



**USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER**  
**CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL**  
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

**Issue No. 973, 20 January 2012**

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Al Arabiya – U.A.E.

## Iran Says Negotiations Under Way to Hold New Nuclear Talks

Wednesday, 18 January 2012

By Reuters

ANKARA - Negotiations are under way to hold new talks between Western powers and Iran over Tehran's nuclear program and the most likely venue is Istanbul, but there is no date set, Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said on Wednesday.

"Negotiations are going on about venue and date. We would like to have these negotiations," Salehi told reporters during a visit to Turkey, where he is expected to meet Turkish leaders.

Salehi also said Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu was in touch with the European Union's foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who heads the so-called P5+1 delegation, and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili to try to arrange a date and venue.

"My personal view is to hold this in Turkey in Istanbul. Negotiations are still going on. My colleague Davutoglu is in touch with Lady Ashton and Jalili so that the date and venue is fixed. Most probably, I am not sure yet, the venue will be Istanbul. The day is not yet settled, but it be soon."

Istanbul was the venue of the last talks a year ago which ended in stalemate because participants could not even agree on an agenda. Iran has since come under much tougher sanctions from the West which accuses it of seeking nuclear weapons capability.

Tehran says its nuclear program is peaceful and that it has a sovereign right to atomic technology.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/01/18/189078.html>

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San Francisco Chronicle

## China Rejects Iranian Development of Nuclear Weapons, Wen Says

By Robert Tuttle

Thursday, January 19, 2012

Jan. 19 (Bloomberg) -- China "completely rejects" Iran developing nuclear weapons and supports the so-called five-plus-one talks to find a solution to the issue, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said at a press conference in Doha, Qatar.

The nation is implementing United Nations resolutions on Iran, and opposes any "extreme" actions in the Strait of Hormuz that would damage world interests, Wen said yesterday. Still, China's oil trade with Iran is "normal" and doesn't worry him, Wen said.

China, which counts Iran as one of its top petroleum suppliers, last week snubbed U.S. efforts to tighten restrictions on Iran, with a vice foreign minister saying his nation "opposes imposing pressure and sanctions."

Iranian Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi said Dec. 27 that his nation would block oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz if sanctions are imposed, the Islamic Republic News Agency said. The Strait is a transit point for one-fifth of oil traded worldwide.

The five-plus-one talks refers to negotiations between the five permanent members of the UN -- the U.S., U.K., France, Russia and China -- and Germany with Iran.

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On Syria, Wen said yesterday that the killing of civilians must stop and Syria needs to listen to the wishes of its people and reform. China supports the empowerment of the Arab league to mediate and find a peaceful solution to situation, he said.

*With assistance from Joshua Fellman in New York. Editors: Joshua Fellman, Larry Liebert*

[http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2012/01/18/bloomberg\\_articlesLY0DQA6K50Y601-LY0H9.DTL](http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2012/01/18/bloomberg_articlesLY0DQA6K50Y601-LY0H9.DTL)

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BusinessWeek

## Iran Asks EU to Determine Time and Place for Nuclear Talks

January 19, 2012

By Emre Peker and Ladane Nasser

Jan. 19 (Bloomberg) -- Turkey will give a letter from Iran to European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton asking to revive talks on the Persian Gulf country's nuclear program, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said.

The letter, from Iran's top nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, will be submitted by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu and asks Ashton to determine a place and a time for negotiations, said Salehi, speaking in Ankara at a press conference with his Turkish counterpart. Salehi said he favored Istanbul as a location.

"Today is the time for talks and a solution," Davutoglu said. "It's important to start negotiations and decrease tension."

EU foreign ministers are scheduled to decide on a ban on Iranian oil at a Jan. 23 meeting in Brussels. The proposed embargo, which requires unanimity among the bloc's 27 states, is part of U.S. and European efforts to tighten economic sanctions aimed at deterring Iran's nuclear program. They say Iran may be seeking to develop atomic weapons, a charge that the Islamic republic rejects.

Tensions have risen in recent weeks with Vice President Reza Rahimi warning on Dec. 27 that Iran, the second-biggest producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries after Saudi Arabia, may close the Strait of Hormuz if western nations block its crude oil sales. Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammad Khazaei, said on the Charlie Rose Show yesterday that his country doesn't plan to do so "unless Iran is threatened seriously and somebody wants to tighten the noose."

### 'Red Line'

Iranian lawmaker Ali Motahari said yesterday that the U.S. called for direct talks with Iran in a letter sent last week, which also included a warning that the closing of the Strait of Hormuz would constitute a "red line." The U.S. has been communicating with Iran's top leaders and has a "number of ways" at its disposal, White House spokesman Jay Carney said Jan. 13, without giving details.

The U.S. should stop "double-dealing" with Iran and pursue with goodwill what he said was a proposal of direct talks by President Barack Obama, Salehi told Turkey's NTV news channel in an interview earlier today.

The U.S. "shows muscle" and risks destabilizing the Middle East while secretly seeking to engage Iran in negotiations, Salehi said. The security of the Strait of Hormuz is crucial to Iran, he said, urging other countries in the region to resist being dragged into a conflict.

Iran held negotiations with world powers in January last year but talks broke down without any commitments to hold future negotiations. Ashton said at the time that she was "disappointed" that Iran brought fresh preconditions and demanded that UN sanctions be lifted before substantive talks about its nuclear work could begin.

*Editors: Leon Mangasarian, Alan Crawford.*

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<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-01-19/iran-asks-eu-to-determine-time-and-place-for-nuclear-talks.html>

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The Star – Malaysia

Thursday, January 19, 2012

## IAEA to Press Iran over Nuclear Concerns

VIENNA (Reuters) - The U.N. nuclear watchdog chief said it was his duty to warn the world about suspected Iranian activities that point to plans to develop atomic bomb, maintaining pressure on Tehran ahead of rare talks between Iran and his agency expected this month.

Yukiya Amano, director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, made clear in an interview with Financial Times Deutschland that the U.N. body would press for full cooperation in meetings with Iranian officials in Tehran.

"What we know suggests the development of nuclear weapons," he was quoted as saying in comments published in German on Thursday, adding Iran had so far failed to clarify allegations of possible military links to its nuclear programme.

"We want to check over everything that could have a military dimension."

An IAEA delegation, to be headed by Deputy Director General Herman Nackaerts, is expected to seek explanations for intelligence information that indicates Iran has engaged in research and development relevant for nuclear weapons.

Tension between Iran and the West over Iran's nuclear programme has increased since November, when the IAEA published a report that said Tehran appeared to have worked on designing a nuclear weapon. Iran says its nuclear programme is aimed at generating electricity.

"I have absolutely no reason to soften my report. It is my responsibility to alarm the world," Amano said. "The overall pattern led me to the decision to alarm the world. The more pieces (of information), the clearer the pattern become."

Iran's envoy to the IAEA, Ambassador Ali Asghar Soltanieh, told Reuters on Tuesday that Iranian officials were open to discussing "any issues" in the talks in Tehran, which he said were set for Jan 29-31.

Western diplomats, who have often accused Iran of using stalling tactics as it presses ahead with its nuclear programme, have expressed doubt that the planned IAEA trip will lead to any major progress in the long-running nuclear dispute.

While U.N. inspectors regularly monitor Iran's declared nuclear facilities, their movements are otherwise restricted, and the IAEA has complained for years of a lack of access to sites, equipment, documents and people relevant to its probe.

Amano rejected Iranian media suggestions that his agency may have been partly responsible for the assassination of an Iranian nuclear scientist last week.

Iran has in the past accused the IAEA of leaking the names of nuclear scientists, making them potential targets for the security services of Iran's foes in the West and Israel.

"That is wrong. We did not publish his name. I did not know him," Amano said about the Jan 11 killing of Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan in a car bomb attack in Tehran. Iran has blamed Israel.

"I don't believe in violence. I believe in dialogue and conversation. I only expect from Iran that it cooperates."



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Reporting by Dana Schaefer and Marc Jones in Frankfurt; Writing by Fredrik Dahl; Editing by Peter Graff

[http://www.thestaronline.com/news/story.asp?file=/2012/1/19/worldupdates/2012-01-19T094325Z\\_1\\_TRE80IOME\\_RTROPTT\\_0\\_UK-NUCLEAR-IRAN-IAEA&sec=Worldupdates](http://www.thestaronline.com/news/story.asp?file=/2012/1/19/worldupdates/2012-01-19T094325Z_1_TRE80IOME_RTROPTT_0_UK-NUCLEAR-IRAN-IAEA&sec=Worldupdates)

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CRIENGLISH.com – China

## Iran Promises to Study Russia's Proposals over Nuclear Issue

January 19, 2012

Xinhua

Iran will study Russia's proposals regarding future talks between Iran and the Iran Six, a diplomatic group consisting of the U.S., China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany, a high-level Iranian official said Thursday.

Ali Bageri, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, arrived in Moscow on Wednesday to discuss with Russian diplomats key bilateral and regional issues, including Iran's nuclear program.

"Our Russian friends submitted the proposals for future talks within the framework of the group of six and we agreed to study these proposals and discussed with the Russian side," Bageri was quoted by the RIA Novosti news agency as saying.

However, the official didn't reveal more details about his talks with Russian diplomats.

Earlier, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said there were good chances for the resumption of talks between Iran and the Iran Six.

Following an International Atomic Energy Agency report on Iran's nuclear program in November, the United States, Britain and Canada announced new sanctions against Tehran and still are working to impose an embargo on Iran's crude exports.

In last August, Russia raised proposals to Iran on its nuclear program, which called for a "phased" approach to resolve the issue.

<http://english.cri.cn/6966/2012/01/19/2743s677144.htm>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

## Worries Grow over Syria Chemical Weapons Arsenal

*Collapse of Assad regime could put toxins in the wrong hands; No one knows the size, quality of WMDs collected by Syria.*

By DAVID ROSENBERG, the Media Line

January 19, 2012

As the days of Syrian President Bashar Assad increasingly look numbered, concerns are mounting that the regime's vast stockpile of chemical weapons might fall into the hands of terrorists by accident or by plan.

No one knows the size and quality of the arsenal of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that the Assad regime has accumulated over the years. Its nuclear aspirations probably ended with a mysterious 2007 attack on a suspected nuclear facility, and experts are divided on whether Syria has biological weapons.

But they are nearly certain that Damascus operates a comprehensive chemical weapons program that encompasses production and delivery capabilities.

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Major-General Amir Eshel, the head of the Israeli military's planning division, was the latest official to express concern about what will happen to Syria's WMD. He told reporters in Jerusalem this week it was only a matter of time before some of the arsenal makes it was out of government-secured facilities.

"We are talking about huge stockpiles," he said. "That's a major concern because I don't know who is going to own those the day after. Up till now, what has been transferred to Hezbollah? What will be transferred to Hezbollah? What will be divided between those factions inside Syria?"

The *Wall Street Journal* reported in late August that a joint US-Israeli surveillance operation has been monitoring Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles. Washington reportedly has contingency plans if there are signs that the regime is preparing to use chemical weapons or pass them on to organizations such as Hezbollah.

Assad is not the first despot in distress to arouse concern about chemicals weapons. As Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi's regime was unraveling in the face of civil war last summer, the US and other powers worked to ensure that the country's WMD didn't fall into the wrong hands.

That program so far has gone well, with the global monitoring body, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), due to report on Friday on it's the cleanup in Libya to date. "We've had very good cooperation," Michael Luhan, OPCW's spokesman, told The Media Line about Libya's transitional government.

But Syria's chemical weapons horde is believed to be many times bigger and more sophisticated. How big and how sophisticated is anyone's guess because Damascus never agreed to any international oversight.

"Syria has never signed the Chemical Weapons Convention and has been indifferent over the years to our consistent overtures to open a discussion on the issue," Luhan said. "We're monitoring events in Syria closely ... and hope whatever situation subsequently develops from the turmoil will create more favorable circumstances for joining the convention."

The Monterey Institute's James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS) believes that Syria has probably acquired the ability to develop and produce chemical weapons agents including mustard gas and sarin, and possibly the VX nerve agent.

Syria also possesses the means of aiming those lethal substances to targets.

While it may have dropped a program to arm short-range missiles with chemical warheads following a 2007 accident, Syria has long-range Scud-B and Scud-C ballistic missiles capable of being fitted with chemical warheads. It may also stockpile artillery shells and rockets filled with chemicals.

"There's a huge difference between the two arsenals," Leonard Spector, director of CNS's Washington DC office, told The Media Line.

"The Libyan arsenal had been under inspection so its scale was well known. We did find some additional weapons but by and large it was understood," he said. "The Syrian capability not only includes World War I-type chemical agents like mustard gas that are semi-liquid, but they have the advanced nerve agents developed more recently."

John Hart, head of the chemical and biological security, said that of the suspected Syrian chemicals stockpile VX and sarin are potentially the most lethal, but creating large-scale threat would require obtaining large amounts of the toxins.

"The only weapons on the chemical side that might cause large numbers of deaths are organo-phosphorus nerve agents," he said. "Hundreds of tons of chemical weapons agents are generally required for operations against military forces in the field."

Syria's biological capabilities, if they exist at all, are shrouded in more mystery. American experts have said Syria can produce anthrax and botulism toxins, but a Swedish Defense Agency report in 2004 found no evidence of a program, according to the CNS.



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If Syria was on its way to developing nuclear weapons – a charge it has vehemently denied – an aerial attack on its facility at Dair Alzour, which was suspected of housing an unfinished atomic reactor, likely put an end to them. Israel is believed to have been behind the September 2007 raid, but it has never claimed responsibility.

Some analysts fear Assad might opt to transfer some of the arsenal to his allies Hezbollah, the Lebanese Shiite movement that fields a huge militia and has fought Israel, most recently in 2006. Others see a risk that the Assad regime might use chemical weapons against its own people.

Even after battling opposition forces for 10 months Assad has so far not lost effective control of any part of the country. But chaos could enable rebels, foreign militant groups or arms dealers to raid the chemical weapons depots.

Michelle Dover, a researcher writing in *World Politics Review* last month, noted that the cities of Homs, Hamah and Latakia are both major centers of unrest and suspected of hosting important chemical-weapon production facilities. Aleppo, which has also witnessed major protests, is believed to be a center for missile production and storage. A suspected chemical weapons production site in Al-Safirah is nearby, she said.

“We believe they have munitions that are filled and ready to be used, like artillery shells and possibly aerial bombs,” said Spector of CNS. “There is a danger of some of these being taken during a conflict. Rebels will not be able to use missiles or bombs, but they could use artillery shells. And they could find a way to transport a bomb by truck.”

<http://www.ipost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=254369>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

## **Sarkozy: Time Running Out for Iran Diplomacy**

*French president calls for further sanctions of Iranian oil, freeze of Tehran's central bank assets.*

By REUTERS

January 20, 2012

PARIS - French President Nicolas Sarkozy said on Friday that Iran's leaders must be forced to negotiate over the country's uranium enrichment program because time was running out to avoid a military intervention.

"Everything should be done to avoid a military intervention... but time is running out," Sarkozy told foreign ambassadors gathered in Paris.

"France will do everything to avoid military intervention but we need stronger, more decisive sanctions that stop the purchase of Iranian oil and freezes the assets of the central bank, and those who don't want that will be responsible for the risks of a military conflict."

Sarkozy urged Russia and China to back the sanctions, which are expected to be approved by European Union foreign ministers on Monday. Israel and the United States have not ruled out military action if Iran refuses to desist from its nuclear program.

Earlier this week, French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe said that the European Union foreign ministers are expected at a meeting on Monday to agree to an oil embargo against Iran and a freeze on the assets of its central bank.

*Jpost.com staff contributed to this article*

<http://www.ipost.com/International/Article.aspx?ID=254471&R=R1>

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Bloomberg News

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## U.S., Europe Trying to Provoke Armed Conflict, Iran Envoy Says

By Henry Meyer  
January 20, 2012

The U.S. and its European allies are blocking further negotiations on the Iranian nuclear dispute in order to provoke an armed conflict, Iran's ambassador to Russia told reporters.

"They are using various excuses, including a failure of the six-party talks with Iran, to start a new war," Mahmoud-Reza Sajjadi said at a press conference in Moscow today, referring to negotiations with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council -- the U.S., China, France, Russia and the U.K. -- as well as Germany.

The U.S. Navy's deployment in the Persian Gulf is a provocation, he added. "If Iran sees aggression from other countries, it will resist, defend itself with all its might," he said.

Iran is willing to hold talks about its nuclear program in Istanbul or elsewhere and has submitted suggestions on a timetable to the international community, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said yesterday after meeting Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul in Ankara the day before.

European Union foreign ministers meet Jan. 23 to discuss an oil embargo on Iran that may be delayed by six months to give some members time to find alternate supplies.

Iranian officials have threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz, the transit route for almost 20 percent of the world's oil, in the event of a blockade of oil shipments or military strikes. Iran denies its nuclear program is aimed at developing atomic weapons, saying it is for civilian purposes.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-01-20/u-s-europe-trying-to-provoke-armed-conflict-iran-envoy-says.html>

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London Telegraph – U.K.

## Great Salt Desert Bunker could be Trigger for an Attack on Iran

*A bunker buried in a mountainside in the Great Salt Desert could become the crucial trigger for any decision to launch military strikes on Iran.*

By David Blair  
20 January 2012

Five years ago, Iran began ambitious excavations at this site near the holy city of Qom. Unknown to the regime, western intelligence agencies were tracking the work, eventually concluding that Iran was building a covert plant where uranium could be enriched in secret.

The existence of this facility, known as the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant, was disclosed by President Barack Obama in September 2009. Simultaneously, Iran came clean and informed the International Atomic Energy Agency, saying its purpose was entirely civilian.

Iran never explained why it had sought to keep the plant secret. Moreover, Fordow is designed to hold 3,000 centrifuges: too few to provide fuel for a civil nuclear power programme, but just enough to produce weapons-grade uranium for nuclear bombs.

Last year, Iran began transferring centrifuges from its established enrichment plant in Natanz into the new facility. This was a highly significant move. Fordow is buried tens of metres inside a mountainside, making it a far harder target for military attack.

Every centrifuge that disappears inside this bunker could be beyond the reach of air strikes. Last November, the IAEA reported that Fordow held 412 centrifuges, representing 14 per cent of its capacity.

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The build-up of centrifuges in Fordow is the timeline "most relevant to military action," said Mark Fitzpatrick, director of non-proliferation at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. But is the plant really invulnerable? The heaviest bunker-busting bomb in the US arsenal is the GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator, weighing 14 tons, and capable of breaking through at least 60 metres of reinforced concrete.

Even Fordow may not be immune to a device this size. Only the B2 and B52 bombers flown by the US Air Force can drop this bomb. The heaviest bunker-buster available to the Israeli Air Force, by contrast, is the GBU-28, which is a third of the size. So Israel may not be able to disable Fordow, but the US probably could.

The process of reinforcing and hardening the plant is not yet complete, say officials, adding that an air strike could still be effective. But the window will eventually close, creating another timeline vital to any decision over military action.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9028412/Great-Salt-Desert-bunker-could-be-trigger-for-an-attack-on-Iran.html>

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BBC News – U.K.  
17 January 2012

## How China Is Advancing Its Military Reach

As the US shifts its focus to Asia, Alexander Neill, head of the Asia Security Programme at the Royal United Services Institute, sets out the Chinese military advances challenging the regional balance.

At the Pentagon recently, US President Barack Obama announced deep cuts to the US military and set out a shift in attention towards the Asia-Pacific region, in a thinly-veiled message to China.

Despite a narrative of peaceful intent, China's leaders have struggled to reassure the US over the direction of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Both countries admit that their military dialogue falls well behind other aspects of the relationship.

So the shift has brought renewed scrutiny of the PLA's latest capabilities against US dominance in the Pacific.

In recent years the PLA has demonstrated impressive new capabilities at sea and in space, aimed at showcasing the success of its modernisation effort.

The obvious message is to deliver a powerful warning if Taiwan were to declare formal independence.

But Pentagon planners are now concerned that the Taiwan contingency has been eclipsed by China's broader maritime territorial claims and demands for more international space to protect the arteries feeding China's growth.

### 'Unrestricted warfare'

China is developing a range of capabilities linked to the space and cyber domain in order to sidestep the overwhelming might of the US military in the Pacific region. The PLA calls this fighting "local wars under informationised conditions".

China recognised almost two decades ago that in the mid-term the PLA could be no match for US conventional forces. So it began working on what was dubbed "unrestricted warfare" - combining multiple methods to defeat a superior opponent.

At the same time party leaders launched adventurous civilian acquisition projects in the high-tech domain to increase Chinese competitiveness and to boost indigenous production capabilities.

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The PLA has been running military projects mirroring these civilian acquisition ventures. Sometimes involving dual-use technologies, the military and civilian strands have often been indistinguishable.

China's space programme is a case in point. The recent successful docking manoeuvre between a Shenzhou module and the Tiangong Space station is as much a triumph for the PLA as it is for China's civilian space agency.

### **Space theatre**

Should the US ever intervene in a cross-strait clash or challenge China's maritime claims, Beijing would employ a pre-emptive "sea denial" strategy alongside its conventional operations - preventing US battle carrier groups operating in or near its claimed territorial waters.

Its submarine-launched ballistic and cruise missiles are now a lethal force. China's long-range nuclear weapons systems have also undergone significant upgrades and its strategic rocket force, the Second Artillery Corps, is very much the pride of the PLA.

One of the most pressing concerns for the US navy is the threat posed by a "carrier killer" anti-ship missile with enhanced targeting capabilities facilitated from space. China very recently launched its own Beidou Positioning System, challenging the monopoly of the US Global Positioning System (GPS).

One of the PLA's most sensitive advances has been the secret deployment and testing of advanced anti-satellite (ASAT) and Anti Ballistic Missile (ABM) weapons systems.

Two years ago, China successfully intercepted one of its own ballistic missiles as it streaked through space. This test coincided with the Pentagon's sale of Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Patriot systems to Taiwan.

Some experts believe a Chinese ASAT campaign against a carefully selected group of US satellites could have catastrophic effect on the US military.

This capability, combined with the potential for China to develop its own Ballistic Missile Defence umbrella, suggests that the space domain will be a new theatre for US-China rivalry.

Chinese ASAT capabilities are not exclusively reserved for "kill vehicles", like the one which obliterated an ageing Chinese weather satellite in 2007.

It is now believed that the successful 2007 "kill" was in fact the third test in a series. Previous tests had demonstrated an ability to manoeuvre in proximity to targeted satellites.

This would suggest that China has experimented with techniques which could be used for "space mining", where mines or mini-satellites armed with jamming technologies could be placed within the orbits of an opponent's spacecraft.

### **Carrier group**

In addition to its "sea denial" and space warfare strategies, China is also expanding its conventional capabilities.

The PLA Air Force in recent years has extended its ability for offshore operations, enhancing an offensive capability. It is planning an overhaul of its ageing fleet with the deployment of over 3,000 new aircraft.

For the most part China has relied on copying Russian fighter technology. However, the roll-out of the Chengdu J-20 Stealth fighter prototype raised eyebrows last year, carefully timed to coincide with a visit by the US defence secretary.

There have been some very significant developments in the deployment of Chinese submarines in recent years. Beijing possesses 10 Russian-built ultra-quiet Kilo class submarines possibly armed with 200km-range anti-ship cruise missiles.

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Since 2006, when a Chinese submarine surfaced undetected within torpedo range of the US aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk, China's submarine force has regularly marauded the US Navy and its allies in the Pacific.

It is thought that China plans to build three aircraft carrier battle groups, each armed with 40 fighters, up to eight warships, three nuclear-powered attack submarines and a number of support vessels. The PLA Navy's retrofitted Varyag carrier, currently under sea-trials, will serve as a training platform.

Even if the aircraft carrier would likely be a prestige piece and more directed at Chinese domestic pride, the prospect of a Chinese aircraft carrier will certainly cause ripples for the broader East Asian naval balance.

#### **Uncertain factors**

While much attention has been paid to the breakneck speed of Chinese military modernisation over the last decade, the events of 9/11 and the subsequent campaigns in the Middle East and Afghanistan provided a window of opportunity for China to accelerate development.

In some cases there may have been, quite literally, windfalls for the PLA. There is speculation that China acquired undamaged Tomahawk cruise missile components in the early stages of the Afghanistan campaign a decade ago.

When US special forces failed to completely destroy one of their stealth helicopters during Operation Geronimo, Pakistan's military may have allowed PLA counterparts to inspect the tail rotor.

The PLA must be congratulating itself on the impressive array of weaponry which has tilted the balance in the Taiwan Strait in its favour.

China's new-found capabilities combined with the opaque nature of its military modernisation create a formula for mistrust with the US.

There are perhaps three factors for uncertainty. Firstly, the Chinese military's confidence in its new equipment could lead to an overestimation of its capability as an emerging great power.

Secondly, the Chinese leadership could underestimate its ability to control an unexpected escalation of hostilities in the Pacific.

Finally, the domestic political factor - the PLA's external behaviour could become a reaction to internal nationalistic sentiment, instability or faction fighting as Beijing prepares for the fifth generation leadership handover this year.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-16588557>

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People's Daily – China

## **DPRK Accuses U.S. of Posing Nuclear Threat to World**

(Xinhua)

January 18, 2012

PYONGYANG, Jan. 17 (Xinhua) -- The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the official news agency of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), issued a commentary on Tuesday to accuse the U.S. of posing nuclear threats to the world.

According to the commentary, the United States has continued secret nuclear weapons testing that has brought to light the hypocritical and deceptive nature of America's commitment to prohibiting the development of nuclear weapons and tests.

The U.S. has conducted nuclear tests more often and has greatly increased the fund for nuclear-related activities. It keeps deploying nuclear weapons in different regions of the world and escalating the danger of a nuclear war on



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the Korean Peninsula. The reality goes to prove that the U.S. nuclear policy for aggression can never change, said the commentary.

"It is the invariable strategy of the U.S. to dominate the world by monopolizing nuclear weapons and holding hegemony in the field of strategic offensive weapons", said the commentary, stressing "it still remains the arch criminal which has posed nuclear war threats to the world and sparked an arms race."

The U.S. talk about "denuclearization" is aimed at preventing all other countries and regions from having access to nuclear weapons, said the commentary.

At the end, the commentary urged the U.S. to "stop making a mockery of the international community and give up its nuclear ambition."

According to the KCNA, the Kyodo News reported on Jan. 6 that the U.S. conducted a plutonium test based on new technology in order to examine the power of stockpiled nuclear weapons last summer.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/7708331.html>

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Boston Globe

Thursday, January 19, 2012

## **Battle for Control of Asia's Seas Goes Underwater**

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

YOKOSUKA, Japan (AP) — It's getting a bit more crowded under the sea in Asia, where Andrew Peterson commands one of the world's mightiest weapons: a \$2 billion nuclear submarine with unrivaled stealth and missiles that can devastate targets hundreds of miles (kilometers) away.

Super high-tech submarines like Cmdr. Peterson's USS Oklahoma City have long been the envy of navies all over the globe — and a key component of U.S. military strategy.

"We really have no peer," Peterson told The Associated Press during a recent port call in Japan.

But America's submarine dominance in the Pacific is facing its biggest challenge since the Cold War. Nearly every Asian country with a coastline is fortifying its submarine fleet amid territorial disputes stirred up by an increasingly assertive China and the promise of bountiful natural resources.

Submarines are difficult to find and hard to destroy. Even fairly crude submarine forces can attack surface ships or other targets with a great deal of stealth, making them perfect for countries with limited resources. The threat of such an attack is a powerful deterrent in Asia, where coastal defenses are vital.

"This is shaping up as an intense arms race," said Lyle Goldstein, an associate professor at the China Maritime Studies Institute of the U.S. Naval War College. "This arms race is not simply China versus the rest — though that explains much of it — because there are other rivalries here as well."

China is pouring money into enlarging and modernizing its fleet, and India is planning to get a nuclear-powered attack submarine — the INS Chakra — on a 10-year lease from Russia as early as this month.

Australia is debating its most-expensive defense project ever — a submarine upgrade that could cost more than 36 billion dollars.

Japan is adding another eight to its 16-boat fleet. South Korea is selling them to Indonesia. Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Taiwan and even Bangladesh either now have or are planning to acquire subs.

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North Korea, which has a large fleet of mini subs, allegedly put them to deadly use in 2010 — killing 46 South Korean sailors in the worst clash since their war ended in 1953.

The trend has a momentum of its own — once one country gets submarines, its neighbors are under pressure to follow suit, lest they give up a strategic advantage. But the rush to build up submarine forces also underscores a growing awareness of the region's potential riches.

Roughly half of the goods transported between continents by ship go through the South China Sea, accounting for \$1.2 trillion in U.S. trade annually. The area has vast, largely untapped natural resources — including oil reserves of seven billion barrels and an estimated 900 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

"The geostrategic significance of the South China Sea is difficult to overstate," said a report this month by the Center for a New American Security, a private think tank based in Washington DC. "To the extent that the world economy has a geographical center, it is in the South China Sea."

With the decline of Russia, the U.S. remains the top nation with a significant capability to operate submarines in the open seas — a crucial advantage if Washington wants to maintain its role in keeping key sea lanes and chokepoints like the Malacca Strait, which connects the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific, free for commercial trade.

The U.S. Navy's blue water superiority is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Peterson, the Oklahoma City skipper, said the Navy's workhorse Los Angeles-class subs remain a cut above the rest. "The beauty is that they are still the state of the art."

But, closer to shore, China is challenging the status quo.

"China has put a major emphasis on submarines, with the result that the PLA Navy submarine force is now, along with the Chinese missile forces, one of the sharpest arrows in China's quiver of military capabilities," Goldstein said.

China now has more than 60 subs in its navy, including nine that are nuclear-powered, according to the Pentagon's annual overview last year.

Its mainstay boats are diesel-powered Song-class vessels, but it also is developing more advanced nuclear-powered attack and ballistic submarines, including the Jin class that would carry missiles with a range of 4,600 miles (7,400 kilometers). Nuclear-powered subs can operate longer submerged than their diesel counterparts.

China has a long way to go to match the U.S. Navy — the advanced Jin subs, for example, would have to be well into the Japan Sea for the continental United States to be within their range — and Goldstein said that Beijing's threat has been overblown.

To keep its edge, however, the United States now has more submarines in the Pacific than in the Atlantic. With the military missions in Iraq and Afghanistan wrapping up, the Obama administration has also announced a "pivot to the Pacific" strategy that will likely further boost U.S. naval resources in the region.

Even so, China is just one player in an increasingly complicated game.

"Everybody's buying subs, but not for the same reasons," said Owen Cote, associate director of MIT's Security Studies Program.

The Pacific is dotted by scores of disputed islands, and who controls what part of the seas is a potentially explosive question. Japan has rival claims with China, South Korea and Russia. A half dozen countries claim rights to the remote Spratly Islands.

"Vietnam and the other states abutting the South China Sea want to have the option to contest a Chinese decision to resolve the various boundary issues that divide them by force," Cote said. "The Chinese have an interest in

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using submarines in preventing U.S. surface ships from intervening on behalf of one of these neighbors in such a conflict."

As regional navies get stronger, so does the potential for armed clashes.

"It poses the prospect of changing the balance of power across the Asia-Pacific — in fact it already has," said Hugh White, Australian National University's professor of strategic and defense studies. "This is a very maritime part of the world. Anyone with a submarine has a clear capability of disrupting commercial shipping."

White said the development of submarine forces by multiple Asian nations is already inhibiting the ability of China and the United States to project their naval power, and posing new issues for smaller navies caught in the middle.

"There are questions about whether the U.S. will continue to assume its security role," he said. "This is a big debate in Australia right now. Do we aim to be able to act independently of the U.S.? To what extent do we want to be able to operate against a major player like China, or more locally against Indonesia?"

[http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2012/01/19/battle\\_for\\_control\\_of\\_asias\\_seas\\_goes\\_underwater/?page=full](http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2012/01/19/battle_for_control_of_asias_seas_goes_underwater/?page=full)

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Washington Examiner

## **North Korea Credits New Leader with Nuke Testing**

By The Associated Press

January 20, 2012

North Korea on Friday credited new leader Kim Jong Un with spearheading past nuclear testing, as it adds to a growing personality cult that portrays the young son of late leader Kim Jong Il as a confident military commander.

Kim Jong Un's youth — he's believed to be in his late 20s — and quick rise have spurred questions in foreign capitals about his readiness for leadership. But North Korea has dismissed such worries in recent days, saying Kim Jong Un worked closely with his father on military and economic matters.

The North's official Uriminzokkiri website said Friday that Kim "frightened" the country's enemies by commanding nuclear testing in the past. North Korea tested nuclear devices in 2006 and 2009, but the website didn't specify which tests Kim oversaw.

Uriminzokkiri described Kim Jong Un as "fully equipped" with the qualities of an extraordinary general, even during his years at Kim Il Sung Military University. The website also repeated the North's claim that he was involved in satellite launching but didn't elaborate.

North Korea's linking of Kim Jong Un to past nuclear testing comes as it pushes for the resumption of long-stalled six-nation aid-for-nuclear disarmament talks that also include China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States. Washington and its allies want the North to first show it is serious about previous disarmament commitments.

North Korea last week questioned Washington's generosity and sincerity, but suggested it remains open to suspending its uranium enrichment program if it can get the food aid it wants.

Kim Jong Un took over after his father and longtime ruler Kim Jong Il died in mid-December and has quickly been given many of the country's most important titles.

He was introduced as heir only in September 2010. Before that he had been kept out of the public eye for most of his life. He was quickly promoted to four-star general and named a vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party of Korea.

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Some of North Korea's neighbors and Washington have expressed worry about whether he can lead a nation of 24 million with a nuclear program as well as chronic trouble feeding all its people.

Kim Jong Il had 20 years of training under his own father, Kim Il Sung, before taking over. Even after his father's 1994 death, Kim Jong Il observed a three-year mourning period before formally assuming leadership.

A senior official told The Associated Press recently that Kim Jong Un spent years working closely with his late father and helped him make key policy decisions on economic and military affairs.

North Korea has also made it clear that Kim Jong Un will continue Kim Jong Il's "songun," or military-first, policy, and a steady stream of reports and images from state media has sought to show him as a fearless military commander who is comfortable with leadership.

North Korea also reported Friday that Kim Jong Un inspected two more military units.

Earlier this month, North Korea's state-run broadcaster aired a documentary that showed Kim Jong Un observing an April 2009 launch of a long-range rocket. It was the first indication of his involvement in the launch.

The documentary quoted Kim as threatening to wage war against any nation attempting to intercept the rocket, which North Korea claimed was carrying a communications satellite but the United States, South Korea and Japan said was really a test of its long-range missile technology.

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/news/2012/01/north-korea-credits-new-leader-nuke-testing/2116756?page=0%2C0%2C0%2C1>

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Rupee News – India

## **Jittery about Pakistan's Tactical Nukes, India Admits To and Refines 'Cold Start'**

18 January 2012

Pakistan now has more nuclear weapons than Bharat—perhaps even more than France. This creates colossal problems for Bharat's Cold Start, "Pro-Active" and Pivot and Strike" strategic plans. While it used to take Bharat months to mobilize its forces, the Bharati Generals now seem to think that they can spring into action in a week or so, striking deep into Pakistani territory without actually holding Pakistan land—in other words, acting under the nuclear threshold, but at the same time inflicting losses on the Pakistan Army.

Pakistan's Nuclear program has been Uranium based. The Chinese Nuclear program is Plutonium based. Pakistan's Uranium based program was based on enriching Uranium using Gas Centrifuges—cheaper technology which none of the other Atomic powers had used before. After perfecting the larger Uranium based devices, now Pakistan has begun to miniaturize its weapons using Plutonium based bombs.

Delhi is a bit jittery about Pakistan's nuclear program that focuses on "low-yield, tactical nuclear weapons." These Plutonium based weapons would be used to decimate Bharat's "Cold Start" strategy that banks on rapid movement and deployment of Bharati forces.

Pakistan's fourth reactor at the Khushab military facility is problematic for Bharat. This stops Delhi from invading Pakistan. Pakistan has the capability to add at least eight to 10 such weapons each year. Apparently the Pakistan are following the Chinese model of owning low-yield nuclear weapons. These tactical nukes are the "Cold Start" buster mechanism which will provide the Pakistani military a flexible response in case of an escalation with India and allow it to dominate.

Once Khushab is up to speed, Pakistan will be able to produce 35 Plutonium based tactical nuclear weapons per year. Pakistan is known to have a nuclear arsenal, however the quantity of the weapons has baffled Delhi.

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Bharat is jittery about Pakistan's continuing veiled threats of using tactical nuclear missiles in the battlefield to deter Indian forces, holding that no one should be foolish enough to think of nuclear weapons as war-waging weapons.

Army chief General V K Singh, speaking on the sidelines of the 64th Army Day on Sunday seemed frustrated and handicapped "Let's be quite clear on it... Nuclear weapons are not for war-fighting. They have got a strategic significance and that is where it should end."

Amazingly Gen Singh said that "I and my Army are not bothered about who has nuclear weapons. We have our task cut out and we will progress along that."

He continued to focus on what analysts call "Charge of the Light Brigade" tactic that deals with quick strikes on Pakistan He described the "task" as the "transform" the 1.13-million strong force into "an agile, lethal and networked force", which can rapidly mobilize and then launch and sustain multiple armoured thrusts across the border, even as India maintains a credible minimum nuclear deterrent.

Bharat has faced serious challenges. The colossal failure of Operation Parakram displayed serious holes in the Bharati plans. The forward troop mobilization along the western front should the Bharati Army that it could not mobilize quickly. Since then it has been trying to fix this failure. The harsh lessons can be categorized under poor Supply Chain. It took the Bharati Army almost a month to amass strike formations at the borders. By then, Pakistan had fully mobilized and displayed its Nuclear teeth. The US and the world also had prevailed on the then NDA regime to back down.

Gen Singh said that "A lot has changed since the days of Op Parakram. If we did something in 15 days then, we can do it in seven days now. After two years, we may be able to do it in three days." Most think that this is wishful thinking.

The Bharati Army has three "strike" corps:

- 1 Corps (Mathura),
- 2 Corps (Ambala) and
- 21 Corps (Bhopal)

Each of these has three to four self-contained, highly-mobile "battle groups" centered around T-90S and T-72 M1 tanks. Bharat hopes that these can now be ready at their border launch points within a week of the government directive.

According to press reports the Bharati Army is now working towards further cutting down this mobilization timeframe to 72 to 96 hours, even as its 10 "pivot corps" undergo "structural changes", operational logistics are reorganized and "theaterisation of combat support" tested. Even at its best, the 72 hour window gives Pakistan ample time to mobilize its missile defense and plaster the assembled army to the ground, before it has a chance to enter Pakistani territory.

Bharat has traditionally denied that it has a "Cold Start Strategy". In a stratling development Gen Singh now admits the Indian Army was fine-tuning its "Pro-Active Strategy", (aka "Cold Start" doctrine, to achieve desired politico-military results. According to the doctrine developed by Stephen Cohen, "the unstated aim is to punish Pakistan in a limited manner, not invade or occupy its territory".

- The strategy to launch multiple blitzkrieg thrusts across the border, tested in two major exercises Vijayee Bhava and Sudarshan Shakti last year, has certainly got Pakistan worried.
- Having already boosted its nuclear arsenal to around 90-110 warheads, compared to India's 80-100, Pakistan has also taken to projecting its 60-km Nasr (Hatf-IX) nuclear missile as a fitting riposte to thwart any such Indian move.





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- But while India has a declared commitment of “no first-use”, its nuclear doctrine does hold that “nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage”. India even retains the option to retaliate with nuclear weapons if its forces “anywhere” are attacked with biological or chemical weapons.

Pakistan has not announced a “No First Use” doctrine, and if Bharat attempts to cross the border, Pakistan reserves the right to retaliate and save itself. Bharat is aware of this, and therefore “Cold Start” is a non-starter.

According to The Times of India, “the current focus on low-yield (tactical) weapons has India worried”. Bharati defense officials know that these weapons will be used by Pakistan “in case of an incursion made by Indian forces into Pakistani territory”. Delhi under domestic constraints has threatened Pakistan several times—the tactical nukes keep them at bay.

With the OBL incursion, Pakistan has been forced to consider other options. One of the options is to disperse the older weapons deeper into Pakistan and diversify their locations. Another strategy is to miniaturize the weapons, so that they can be holed up in caves, and underground structures, away from prying satellite images. With CIA spies running rampant in Pakistan—the miniaturized weapons will deter a large scale attack either by Bharat or any other country.

Senator’s personal guarantee written in his blood notwithstanding, Islamabad is not taking any chances. If it weren’t for Pakistani nukes and Islamabad’s ability to deliver them, Pakistan would have ended up like Iraq. This is not the only time that Abdali, Babur, and Hataf have saved the land of Pakistan from being carpet bombing. China is upgrading Pakistan’s radar system with something that is akin to the Soviet S-400 fully automated tracking, zoning and targeting enemy aircraft. The incursion into Abbottabad has opened the eyes of the PAF—which is now also relying on human intel and plain old-fashioned monitoring in addition to electronic surveillance during peace time.

<http://rupeenews.com/2012/01/jittery-about-pakistans-tactical-nukes-india-admits-to-and-refines-cold-start/>

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Firstpost

## **US: We’re Willing to Work with India on Missile Shield Systems**

By Uttara Choudhury

January 19, 2012

New York: In a telling sign of a bolder strategic engagement between Washington and New Delhi, the US on Wednesday said it was willing to examine the sale or joint production of missile shield systems to help New Delhi guard against nuclear threats.

The US offer was made by Robert Scher, deputy assistant secretary of defense for South and Southeast Asia while underlining the importance of India-US defense ties for security in Asia. In its new strategic review released earlier this month, Pentagon officials emphasised the need for a long-term strategic partnership with India, and identified China as a threat while declaring surging Asia as a priority to the US.

“We are really open to it. This is something we ask them if they are interested in,” Scher told the *Press Trust of India*.

The senior Pentagon official disclosed that Washington and New Delhi had been involved in “crucial discussions” on the ballistic missile defense shield and looked forward to restarting the dialogue.

The US started preliminary talks with India nearly three years ago over the sale of missile shield systems. Most of the talks have been at the technical level. US defence officials had conducted computer simulations with their Indian counterparts to demonstrate the capabilities of such technology. Indian missile experts from the Defence

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Research Development Organisation (DRDO) have watched at least two live launches of missiles used in the US shield system.

According to analysts, the US was hoping to sell India the Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-3 missile defense system but India is more interested in building its own systems than buying some from the US.

The 'hit-to-kill' American PAC-3 missile is the world's most advanced and powerful air defense missile. It can destroy enemy-fired tactical ballistic missiles carrying weapons of mass destruction, advanced cruise missiles and aircraft. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, a mix of PAC-3 missile interceptors and PAC-2 air defense missiles destroyed a series of short-range ballistic missiles fired by Iraq.

Pakistan and China will obviously follow any US-Indian anti-missile cooperation with great interest, since a close US-Indian cooperation in missile defenses not only is an indication of their shared strategic interests, but also has implications for India which is developing its own indigenous missile defence systems to defend against both Pakistani and Chinese missiles.

India started its own Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme in 1995 and has successfully conducted two exo-atmospheric interceptor tests at altitudes of 48 km and 80 km, and two endo-atmospheric tests at altitudes of 15 km and 18 km. India is now focusing on intercepting 2,000 km range ballistic missile at a higher altitude of 150 km. So far all the interceptor tests have been conducted from known test sites.

"In actual war, such ideal situations will not be unavailable. There is thus a need to do further tests in the above suggested configurations for successful interceptions of missiles with 2,000 km ranges," wrote Pravin Sawhney of *FORCE* magazine.

So far all Prithvi missiles depicting hostile missiles have been fired from the integrated test range at Chandipur, in Orissa and the interceptors from Wheeler's Island, an island off the coast of Orissa.

<http://www.firstpost.com/world/us-says-its-willing-to-work-with-india-on-missile-shield-systems-187203.html>

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IBNLive.com – India

January 19, 2012

## **Preparations Apace for Agni-V Launch**

By Hemant Kumar Rout, The New Indian Express

BALASORE: Amidst growing tension between India and China over technological demonstrations, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is all set to start ground preparations for the maiden launch of the country's longest-range nuke-capable ballistic missile Agni V.

Reliable sources told this paper that a team of scientists and technologists will arrive on January 25 at Wheelers Island test facilities of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) from where the indigenously built missile will be tested. Around 150 technologists, including at least 80 scientists, will be engaged for range integration.

"We have received confirmation letter for range configuration. The work will start soon. As for the first time a missile with a strike range of more than 5,000 km is being tested from the range, the range will be configured to provide optimum data for validation," said an official.

Earlier, missiles with a range of 3,000 to 3,500 km have been tested from this island and the tracking systems have tracked the missiles successfully. This time more tracking radars and telemetry systems will be placed to track the long range missile.



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Besides the existing radars at Chandipur, Dhamra, Puri and Mahakalpada, one radar will be placed at Andamans and another X-band radar in a ship which will track the missile till its point of impact. If required, another radar will be positioned at Visakhapatnam, said the source.

Chief Controller for Life Sciences and International Cooperation at DRDO W Selvamurthy said the maiden test of Agni V is on schedule. "We are planning to test the missile in full operational configuration by the end of February. If it doesn't happen, it will definitely be in the first week of March," he said informing that all the three stages of the missile have been successfully tested at Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district.

The 17.2 metre missile having launch weight of nearly 50 tonnes and diameter of two metres will be launched from a road mobile system. All its three stages would be fired by solid propellants. It is expected that with a one-tonne nuclear warhead, the missile would give teeth to the country's much-touted nuclear deterrence programme.

Scientists headed by Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister (SA to DM) VK Saraswat and Chief Controller (Missiles and Strategic Systems) Avinash Chander are leaving no stone unturned for the launch.

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/preparations-apace-for-agniv-launch/222276-60-117.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

## **Tons of Mustard Gas Remain Undestroyed in Libya**

18 January 2012

Some 11 metric tons of lethal mustard gas, also known as sulfur mustard or yperite, remain in existence in Libya, Belgian media reported on Wednesday citing Defense Minister Pieter de Crem.

Under ousted leader Muammar Gaddafi, Libya joined the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in 2004. The country declared it had 1.4 metric tons of raw materials to produce chemical weapons and 25 metric tons of mustard gas.

As of March 2011, Libya had destroyed 55 percent of its chemical weapons stockpile.

However, the country still had to eliminate 11.25 tons of mustard gas, which can form large blisters or chemical burns on exposed skin and eyes and cause bleeding and blistering within the respiratory system.

The disposal process was disrupted when an uprising to oust Gaddafi evolved into an armed conflict and resulted in the death of Libya's longtime ruler, with the help of NATO and other international forces.

According to earlier media reports, mustard gas was produced at a chemical plant in Rabta about 100 kilometers (60 miles) south of Tripoli and stockpiles were located in Rabta and Al-Jufra, south of Sirte.

BRUSSELS, January 18 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.ria.ru/world/20120118/170824247.html>

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Egypt Independent (Al-Masry Al-Youm) – Egypt

## **Egypt Probes Reports of Stolen Radioactive Material**

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Friday, January 20, 2012

Experts are investigating reports that a safe containing radioactive material was stolen from a site where Egypt plans to build its first nuclear power plant, government newspapers said on Friday.

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The UN atomic energy agency issued a statement Thursday saying "the items that have gone missing are low-level radioactive sources."

"The sources were stolen not from an operating NPP (nuclear power plant), but from a laboratory at a construction site for an NPP that is not yet operational," the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

The Vienna-based agency said it is "in touch with the Egyptian authorities."

Al-Ahram newspaper reported Thursday that a safe containing radioactive material was stolen from a site in Dabaa, on the Mediterranean coast.

Another safe was broken and some of its contents were taken, Al-Ahram said.

Villagers claiming the government has confiscated some of their land to build the plant in Dabaa clashed with security officials last week, causing some damage to the site, according to press reports.

Al-Akhbar newspaper said on Friday that the experts who toured the site on Thursday found "no evidence of any theft of radioactive material" or any radioactive leakage.

But Al-Ahram gave a conflicting report.

It said the team of experts entered the site but "did not find the missing safe. It did, however, find two sources of radioactivity in another safe that had been broken into," adding that the radioactivity was not harmful.

The experts also toured the site to assess damage caused during last week's clashes, the newspapers reported.

In May, the official MENA news agency reported that Egypt completed technical studies and would invite tenders for building a nuclear power plant at Dabaa, but the plan has been delayed by unrest in the country.

The project is designed to meet the energy needs of the most populous Arab nation, with more than 82 million inhabitants.

<http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/610411>

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Denver Post

## **Russia Urges Quick Missile Defense Deal with US**

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV, Associated Press

Wednesday, January 18, 2012

MOSCOW (AP) — A deal with Washington to assuage Moscow's concerns about U.S. missile defense plans in Europe is still possible, but time is running out, Russia's foreign minister said Wednesday.

Sergey Lavrov reaffirmed that Moscow will take retaliatory action if moves by Washington to deploy missile shield components around Europe pose a threat to Russia.

The U.S. says its planned missile shield is aimed at deflecting potential missile threats from Iran, but Russia fears that the missile shield will eventually grow powerful enough to undermine Russia's nuclear deterrent.

"Like any responsible state, we proceed not from declarations, but from concrete action when it comes to security issues," Lavrov said. "Our response will strictly correspond to the potential of the European component of the U.S. missile defense as it develops."

Moscow agreed in 2010 to consider NATO's proposal to cooperate on the U.S.-led missile shield, but the talks have run into a deadlock over how the system should be operated. Russia has insisted that it should be run jointly, which NATO has rejected.



In a televised address to the nation in November, President Dmitry Medvedev threatened to deploy missiles to the Kaliningrad region, bordering Poland and Lithuania, and to other areas of Russia to be aimed at U.S. missile defense sites, if the U.S. and NATO fail to reach a deal allaying Russian worries. He urged the U.S. to provide firm and specific guarantees that its future missile defense potential will not be directed against Russia.

Lavrov said Wednesday that Russia doesn't want confrontation with the U.S. and doesn't think that Washington is making a specific effort to erode Russia's nuclear deterrent.

But he added that the growing power of the U.S. missile shield could eventually make it capable of engaging Russia's nuclear forces. "I hope that it's not their goal, but its development undermines the strategic parity," he said.

"We still have time to solve the acute problems, but it's not unlimited," Lavrov said, adding that Russia hopes that differences over missile defense wouldn't throw Moscow and Washington back to a Cold War-style pattern of confrontation. "We must be heard and there must be a response to our legitimate concerns."

Washington's missile defense plans have been a key irritant in U.S.-Russian relations since President Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" plans that spooked the Kremlin in the 1980s.

The current toughening of Moscow's rhetoric has posed a challenge to President Barack Obama's policy of "resetting" relations with the Kremlin, which suffered badly under George W. Bush's administration.

[http://www.denverpost.com/recommended/ci\\_19764943](http://www.denverpost.com/recommended/ci_19764943)

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

## **Russia to Train Contract Soldiers for Yars Missile Systems**

18 January 2012

More than 4,000 contracted soldiers will take training courses in 2012 to be able to operate the new Yars (RS-24) ballistic missile systems, a spokesman for Russia's Strategic Missile Forces (SMF) said on Wednesday.

The RS-24 is a new-generation intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of carrying multiple warheads.

"Over 4,000 contracted soldiers, serving in the SMF, will take basic and advanced training and re-training courses in 2012," Col. Vadim Koval said.

Koval said the three-month training programs would focus on the operation of Yars systems as the new missiles are gradually replacing the outdated ICBMs in the Russian nuclear arsenal.

The official also said the number of contracted soldiers in the SMF is expected to increase by over 20 percent by the end of this year.

The Yars missile system is armed with the RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missile that has considerably better combat and operational capabilities than the Topol-M (SS-27 Stalin).

Russia fully deployed the first Yars regiment consisting of three battalions on combat duty with the Teikovo missile division in central Russia in August 2011.

Two more missile divisions will start receiving the Yars systems in 2012. The Novosibirsk division [in Siberia] will receive mobile RS-24 systems, while the Kozelsk division (in central Russia) will be armed with the silo-based version of the system.

The SMF said last year that the Topol-M and RS-24 ballistic missiles would be the mainstay of the ground-based component of Russia's nuclear triad and would account for no less than 80% of the SMF's arsenal by 2016.



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MOSCOW, January 18 (RIA Novosti)

[http://en.ria.ru/military\\_news/20120118/170821335.html](http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20120118/170821335.html)

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RT (Russia Today) – Russia

## **Russian Spy Agency: Global Crisis Demands New Tactics**

19 January 2012

Russian military intelligence is adjusting its work methods in response to the worsening international situation, Igor Sergun, the head of GRU – the country’s largest espionage agency – has told President Dmitry Medvedev.

*“Changes in the world situation have required adjustments to be made to intelligence mechanisms and their implementation,”* Sergun said on Thursday, as he presented his report to the head of state.

Currently, the main focus of Russian military intelligence is on *“the so-called hot spots where terrorist and extremist groups are acting, regions with crisis situations, and also the sources and possible routes of illegal proliferation of nuclear materials and the components of weapons of mass destruction,”* he said.

Sergun underlined that the Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) is *“practically the only special service in the world”* which integrates all existing types and directions of intelligence into its structure.

GRU successfully fulfills its tasks thanks to the professionalism of secret service agents *“combined with the usage of the most up-to-date achievements of information, telecommunication and space technologies and innovations,”* explained Sergun.

Major General Sergun added that the agency has the technical capabilities to act in almost all possible fields. *“This helps to obtain important information concerning the situation in military conflict areas and regions that interest military intelligence,”* he added, as cited by Itar-Tass.

The key task of GRU – Russia’s main military intelligence body – is to *“uncover in a timely way any imminent attack or development of a situation that could pose a threat to the country’s security,”* and warn Russia’s military leadership of such cases.

President Medvedev spoke of the need to increase the service’s operational potential, monitor the international military and political situation, forecast potential threats and suggest ways to neutralize them. He specifically pointed at the need to keep a close watch on new trends in the development of military industry.

The head of state urged Russian intelligence agents to cooperate with foreign partners in countering terrorism given its nature as a global problem.

*“One of the major tasks of all Russian special services – and, naturally, of the military intelligence – is fighting international terrorism,”* Medvedev stressed. *“We must reveal terrorists’ weapon and finance supply chains and, pursuing a preemptive tactic, foil their plans.”*

He noted that as a result of changes in the world, the Russian military intelligence service was being restructured. Overall, the GRU’s work is efficient and professional, Medvedev summed up.

During his first visit to the GRU office, the President was accompanied by Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and Chief of the General Staff Nikolay Makarov.

Makarov's deputy, Major-General Igor Sergun, was appointed the agency’s chief in December 2011.

Speaking on Thursday, Medvedev expressed the hope that under Sergun’s leadership the agency would continue working as well as it has done so far.

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<http://rt.com/politics/intelligence-military-gru-sergun-169/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

## **Russia's Bulava Carrying Sub to Enter Service by June**

20 January 2012

Russia's newest nuclear-powered submarine, the Yury Dolgoruky, will be put into operation in the second quarter of the year, the United Shipbuilding Corporation said on Friday.

The Borey-class Project 955 sub will be armed with the Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles but a USC representative said it was yet to be decided when the troubled missile will enter service.

The sub's construction began in 1996 at the Sevmash shipyard and was completed in 2008. It has a crew of 130 and will be armed with 16 Bulava SLBMs and six SS-N-15 cruise missiles.

President Dmitry Medvedev said in late December that the flight tests of the Bulava SLBM were completed and it will now be adopted for service with the Russian Navy.

Russia successfully test launched two Bulava missiles on December 23.

They were the 18th and 19th test launches of the troubled Bulava. Only 11 launches have been officially declared successful.

But some analysts suggest that in reality the number of failures is considerably larger. Russian military expert Pavel Felgenhauer said that of the Bulava's first 12 test launches, only one was entirely successful.

Despite several previous failures, officially blamed on manufacturing faults, the Russian military has insisted that there is no alternative to the Bulava.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30) SLBM, developed by the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology (since 1998), carries up to 10 MIRV warheads and has a range of over 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles). The three-stage ballistic missile is designed for deployment on Borey-class nuclear submarines.

MOSCOW, January 20 (RIA Novosti)

[http://en.ria.ru/military\\_news/20120120/170865320.html](http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20120120/170865320.html)

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The Nation – Pakistan

## **US, NATO Have Some 1,000 Interceptor Missiles: Rogozin**

By Agencies

January 20, 2012

The U.S. and its NATO allies already have about a thousand of missiles capable of intercepting Russia's intercontinental ballistic missiles, the Russian deputy premier in charge of defense said.

"Along with allies, whom the U.S. now persuades to buy ships equipped with the Aegis Combat System, the overall potential can be estimated at about 1,000 interceptor missiles," Dmitry Rogozin, who is also the Russian president's special representative for talks with NATO, said in an interview with the Ekho Moskvy radio station.

He said that the figure is currently approaching the limits established by the recently signed Russia-U.S. strategic arms reduction treaty.

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"There are no guarantees that after first, second, third phases [of the U.S. missile shield project] are completed, there will be no fourth, fifth and sixth. Do you really think they will halt all their technologies after 2020? That's nonsense! They will go ahead with developing and boosting technical parameters of their interceptor missiles and performance capabilities of their warning [missile defense] systems," Rogozin said.

He said that U.S. interceptor missiles cover all European Russia to the Urals Mountains, and are capable of hitting not only small and medium-range missiles of "rogue states," but also intercontinental ballistic missiles of Russia's armed forces.

"The fact that the missile defense system can hit strategic missiles and the fact that those bases and fleet are deployed in northern seas demonstrate the evident... anti-Russian nature of the [U.S.] missile defense," Rogozin said.

Russia-NATO missile defense talks are close to deadlock as Moscow is seeking written, legally binding guarantees that the U.S.-backed European missile defense program will not be directed against it. Washington, however, refuses to provide the guarantees, saying the shield is directed against threats from Iran and North Korea.

Russia and NATO agreed to cooperate on European missile defense system at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010. President Dmitry Medvedev proposed a joint system with full-scale interoperability to ensure that the alliance's system will not be directed against Moscow. The military bloc, however, favors two independent systems which exchange information.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/international/20-Jan-2012/us-nato-have-some-1-000-interceptor-missiles-rogozin>

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RT (Russia Today) – Russia

## **US Missile Defense a Threat to the Security of Neutral States**

20 January 2012

The planned American missile defense shield is "a copper basin" that will cover NATO states and pose a threat to neutral European countries, believes Russian Vice Premier Dmitry Rogozin.

*"The Americans call the deployment of the missile defense system in Europe 'an umbrella'. It's not an umbrella, it's a copper basin that will cover both NATO member countries and neutral states,"* Rogozin said in an interview with Echo Moskvyy radio station. The Russian idiom "to get covered by a copper basin" is similar to the English expression, "to go out of the window". In this context, what is going out of the window is national security.

Rogozin, Moscow's outgoing NATO envoy, also underlined that a defense shield should be limited to the territory for which the initiator of this shield is responsible.

*"But if it crawls into someone else's territory, it's no longer a defense, but an offense,"* noted the Russian deputy PM who is in charge of the country's defense complex. *"What kind of defense system is it that spreads to the territory of states that do not want to be controlled by anyone and don't want the range of any missiles to lie within their soil?"* Rogozin asked.

The planned deployment of the American-NATO defense system in Europe has long been a bone of contention in relations between Moscow and Washington. The Russian side is worried that the system, located close to Russia's borders, may pose a threat to its national security as long as the US fails to provide any legally binding guarantees to the contrary.

Dmitry Rogozin is confident that the system will be directed against Russia's strategic nuclear forces. He noted that the aim of the deployment of the NATO fleet in Norwegian fjords is not to provide security from North Korea or Iran. *"There is only the Russian Federation in this region,"* Rogozin pointed out.





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*"The very presence of such missile defense system's parameters that are capable of shooting down exactly strategic missiles, and the very placement of these [military] bases, fleet and anti-missile weapons systems in northern seas point at one thing: a clear and practically uncontrollable anti-Russian nature of the missile defense,"* he said.

The former NATO envoy believes that measures that Russia will have to take in response to the deployment of elements of the American missile defense shield in Europe may lead to a new arms race.

Meanwhile, US-Russian negotiations on the matter *"are maintaining a low profile at the moment."* In fact, there are no talks, Rogozin said. The vice premier thinks it unlikely that there would be any breakthrough or development before the NATO summit in Chicago that is due to take place in May.

Earlier, Washington invited Russia to send its military experts to missile defense system tests in the spring of 2012. Rogozin said that Moscow was not satisfied with the proposal. Sending Russian military officials to *"a planetarium"* in the Pacific Ocean to watch missiles and antimissiles being launched through binoculars *"is not interesting."*

*"We need telemetry, telemetric equipment, which should be installed on the interceptor itself,"* Rogozin explained.

On Thursday, Russia's former finance minister, Aleksey Kudrin, stated that Russia should not try to catch up with America militarily by increasing its defense spending.

*"I think there is a military solution: to maintain nuclear parity and defensive capability. We cannot have the same army as the US,"* he said, speaking at the Gaidar Forum in Moscow, as cited by Interfax.

Dmitry Rogozin criticized the stance on his Twitter microblog. *"Does Kudrin know the meaning of the word 'parity'?"* he wondered.

The former finance guru also expressed doubts that Russia's military-industrial complex would be able to fulfill the state defense procurement order since *"there are many inefficient enterprises"* in the sector.

In response, Rogozin tweeted that there is one thing that is comforting: *"forecasts made by people like Kudrin and [former acting PM Yegor] Gaidar have never come true."*

*"It's plain as a pikestaff,"* Rogozin added, as cited by Interfax news agency.

<http://rt.com/politics/rogozin-missile-defense-threat-257/>

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Military.com

## **New Strategy Could Presage Smaller US Nuclear Arsenal**

January 19, 2012

By Michael Hoffman, Military.com

President Barack Obama's new defense strategy, which raises the prospect of shrinking the U.S. strategic arsenal, has left American commanders and NATO allies wondering what that could mean for the future of the nuclear forces.

Defense officials will examine high-priced modernization programs and forward deployments of nuclear forces in European countries as the White House and Congress try to flatten defense spending.

The strategy wasn't the first time Obama's administration has broached the idea of fielding fewer nuclear weapons: Obama announced his intentions in Prague in 2009.

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"Make no mistake: As long as these weapons exist, the United States will maintain a safe, secure and effective arsenal to deter any adversary, and guarantee that defense to our allies -- including the Czech Republic. But we will begin the work of reducing our arsenal," he said.

Those words marry closely to the phrases in the new defense strategy released earlier this month.

"It is possible that our deterrence goals can be achieved with a smaller nuclear force, which would reduce the number of nuclear weapons in our inventory as well as their role in U.S. national security strategy," it said.

The key question for the coming defense build-down is how the Pentagon will square that goal with its existing plans to spend hundreds of billions of dollars on strategic hardware. Gen. Robert Kehler, the head of U.S. Strategic Command, said the upcoming fiscal austerity puts future nuclear modernization programs in jeopardy.

The Navy wants to spend \$110 billion on a new nuclear submarine fleet to replace its Ohio-class submarines. Air Force officials plan to build a nuclear-capable bomber at a price tag of \$55 billion. The U.S. also plans to start life extension programs for its nuclear warhead arsenal such as the B-61 and W-67. A top Navy admiral also has mused that the Navy and Air Force could even collaborate on a new, joint ballistic missile.

Defense analysts said they don't see these programs getting cut. Instead, the Defense Department may choose to pare down or shelve certain modernization programs in order to meet budget goals.

Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, points to the Navy's future nuclear submarines as an example. Even though the submarine force has an "untouchable aura," Kristensen said he could see the Defense Department trimming the number of new submarines from 12 to 10 or as few as eight.

If the number of submarines is cut, the Navy may have no choice but to increase the number of missiles carried aboard each ship.

"If they go to a low number of submarines then Congress will insist that they have 20 instead of 16," Kristensen said.

The Air Force also remains committed to building its next-generation bomber. But the past five years have seen a major shakeup in the nuclear bomber fleet since the mishap in 2007 when a B-52 mistakenly flew six nuclear warheads from North Dakota to Louisiana.

Problems in the Air Force even caused some to question if it still made sense to keep the bomber fleet in the nuclear triad.

Air Force officials have since stood up Global Strike Command to place its nuclear mission under one command and a separate B-52 squadron solely dedicated to the nuclear mission. Service leaders insist they have their gotten their nuclear house in order.

Delivering a new bomber, though, might have more to do with whether the service has straightened out its acquisition process following the problems it faced landing a new tanker.

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Norton Schwartz has already had to make decisions to limit the bomber because of cost concerns. Engineers will design the bomber to carry both nuclear and conventional weapons, but the service will delay the aircraft's nuclear certification to cut costs.

Air Force officials plan to trim the bomber's price tag by delaying the expensive nuclear certification tests and introduce the aircraft as a conventional strike platform.

"We simply won't do the tests and certification which is quite elaborate and includes electromagnetic pulse and so on until a little bit later in the sequence and we think that's the prudential thing to do to bring in this platform on cost and on time," Schwartz told the House Armed Services Committee on Nov. 2.

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Schwartz said he remained committed to upgrading the nuclear missiles the next-generation bomber will hold in its weapons bays. He told Congress a life extension program for the B-61 nuclear bomb is essential.

"The reality is, is that that weapon is the item that's paired with our bombers. And it needs to be updated," Schwartz told the House Armed Services Committee.

How many different types of aircraft deliver the B-61, or any other nuclear warhead, could come up for debate, Kristensen said. The F-15, F-16, B-2, B-52 and Tornado can all deliver a nuclear missile.

Each aircraft must maintain those expensive certification tests highlighted by Schwartz. Kristensen said he expects budget experts to look at the redundancies found in having five aircraft deliver nuclear weapons to find savings.

"Why do we need five different aircraft to drop nuclear weapons?" he asked.

Eventually the number of aircraft could shrink to two once the F-35 Lightning II and the next-generation bomber make up most of the Air Force fleet. That fleet remains years away, though, as the F-35 experiences delays and the bomber starts its design phase.

The location of the fighters stationed with nuclear missiles will also come into question as the Defense Department examines its nuclear force. The U.S. has many fighters forward deployed to Europe with nuclear missiles.

Pulling those nuclear missiles out of Europe could save the U.S. money, but it would also cause serious political ramifications within NATO. U.S. diplomats also see tactical nuclear weapons deployed to Europe as bargaining chips that encourage the Russians to pull back their own tactical nuclear missiles.

"There are officials in some countries who can't envision a NATO without forward-deployed nuclear forces," Kristensen said.

Some defense analysts argue the U.S. can depend solely on long-range deterrence with its intercontinental ballistic missile fleet. However, even that force could face cuts.

Congress could order the Air Force to reduce the tally of ICBMs disbursed amongst its three wings from 450 to 400 or fewer.

Critics argue that potential cuts to long range deterrence don't fall in line with the pivot to the Pacific found in the president's new defense strategy. A renewed focus on the Pacific, with nuclear-armed countries such as China and North Korea, demand investments in nuclear capabilities, said Rep. Michael Turner, an Ohio Republican who chairs the House Armed Services strategic forces subcommittee.

"Deeper nuclear cuts will actually undermine the president's stated shift of focus to the Pacific," Turner said.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/new-strategy-could-presage-smaller-us-nuclear-arsenal.html>

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People's Daily – China  
OPINION/Commentary

## **US Should Take Rational View on China's Military Development**

By Yang Yi (People's Daily Overseas Edition)  
January 18, 2012

*Edited and translated by People's Daily Online*

The U.S. Department of Defense issued a strategic guide to defense on Jan. 5, which stressed that the strategic investment in the Asian-Pacific region should be strengthened, and the United States claims that this action is taken in response to the challenges brought by the development of Chinese military strength.

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It says, in the long run, China becoming the regional great power will have the potential to influence American economy and security through every means. China will continue developing asymmetric manners to counterbalance American delivery capacity, and China has to clarify its strategic purposes in improving the military strength.

Chinese Ministry of National Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs have presently refuted America's accusations, hoping it could conform to the trend of time, view China and the Chinese military forces objectively and rationally. China also urged it to do more things that are conducive to the regional peace and stability.

American government's accusations of the Chinese government and Chinese military forces in this document are groundless. China's course of over the 30 years since the Reform and Opening-up is a process of peaceful development, and China's development not only benefits all Chinese people, but also brings great opportunities for the regional and global peace and development.

Constructing a harmonious socialism society with prosperity and promoting the construction of an externally harmonious periphery and world reflect the Chinese government's highly unification between domestic and foreign affairs on levels of strategy, philosophy and thinking.

In the early stage since the Reform and Opening-up, China's investments in national defense and army construction stayed at a low level, which broadened its distance with the military modernization of each country throughout the world.

China has increased its investment in national defense and army construction since last decade. This is a compensation for the past, and an adjustment corresponding with the elevation of China's international position and the expansion of national interest.

The strategic purposes of Chinese national defense and army construction are consistent and clear. China consistently and permanently insists on the national defense policy that is defensive in nature, and the modernization of Chinese military strength will not pose any threat for any country or region.

As a regional power, China does not solve disputes of land and maritime rights with bordering countries through military means, instead, it solves the boundary problem with most countries through peaceful negotiations.

In international affairs, China is the country that sends most peacekeeping troops among the five permanent member states of the UN Security Council, and Chinese naval vessels' contributions in combating pirates at the Gulf of Aden and Somalia waters are obvious to all.

America has various motives and restraining factors in adjusting military strategies, although it can list all kinds of reasons, connecting the strengthening of military presence in the Asia-Pacific region with the modernization of Chinese military is hardly convincing and acceptable.

China is exploring a road of peaceful development for the newly emerging great power, and we are confident to avoid the lessons in the rising of historically traditional great powers, such as the military expansion and military conflicts with hegemonic powers.

We hope America could treat China and Chinese military troops in a rational way, and jointly create a new road of peaceful coexistence of countries with China.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7708972.html>

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China Daily – China  
OPINION/Meet the Diplomats

## **China Urges Talks in Iran Nuclear Issue**

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**January 18, 2012**

*Li Song, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Arms Control and Disarmament of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, answered questions about Iran's nuclear issue during an interview with People's Daily online on Jan 18, 2012.*

**Q: What is China's role in addressing Iran's nuclear issue? What is the six-country mechanism?**

**A:** China has always promoted peace and dialogue and sought a long-term resolution to settle Iran's nuclear issue. We oppose the use of force as it may bring disastrous consequences to the Middle East and threaten energy security and the world economy. The six-country mechanism was initiated to tackle Iran's nuclear issue in 2006. The six countries, including the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany, have played an important role in dealing with Iran's nuclear issue by promoting dialogue and negotiations. Four talks and dozens of conferences have been held by the mechanism in the past five years.

**Q: What's your comment on the accusation China is assisting Iran to develop nuclear weapons?**

**A:** As a signatory of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), China is committed to not assisting, supporting and encouraging non-nuclear-weapon states to develop nuclear weapons. We have never helped and will never help Iran develop nuclear weapons. China has strict non-proliferation export regulations to direct all Chinese companies and entities to monitor their trade activities. However, no third party should interfere with the normal trade and energy cooperation between China and Iran.

**Q: To prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons is the wish of the whole world. How do we achieve that?**

**A:** NPT has set obligations for nuclear-weapons states and non-nuclear-weapons states. To achieve its goal of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, there are five aspects. The first is establishing a fair and rational new international order. The second is establishing a new security concept featuring mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. The third is consolidating and strengthening the international mechanism of nuclear non-proliferation. The fourth is realizing the mission of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons through dialogues and negotiations. The fifth is balancing the prevention of proliferation of nuclear weapons with nuclear energy uses.

[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012diplomats/2012-01/18/content\\_14471433.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012diplomats/2012-01/18/content_14471433.htm)

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Japan Times  
OPINION/Commentary  
January 19, 2012

## **Understanding Tehran's Behavior**

By Ray Takeyh

WASHINGTON — The perennial conflict between Iran and the West has entered a dangerous new phase, with tensions rising in the Persian Gulf since Iran has threatened retaliation for last week's assassination of a chemical engineer linked to the Islamic Republic's nuclear program. What accounts for Iran's behavior? Behind all the sound and fury, Tehran is diligently pursuing a three-track policy that involves provocation of the international community and making noises about diplomacy as it relentlessly marches toward the bomb.

In recent months, the Islamic Republic has engaged in conduct that has confounded even its most seasoned observers. Shortly after a critical International Atomic Energy Agency report published in November was followed by threats of sanctions by the European Union, Basij militias masquerading as students stormed the British embassy in Tehran. Washington's recent attempt to restrict Iran's oil trade by sanctioning its Central Bank

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prompted Tehran's threat to destabilize the global economy by closing the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which a sixth of the world's oil passes.

Such bellicose actions are a departure for a regime that has long exercised a modicum of restraint in its belligerence. Indeed, such behavior makes sense only if we appreciate that Iran sees itself as locked in conflict with the West and is determined to respond to recent escalations in U.S. policy with escalations of its own. Mas'ud Jazayeri, the deputy chief of staff of Iran's armed forces, said in December that new guidelines for the armed forces from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei include that, "from now on, we will make threats against threats." Iran hopes that its unsettling conduct will prompt Russia, China and members of the non-aligned community who fear war to defy U.S. efforts to tighten sanctions.

The second track of Iran's strategy involves signaling its willingness to resume negotiations with the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany. It is important that Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons has always involved negotiations. A diplomatic path that is sporadic yet protracted can provide an umbrella under which Tehran advances its nuclear program. It is no coincidence that Iran has timed its latest diplomatic gesture with the intensification of its nuclear activities. By threatening the disruption of global oil supplies yet dangling the prospect of entering talks, Iran can press actors such as Russia and China to be more accommodating in an effort to avoid a crisis that they fear. Any concessions that Iran may make at the negotiating table are bound to be symbolic and reversible.

Beneath all its bluster and threats, Iran is limiting itself to incremental gains in its nuclear program. Khamenei has always sought to expand Iran's nuclear capabilities systematically but cautiously. Tehran calibrates to acclimate the international community to its sequential gains.

Consider that today, Iran is steadily enriching uranium, a position widely considered unacceptable in 2005. Iran is ratcheting up its enrichment activities and is moving its most sensitive technologies to a facility near Qom better able to withstand military attack. Such conduct was once viewed as a provocation. The Islamic Republic is working on a new generation of centrifuges that operate with speed and efficiency. Given that a limited number of such machines are required for enriching large quantities of uranium, Iran can begin housing its nuclear facilities in small installations that will prove difficult to detect. By gradually yet relentlessly expanding its capabilities, Iran has succeeded in breaching Western red lines while avoiding the type of crisis that could outright endanger its nuclear program, if not its regime.

In any confrontation with the West, Iran remains the weaker party. But an inordinately tense situation can provoke accidental conflicts and mishaps. Weaker parties can act impetuously and irresponsibly. All this does not suggest that the international community should ease pressure on Iran or condone its aggressive behavior. But it does suggest eschewing conduct that further inflames the situation.

It is impossible to determine who killed the Iranian scientist Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan, but such actions are self-defeating in the sense that they do little to slow Iran's nuclear program and plays into the regime's hands as it seeks to fracture the international community.

The best means of holding the coalition together is to stress that it is Iran's behavior that remains outside the parameters of legality so long as Tehran continues to enrich uranium in defiance of U.N. resolutions and threatens to imperil peaceful maritime traffic. Any action that distracts attention from Iran's illegal behavior only retards the efforts to disarm the Islamic Republic.

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<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/eo20120119a3.html>

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Christian Science Monitor  
OPINION/Commentary

## How Obama Can Slash Defense Budget: Cut Unnecessary Nuclear Weapons Programs

*In order to reach its goal of at least \$480 billion in Pentagon savings over the next decade, the Obama administration must scale back previous schemes for a new generation of strategic nuclear weapons delivery systems.*

By Daryl G. Kimball and Tom Z. Collina  
January 19, 2012

Washington -- Earlier this month, President Obama and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta outlined a more streamlined and affordable defense strategy that envisions a more limited role and smaller budget for US nuclear weapons.

While they were short on specifics, it is clear that in order to reach the administration's goal of at least \$480 billion in Pentagon savings over the next decade, previous schemes for a new generation of strategic nuclear weapons delivery systems must be scaled back.

The Navy has been seeking 12 new nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines to carry more than 1,000 nuclear warheads into the 2070s, at a total cost of almost \$350 billion. The Air Force has sought a new, nuclear-armed strategic bomber that would cost at least \$68 billion, as well as a new fleet of land-based ballistic missiles.

In July, then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. James Cartwright explained that "... we have to recapitalize all three legs [of the nuclear triad], and we don't have the money to do it."

But as the new defense strategy correctly asserts, "It is possible that our deterrence goals can be achieved with a smaller nuclear force..."

Such adjustments are long overdue. Today, more than 20 years after the end of the Cold War, US and Russian nuclear arsenals still exceed what is reasonably necessary to deter nuclear attack. The United States deploys 1,790 strategic warheads, while Russia deploys 1,560 strategic warheads. Each side possesses thousands more warheads in storage.

No other nuclear-armed country deploys more than 300 strategic warheads; China has no more than 40 to 50 warheads on intercontinental-range missiles. Just one US nuclear-armed submarine could devastate an entire nation and kill millions.

Rather than maintaining obsolete arsenals that they neither need nor can afford, leaders in Washington and Moscow could pursue further, reciprocal reductions in their overall strategic nuclear forces -- to 1,000 warheads or fewer each -- and still retain more than enough megatonnage to deter nuclear attack by any current or future adversary.

There are three key ways in which the president and the Congress can trim at least \$45 billion from strategic nuclear force modernization programs over the next 10 years.

The first step is to downsize the nuclear-armed submarine force. By reducing the Trident nuclear-armed sub fleet from 14 to eight or fewer boats and building no more than eight new nuclear-armed subs, the US could save roughly \$27 billion over 10 years, and \$120 billion over the 50-year lifespan of the program.

And by increasing the warhead loadings on each submarine, the Navy could still deploy the same number of strategic nuclear warheads at sea as currently planned under the New START treaty (about 1,000).

Second, work on a new strategic bomber should be delayed. There is no rush to field a fleet of new bombers given the Pentagon's plan to retain 60 of its existing nuclear-capable, long-range B-2 and B-52 bombers into the 2040s.

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Delaying work on the new bomber program would save \$18 billion over the next decade, according to the Pentagon.

For additional savings, the Pentagon could consider reductions to its land-based strategic missile force from 420 to 300 by cutting one squadron at each of the three Air Force bases where such missiles are deployed and foregoing a follow-on missile program to replace the existing force.

Some may believe that further reductions in US nuclear forces might encourage other states to improve their nuclear weapons capabilities. In reality, wasting billions of taxpayer dollars on an excessive nuclear force does nothing to help convince nations, such as Iran or North Korea, or terrorist actors to abandon their pursuit of dangerous weapons.

Moreover, by maintaining a larger nuclear force than America needs, it is more likely to induce Russia to build up its nuclear arsenal, which only undermines international security.

We can expect the congressional “doomsday caucus” – many of them have strategic nuclear weapons bases in their states – will oppose any reduction in the number of nuclear-armed subs, missiles, or bombers for fear of losing defense dollars and jobs in their districts.

But fresh thinking is in order. Programs that address low-priority threats must be scaled back to make room for more pressing national priorities and reduce the deficit. Smart reductions in spending on unnecessary new nuclear weapons systems would enhance US security.

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<http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2012/0119/How-Obama-can-slash-defense-budget-Cut-unnecessary-nuclear-weapons-programs>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency  
OPINION/Analysis

## **From Yugoslavia to Iran**

20 January 2012

By RIA Novosti military commentator Konstantin Bogdanov

The United States has been massing naval forces off Iran’s shores. Since November the media has been filled with rumors about an imminent military strike on Iran’s nuclear infrastructure. How might this potential war differ from past U.S. operations against Iraq and Yugoslavia, and what will they have in common? What might be the objectives and the results of such an attack?

### **Non-contact warfare**

Any U.S. attack will likely aim to minimize contact as much as possible. It will involve air strikes and cruise missile attacks aided by detailed information from reconnaissance and the broad superiority it boasts in terms of control over its units in a wartime theater of operation.

The U.S. and its allies are unlikely to get involved in a ground operation. The United States does not have the power or the internal political support for it. Iran is a very formidable rival and it will be extremely hard to fight against it on the ground (compared to Iraq in 1991 or 2003). It would be political suicide for Obama to risk having more soldiers return in coffins before the November elections.

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For this reason alone, a ground invasion is off the table, with the possible exception of operations carried out by special forces, who may conduct in-depth reconnaissance of Iran's territory, locate targets and sabotage critical facilities.

Aviation would bear the brunt of the burden of this non-contact warfare. This would be a hit-and-run air war. In light of the awkward air campaign of its French and British allies in Libya, the United States may show the world what it has mastered in a little less than a decade since the Iraq War began in 2003.

It was in 2003 that the United States began using Joint Direct Attack Munitions (JDAMs) – a cheap guidance kit that converts conventional bombs into precision weapons. It was also at that time that it began switching to integrated systems of control, targeting and information – the concept of network-centric warfare. The roles of drones increased as well.

Iran may expect something vaguely similar to NATO's operation in Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999. The strikes on Iraq in 1993 and 1998 were very limited and were actually punitive in nature. The air blitzes in 1991 and 2003 were meant primarily to pave the way for subsequent ground operations.

However, as distinct from European Yugoslavia, which had to be crushed politically, in Iran the United States will have to carry out targeted strikes to destroy the country's military and industrial capabilities. Iran will not surrender after a couple of heavy blows; it will only get mad.

The experience of air operations in Yugoslavia and Iraq suggests that air defense systems, airfields and ballistic missiles bases will be the first targets as well as the Iranian navy and coastal launchers of anti-ship missiles. Later the emphasis may be switched to critical oil, energy and fuel facilities.

The fuel industry may become a key target. While Iran is an oil exporter, it has long suffered from shortages of gasoline, buying up to 45% of its gasoline from its Gulf neighbors. In 2009 and 2010 it managed to produce enough oil products for strictly rationed domestic consumption, but the Iran's weak refining capabilities continues to stifle economic growth.

And, of course, there's the matter of Iran's nuclear infrastructure. It will be destroyed with particular zeal and not necessarily by the first attacks.

The Natanz plant and the unfinished reactor near Arak may get their share of smart bombs. The operating reactor of the Bushehr nuclear power plant is unlikely to be attacked directly, but its supporting facilities may be put out of commission.

### **Fordo – a tough nut to crack**

The most tempting target is located in the very heart of Persian power, not far from the holy city of Qom. This is an enrichment facility in Fordo, a giant fortified underground complex. Construction began in 2007 and it was put into service last year.

Now Iran has transferred all work on the production of uranium enriched to 19.75% to the Fordo facility. Previously it has been conducted in Natanz, but Iranian officials have acknowledged that it was not well protected from air strikes. The underground facility in Fordo is much better protected.

Israel regularly complains to Washington about its lack of air-to-ground munitions or "penetrators," obviously hinting at a potential attack against Iran. The United States has an array of munitions for this job. The most monstrous of these is the GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator (MOP), weighting more than 13.5 tons. It is part of the strike arsenal of B-52 bombers and B-2 Stealth aircraft.

According to open sources, the GBU-57 can penetrate the ground to a depth of 60 meters and rock to a depth of up to 40 meters or even less in some cases. Meanwhile, U.S. experts believe that key elements of the Fordo facility are located about 80 meters or more below the surface.



Even advocates of air strikes have misgivings. Fordo seems a hard nut to crack. Experts believe that precision weapons can make multiple strikes on a single spot, but there is a simple argument against this – nobody knows the structure of the Fordo facility.

This is why the most a massive air attack on Fordo could achieve is to block surface exits, energy supply routes and the transport infrastructure. To achieve this it will be enough to use conventional JDAMs and Tomahawk cruise missiles, which are traditional for such warfare.

This approach will not help destroy Iran's production capacity. More can be achieved only if the attackers are incredibly lucky, use tactical nuclear arms, or send a task force to seize the facility.

But luck cannot be planned. The use of tactical nuclear arms would destroy the Fordo facility but would create so many difficulties (both purely technical and in terms of the overarching strategy) that the game would not be worth the candle.

As for a task force, its success is also unpredictable. Moreover, any sabotage operation will require adequate weapons. The only more or less reliable weapon would be a suitcase nuke, but again the game wouldn't be worth the candle.

### **Possible outcomes**

We are getting an interesting picture. A ground operation against Iran is highly unlikely, and an occupation is altogether impossible. Massive air strikes may undermine Iran's industrial capabilities but would prove unable to settle, once and for all, the nuclear issue.

A massive air attack on Iran would certainly delay its nuclear program. In this narrow sense, such an operation could be considered a success. However, it is more difficult to predict the potential impact of this crude military intervention in a regional power.

One thing is clear – the impact would not be positive. Such a blow at the rocky boat that is the Middle East could capsize it.

In this case incensed Islamic radicals will easily sweep away everything – the conservative Gulf monarchies (for their pro-American stance), the last secular regimes (in Syria, Jordan and Kuwait) and the weak transitional governments borne of revolution (in Egypt and Yemen).

Is it worth unleashing such destruction in the region, the world's "soft underbelly," in order to delay Tehran's nuclear program by five or six years? The United States will hardly defeat Iran. The more likely result would be the inadvertent destruction of several decades of U.S. policy in the region.

*The views expressed in this article are the author's and may not necessarily represent those of RIA Novosti.*

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20120120/170861124.html>

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