via Turkey in June 2012 headed for a training camp for European fighters, or Mehdi al-Harati, a Libyan with an Irish passport. He was one of the founders of the Tripoli Brigade, the first rebel unit in Libya. He now leads the rebels in the north of Syria.

According to Western intelligence sources, al-Nusra commander Abu Mohammad al-Julani is already planning to expand his base of operations to Europe via Turkey. He's preparing to make Syria – after the fall of the Assad regime – a center of jihadist activity with branches in other countries.

Some of al-Julani's al-Qaeda cells are already up and running in other countries in the region, and Western intelligence operatives say he is in the process of building additional cells in Europe.

It has been noted that so far Jabat al-Nusra has avoided using European fighters in suicide missions. Apparently these fighters are too valuable to "burn" right now – their European passports will come in good stead when the fighting in Syria is over and the terror network enters a Europe-oriented expansion phase.

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Washington Post
OPINION/Fine Print

How Many Nukes Does it Take to Be Safe?

By Walter Pincus
December 17, 2012

We are rightly mourning the horrific killings in Newtown, Conn.'s Sandy Hook Elementary School and discussing the threats posed by semiautomatic rifles. On another front, the United States is moving ahead with plans to spend



hundreds of billions of dollars on nuclear weapons — an even more destructive force — with no serious public discussion.

Twenty years from now, how many nuclear warheads on strategic submarines will the United States need? That's not an abstract question. The country is engaged in a costly, ambitious modernization of its nuclear weapons complex and development of a new generation of delivery systems — new strategic submarines, bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles that will be operating more than 50 years from now.

Start with the Navy's plan for 12 new SSBN-X strategic submarines to replace the 14 Ohio-class subs now in service. A Congressional Research Service (CRS) report on the program, released Dec. 10, asks whether the Navy can stay within the cost targets for their procurement (\$4.9 billion each) and whether each sub should carry 16 or 20 missiles.

But shouldn't the questions be more basic, such as who is the enemy and how many subs would be needed to deter that enemy?

There will be at least four or five warheads on each of the 16 ICBMs carried on each of the new subs. Their destructive power will be eight to more than 20 times that of the atomic bomb that all but destroyed Hiroshima in 1945.

That bomb killed 45,000 men, women and children instantly. Another 19,000 died during the next four months, according to a 1946 study by the Manhattan Engineer District, which built the bomb. The majority of those killed were civilians, though Hiroshima was picked because planners saw it as a military target with army barracks and defense factories. But the bomb — its 12.5 kiloton explosive power [equal to 12,500 tons of TNT], its heat effects and radiation — went well beyond those military targets. Today's nuclear weapons are 100 kilotons and above.

It's agreed that nuclear weapons don't deter terrorist groups. And if history is any guide, the more the United States and other nuclear-armed countries modernize their weapons, the more tempting it is for other countries to want nuclear arsenals.

So how many warheads does the United States need over the next 40 years to deter others?

That's a multibillion-dollar question, and among those President Obama and his new national security team will have to wrestle with as they try to tighten Defense spending.

I have written before that it's time to get a rational, long-range nuclear strategy because the cost of replacing the nation's three nuclear delivery systems will top \$100 billion and require another \$300 billion over the next 10 years to keep them operational.

The Cold War created a mindless U.S.-Soviet Union nuclear arms race in which both sides forgot the power of the weapons they were building and believed that whoever had the largest number was the strongest. Numbers on both sides went close to 20,000 bombs and warheads. It took just two to end World War II in the Pacific, and the threat of using one ended the 1962 Cuban missile crisis.

Since 1991, when the Iron Curtain fell, both the United States and Russia have sharply reduced not just their overall stockpiles but their deployed weapons. According to a study released last week by Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists, both sides are down to roughly 4,500 strategic warheads and bombs apiece, and by 2018 will have just 1,550 operationally deployed as required by the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which took effect Feb. 5, 2011.

Ironically, after signing the treaty, the two countries began modernizing their nuclear forces.

By the end of the decade, the deployed U.S. force may be 400 single-warhead, land-based ICBMs; 240 submarine-launched ballistic missiles with three to five warheads each; and 60 strategic bombers, which each count for only one warhead though they carry more than one bomb. Beyond that, there are to be some 1,600 stockpiled warheads or bombs, Kristensen says.

Why do we need that size of a nuclear arsenal for the next 50 years?



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Why 12 and not 10 subs, for example? Under construction plans, the Navy will go down to 10 operational boats between 2029 and 2041, as old Ohio-class submarines are retired before new ones are finished, according to the CRS study. What new threat requiring another 90 sub-launched warheads will be arising after 2041?

A new Presidential Policy Directive is due to be presented to the military shortly, a paper in which Obama will set nuclear force planning for the rest of his administration. In his April 2009 speech in Prague, the president said he wanted to “put an end to Cold War thinking . . . reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same.”

The country should be watching to see how he implements that promise as much as they are waiting to see how he follows up on Sunday’s pledge in Newtown to use “whatever power this office holds to engage my fellow citizens . . . in an effort aimed at preventing more tragedies like this.”

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/how-many-nukes-does-it-take-to-be-safe/2012/12/17/7f270b4a-4616-11e2-8061-253bccfc7532_story.html

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Gulf News – U.A.E.
OPINION/Columnist

Playing Politics over the Nuclear Issue

There will be no dispute if the US recognises Iran’s right to a nuclear programme to generate power and Ahmadinejad stops baiting the Americans and adopts a transparent policy on inspections

By Francis Matthew, Editor at Large
December 19, 2012

Iran and the US will need to come to some agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme, and the installation of a new Iranian president after elections in June 2013 may offer Obama’s administration a chance to find a way to talk to the Iranians. The making of a deal have been around for some time, but so far neither side sees any domestic political advantage to ending their dispute.

Basically, the US has to be willing to recognise that Iran has a right to a nuclear programme to generate power, and that this programme includes the right to enrich its own fuel. From the Iranian side they need to prove to the world that they are not enriching fuel beyond the level required by nuclear power stations to generate electricity, and that they do not have secret sites developing nuclear weapons.

A major difficulty is that the US has persuaded the international community that the deliberate lack of transparency by the Iranian government is to hide a nuclear weapons programme, and therefore the burden of proof that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), should insist on should be higher for Iran than for other states. The Iranians will naturally resent this and use it as a major stumbling block to any solution.

But the real problem is that Iran has not been open about its technologies or nuclear programme. It is the case that secret nuclear sites in Iran have been discovered by intelligence agencies, and these raise real doubts about what Iran is doing. But these international doubts have not harmed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad politically inside Iran, since he has been able to stand up to the Americans and pose as one of the leaders of the Third World. This notoriety has been a huge advantage to him.

Wiggle room

If it wants, the US can find plenty of wiggle room since it has a long history of working with new nuclear powers that are illegal under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The US has not had a problem with Israel’s nuclear technology and its weapons programme.

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And when India set off its test weapons in 1998 followed by Pakistan, the Bush administration destroyed any lingering credibility that the NPT had by first persuading the existing nuclear nations under the NPT that India and Pakistan's acts were not a problem and the working on the 40 nations in the Nuclear Group so that they also ignored the provisions of the NPT. So it is clear that the international community's working with nuclear nations does not depend on anyone observing international treaties, but on a political decision in Washington.

In addition, there is a long history of the US working with nations that have nuclear weapons. The red lines that the State Department has laid down for the Iranians have been crossed many times by the US itself. The present position is that the US does not want the Iranians to have the technology that would lead to building nuclear weapons.

Almost certainly this red line will be crossed as it has by many other states around with world. The technology to build a bomb is widely available and has not been a problem for Washington in many places. The consequent red lines will be first if the Iranians start to use this technology to build the parts of a weapon; then assemble them into a weapon.

The next red line would be if they put the nuclear weapon on a delivery mechanism like a missile; then conduct a test explosion, Finally, if they have nuclear weapons, the red lines become a matter of how large the arsenal of weaponised nuclear missiles might be.

Each of these stages has been crossed in the past. For example, during the Cold War, the US and USSR both crossed all these lines and were arguing about how many nuclear missiles they had.

The real problem is not the technology or weaponisation, but the political will to find a solution. Obama's administration must be able to prove to its public that it has won enough Iranian transparency to declare a victory, and the future Iranian leadership needs to be able to prove to its population that the US recognises its rights.

And both these domestic justifications have to be able to happen at the same time, and not cancel each other out. This will require determined joint political leadership in both Tehran and Washington, which is not impossible but difficult.

<http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/playing-politics-over-the-nuclear-issue-1.1121220>

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Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis (IDSA) – India

OPINION/IDSA Comment

Ballistic Missile Proliferation: Implications for India

By Vivek Kapur

December 19, 2012

In the face of international opposition, North Korea launched a rocket on 12 December 2012 to place a satellite in orbit. [1] Its earlier four attempts had all failed; the first of these was in 1998 and the most recent failure was in April 2012. [2] The "successful" launch on 12 December 2012 places North Korea among the few nations (United States, Russia, China, Japan, Europe, India, Pakistan and possibly Iran) that possess the ability to build long range ballistic missiles. What has added to international concerns about North Korea's missile programme is its transfer of missiles banned by multilateral treaties and conventions to countries such as Pakistan and Iran as well as its support for international terrorist groups. [3]

India has no direct dispute with North Korea and the distance separating the two countries serves to further reduce threat perceptions. India's interest in North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes comes from the reported clandestine co-operation between North Korea, Pakistan and Iran in this regard. There have been persistent reports that North Korea has assisted Pakistan's missile programme in return for Pakistani assistance with its nuclear weaponisation programme. The current Pakistani ballistic missile capability extends to a reported range capability of about 1500 to 2500 km, which is equivalent to that of the North Korean Taepodong-I missile and its further developments. The test conducted on 12 December 2012 by the Unha-3 rocket gives North Korea a range capability of 5500+km or the equivalent of the Taepodong-II missile. [4] India's Agni-V missile was claimed to have a range of 5500



km and falling into the classification of an ICBM. This is a range capability not currently possessed by Pakistan and one, if inducted by Pakistan from North Korea, would be detrimental for Indian security. Iran has also been suspected of being a recipient of North Korean ballistic missile technology. [5] Iran's acquisition of long range ballistic missile capability from North Korea would further complicate India's security situation. Beyond this direct impact of North Korean missile proliferation, India, as a responsible member of the international community, has no choice but to support international action and restrictions on countries that act and behave in a manner that is found unacceptable by the rest of the world.

India has ballistic missile armed countries on its Northern as well as Western borders. Further, territorial disputes exist with both of these neighbours. The steady spread of ballistic missile technology to ever more states continues unabated. Although the likelihood is remote presently, there is no guarantee that in the near to medium term future such technology will not be available with more of India's neighbours. There is also the alarming, but above zero, possibility of ballistic missiles falling into the hands of terrorist groups especially in "failing" or "failed" states such as Pakistan whose military includes several sympathisers of terrorist groups. (Two terrorist organisations, Hamas and Hezbollah, have already demonstrated the ability to obtain and use such weapons – Fajr-5 missiles with ranges of 75 km – against Israel). [6] Such developments in its neighbourhood have adverse implications for India.

No country is in a position to be able to control the proliferation of ballistic missile technology all by itself, India included. Even missiles with non-nuclear payloads could be a major threat to India's security and economy. Hence, if unable to avoid the proliferation of ballistic missiles in South Asia, India would have no choice but to work towards countering this threat. Nuclear armed ballistic missile attacks would be countered by India's declared Nuclear Doctrine and executed by the Indian strategic forces. The challenge here would lie in dealing with situations where the country responsible for the launch of a nuclear attack cannot be easily identified, as in the case of missiles launched from sea.

There are two possible solutions to countering the conventional payload ballistic missile threat. The first would be to harden all population centres and other vital facilities against such attacks. Given the very large number of these and the ever increasing range and accuracy of ballistic missiles available with an ever increasing group of countries, this is unlikely to be feasible or even prove sufficient. The second option would be to develop a viable Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is already working on a 'only terminal stage intercept' BMD system, which has achieved several notable successes during its trials to intercept target ballistic missiles in the exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric stages. Ballistic missile proliferation in India's neighbourhood requires the development of a more capable BMD system.

While the DRDO's BMD project is reportedly proceeding well and should be available for initial deployment in the near future, it is only a terminal phase system as of now. There is a need to extend the current capability towards the ability to engage ballistic missiles during their mid-course and boost stages as well as during the terminal stage of their flight. DRDO may need to explore air-based, Directed Energy Weapon (DEW) and Electromagnetic (EM) gun based solutions in addition to its current land based 'anti-missile missile' BMD system to achieve a more robust and capable BMD system or a system of systems capable of reliable boost phase, mid-course phase and terminal phase ballistic missile intercept and destruction.

The proliferation of ballistic missile technology has continued despite international efforts to curtail it. This proliferation poses threats to India's security. India may face a conventional as well as nuclear ballistic missile threat in the near to medium term future. The possible spread of these ballistic missile capabilities has the potential to further complicate India's security situation. India is preparing to deal with the nuclear ballistic missile threat from its potential adversaries through its nuclear doctrine and nuclear forces. However, the increasing ballistic missile threat would require a combination of developing a full spectrum (boost phase, mid-course phase and terminal phase) BMD capability. The current DRDO BMD programme needs to be extended to attain such a capability.

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variants and MiG-29s. Before joining IDSA, Group Captain Vivek Kapur was a Research Fellow at the Centre for Air Power Studies from June 2006 to July 2010.

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Washington Times
OPINION/Commentary

PRY: North Korea EMP Attack Could Destroy U.S. — Now

Obama must take immediate action

By Peter Vincent Pry

Wednesday, December 19, 2012

North Korea now has an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of delivering a nuclear weapon to the United States, as demonstrated by their successful launch and orbiting of a satellite on Dec. 12. Certain poorly informed pundits among the chattering classes reassure us that North Korea is still years away from being able to miniaturize warheads for missile delivery, and from developing sufficiently accurate missiles to pose a serious nuclear threat to the United States. Philip Yun, director of San Francisco's Ploughshares Fund, a nuclear disarmament group, reportedly said, "The real threat from the launch was an overreaction that would lead to more defense spending on unnecessary systems. The sky is not falling. We shouldn't be panicked."

In fact, North Korea is a mortal nuclear threat to the United States— right now.

North Korea has already successfully tested and developed nuclear weapons. It has also already miniaturized nuclear weapons for ballistic missile delivery and has armed missiles with nuclear warheads. In 2011, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, Lt. General Ronald Burgess, testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that North Korea has weaponized its nuclear devices into warheads for ballistic missiles.

North Korea has labored for years and starved its people so it could develop an intercontinental missile capable of reaching the United States. Why? Because they have a special kind of nuclear weapon that could destroy the United States with a single blow.

In summer 2004, a delegation of Russian generals warned the Congressional Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Commission that secrets had leaked to North Korea for a decisive new nuclear weapon — a Super-EMP warhead.

Any nuclear weapon detonated above an altitude of 30 kilometers will generate an electromagnetic pulse that will destroy electronics and could collapse the electric power grid and other critical infrastructures — communications,



transportation, banking and finance, food and water — that sustain modern civilization and the lives of 300 million Americans. All could be destroyed by a single nuclear weapon making an EMP attack.

A Super-EMP attack on the United States would cause much more and much deeper damage than a primitive nuclear weapon, and so would increase confidence that the catastrophic consequences will be irreversible. Such an attack would inflict maximum damage and be optimum for realizing a world without America.

Both North Korean nuclear tests look suspiciously like a Super-EMP weapon. A Super-EMP warhead would have a low yield, like the North Korean device, because it is not designed to create a big explosion, but to convert its energy into gamma rays, that generate the EMP effect. Reportedly South Korean military intelligence concluded, independent of the EMP Commission, that Russian scientists are in North Korea helping develop a Super-EMP warhead. In 2012, a military commentator for the People's Republic of China stated that North Korea has Super-EMP nuclear warheads.

A Super-EMP warhead would not weigh much, and could probably be delivered by North Korea's ICBM. The missile does not have to be accurate, as the EMP field is so large that detonating anywhere over the United States would have catastrophic consequences. The warhead does not even need a re-entry vehicle, as an EMP attack entails detonating the warhead at high-altitude, above the atmosphere.

So, as of Dec. 12, North Korea's successful orbit of a satellite demonstrates its ability to make an EMP attack against the United States — right now.

The Congressional EMP Commission estimates that, given the nation's current unpreparedness, within one year of an EMP attack, two-thirds of the U.S. population — 200 million Americans — would probably perish from starvation, disease and societal collapse.

Thus, North Korea now has an Assured Destruction capability against the United States. The consequences of this development are so extremely grave that U.S. and global security have, in effect, gone over the "strategic cliff" into free-fall. Where we will land, into what kind of future, is as yet unknown.

Nevertheless, some very bad developments are foreseeable. Iran will certainly be inspired by North Korea's example to persist in the development of its own nuclear weapon and ICBM programs to pose a mortal threat to the United States. Indeed, North Korea and Iran have been collaborating all along.

If North Korea and Iran both acquire the capability to threaten America with EMP genocide, this will destroy the foundations of the existing world order, which has since 1945 halted the cycle of world wars and sustained the global advancement of freedom. North Korea and Iran being armed with Assured Destruction capability changes the whole strategic calculus of risk for the United States in upholding its superpower role, and will erode the confidence of U.S. allies — perhaps to the point where they will need to develop their own nuclear weapons.

Most alarming, we are fast moving to a place where, for the first time in history, failed little states like North Korea and Iran, that cannot even feed their own people, will have power in their hands to blackmail or destroy the largest and most successful societies on Earth. North Korea and Iran perceive themselves to be at war with the United States, and are desperate, highly unpredictable characters. When the mob is at the gates of their dictators, will they want to take America with them down into darkness?

What is to be done?

The president should immediately issue an Executive Order, drafted for the White House earlier by the Congressional EMP Commission, to protect the national electric grid and other critical infrastructures from an EMP attack. The Congress should pass the SHIELD Act (HR 668) now to provide the legal authorities and financial mechanisms for protecting the electric grid from EMP. The Congress should enhance Defense Department programs for National Missile Defense and Department of Homeland Security programs for protecting critical infrastructures.

The administration and the Congress owe the American people security from an EMP Apocalypse.

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<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/dec/19/north-korea-emp-attack-could-destroy-us-now/?page=all#pagebreak>

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Foreign Policy

AOL Defense

OPINION/Strategy & Policy

All's Well With the Nation's Nukes -- In Theory

By Michaela Bendikova

December 19, 2012

What kind of shape are our nuclear weapons in? Used to be, you'd have to test them to find out. But the State Department's Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance has some good news: Over the last decade, our ability to predict how our aging nukes will perform--without resorting to explosive testing--has greatly improved.

There's still a problem, though. The last time the U.S. conducted a nuclear explosive test was in 1992. So, while the State Department *thinks* we can now assess the condition of our nukes better than before, there's really no way of knowing how accurate those assessments really are--since there has been absolutely no explosive testing to confirm the predictions.

That's not the way the scientists wanted to proceed. After the 1992 test, the Directors of the National Nuclear Laboratories requested funding to conduct some yield-producing experiments. The experiments were designed to help them to validate advanced computer codes that had been developed to understand the science of nuclear explosions and then to predict what happens within a nuclear weapon overtime.

Congress never funded these experiments, though. And so, to this day, we don't know how predictive these codes truly are. They're based entirely on theory, which may be more or less correct. To add insult to injury, U.S. nuclear stockpile has never been older. That makes it very difficult to draw on previous experience regarding aging of our nuclear systems, since the nukes have never been this old before.

It's foolish to think the U.S. can safely maintain our nuclear stockpile without ever conducting another yield-producing experiments. Nuclear warheads comprise thousands of finely calibrated parts, and all of them must work with split-second precision for a warhead to perform as designed and expected. Without yield-producing experiments to validate or correct our theoretically predictive capabilities, we can't be sure we understand every critical element of the complex physical processes at work during a nuclear detonation.

During negotiations over the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Directors of the National Nuclear Laboratories urged the U.S. to preserve its right to conduct modest (lower than one kiloton) yield-producing experiments. Such limited tests pose minimal risk of damage to either people or the environment. In fact, some of these experiments can be conducted in an apartment-sized facility with only tiny amounts of radioactive material.

Ultimately, the CTBT remained silent on what constitutes an acceptable nuclear weapons test. The Clinton Administration, sadly, interpreted the treaty as prohibiting *all* yield-producing experiments. Meanwhile, Russia and China--both signatories to the treaty--continue to conducting yield-producing experiments on their own inventories.

More than 30 countries around the world rely on U.S. nuclear weapons for their security. Some, such as Turkey and Japan, are in highly volatile neighborhoods. According to an article in the *Journal of Turkish Weekly* this March, 54 percent of Turkish survey respondents favor Turkey developing its own nuclear weapons in response to an Iranian nuclear threat. Japan maintains break-out capability and could develop a nuclear weapon within weeks if the

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perceptions of its security situation and U.S. guarantees changed. This dynamic might give the word "credibility" a whole new meaning in the U.S. nuclear weapons context.

The predictive capability to assess the nuclear stockpile will remain essential in the years to come. But without testing, that capability may not be enough to convince others—both friend and foe—that U.S. nuclear forces are a credible deterrent.

Michaela Bendikova specializes in missile defense, nuclear weapons modernization and arms control as research associate for strategic issues in The Heritage Foundation's Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies.

<http://defense.aol.com/2012/12/19/all-s-well-with-the-nation-s-nukes-in-theory/>

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Washington Times
OPINION/Analysis

HEINRICHS: It's Time to Get Serious about Missile Defense

By Rebecca Heinrichs - Special to *The Washington Times*
Wednesday, December 19, 2012

Our friends and foes alike have spent the past several weeks emphasizing the need for missile defense. First, Israel's Iron Dome system showed how well missile defense can work. Then, North Korea demonstrated why the U.S. needs to get serious about its own missile defense program.

The Iron Dome was remarkably effective in knocking out multiple short-range missiles fired by Hamas into Israel, saving Israeli lives. It saved Palestinian lives as well. Being able to stop missiles in flight obviated the need for Israel to eliminate the missile threat by launching a massive conventional attack on Gaza.

Pyongyang's successful Dec. 12 launch of a long-range missile put a satellite into orbit. Satellite launch technology is directly applicable to long-range missile technology.

So, what kind of defense against long-range missile attack does America have? The answer is, "Not enough." Our Ground-Based Midcourse Defense system is the only homeland defense we have deployed, and it protects from certain kinds of attacks. It deploys from two sites — one in California, the other in Alaska. They are home to a total of 30 missile interceptors. A National Academies report recommended a third interceptor site on the East Coast — a recognition of the growing threat of an Iranian missile attack.

Congress has the opportunity to act. The defense authorization bill coming up for a final vote Thursday calls for the Pentagon to explore locations and systems suitable for a third missile defense site.

But missile defense doesn't start — and stop — at our borders. Washington must strengthen cooperative missile defense initiatives with our allies.

The Israelis have proved their savvy and determination to make missile defense work. Several U.S. companies are working with Tel Aviv on next-generation programs, including the David's Sling and the Arrow, geared to intercept medium- and longer-range missiles. The Pentagon should plan now for how to best benefit from these systems once they are ready for prime time.

Our Asian allies have made it clear that they see missile defense as necessary. Japan was poised to shoot down the North Korean missile with the Patriot Advanced Capability system if the missile entered its airspace. Japan also could employ the highly capable sea-based Aegis weapon system. It has a right to do so. The U.S. should publicly affirm that right — and pledge to assist Japan in the endeavor should the need arise. Ditto for South Korea, an ally attacked by North Korea twice last year.

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Of course, that won't be popular with Russia or China. Russia keeps demanding that the U.S. abandon plans for a missile defense system in Europe and has even threatened to pre-emptively attack that system should it be deployed. Beijing has opposed installation of a U.S.-Japanese missile defense radar system in Japan, calling it "destabilizing."

Yet Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta told the House Armed Services Committee that he was sure North Korea's missile program received "some help coming from China." Aiding and abetting Pyongyang's illicit missile program is destabilizing. Purely defensive anti-missile systems are not.

The North Korean missile test serves as another red flag that averting nuclear war isn't about mollifying the Russians or the Chinese. Other countries have nuclear weapons and missiles, too. Weakening our missile defenses in order to placate Moscow and Beijing will leave us and our allies exposed to attack.

The Iron Dome and the North Korean missile launch mark major technological advances. The good guys can't afford to hedge their bets on defense while the bad guys are doubling down on offense. Missile defense must be significantly improved and fully integrated into our strategic planning.

Rebecca Heinrichs is an analyst on nuclear deterrence and missile defense and is a visiting fellow at the Heritage Foundation.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/dec/19/heinrichs-its-time-to-get-serious-about-missile-de/>

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National Bureau of Asian Research – Seattle, WA
OPINION/Analysis Commentary
December 19, 2012

The Leap in North Korea's Ballistic Missile Program: The Iran Factor

By John S. Park

North Korea's successful launch of a long-range missile has turned a hypothetical into an emerging reality. Recent U.S. intelligence estimates warned of a North Korean missile capable of reaching the shores of Alaska and Hawaii in a few years. Failed missile tests since 1998 had inoculated many observers with the belief that North Korea's long-range missile development program had more bark than bite. Pyongyang had been reportedly using missile tests as a bargaining chip rather than as part of a concerted effort to attain long-range capability. North Korea's leap forward in mid-December, however, clearly demonstrates that the nascent Kim Jong-un regime is on a credible path to further improving its long-range missile capabilities.

How did Pyongyang pass the chronically elusive threshold of completing a three-stage rocket test and placing a satellite in orbit? The Iran factor has been hiding in the open. Cooperation between North Korea and Iran has been a critical—yet underexamined—enabler of the recent success. What started as a transactional relationship, where Iran provided much-needed cash to North Korea in return for missile parts and technology, has evolved into an increasingly effective partnership. The time has come to view their previously independent ballistic missile programs as two sides of the same coin.

Client Becomes Partner

Although sporadic cooperation between North Korea and Iran on missile development has been well documented, analysts viewed this interaction largely through the lens of serial commercial transactions. The conventional wisdom was that cash-starved North Korea found a lucrative client in Iran. As a result, analysts tended to view the two pariahs' long-range missile development programs as largely independent endeavors. However, North Korea's sudden success on December 12 was not the result of good fortune but rather was the fruition of its increasing institutional cooperation with Iran. In September 2012, North Korea and Iran signed a scientific and technological cooperation agreement. Largely dismissed as a propaganda ploy, it provided an organizational framework to set up joint laboratories and exchange programs for scientific teams, as well as to transfer technology in the fields of information

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technology, engineering, biotechnology, renewable energy, and the environment. In practice, the projects created a cover for these regimes to weather U.S.-led sanctions related to missile-proliferation activities. The new bilateral agreement thus appears to have formalized a recent mechanism through which both regimes had been regularly procuring specialized components, as well as sharing technical data and expertise. When one side masters or acquires a key missile-related technology, the other now institutionally benefits.

Further technical analysis is likely to show that North Korea's recent success was rooted in Iran's orbital launch of its Omid satellite atop the Safir satellite carrier in February 2009. This landmark event was itself likely facilitated by Russian missile cooperation with Iran in the 2005 period. Under the innocuous title of "civilian scientific and technological cooperation," the North Korea–Iran agreement provides a conduit for Pyongyang to access earlier Russian inputs into the Iranian program. Of particular significance to North Korea is Russia's proven long-range missile technology.

This bilateral partnership—and mutual reliance—is unique in the international community, especially given that North Korea and Iran lack any common ideology, religion, geographic space, or ethnicity. An overlooked reality is that each has helped the other cope during national emergencies. For Iran, North Korea was a vital supplier of conventional arms during the Iran-Iraq War. For North Korea, Iran has been a long-standing linchpin in Pyongyang's vitally important procurement activities in the Middle East and Eastern Europe—a role that China is now increasingly playing as a result of more foreign companies setting up production facilities targeting the growing Chinese market.

Conclusion

What is to be done? The U.S. response to the fused North Korean and Iranian missile programs will require innovation and adaptation to better understand this new reality. The following initiatives could help bridge gaps resulting from obsolete frameworks of analysis:

- The United States needs to identify and track the primary North Korean and Iranian state trading companies engaged in operationalizing the September 2012 agreement. Many analysts have traditionally examined supply chains, logistics, and procurement as separate activities. An integrated approach to analyzing the full life cycle of a North Korean–Iranian transaction is long overdue—and now possible given access to key defectors in Seoul who have worked in North Korean state trading companies.
- Building on improved understanding of how the fused missile development programs function, policymakers can structure new incentives to disrupt critical sections in the life cycle. Rather than rely solely on a sanctions-based policy of "strategic patience," the United States should consider innovative programs to incentivize private Chinese companies in third-party countries that serve as vital middlemen in key transactions.

One incentive that may prove fruitful is a monetary reward program to interdict components or technicians central to ballistic missile development. Hiding in the open is a particularly effective tactic employed by North Korea. Contracting private Chinese companies to serve as middlemen to facilitate "cargo laundering"—a creative process of disassembling components and moving them through different logistics routes—enables North Korean state trading companies to utilize commercial shipping containers. Monetary rewards would offer a double payday for some Chinese companies, who could collect the commission fee from a North Korean client as well as the reward for anonymously providing a copy of the freight insurance to local authorities in busy Southeast Asian ports.

Only by engaging in innovative research can we generate the understanding and insights required for developing such new policy tools. Overreliance on sanctions has resulted in the focus shifting from objectively measuring their effectiveness to attributing any setback for the target regimes to this approach. A crude North Korean satellite currently in a polar orbit is a wake-up call for the United States.

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<http://www.nbr.org/publications/element.aspx?id=638>



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Pakistan Observer – Pakistan

OPINION/Commentary

Thursday, December 20, 2012

Myth of Indian Nuke Doctrine

By Shams uz Zaman

The Indian policy makers finally, on 11 May 1998, lifted the veil from the true face of the Buddha which had apparently smiled “peacefully” on 18 May 1974 in Pokhran. Pakistan was quick to display its tit for tat reaction a few days later. Although the 1998 testing did give India the status of defecto Nuclear weapon status, yet it also neutralized Indian conventional edge over Pakistan as prospects of any future conflict between these South Asian rivals could not be conceived without bringing the nuclear equation into the calculus. Subsequently, Indians hurriedly came up with a draft nuclear doctrine which provides fuzzy guidelines for the employment of nuclear weapons. Pakistan, to add further credibility to its nuclear deterrent, decided to keep its nuclear doctrine a classified matter.

While Pakistan has never kept it hidden that its nuclear deterrent is premised on the core belief of “first use but last resort”, this term has usually been seen by the western academics as an offensive nuclear posture. Other than Pakistan, only Israel shares same kind of doctrinal principle labelling it as a “Samson Option”, but it has never been subjected to the same kind of scrutiny in the western media or academics, as has been seen in the case of Pakistan. According to a report published by International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, no other nuclear weapon state, de jure or defecto, gives an unequivocal and unconditional negative security assurance except for China. Ironically, while Pakistan is singled out for adopting a posture of “first use but last resort” which actually means that it could consider the employment of nuclear weapons once all other options have been exhausted, India is given a salutary status to its actually meaningless clause of “no first use.” Interestingly, not only in the west but some of the Pakistani scholars amongst the strategic community have fallen victim to this deceptive phrase in the Indian nuclear doctrine. The Indian so called “no first use” clause has three conditions attached to it which actually makes it redundant. The first condition says that, “any threat of use of nuclear weapons against India shall invoke measures to counter the threat” which doesn’t rule out a pre-emptive nuclear strike. Second, in the clause 2.5 saying, “India will not resort to the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against States which do not possess nuclear weapons, or are not aligned with nuclear weapon powers,” the term alliance can be translated into various terms. Like should there be a formal defence pact or a treaty between a nuclear weapon states or mere maintaining diplomatic, economic and cultural ties could also be considered as an alliance.

Saudi Arabia, Turkey and even Iran can be considered as allies of Pakistan with regards to certain issues. Likewise, Japan, Germany, Italy and South Korea also forms and alliance with the US and thus qualifies for a nuclear first strike. Finally, clause 2.3a, revised in 2003 states that, “however, in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.” This implies that if some UN contingent including few Indian troops is attacked with either a chemical or a biological agent in some of the remotest part of the world, India could retaliate with nuclear weapons. Under such conditions, actually believing in the myth of Indian no first nuclear posture and doctrine is a self-alluded fallacy which practically makes no sense at all. Rather, it is primarily meant to maintain ambiguity with regards to first strike option if a situation is deemed necessary.

This is not to criticize the Indian nuclear doctrine for its first use clause because all states, except China, have such provisions, rather the purpose is to understand the doctrine in right perspective and avoid singling out some states at the same time comforting other with the same nuclear posture.

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<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=187714>

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London Daily Telegraph – U.K.
OPINION/Analysis

Iran's Middle East Neighbours 'Would Not Join a Nuclear Arms Race'

Iran's Middle East rivals have nothing to gain from a nuclear arms race triggered by the Islamic Republic acquiring a nuclear bomb and could be stopped from going nuclear by Western pressure, new research claims.

By Damien McElroy, Foreign Affairs Correspondent
20 December 2012

The assumption that states such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Egypt would hastily push to acquire a nuclear deterrent if Iran emerged as an atomic weapons power has underpinned diplomatic efforts to stop Tehran's nuclear programme.

But Looking Beyond a Nuclear Iran, a new paper from Centre for Science and Security Studies at Kings College London, claims that all three states are in no position to unilaterally acquire nuclear weapons.

As a result warnings that Iran's development of an atomic weapon would destroy the non-proliferation regime that has kept the number of nuclear states in single figures, were overblown.

Christopher Hobbs and Matthew Moran, the authors, point out that Egypt, although it sees itself as a leader of the Sunni Muslim Arab states, has opted for a diplomatic response to the much closer challenge of Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal. "It would seem very unlikely that the threat presented by a nuclear-armed Iran would cause Cairo to abandon this approach," the report will state.

It adds recent political division and economic difficulties means the weakened Egyptian government that emerged following the fall of President Hosni Mubarak's regime would be ill-placed to acquire a weapon. "While the fall of the Mubarak regime and the subsequent rise of the Muslim Brotherhood has added an air of uncertainty to the future of Egyptian nuclear policy, it has also increased the cost of embarking on the path to nuclear weapons" it said. "Such a decision would likely incur huge economic and security costs."

While Saudi Arabia has deep pockets and no obvious internal political challenge to the monarchy, Riyadh would also refrain from buying its own weapon. The country is too dependent on American arms sales, which would certainly be cut off in response to a nuclear declaration in Riyadh.

"A situation whereby Saudi Arabia would jeopardise its deeply-rooted security relationship with the world's only superpower for dependence on Pakistan is almost inconceivable," the report said.

Turkey has also emerged as a rival to Shia Muslim Iran's gambits for influence in the Middle East despite the two countries strong trade relationship. Its determination to remain in the Western coalition, however, remains its paramount foreign policy goal and would preclude an illicit nuclear programme.

At the same time regional powers have sought to meet growing energy demand by launching nuclear programmes that could act as cover for a dash to "break out" a weapon.

"This has led many to interpret the recent launch of new or renewed nuclear programmes in Egypt, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia as a security hedge against Iran's nuclear progress, " it said.

The authors also add that the general principle that proliferation triggers proliferation even in countries with already advanced civilian nuclear industries. A break out has not taken place in north east Asia, where both South Korea and Japan have remained non-nuclear weapon states despite North Korea's detonation of a nuclear device.

However the authors are much more pessimistic about Iran's interest in atomic weapons. Although there is no evidence Tehran has taken a political decision to produce a bomb, it already possesses the most important element that goes into making a weapon. Its claims that its weapons stockpile is to supply a medical facility in Tehran are no longer credible.



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"Iran's growing stockpile of 19.75 per cent enriched uranium, which could be used in a 'break out' scenario to rapidly produce weapons-grade uranium, is already far in excess of what is needed to fuel the Tehran Research Reactor," the authors claim.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9757376/Irans-Middle-East-neighbours-would-not-join-a-nuclear-arms-race.html>

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Washington Times
OPINION/Commentary

BERMAN: Why North Korea's Missile Launch Matters

Hostile regime can reach U.S.

By Ilan Berman

Thursday, December 20, 2012

North Korea's successful use last week of a long-range rocket to launch a satellite into orbit has catapulted the Asian rogue state back into the international spotlight. It also has brought back the global danger posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea into sharp focus.

There are at least two reasons why the North Korean test matters to the West.

First, the launch speaks volumes about the maturity of the North's missile arsenal. Ostensibly, the Dec. 12 launch was intended to put a commercial payload into orbit. But it also was a very public demonstration of North Korea's missile prowess because the rocket that carried the satellite into space can be repurposed for ballistic-missile duties.

In fact, Pyongyang has long blustered about doing precisely that and focused on developing a missile capability robust enough to hold the continental United States at risk. Until now, it has fallen short of that mark. Several previous tests of intercontinental-range ballistic-missile technology failed miserably. Because they did, North Korea still could be said to be a regional — rather than a global — threat.

No longer. The recent test demonstrates that the North "has developed the ballistic missile launch technology to fly a missile possibly [2,460 to 3,730 miles]," according to Victor Cha of the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. At the low end of that range, Alaska is within North Korean missile range. At the high end, large swaths of the West Coast of the continental United States are. Of course, considerable work still needs to be done on miniaturization and weaponization before Pyongyang will be able to field a credible long-range nuclear capability. Still, North Korea's missile test is an undeniable leap forward.

Second, North Korea's missile gains aren't likely to remain strictly North Korean for long. The Kim regime has long been a serial proliferator of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile-related technology to aspiring weapon states, particularly in the Middle East. Over the years, it has made significant contributions to a variety of nefarious causes, from Saddam Hussein's Scud missile arsenal to the Syrian regime's fledgling nuclear program (which was obliterated by Israel back in 2007).

North Korea's most significant proliferation client is Iran. Pyongyang and Tehran boast an extensive — and lucrative — dialogue on a range of WMD matters. Iran long has modeled its nuclear program after Pyongyang's and has sought to follow what can be termed the "North Korean model" of rapid, covert nuclearization. North Korean-Iranian ties extend to ballistic-missile collaboration as well. The mainstay of Iran's ballistic-missile arsenal, the medium-range Shahab-3, was reverse-engineered from North Korea's No Dong missile, and earlier this year the two countries signed a deal for further technological collaboration on both nuclear technology and ballistic missiles.

As an overt sign of this partnership, a delegation of Iranian engineers reportedly was present in Pyongyang to observe North Korea's failed missile launch last spring. A group similarly was in attendance at last week's successful launch.

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Given this history, it is reasonable to conclude that North Korea's recent missile advances could well translate into tangible gains in Iran's ballistic-missile capabilities in the near future.

That should matter a great deal to Pentagon planners. The Obama administration's four-phase missile-defense plan, colloquially known as the "phased adaptive approach," is predicated on the notion that an Iranian intercontinental-range missile capability won't emerge until 2015 at the earliest — and likely much later than that. However, if the North Korean regime shares its new missile know-how with its friends in Tehran, such a capability could materialize sooner, potentially ahead of any defenses the United States and its allies are erecting to protect against it.

If that ends up being the case, Tehran certainly will have Pyongyang to thank. Washington, which long has treated Iran's ballistic-missile program as slow-moving and incremental, will have itself to blame.

Ilan Berman is vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/dec/20/why-north-koreas-missile-launch-matters/>

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The National Interest
OPINION/Commentary

Iran's Conservatives Push for a Deal

By Ray Takeyh

December 21, 2012

As Washington contemplates another round of diplomacy with Iran, an intense debate is gripping the Islamic Republic's corridors of power. An influential and growing segment of Iran's body politic is calling for a negotiated settlement of the nuclear issue. Such calls have transcended the circle of reformers and liberals and are increasingly being voiced by conservative oligarchs. In the midst of this melodrama stands the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, whose instincts for resistance are being challenged by some of his loyal supporters.

The international community can play an important role in nudging this discussion in the right direction. Pursuing a deliberate arms-control process that initially focuses on stopping Iran's more dangerous enrichment activities will both ease tensions and press this debate in the right direction.

In a sense, the sanctions policy that the United States has pursued over the past decade is beginning to bear fruit. Sanctions and pressure were never going to provoke an Iranian capitulation, but they have seemingly succeeded in convincing influential sectors of the theocracy to reconsider their options. The notions of talks with the United States and compromise solutions are not new in Iran, but had previously been embraced by largely inconsequential actors such as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his two predecessors, Hashemi Rafsanjani and Muhammad Khatami.

In recent days, however, that chorus has been gingerly joined by some hardliners. In November, Mohsen Rezai, the former head of the Revolutionary Guard, stressed that given Iran's strength, it is now in a position to address the United States on a more equal footing. In a similar vein, General Muhammad Reza Naqdi, the head of the Basij militia, who had previously acclaimed the virtues of sanctions as empowering domestic production, now claims that "if the United States behaves properly we can negotiate with it."

All this is not to imply that the Islamic Republic and its complex maze of decision-making has arrived at a consensus on resolving the nuclear issue. The chief proponent of resisting such gestures remains Khamenei. In recent weeks, in a subtle and indirect manner, the Supreme Leader has rebuked those calling for concessions on the nuclear front. It was, after all, Khamenei's representative to the Revolutionary Guard, Ali Saeedi, who castigated proposals for direct talks with the United States as a trick to get Iran to relinquish its nuclear ambitions. A remarkable article in the Keyhan newspaper, long seen as Khamenei's mouthpiece, warned the "tired revolutionaries" that "by offering wrong analyses and relating all of the country's problems to external sanctions, they want to make the social atmosphere inflamed and insecure and agitate the public sentiment so that the exalted Leader is forced to give in to their demands in order to

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protect the country's interests and the revolution's gains." It is inconceivable that such an article would have been written without Khamenei's approbation.

Despite his stern and forbidding presence, Khamenei can be coaxed into compromise—one that concedes aspects of the program but not its entirety. At this juncture, the Islamic Republic's contentious and divided system can only countenance a limited deal, one that addresses the hard edges of its program. Khamenei is too invested in his enmities and too attached to his nuclear apparatus to accept its dismantlement. An accord that curtails Iran's production of 20 percent enriched uranium can still reduce tensions and potentially pave the way for further arms-control measures. A circumscribed agreement would not end Iran's nuclear challenge, but it may empower more reasonable actors and inject a measure of pragmatism into Iran's nuclear calculus. For the United States, such an accord has the advantage of delaying Iran's nuclear timelines and putting some indispensable time back on the clock.

The challenge for the international community is how to transact a limited deal while maintaining the leverage of the sanctions that seem to be disciplining the recalcitrant theocracy. It is the conceit of Iranian diplomacy to give a little and get a lot back. Despite the crisis atmosphere that unwisely surrounds this issue, it is important to recognize that time and its accompanying pressure continue to favor the United States more than Iran.

Ali Khamenei may not want a deal with America, but increasingly he cannot afford not to have one. Ironically, a more circumscribed agreement that allows him to sustain the essential character of his nuclear program and his slogans of resistance may be his path out of the dilemma of his own creation. Such an agreement may yet create conditions favorable to a more fundamental accord.

Ray Takeyh is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

<http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/will-khamenei-compromise-7894>

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