



**USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER**  
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**Issue No. 977, 03 February 2012**

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New Zealand Herald – New Zealand

## Tehran Not Building Nuclear Weapons, Say US Officials

Thursday, February 2, 2012

United States intelligence officials assert that Iran has the means to build a nuclear weapon but has not yet decided to follow through, in contrast to Israel's insistence that time is running out to stop Iran from developing such a weapon.

But Iran was likely to strike out at US interests if it felt threatened, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told the Senate Intelligence Committee in an annual report to Congress on threats facing America.

Citing last year's thwarted Iranian plot to kill the Saudi ambassador in the US, "some Iranian officials probably including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei ... are now more willing to conduct an attack in the US in response to real or perceived US actions that threaten the regime", Clapper said.

Iran had the technical ability to build a nuclear weapon, Clapper said. But he, CIA Director David Petraeus and others reasserted their stance that Iran was not building nuclear weapons.

"There is dissension and debate in the political hierarchy of Iran" over whether to build a weapon, Clapper said.

"There is not unanimity about this" as Iranian political officials weigh the regional prestige they believe they may gain by possessing a weapon against the cost of further international sanctions and the risk of retaliatory military action by Israel or the West.

Petraeus said the latest round of sanctions against the regime was beginning to bite, with a run on Iranian banks in recent weeks, but he conceded that the "clock is ticking" as Iran moved ahead enriching uranium to a grade that was below weapons-ready, but higher than normal for regular industrial use.

Defence Secretary Leon Panetta said this week that the Iranians could build a bomb quickly.

"If they decided to do it, it would probably take them about a year to be able to produce a bomb and then possibly another one to two years in order to put it on a deliverable vehicle of some sort in order to deliver that weapon," Panetta said.

Israeli Defence Minister Ehud Barak said last week that Iran was proceeding towards nuclear weapons capability and time was "urgently running out".

Israel has set up a specialist commando unit designed to carry out missions deep inside enemy territory amid growing consensus in government circles that military strikes must be contemplated if economic sanctions do not halt Iran's nuclear programme.

The Tehran regime has repeatedly claimed that Israeli, US and British agents are responsible for the assassination of six scientists involved in the country's nuclear programme - a charge rejected by London and Washington.

- *Independent, AP*

[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=2&objectid=10782770](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/world/news/article.cfm?c_id=2&objectid=10782770)

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The Star – Malaysia

Thursday, February 02, 2012

## Little New in IAEA-Iran Talks - Diplomats

By Fredrik Dahl

**Issue No. 977, 03 February 2012**

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



VIENNA (Reuters) - U.N. nuclear experts' talks in Iran appear to have made little concrete progress, diplomats said on Thursday, setting the stage for a crucial second round this month over Western fears Tehran may aim to build atomic weapons.

Three days of discussions in Tehran which ended on Tuesday were a rare direct dialogue in the long-running international dispute, which has deepened as the West pursues a punitive embargo on Iranian oil and Tehran threatens retaliation. There are fears the confrontation could lead to a military conflict.

Senior officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency plan to return to Tehran for more discussions on February 21 and 22 after holding what both sides publicly described as good talks.

Herman Nackaerts, IAEA deputy director-general, told reporters on his return from Tehran on Wednesday that more work remained to be done. Asked if he was satisfied with the talks, Nackaerts said: "Yeah, we had a good trip."

Now diplomats are trying to glean whether Nackaerts was simply being polite, or really meant the visit was fruitful.

"It does seem to us that there has just been no indication of any substantive progress during this meeting, that Iran was very focused on process and modalities and not engaging the IAEA on answering the questions or providing the information and access that they have been asking for," one envoy said.

Another diplomat described the latest talks as "long, intensive discussions about procedures, issues, but no discussion on concrete issues."

But he acknowledged there had been "some headway" to start substantive talks that now had to be fleshed out.

"To summarise it: talks about procedures and how to proceed and then probably next time they have to fix the issue of access," he said.

#### **ACCESS "DENIED"**

One Western diplomat said he understood the IAEA team had sought - but not been granted - access to the Parchin military site mentioned in a report the agency drew up in November spelling out why it was concerned about Iran's ambitions.

But he and other analysts pointed out the scheduling of a return trip to Tehran at least held out some hope of progress.

"Failure was really an option," he said of the prospects before Nackaerts and his colleagues flew to Tehran. But he added: "They did not fail."

The secretive, Vienna-based IAEA would not comment officially on the visit beyond a formal statement issued on Wednesday in which Director General Yukiya Amano said: "The Agency is committed to intensifying dialogue. It remains essential to make progress on substantive issues."

Tehran says its uranium enrichment programme is solely for peaceful electricity generation and has dismissed as baseless allegations that it is seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

The standoff has spawned three years of deadlock in efforts to resolve the questions about Tehran's nuclear work.

The IAEA has said it explained to Iran its "concerns and identified its priorities, which focus on the clarification of possible military dimensions" to Iran's nuclear programme.

"The IAEA also discussed with Iran the topics and initial steps to be taken, as well as associated modalities," it said.

#### **FURTHER TALKS**

In Tehran, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi said on Wednesday more talks would be needed.



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"We had very good meetings and we planned to continue these negotiations. The team had some questions about the claimed studies. One step has been taken forward," he told the semi-official Fars news agency.

By "studies," Salehi was alluding to intelligence reports indicating that Iran has covertly researched ways to design a nuclear weapon. Salehi added: "We were ready to show them our nuclear facilities, but they didn't ask for it."

Lower-level IAEA inspectors based in Iran have regular, if limited, access to Iran's declared nuclear installations.

Western diplomats have often accused Iran of using offers of dialogue as a stalling tactic while it presses ahead with stockpiling enriched uranium, the key energy source in nuclear power plants or bombs, depending on the level of refinement.

Israel's military intelligence chief said on Thursday that Iran had stockpiled sufficient enriched uranium that, if processed much further, could provide material for four nuclear weapons.

Friction between Iran and the West worsened this year after the United States and the European Union imposed sanctions targeting Tehran's oil sector over its continued defiance of U.N. resolutions demanding it suspend enrichment, grant unfettered access to the IAEA and engage in negotiations.

Iran has been open to resuming talks with six world powers frozen for over a year but only to discuss broader international issues, not its nuclear programme.

The new Western measures take direct aim at the ability of OPEC's second-biggest oil exporter to sell its crude. Iran has threatened to cut off oil exports to EU countries before July 1, when the sanctions would take full effect.

The reluctance of major powers China and Russia to support more sanctions, and the willingness of Asian nations to go on buying Iranian oil, has frustrated Western governments.

Visiting Beijing on Thursday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged China to use its influence with Iran to persuade it to comply with Western demands on its nuclear programme.

*Editing by Alastair Macdonald*

[http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/2/2/worldupdates/2012-02-02T125641Z\\_1\\_TRE81113M\\_RTROPTT\\_0\\_UK-IRAN-IAEA&sec=Worldupdates](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/2/2/worldupdates/2012-02-02T125641Z_1_TRE81113M_RTROPTT_0_UK-IRAN-IAEA&sec=Worldupdates)

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Chicago Tribune

## **Israel Says Iran Has Material for Four A-Bombs**

Jeffrey Heller, Reuters

February 2, 2012

JERUSALEM (Reuters) - Israel estimated on Thursday that Iran could make four atomic bombs by further enriching uranium it has already stockpiled, and could produce its first within a year of deciding to build one.

But in his rare public remarks, Major-General Aviv Kochavi, chief of military intelligence, held out the possibility stronger international sanctions might dissuade Tehran from pursuing a policy he had no doubt was aimed at developing nuclear weapons, despite Iranian denials.

Citing figures similar to those from the U.N. nuclear agency, Kochavi told Israel's annual Herzliya Conference on strategic affairs: "Iran has accumulated more than 4 tonnes of uranium enriched to a level of 3.5 percent and nearly 100 kilos at an enrichment level of 20 percent.

"This amount of material is already enough for four atomic bombs."

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Nuclear bombs require uranium enriched to 90 percent, but Western experts say much of the effort required to get there is already achieved once it reaches 20-percent purity, shortening the time needed for any nuclear weapons "break-out."

One former U.N. inspector said last month Iran could have enough 20-percent uranium for one bomb - about 250 kg of the material - in about a year from now.

Tehran says it will use 20 percent-enriched uranium to convert into fuel for a research reactor making isotopes to treat cancer patients. Western officials say they doubt that the country has the technical capability to do that.

Referring to Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in whose country's hands Israel believe a nuclear weapon would threaten the survival of the Jewish state, Kochavi said:

"From the moment Khamenei gives an order ... to speed up production of the first nuclear explosive device, we estimate it will take about a year to complete the task."

Arming a missile with a nuclear warhead, he added, could take a year or two longer.

Western experts' estimates of how quickly Iran could assemble a nuclear weapon if it decides to do so range from as little as six months to a year or more. Some believe Iran hopes to develop nuclear technology but stop short of building weapons, a move from which it is barred by treaty commitments.

In a report in November, the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency said Iran had almost 5 tonnes of low-enriched uranium and, citing data from September, 73.7 kg of uranium with a purity of 20 percent.

#### **"STRONG DATA"**

"Iran continues to contend that its program is for peaceful and civilian purposes," Kochavi said.

"But a long series of solid, strong data in our hands prove beyond any doubt that Iran is continuing to engage in developing nuclear weapons," he said in the speech, in which he steered clear of discussing Israel's military options.

Israel, widely believed to possess the Middle East's only nuclear arsenal, has said it would use force if necessary to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

It has made little comment on Iranian accusations that its agents, along with those of its Western allies, are behind assassinations and explosions that appear to form part of a covert war to sabotage Iran's nuclear development capacity.

In separate remarks in Tel Aviv, Israeli Defense Minister Ehud Barak said "we are in a period of diplomacy and sanctions" in trying to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions.

"It is clear to all that there is no need to take any option off the table, that there needs to be intensive and urgent diplomacy and that sanctions on Iran need to include not only on oil but on the financial system and the central bank," Barak told reporters.

Washington and the European Union have imposed tighter sanctions in recent weeks on both Iran's oil exports and on international financial transactions with Tehran.

Kochavi said the current sanctions have not led to a change in Iranian strategy, but could still have an effect.

"But the stronger the (pressure), the greater the potential for the regime - which is worried first and foremost about its survival - to reconsider," he said.

Tension between Iran and the West over Iran's nuclear work 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 energy program is peaceful and aimed at generating electricity and other civilian uses.



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[http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-nuclear-iran-israel15e8d23qr-20120202\\_0,3952846.story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-nuclear-iran-israel15e8d23qr-20120202_0,3952846.story)

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

## Ya'alon: Iran Was Working on US-Range Missile

*Vice Prime Minister says December explosion at Iran base occurred where long-range missile was being developed.*

By YAAKOV KATZ

February 02, 2012

Iran was working on developing a missile with 10,000 km range that would put America in reach of a potential Iranian attack, Strategic Affairs Minister and Vice Prime Minister Moshe Ya'alon said Thursday.

According to Ya'alon, the missile was based on a solid fuel propellant and would have been able to significantly increase Iran's offensive capabilities. Last month, a mysterious explosion rocked an Iranian missile base near Tehran where Iran was working on developing this long range missile.

Ya'alon also said that Turkey is helping Iran bypass the sanctions that have been imposed on it in recent months.

According to the vice prime minister, who was in the United States last week for talks on Iran with senior officials from the Obama administration, Turkey was helping Iran circumvent the sanctions by allowing it to use its banking system.

Ya'alon said that the Israeli government was committed to stopping Iran's nuclear program "in one way or another."

"We need a credible military option. The Iranians understand the West has capabilities, but as long as the Iranians don't think that the West has the political stomach and determination to use it they will not stop," Ya'alon affirmed. "Currently they don't think that the world is determined."

Ya'alon also stated that all Iranian facilities can be reached in a military strike. "Anything built by humans can be destroyed by humans... I say this from experience as a former IDF chief of staff," he said.

Ya'alon also said that Iran and Hezbollah were working with drug cartels in Mexico to learn how to smuggle materials into the US, a conduit that could one day be used to smuggle weapons into the country.

Ya'alon said that the "crippling sanctions" that are being imposed on Iran such as the ban on oil exports could succeed in posing a "clear dilemma" for the regime, whether it wants to continue its nuclear program and risk the survival of the Islamic regime or stop and open in dialogue with the West.

Ya'alon said that the West still does not fully understand the severity of the nuclear threat posed by Iran. "America is the larger Satan," he said.

<http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=256186>

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Journal of Turkish Weekly – Turkey

## Iran More Than Doubles 2012 Budget for Defense

Thursday, 2 February 2012

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad predicted yesterday that Iran's economy would grow eight percent over the next 12 months despite severe Western sanctions, as he presented his government's annual budget to parliament. Iran's defense spending would more than double under plans set out by Ahmadinejad yesterday.

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“The budget is aimed at securing a growth rate of eight percent, higher than 7.3 percent growth in the current year. The budget bill for 1391 (the Iranian year starting on March 20) has been drawn up by taking into account the price of oil and the international economy,” Ahmadinejad said, without giving a figure. The president said the public budget for 2012-13 was worth around \$90 billion, with an increase of 127 percent in the defense budget. Ahmadinejad set out a \$416 billion state budget for Iran’s calendar and fiscal year, which runs this year from mid-March. That was 14 percent less than the 2011-2012 budget, which was set at \$484 billion. The president did not elaborate on the defense spending, while telling that it would increase by around 127 percent. Iran’s economy has been grappling with ratcheted-up sanctions imposed by the U.S. and the E.U. in an effort to pressure Tehran to drop nuclear activities suspected to include research for an atomic bomb. “Considering increasing pressure and threats against Iran, it was necessary to increase the defense budget,” MP Jahanbakhsh Amini told Reuters. Iran has warned it would take drastic measures, including possibly closing the Strait of Hormuz at the entrance of the Gulf to tanker traffic, if its economy is brought to its knees, or the country is attacked.

### **‘Too optimistic’**

Parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani again underlined that threat yesterday, saying that while Iran considers “the Strait of Hormuz as the strait of peace, it will cut the hands of anyone who seeks [military] adventurism in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman,” the Islamic Republic News Agency reported. Iranian media said the budget was based on an oil price of \$85 a barrel, which is below international crude prices. Brent crude rose above \$111 per barrel yesterday, gaining for a second straight session on fears that tensions between Iran and the West may escalate further. The president has been accused by his hardline rivals, including lawmakers, of stoking price rises with profligate spending of petrodollars.

“The submitted budget is too optimistic. It is not compatible with the realities of our economy,” said lawmaker Ali Akbar Olia.

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/130888/iran-more-than-doubles-2012-budget-for-defense.html>

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New York Times  
February 3, 2012

## **U.S. Plays Down Warning By Israeli Over Iran’s Missiles**

By ETHAN BRONNER  
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JERUSALEM — A senior Israeli official said Thursday that the missile testing site near Tehran that was destroyed in a huge explosion three months ago was developing missiles with a range of about 6,000 miles that could reach the United States.

The assertion went far beyond what rocket experts have established about Iran’s missile capabilities, and American officials questioned its accuracy.

The Israeli, Moshe Yaalon, a deputy prime minister and minister for strategic affairs, said the blast at a missile base of Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps hit a system “getting ready to produce a missile with a range of 10,000 kilometers.”

“That’s the Great Satan,” he said, invoking a name Iran has used for the United States. “It was aimed at America, not at us.”

Mr. Yaalon was trying to make the point that the Iranian nuclear program is a threat not only to Israel but to other nations, creating “a nightmare for the free world.” He said that it was a concern to Arab states as well as to the United States and Israel.



American officials said they believed that Mr. Yaalon's assertions were at best premature, and at worst badly exaggerated.

Speaking on the condition of anonymity because assessments of Iran's missiles are largely classified, the officials said that Iran might harbor the ambition of having missiles that could reach the United States, but that it was not close to achieving that goal. They declined to say what kind of work was being done at the base where the blast took place.

Today, the maximum range of Iran's known ballistic missiles is roughly 1,200 miles, rocket experts say. That means they could reach targets in the Middle East, including Israel, as well as Turkey and parts of Eastern Europe.

Iran is known to be working on missiles with a range of 2,000 miles, which are considered medium range. The United States defines long-range or intercontinental ballistic missiles as having ranges greater than 3,400 miles.

A range of 10,000 kilometers, slightly more than 6,200 miles, would let a missile fired from Iran fly halfway around the globe to reach the United States.

Mr. Yaalon's comments came in an address to an annual conference that examines Israel's security challenges.

Mr. Yaalon, who was in the United States last week for talks with American officials, said that Turkey had been helping Iran circumvent international sanctions by allowing it to use its banking system. He also argued that all of Iran's nuclear sites could be hit with Western weapons.

"We need a credible military option," he said. "The Iranians understand the West has capabilities, but as long as the Iranians don't think that the West has the political stomach and determination to use it, they will not stop. Currently they don't think the world is determined."

Earlier, Maj. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, the chief of Israeli military intelligence, told the audience that he believed crippling sanctions could persuade the Iranian government to abandon what he believed was its determination to build a nuclear weapon. He said if Iran chose to build a bomb, it would take it about a year.

General Kochavi also estimated that Israel faced 200,000 missiles and rockets aimed at it from its enemies.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta, speaking at a NATO meeting in Brussels, declined to comment on a column by David Ignatius in The Washington Post that reported that Mr. Panetta believed there was a "strong likelihood" that Israel would strike Iran in April, May or June.

Mr. Panetta would say only that "Israel has indicated that they're considering this, and we have indicated our concerns."

*William J. Broad contributed reporting from New York, Elisabeth Bumiller from Brussels and David E. Sanger from Washington.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/03/world/middleeast/israel-warns-iranian-missiles-might-threaten-us.html?src=un&feedurl=http%3A%2F%2Fjson8.nytimes.com%2Fpages%2Fworld%2Fmiddleeast%2Findex.jsonp>

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Boston Globe

## **Iran Reports Launch of Small Satellite into Orbit**

By Nasser Karimi, Associated Press

February 3, 2012

TEHRAN, Iran—Iran successfully launched a new small satellite into orbit early Friday, state media reported, the latest in the country's ambitious space program that has raised concerns because of its possible military applications.





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President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called in to the launch site, saying he was "hopeful this act will send a signal of more friendship among all human beings," the state IRNA news agency reported.

IRNA said the home-made satellite, Navid, or Gospel, was designed to collect data on weather conditions and monitor for natural disasters.

It said the satellite weighs about 110 pounds (50 kilograms) and would orbit the earth at an altitude of up to 234 miles (375 kilometers), circling the planet 15 times a day. It's of a type known as miniaturized or microsatellites, which are cheaper to produce and allow for less costly launch vehicles.

Navid, produced at an Iranian engineering university, is the third small satellite that Iran launched over the past years and is expected to remain in orbit for about two months. The two earlier satellites -- Omid, launched in 2009, and Rasad, sent into orbit in June 2011 -- lasted three weeks and 82 days, respectively. IRNA said Navid has advanced control technology, a higher resolution camera and photocells to generate power.

The satellite was sent into orbit by a missile launch-vehicle dubbed Safir, or Ambassador in Farsi, which IRNA described as having 20 percent more launch power, compared to earlier versions of satellite carrier missiles.

An Iranian website, Irannuc.ir, claimed Safir was a ballistic missile that can be converted into an intercontinental missile. State TV showed footage of the launch, with a rocket sent off and turning into a light point in the darkness of the skies.

Iran's decade-old space program has raised alarms in the West, because the same technology that allows missiles to launch satellites can be used to fire warheads.

Israel, the U.S. and others charge that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons, a charge Tehran denies, insisting its nuclear enrichment program is geared only for peaceful purposes, such as energy production.

Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi and the country's minister of science and technology, Kamran Daneshjoo, were present at the launch, IRNA said. There was no independent confirmation or details about where the launch took place.

Iran has made a series of claims in recent years about advances in its space program, which have not been verified by others. In 2010, Tehran announced it had successfully launched a rocket carrying a mouse, turtle and worms into space.

Also, Iran has set a goal of putting a man in orbit within 10 years, despite the expense and technological challenges involved.

The authorities are intent on showcasing the nation's technological successes as signs Iran can advance despite the West's sanctions over its controversial nuclear program. Iran is also pressing ahead with its military missile program, frequently testing missiles capable of reaching Israel, U.S. bases in the Gulf and parts of southeast Europe.

[http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2012/02/03/iran\\_reports\\_launch\\_of\\_small\\_satellite\\_into\\_orbit/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2012/02/03/iran_reports_launch_of_small_satellite_into_orbit/)

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New York Times  
February 3, 2012

## **Iran's Supreme Leader Threatens Retaliation Against Attack**

By J. DAVID GOODMAN

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The supreme leader of Iran vowed on Friday to retaliate over oil sanctions and threats of military action by the West to stop Iran's nuclear program, warning that the United States in particular would face severe damage to its interests if any strike were carried out against its nuclear sites.

The pointed remarks by the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, were the most public response by him to mounting tension between Western powers and Iran in recent weeks. They came amid increasing concern among American officials that Israel may soon strike at Iran's nuclear facilities.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that Iran "had its own tools" to respond to such threats and that it would use them "if necessary," the semiofficial Mehr news agency reported.

"The threat of war would disfavor the United States itself," he said, adding that war with Iran "would be 10 times worse for the interests of the United States" than it would be for Iran, he said.

"Americans say all options are on the table, even the option of military strike," he said, according to a Reuters translation of his televised remarks. "Such threats show that they have no sufficient discourse against Iran's logic and discourse."

The United States and the European Union have accused Iran of seeking to develop a nuclear weapon and adopted strong new sanctions targeting Iran's oil industry and banking system last month. Iran insists its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes.

The sanctions have done damage to Iran's economy, but Ayatollah Khamenei said they were "beneficial" because they have made Iran more determined to stay the course on its nuclear program. "Iran will not change its nuclear course because of sanctions," he said.

The supreme leader delivered the latest bellicose volleys in the increasingly tense standoff during Friday prayers marking the anniversary of the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution. Iran has tried to draw a straight line from the revolution that overthrew the Shah's government 33 years ago and the Arab Spring movement, which toppled repressive government across the Middle East over the past year, branding it an "Islamic Awakening."

Those efforts appeared to falter during a conference in Tehran this week as hundreds of young activists argued over Iran's support for the government in Syria, which has mounted a violent military campaign to stamp out an 11-month-old uprising there. Syria was not among the countries included in the timeline of Arab revolutions shown at the conference, which led from Tehran to Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and Bahrain. For its part, the government of Bahrain has accused Iran of meddling in its affairs and lending support to the small but continuing protest movement there.

Ayatollah Khamenei in his speech on Friday rejected those charges, asserting that Iran had no hand in the uprising that swelled last year in Bahrain among its majority Shiite population before a crackdown by the Sunni-led government halted its momentum. "Had we interfered in the country's affairs, the situation would have been vice versa," he said, the official IRNA news agency reported.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/04/world/middleeast/irans-supreme-leader-threatens-retaliation-against-attack.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea  
February 02, 2012

## **N. Korea's New Leadership to Continue WMD Exports: U.S. Spy Chief**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 (Yonhap) -- The U.S. intelligence chief warned Tuesday that North Korea will continue its exports of weapons of massive destruction despite its leadership change.



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"North Korea's export of ballistic missiles and associated materials to several countries, including Iran and Syria, illustrates the reach of the North's proliferation activities," James Clapper, director of national intelligence, told a congressional hearing.

"We don't expect Kim Jong-un, North Korea's new young leader, to change Pyongyang's policy of attempting to export most of its weapons systems."

Clapper's comments marked one of the firmest assessments by Washington of Pyongyang's new leadership.

The secretive communist nation embraced Kim, believed to be in his late 20s, shortly after the sudden death in December of his father, Kim Jong-il, who ruled for 17 years.

The White House made it clear that there will be no major policy shift on Pyongyang after its power transfer.

"Obviously, I can't predict the future in terms of what might transpire on the Korean Peninsula and with North Korea. But there has been no policy change," spokesman Jay Carney said at a press briefing.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/02/01/35/0401000000AEN20120201009500315F.HTML>

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London Guardian – U.K.

## **North Korea Demands Preconditions for South Korea Talks**

*Pyongyang's move follows message from US diplomat that Washington is open to diplomacy ties with Seoul are improved*

Associated Press in Pyongyang

Thursday, 2 February 2012

North Korea has backed away from earlier vows never to deal with the South's leader but demanded several preconditions for resuming talks, including the cancellation of US-South Korean military drills.

South Korea is unlikely to accept most of the demands made in a statement by the policy department of the North's national defence commission. But the timing of the statement on Thursday could signal a willingness to ease tensions, analysts said.

"If clear answers are given, dialogue will resume immediately, and the inter-Korean relations that have been moving toward complete destruction will improve," Ri Son Kwon, a colonel working for the commission's policy department, said in an interview. "The resumption of dialogue and the improvement of relations hinge completely on the willingness of the South's government."

The North Korean statement comes the day after a senior US diplomat suggested that Washington is open to diplomacy if Pyongyang improves ties with Seoul. It is also represents a change in tone for North Korea after weeks of refusing to talk with the South's president, Lee Myung-bak.

North Korea's defence commission issued a list of nine conditions, including demands that South Korea apologise for failing to show proper respect to Kim Jong-il during the mourning period that followed the leader's death last December. Among the other demands were that Seoul stop criticising Pyongyang over two deadly 2010 attacks blamed on North Korea, and follow through on previous agreements that call for South Korean investments in the North.

The North also demanded an end to the regularly held US-South Korean military drills, which Pyongyang calls rehearsals for war.

A round of military exercises are due to start later this month.

**Issue No. 977, 03 February 2012**

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South Korea has called for dialogue as the new North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un, tries to consolidate power and extend his family dynasty into a third generation following his father's death.

But South Korea's unification ministry released a statement on Thursday saying it regrets the North's "unreasonable claims as part of its propaganda at an important juncture for peace" and "does not feel the need to respond to these questions put forth by North Korea one by one".

Still, the Pyongyang statement is "a bit of an olive branch" when contrasted with its previous promises to ignore Seoul, said John Delury, an assistant professor at Yonsei University's Graduate School of International Studies in South Korea.

The North could be signalling that it understands a message relayed by the US assistant secretary of state, Kurt Campbell, on a trip to Seoul this week, that Washington favours a diplomatic solution to a North Korean nuclear standoff, but only if ties with the South are improved. Although Pyongyang has been reluctant to deal with Seoul, it has suggested a willingness to negotiate with the US.

But "the statement is meant primarily to pull the fig leaf off the South Korean government's claims that it is open to dialogue", Delury said. "Pyongyang is trying to call Seoul's bluff by claiming South Korea is the intransigent one."

Pyongyang conducted nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009 and has developed missiles with the potential to attack its neighbours and possibly reach the US.

North Korea has repeatedly pressed for the resumption of aid for nuclear disarmament talks that have been stalled since Pyongyang walked away in early 2009, but Washington and Seoul have said Pyongyang must first follow through on previous nuclear commitments.

In late December, the North's defence commission warned South Korea and the rest of the world not to expect any change from North Korea after Kim's death and said it would never deal with Lee's conservative government, which ended a no-strings-attached aid policy to the North after taking power in 2008

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/02/north-korea-conditions-south-talks>

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Nature.com  
OPINION/Analysis

## Isotopes Hint at North Korean Nuclear Test

*Data suggest that the country has experimented with a fusion boost to its fission weapons.*

By Geoff Brumfiel  
03 February 2012

North Korea may have conducted two covert nuclear weapons tests in 2010, according to a fresh analysis of radioisotope data.

The claim has drawn scepticism from some nuclear-weapons experts. But if confirmed, the analysis would double the number of tests the country is known to have conducted and suggest that North Korea is trying to develop powerful warheads for its fledgling nuclear arsenal.

It might also explain a bizarre statement issued by North Korea's state news agency in May 2010, which said that the country had achieved nuclear fusion. The news was largely ridiculed in the South Korean and Western media — but it was not so quickly dismissed by the small circle of experts who devote their careers to identifying covert nuclear tests. South Korean scientists had detected a whiff of radioactive xenon at around that time, hinting at nuclear activity in its northern neighbour, which had already tested nuclear devices in 2006 and 2009.

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In August 2010, experts meeting in Vienna informally discussed the South Korean data and measurements from an international network of radioisotope-monitoring stations operated by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), which supports an as-yet-unratified treaty that seeks to ban nuclear-weapons testing.

Among those experts was Lars-Erik De Geer, an atmospheric scientist at the Swedish Defence Research Agency in Stockholm. When they looked at the monitoring data from Russian and Japanese stations close to North Korea, "the conclusion from everyone was, 'Hell, we cannot explain them.'", De Geer recalls (see 'Nuke watching').

Unwilling to let the matter rest, De Geer took the radioisotope data and compared them with the South Korean reports, as well as meteorological records. After a year of work, he has concluded that North Korea carried out two small nuclear tests in April and May 2010 that caused explosions in the range of 50–200 tonnes of TNT equivalent. The types and ratios of isotopes detected, he says, suggest that North Korea was testing materials and techniques intended to boost the yield of its weapons. His paper will appear in the April/May issue of the journal *Science and Global Security*<sup>1</sup>.

### **Isotope detective**

De Geer's theory rests on the detection of several short-lived radioisotopes that are generated during man-made nuclear processes.

Ratios of xenon-133 and xenon-133m (a higher-energy, 'metastable' form of the isotope) point towards an explosion in mid-April. The ratio of more short-lived isotopes — barium-140 and its radioactive decay product lanthanum-140 — pointed to a second test around 11 May. Indeed, the presence of barium-140 can be explained only by a sudden nuclear event, he says. "In Sweden, we saw this kind of thing decades ago from Russian underground tests." Ratios of other xenon isotopes also point to a fast nuclear reaction that involved uranium. Until now, North Korea's programme was thought to be based on plutonium, although rumours of a covert uranium programme have persisted for years.

De Geer speculates that North Korea is trying to build a more powerful bomb. Advanced nuclear weapons often have a small quantity of the heavier isotopes of hydrogen, known as deuterium and tritium. When a warhead detonates, it squeezes the deuterium and tritium until they fuse together. The fusion reactions release neutrons that in turn boost the fission process, increasing its yield. De Geer says that low-yield tests of the sort he suspects took place can be a first step in building a tritium-boosted weapon.

Frank von Hippel, a physicist at Princeton University in New Jersey, says that De Geer's analysis provides convincing evidence of some kind of nuclear fission explosion. But he does not agree that it necessarily involved two weapons tests, or a fusion boost. "I hope that other experts will analyse it and see whether they can put forward alternative, simpler explanations," he says.

Others remain deeply sceptical that the tests took place at all. Most troubling is the lack of any seismic vibrations to support the radioisotope data, according to Ola Dahlman, a retired geophysicist who spent years working with the test-ban group's detection network. The Korean peninsula is wired to spot the tiniest shake from a nuclear explosion, Dahlman says. "It should have been able to see something."

### **Far from conclusive**

Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia non-proliferation programme at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, agrees. De Geer's hypothesis "doesn't feel right to me", he says. The monitoring system alone simply can't prove that some other sort of nuclear incident, such as a reactor accident, wasn't responsible. Dozens of reactors are currently operating in East Asia, he says, and without seismic data or on-the-ground inspections it is impossible to verify where the isotopes come from. "You need other data."

De Geer's arguments rest in part on data collected by the CTBTO's network of sensors, but the organization itself has never officially analysed all these data, according to Lassina Zerbo, director of the data centre in Vienna that



handles the sensor network. Zerbo says that although the data are processed and shared quickly after such an event, formal analyses are done only if requested by the CTBTO's member states. None of the 182 signatories to the treaty ever made such a request, he says. Zerbo adds that the organization does not have access to the South Korean data mentioned in the paper, which was collected by that nation's network of monitoring stations.

De Geer hopes that his paper will spur debate and encourage another look at the mysterious emissions. Zerbo says that it may indeed prompt scientists in CTBTO member states to re-examine the data — and then possibly to ask the CTBTO to conduct a formal analysis.

#### References

1. De Geer, L.-E. *Sci. Glob. Secur.* 20, 1–29 (2012).

<http://www.nature.com/news/isotopes-hint-at-north-korean-nuclear-test-1.9972#/references>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

## Gorbachev Russia's Most Unpopular Leader - Survey

2 February 2012

Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin are Russia's most unpopular leaders of the past century, according to a survey by Russia's state-run VTsIOM pollster published on Thursday.

Only 14 percent of respondents named Soviet President Gorbachev and 17 percent mentioned his successor, first president of the Russian Federation Yeltsin, when asked whose policies in the past 100 years made Russia develop in the proper direction. Their results are largely similar to a VTsIOM survey held in 2007.

A total of 61 percent of Russians described Vladimir Putin's policies during his two presidential terms in 2000-2008 as "generally positive", down six percentage points from 2007. About 54 percent of respondents were positive about incumbent Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Russia's last Tsar Nicholas II received a positive assessment from 31 percent of respondents.

Leonid Brezhnev, who presided over the "stagnation period" with a ruling group characterized as a "gerontocracy," was the most popular Soviet leader with the support of 39 percent of respondents.

Best-known Communist Leaders, 1917 October Revolution architect Vladimir Lenin and Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin, gained 28 percent each. Nikita Khrushchev, who steered Soviet Union through the Cold War's peak, the Cuban Missile Crisis, received the support of 24 percent of respondents.

The survey, involving 1,600 respondents, was held on October 29-30, 2011 in 46 Russian regions. The margin of error is below 3.4 percent.

MOSCOW, February 2 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.ria.ru/society/20120202/171088106.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

## Disposal of Russian Third Generation Nuclear Subs Suspended

2 February 2012

Russia has decided to suspend the planned disposal of third-generation strategic nuclear submarines currently in service with the Navy, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said on Thursday.



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"The most successful projects will undergo two repairs instead of one. The subs' period of service will be extended to 30-35 years instead of the current 25," Rogozin told journalists.

He also said Akula (Typhoon) class submarines will be upgraded and their electronics and armaments replaced every seven years.

According to Rogozin, this will help gain time until all eight Borey class strategic submarines are deployed by 2020.

The deputy premier also said a naval vessel construction development program for the next 30 years is expected to be worked out soon.

SEVERODVINSK, February 2 (RIA Novosti)

[http://en.ria.ru/military\\_news/20120202/171099602.html](http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20120202/171099602.html)

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Journal of Turkish Weekly – Turkey

## **Putin Says NATO Missile System Pointed At Russia**

Friday, February 03, 2012

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin appeared on the program "Cold Politics" (Kholodnaya Politika) on Russian First Channel on Thursday and said the anti-missile system the U.S. and NATO allies are deploying in Europe "is undoubtedly aimed at neutralizing the nuclear rocket capability of Russia."

Putin said the anti-missile system can cover "territory to the Ural (Mountains), the places where our ground nuclear forces are based."

Putin said "today there is no threat from Iran or North Korea" and NATO is not offering any guarantees, even written, that the (anti-missile) system is not targeted against Russia.

The Russian prime minister said the U.S. is the initiator of the deployment of the anti-missile system in Europe and reminded the U.S. is the only country in history to use nuclear weapons, and that against a non-nuclear country – Japan – in 1945.

"What should we do, just black this out from our memory?" Putin asked. He said, "We will always respond to threats that appear along our borders."

Supporting his statement, Putin said that Russia is the only country besides the U.S. that has a "nuclear triad" – ground, marine and air nuclear forces.

Putin said Russia's "partners in the UN Security Council" produce evidence of the presence of weapons of mass destruction in some countries and call for the invasion of these countries or changing the governments of these countries. He said he had doubts about the sincerity of these partners.

"It seems to me our partners don't want allies, they want vassals," Putin said. They want to rule" but "Russia doesn't work that way," he concluded.

Putin has cultivated an image as a tough leader, and a person who will always promote a strong Russia, playing key roles in world events. His criticism of NATO's anti-missile system comes just a month before Russian presidential elections where Putin is seeking to return to the nation's top post after serving as prime minister since 2008. Prior to that he served two four-year terms as president.

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/130943/putin-says-nato-missile-system-pointed-at-russia.html>

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This is North Devon – U.K.

## Minister Tight-Lipped on Nuclear Submarine Home

Wednesday, February 01, 2012

A Government minister has refused to detail back-up plans on an independent Scotland ditching nuclear submarines and moving the vessels to the Westcountry.

In a series of written Parliamentary questions, MPs have pressed the Ministry of Defence on its contingency if the UK is to split.

The Scottish National Party has vowed Trident nuclear missiles will be removed from Faslane naval base on the Clyde if voters back independence in a referendum.

It could mean Plymouth's Devonport Naval Base becomes home to the UK's nuclear deterrent and submarine fleet.

Alison Seabeck, Labour MP for Plymouth Moor View, asked what the cost would be of moving both Trident and nuclear-powered Astute-class submarines to Plymouth.

Meanwhile, Conservative MP for Plymouth Sutton and Devonport, Oliver Colvile, asked if the MoD had "made plans for the base-porting of Royal Navy nuclear submarines in the case of future independence of Scotland and Scotland becoming a nuclear-free zone".

Officials have refused to countenance moving the ships south of the border on the basis that the union will not be broken.

In a carefully worded statement, Defence Minister Peter Luff said: "The Ministry of Defence is not making plans to change the base ports of those classes of submarines currently base-ported at HM Naval Base Clyde (Faslane).

"The department does not therefore hold cost estimates or other information that would relate to such changes.

"The Government are clear that Scotland benefits from being part of the UK and the UK benefits from having Scotland within it."

He added: "The Government are not making plans for independence as we are confident that people in Scotland will continue to support the union in any referendum."

The Western Morning News reported last week how MoD insiders believe that, after an independence vote, ministers in London would be forced to strike a deal with Scottish leaders allowing the Navy to go on using Coulport, where missiles and warheads are stored, and Faslane, where the subs are based, until an alternative was ready.

One source was quoted as saying: "Berths would not be a problem – there are docks on the south coast that could be used without too much fuss.

"But there simply isn't anywhere else where we can do what we do at Coulport and, without that, there is no deterrent."

Devonport is an alternative as it is currently home to three nuclear-powered submarines and is the UK's only base capable of maintaining the current and future submarine fleet.

The SNP has unveiled plans for a referendum on independence to be held in 2014.

<http://www.thisisnorthdevon.co.uk/Minister-tight-lipped-nuclear-subs-home/story-15097916-detail/story.html>

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British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) – U.K.

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3 February 2012

## Tactical Nuclear Weapons 'Are an Anachronism'

By Gordon Corera, Security correspondent, BBC News

Tactical nuclear weapons in Europe are a Cold War anachronism and should be removed from combat bases, argues the group Global Zero in a new report.

Both Russia and Nato maintain such tactical weapons (which are smaller in scale than so-called strategic weapons) even though many experts say their military usefulness is unclear.

When they were deployed, the original targets for those weapons on the Nato side were states in eastern Europe - which are themselves now part of the European Union and Nato.

"This proposal - developed by national security experts - is grounded in the fact that these tactical nuclear weapons in Europe serve no meaningful purpose 20 years after the end of the Cold War, and represent nothing but a financial cost and a security risk," argues Matt Brown, co-founder of Global Zero.

The group (whose UK co-chair is the former Defence and Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind) also argues that removing them from combat bases would greatly increase early warning and decision time, and therefore reduce any remaining concern of a sudden nuclear attack.

There are thought to be about 200 Nato weapons at six combat bases in Europe (they were removed from RAF Lakenheath in the UK in the last decade).

The number of Russian weapons is less clear but there are thought to be perhaps 500-700 at combat bases.

Global Zero has mapped them using commercially available satellite imagery.

The call is to move these away from bases where they are co-located with delivery systems such as planes and missiles and instead place them in national storage facilities.

In the case of US weapons, this would involve taking them back to the continental US itself, to Kirtland in New Mexico and Nellis in Nevada, and in Russia to facilities like that at Belgorad.

### **Budget constraints**

Nato is currently undergoing a Deterrence and Defence Posture Review ahead of its summit in Chicago in May, and US President Barack Obama has committed himself to the goal of nuclear disarmament.

But moving the weapons is a challenging goal. It is election season in both the US and Russia this year.

In the past, European allies in Nato have wanted to maintain the weapons to reassure them of America's commitment to their defence.

Western European nations (where the weapons are housed) have moved away from that position, with some such as Germany calling for their removal - but newer members to the east continue to see them as a guarantee of US commitment to defend them.

Russia meanwhile has seen such weapons as compensating for relative weaknesses in conventional military force.

Global Zero, which campaigns for the elimination of nuclear weapons, argues there are other ways of providing reassurance. It says this proposal is one way of getting the US and Russia back to the negotiating table and getting a process for first bilateral and then multilateral disarmament back on track.

It also argues that it would improve security for the weapons and lower costs at a time when defence budgets are under strain.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16877666>

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Washington Times

## **'Hell to Pay' if Terrorists' Link to Drug Cartels Isn't Checked**

By Guy Taylor, The Washington Times

Thursday, February 2, 2012

Collaboration between Latin American drug cartels and groups such as Iran's Quds Force and the Islamic terror group Hezbollah is growing "far faster than most policymakers in Washington, D.C., choose to admit," a former U.S. intelligence official testified Tuesday.

Michael A. Braun, former chief of operations and intelligence for the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), told lawmakers that the operational capability of such groups is being "strengthened by the close relations that they are working hard to develop with very powerful organized criminal organizations in our neighborhood and throughout Latin America."

The ultraviolent Los Zetas Mexican drug cartel and others "allow them to operate freely in our neighborhood, and they're getting closer to our doorstep," he said during a hearing by the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

"If we don't do something about it and really get serious about it, I think there's gonna be hell to pay at some date in the probably not too distant future," said Mr. Braun, who retired from the DEA in 2008 and is a managing partner at the international drug law enforcement consulting group Spectre International.

The committee's chairwoman, Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, asserted that Iran's ongoing diplomatic alliance with several Latin American leaders could be giving the Islamic republic's intelligence forces and proxy groups "a platform in the region to carry out attacks against the United States."

"Some may question the congressional focus on the Iran-Latin America nexus because they wrongly believe that Iran's influence in the region is exaggerated," said Mrs. Ros-Lehtinen, Florida Republican.

She called for the hearing amid mounting international concern over Iran's nuclear program and on the heels of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent tour through Latin America.

Many policy analysts and Democrats have expressed skepticism over the extent to which a foothold has been gained in the region by Iranian intelligence elements, including the elite Quds Force, part of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

"Several allegations have been made about Iran's current activities in Latin America," said Michael Shifter, who heads the nonpartisan inter-American Dialogue think tank and appeared alongside Mr. Braun at the hearing.

Mr. Shifter said that while some have made claims of Iranian agents sponsoring terror training camps and of Iranian support for prospecting uranium in Venezuela and Ecuador, such "charges have not, however, been substantiated."

"There is no convincing evidence that such activities are taking place," he said. "More plausible are repeated accusations of money laundering through the region's banks, to help finance Hezbollah's activities."

Hezbollah, which is a key part of Lebanon's government, has long enjoyed material and spiritual support from Iran's Shiite-led regime.

But with the Iranian nuclear threat dominating headlines in recent weeks, Mrs. Ros-Lehtinen and others referred to Tuesday's remarks by Director of National Intelligence James R. Clapper. He told the Senate Intelligence Committee that if Iran feels threatened, it could seek to launch terrorist attacks against targets inside the United States.



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Mr. Clapper cited the charges filed in October by the Justice Department, which revealed a failed plot by Iranian officials to hire a Los Zetas assassin to kill a Saudi diplomat in Washington.

Mr. Braun pointed to the alleged plot as a legitimate example of Iranian ties to drug cartels: "We have the greatest system of justice in the world in our federal courts system, and it's not an easy thing to get evidence admitted."

Mr. Braun went on to reveal details about the secret 2008 DEA campaign Operation Titan, in which agents broke up a cocaine-smuggling and money-laundering ring believed to have been channeling funds to Hezbollah.

The operation, he said, resulted in the discovery of a "very close associate and affiliate of Hezbollah" who apparently was responsible for getting cocaine shipments from Latin America to West Africa and "ultimately responsible for collecting massive amounts of bulk cash."

"Part of that operation involved the delivery of part of that money laundered to a DEA undercover operative, an agent that spoke fluent Arabic," he said. "The agent actually took a delivery of \$20 million dollars in cash as part of that investigation."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/feb/2/hell-to-pay-if-terrorists-link-to-drug-cartels-isn/?page=all#pagebreak>

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BusinessWeek

## **Biological Attack Threat Cited as Pentagon Bolsters Defenses**

February 01, 2012

By Viola Gienger

Feb. 1 (Bloomberg) -- The Pentagon is increasing spending to combat biological threats, such as highly toxic ricin, as U.S. spy agencies warn that a terrorist group might conduct a "limited" attack "in the next year."

While a mass attack by foreign terrorist groups using a chemical, biological or radiological weapon in the U.S. is "unlikely" in the next 12 months, intelligence agencies "worry about a limited" attack domestically or abroad, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told a Senate panel yesterday. He cited interest expressed in such attacks by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which operates in Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

American intelligence agencies judge that lone actors abroad or in the U.S. "are capable of conducting at least limited attacks in the next year," Clapper said in written testimony submitted to the Senate Intelligence Committee before his hearing.

Culprits might include criminals or "homegrown violent extremists" who have been influenced by terror groups or literature advocating similar attacks, he said.

The threat assessment follows the Pentagon's unveiling last week of revised budget priorities for the next five years that protect spending on programs to counter weapons of mass destruction and that increase funding in the field of biological weapons. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton warned of the threat at a biological weapons meeting in Geneva in December.

### **Crude but Effective**

"A crude, but effective, terrorist weapon can be made by using a small sample of any number of widely available pathogens, inexpensive equipment and college-level chemistry and biology," Clinton said. "Even as it becomes easier to develop these weapons, it remains extremely difficult -- as you know -- to detect them."

Clinton cited what she said was a "call to arms" by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula for supporters with degrees in microbiology or chemistry to develop a weapon of mass destruction.

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“That’s probably one of the reasons they’re ramping up the threat assessment for biological weapons,” said Kelsey Gregg, project manager of the Virtual Biosecurity Center at the Federation of American Scientists in Washington.

In contrast, last year’s joint threat assessment from U.S. intelligence agencies devoted only three sentences to the terrorist threat involving chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. It said some terror groups remain interested in acquiring the weapons and threaten to use them, and that stockpiles that were poorly secured might provide material for attacks.

### **Increasing Capability Worldwide**

The Pentagon said the increased focus on biological defense wasn’t spurred by any specific intelligence assessment. President Barack Obama’s 2009 National Strategy for Countering Biological Threats was the impetus, said Air Force Lieutenant Colonel April Cunningham, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

“A key part of the strategy is a broad effort to increase capability worldwide to conduct effective and timely disease surveillance” and counter disease outbreaks, Cunningham said.

The Obama administration is due to release its budget recommendations on Feb. 13 for the fiscal year starting Oct. 1.

“I would put ricin at the top of the list” of threats, Gregg said. “You can get a deadly amount of it pretty easily.”

The Defense Department first revised its chemical and biological weapons programs for the year that started Oct. 1 “to increase focus on biological capabilities such as bio surveillance and medical countermeasures,” Cunningham said in an e-mailed response to questions.

### **Downplaying Some Aspects**

She said the department now is increasing funding for the next fiscal year to expand work under the Cooperative Threat Reduction program, which involves joint work with other nations.

This year’s assessment downplays concern that countries may have supplied help in developing or obtaining weapons of mass destruction.

“We assess that no nation-states have provided WMD assistance to terrorist groups and that no non-state actors are targeting WMD sites in countries with unrest,” Clapper said in the written statement.

*Editors: Terry Atlas, Jim Rubin.*

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2012-02-01/biological-attack-threat-cited-as-pentagon-bolsters-defenses.html#fadetoblack>

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Los Angeles Times

## **Al Qaeda Weakened, Iran a Threat, U.S. Intelligence Officials Say**

*A Senate panel is told a purported Iran plot to assassinate a Saudi diplomat convinced the U.S. that Tehran is increasingly likely to support bombings on U.S. soil.*

By Brian Bennett, Los Angeles Times

February 1, 2012

Reporting from Washington— Al Qaeda's ability to conduct terrorist operations against the United States has diminished in the last year, but U.S. intelligence agencies said Tuesday that they now believe Iranian leaders are willing to launch attacks against American targets.

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The top U.S. intelligence official, James R. Clapper, told a Senate hearing that a purported Iranian plot to assassinate a Saudi diplomat in Washington in the fall convinced U.S. officials that leaders in Tehran are increasingly likely to support bombings on U.S. soil, especially if they feel that their hold on power is threatened.

"Some Iranian officials, probably including supreme leader Ali Khamenei, have changed their calculus and are now willing to conduct an attack in the United States," said Clapper, director of national intelligence.

Tension with Tehran has risen sharply in recent weeks as the European Union and the Obama administration have imposed punishing economic sanctions in an effort to persuade Iran's leaders to abandon what they suspect is a nuclear weapons program.

Recent reports of bombings in Iran, the crash of a secret CIA surveillance drone there and the assassination of several Iranian nuclear scientists suggest a covert campaign by the West or its proxies is aimed at sabotaging the effort.

America's most senior intelligence officials, including Clapper, CIA Director David H. Petraeus and FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III, testified at the Senate Intelligence Committee hearing on worldwide threats against the United States. Iran was a major topic.

The officials provided no further evidence during the hearing to support their perception of a change in Iranian attitudes.

Iran is "keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons" and is "technically capable" of producing enough highly enriched uranium to fuel a nuclear weapon, Clapper said.

"We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons," he said. Inspectors from the United Nations nuclear watchdog agency are in Iran this week to gather further data on the country's nuclear program. Iran says the effort is aimed at generating electricity, not building weapons.

The CIA believes that Iran is feeling the "increased bite of new sanctions," Petraeus said, referring to the U.S. blacklisting of Iran's central bank. The institution receives revenue for about 70% of the oil sold by the National Iranian Oil Co.

"I think 2012 will be a critical year for convincing or preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon," said Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), who chairs the committee. "While the overall terrorist threat may be down, the threat from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction from Iran and North Korea is growing."

In October, FBI and other federal agents claimed they had disrupted a plot to kill the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States by placing a bomb in a Washington restaurant. The alleged plot, which U.S. officials said involved Iran's Revolutionary Guard and a Mexican drug cartel, never moved beyond the planning stages.

Clapper also furnished a 30-page report to the committee on danger spots around the world.

It noted concern about Washington's uneasy partnership with nuclear-armed Pakistan, the rising death toll of drug-related violence in Mexico and Central America, North Korea's push to build nuclear weapons, and the political turmoil in North Africa and the Middle East a year after a series of popular uprisings erupted.

The intelligence officials said that cyber attacks against government agencies and private businesses are growing.

"Down the road, [cyber attacks] will be the No. 1 threat to the country," said Mueller, the FBI director. He said he is working to reorganize the FBI to investigate cyber attacks just as the agency was retooled to respond to terrorist threats over the last decade.

Regarding current threats, Clapper said "lone actors" inspired by terrorist leaders still could conduct limited attacks.

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Clapper said U.S. intelligence judged an attack using a dirty bomb, chemical weapons or deadly germs as "unlikely" in the next year.

U.S. airstrikes and drone missile attacks against Al Qaeda in Pakistan and elsewhere have left the organization without central leadership, and a "largely symbolic" role among Islamic extremists, Clapper said.

No charismatic leader has replaced Osama bin Laden, who was killed by Navy SEALs in May, and Clapper said there was a "better than even chance" that the movement will fragment.

Al Qaeda's affiliate in Yemen, known as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, remains the most likely group to plan and launch an attack on U.S. soil, Clapper said, but most groups are focused on regional battles.

In Mexico, drug-related killings continue to increase, but the escalating drug violence is not likely to spill across the border, Clapper said.

"The factor that drives most of the bloodshed in Mexico — competition for control of trafficking routes and networks of corrupt officials — is not widely applicable to the small retail drug trafficking activities on the U.S. side of the border," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-intel-threats-20120201-1,0,1941978.story>

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Wall Street Journal

February 3, 2012

## U.S. Fears Iran's Links to Al Qaeda

By Siobhan Gorman

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WASHINGTON—U.S. officials say they believe Iran recently gave new freedoms to as many as five top al Qaeda operatives who have been under house arrest, including the option to leave the country, and may have provided some material aid to the terrorist group.

The men, who were detained in Iran in 2003, make up al Qaeda's so-called management council, a group that includes members of the inner circle that advised Osama bin Laden and an explosives expert widely considered a candidate for a top post in the organization.

The assertions are likely to amplify tensions between Washington and Tehran. A Senate committee on Thursday moved to intensify sanctions to force Iran into negotiations on its nuclear program, while Tehran has largely defied pressure. This week, Iran prevented U.N. nuclear inspectors from gaining access to sites and scientists, according to diplomats.

Skeptics caution that intelligence on Iran's activities is limited and worry that some policy makers might use provocative reports to justify military action against Tehran. Iran has denied any connection with al Qaeda.

U.S. officials believe there have been recent indications officials in the Iranian government have provided al Qaeda operatives in Iran limited assistance, including logistical help, money and cars, according to a person briefed on the developments.

Adding to the U.S. pressure on Iran, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper told senators in an annual intelligence assessment that U.S. agencies believe the Iranian regime is now more willing to conduct an attack in the U.S.

"We have to be vigilant for more of that," Mr. Clapper told lawmakers Thursday.

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The reports come at a time of growing concern about Iran's decision-making. President Barack Obama, in last month's State of the Union address, said "America is determined to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, and I will take no options off the table to achieve that goal."

Even among U.S. officials who believe Iran has given greater freedoms to al Qaeda operatives, there is substantial debate within the U.S. government about whether that means there are significant ties between Iran and al Qaeda.

Some officials say it is too early to draw conclusions about Iran's intentions and caution against judgments that Iran is posing an imminent threat.

"There is not significant information to suggest a working relationship between Iran and al Qaeda," said a U.S. official.

Said another U.S. official: "Al Qaeda moving fighters or money is one thing, while planning major terrorist attacks against the West from Iranian soil is probably something [Iran] won't allow."

Iran and al Qaeda have a long history of differences, particularly religious ones: Iran is Shiite Muslim and al Qaeda is Sunni. The regional aims of Iran and al Qaeda remain sharply divergent, particularly in Iraq. Iran has long supported Shiite extremist groups and militias, which are bitterly opposed to Sunni groups, the sect from which al Qaeda has drawn support.

Hillary Mann Leverett, a former National Security Council aide in the Clinton and Bush administrations, strongly urged caution in drawing links between Iran and al Qaeda, noting that Iran in the past repatriated more than 200 al Qaeda operatives that had crossed into Iran, and even provided copies of their passports to the United Nations.

"I think [there] is a war-fevered hysteria that is going on now," she said. "A lot of this stuff is really flimsy and is really questionable."

Ms. Leverett added that if Iran is in fact granting more freedom to al Qaeda members, it may not represent an effort to partner with al Qaeda, but rather a decision that letting them go could stir up trouble for the U.S. "'Let the United States deal with it,'" would be Iran's logic, she said.

Nonetheless, some officials and experts worry conditions may be ripe for a more direct partnership between Iran and al Qaeda as both come under pressure by the U.S. and the West.

Much of the al Qaeda senior leadership has been killed by the Central Intelligence Agency's drone campaign and the commando raid that killed bin Laden last year—meaning the organization needs to replenish its leadership ranks.

"For al Qaeda core, it's one of their best hopes of reviving themselves," said Bruce Hoffman, an al Qaeda specialist at Georgetown University.

"Al Qaeda is in deep trouble right now, but they do have some senior leaders outside the country in some locations that are not easy to get at," said Seth Jones of Rand Corp., who wrote a recent article in Foreign Affairs on the potential Iran-al Qaeda partnership.

Tehran, for its part, under growing pressure from Western sanctions, needs allies.

Iran has, in effect, provided sanctuary to several senior al Qaeda leaders over the years, Mr. Jones said. Some al Qaeda operatives fled to Iran when the U.S. launched its Afghan offensive in 2001. Since then, these operatives have communicated, moved money and facilitated recruiting from their Iranian beachhead, Mr. Jones said. Some lower-level al Qaeda operatives are also believed to be in Iran.

After an al Qaeda attack in Saudi Arabia in 2003, Iran placed most of the operatives under house arrest. But they still were permitted to communicate with other operatives and transfer funds to their counterparts in Pakistan, said Mr. Jones.

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The management council, a group of advisers to al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan, includes planner and explosives expert Saif al Adel, who is from Egypt; spokesman Sulayman Abu Ghayth, of Kuwait; Abu al-Khayr al-Masri, of Egypt, who was a member of bin Laden's inner shura council; planner Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, of Egypt; and spiritual leader Abu Hafs al-Mauritani, a Mauritanian.

Together, they comprise some of the group's financial, spiritual and operational leaders, many with long-standing ties to senior al Qaeda leaders in Pakistan.

It isn't clear whether the five men would take advantage of an offer to return to their home countries—where they could face arrest and prosecution—or if Iran would allow them to go to another country, such as Pakistan, U.S. officials said. Nor is it clear what restrictions, if any, would be placed on them if they remain in Iran, the officials said.

Mr. Adel has been considered a rising star within al Qaeda. He is under U.S. indictment for his alleged role in the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Africa. In the wake of bin Laden's death, Mr. Adel's name was floated in reports out of the region as a potential candidate to lead the international organization.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203920204577197421440415962.html>

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Sun Star – Manila, Philippines

## **Body of Malaysian Terrorist 'Killed' in Jolo Not Yet Found**

Friday, February 3, 2012

MANILA -- The remains of a top leader of the regional Jemaah Islamiyah terror network have not been found, the Philippine military said Friday, a day after announcing that he had been killed in a US-backed airstrike.

Troops on the ground were still combing the jungle camp that was hit Thursday for the body of Malaysian Zulkifli bin Hir, also known as Marwan, said regional military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Randolph Cabangbang.

Military officials said at least 15 people were killed in the dawn strike on a militant camp on remote southern Jolo Island, including two other high-level leaders. A military spokesman in Manila, Colonel Marcelo Burgos, initially reported that Marwan was among them.

Marwan's death would mark a major success in disrupting a militant network blamed for some of the most spectacular bombing attacks in Southeast Asia in recent years. But if the initial report proves incorrect, it would turn a largely successful strike into at least a partial embarrassment for the Philippine military, while burnishing the reputation of the elusive terrorist.

The US has offered a \$5 million reward for the capture of Marwan, a US-trained engineer accused of involvement in deadly bombings in the Philippines and in training militants.

Cabangbang, who is based in southern Zamboanga city, from where the bomber planes in Thursday's strike took off, said the military's announcement of Marwan's killing was based on information provided by informants. He refused to elaborate, saying it would compromise their intelligence assets.

"We are still searching. Our troops are still there," Cabangbang said.

He suggested that the blast could have obliterated Marwan's body, saying the process of verification linked to the possible disbursement of the reward money to informants will be "more tedious" and could include DNA testing.

Two Philippine security officials with knowledge of the airstrike who spoke to The Associated Press also said Marwan's body was not found, though bombs shattered the house where he was believed to have been.





One of the officials confirmed the deaths of the two other high-level leaders: Umbra Jumdail, who led the Philippine-based Abu Sayyaf group, and a Singaporean leader in Jemaah Islamiyah, Abdullah Ali, who used the guerrilla name Muawiyah. The other official confirmed only the death of Jumdail, also known as Dr. Abu Pula, and his son.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters.

Cabangbang said the decision to announce the killings, including that of Marwan, was made by the chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, General Jessie Dellosa, after he was briefed by commanders.

"There are details that we cannot divulge because of operational security," he said when pressed for details.

A US official in Washington confirmed the strike on Jolo Island, an impoverished region 600 miles (950 kilometers) south of Manila, and said the Pentagon provided assistance in one of the region's most successful anti-terror operations in years.

The strike debilitated a regional militant network that has relied on the restive southern Philippines — sometimes called Southeast Asia's Afghanistan — as a headquarters for planning bombings and a base for training and recruitment.

About 30 militants were at the camp near Parang town on Jolo, the stronghold of the Abu Sayyaf and their allies from the mostly Indonesian-based Jemaah Islamiyah, when it was bombarded by two OV10 aircraft dropping 500-pound (227-kilogram) bombs at 3 a.m., regional military commander Major General Noel Coballes said.

"Our report is there were at least 15 killed, including their three leadership," he said. "This is a deliberate, fully planned attack coming from our forces."

The rest of the militants escaped and no one was captured, Coballes said.

American counterterrorism troops have helped ill-equipped Filipino troops track Marwan for years using satellite and drone surveillance. About 600 US special forces troops have been deployed in the southern Philippines since 2002, providing crucial support for the Philippines' counterterrorism operations. US-backed Philippine offensives have been credited for the capture and killing of hundreds of Abu Sayyaf fighters and most top leaders since the 1990s.

In Washington, a US official, speaking to the AP on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the record about the operation, confirmed the Pentagon had aided the strike. He was not specific about the contribution and did not know how many people had been killed in the operation.

Marwan's death would represent the most important success against Jemaah Islamiyah since the January 2011 arrest of Indonesian suspect Umar Patek in Pakistan's garrison town of Abbottabad, where Osama bin Laden was killed in a US commando attack four months later.

Patek and Marwan allegedly collaborated with the Abu Sayyaf in training militants in bomb-making skills, seeking funding locally and abroad and plotting attacks, including against American troops in the southern Philippines.

Patek is believed to have returned to Indonesia then gone to Pakistan, leaving Marwan to take charge in the southern Philippines, military officials say.

The attack in Jolo also represents a huge blow to the Abu Sayyaf's ability to recover from years of setbacks through fund raising and training of militants.

The Philippine Air Force dropped four bombs from two planes, said Major General Jose Villarete, head of the 3rd Air Division based at an air force base in Zamboanga city.

Abu Sayyaf is behind numerous ransom kidnappings, bomb attacks and beheadings that have terrorized the Philippines for more than two decades.



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Jumdail had eluded troops in numerous offensives and emerged as a key figure in the radical movement.

Most recently, all three of the militant leaders were among the prime suspects in the kidnappings of three Red Cross workers from Switzerland, Italy and the Philippines in 2009. The hostages regained their freedom months later.

Abu Sayyaf militants, numbering about 400 by military estimates, are still considered a key threat to regional security and are suspected in the kidnapping of a former Australian soldier, as well as a Malaysian, a Japanese and an Indian.

On Wednesday, gunmen in nearby Tawi-Tawi island province seized Dutch and Swiss tourists. Officials said they were trying to move the hostages to Jolo. (AP)

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/manila/local-news/2012/02/03/body-malaysian-terrorist-killed-jolo-not-yet-found-204108>

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Pakistan Observer – Pakistan  
OPINION/Op-Ed  
Wednesday, February 01, 2012

## **Spoiling the Nuclear Peace**

By Saqib Mehmood

Indian navy has taken over the Russian built INS Chakra II nuclear powered attack submarine from Russian navy near the Russian port of Vladivostok. This addition in Indian nuclear capability would be detrimental not only for the deterrence satiability in South Asia but also for efforts, which are being on the way to halt a nuclear arms race in the region.

With this addition the triad of Indian nuclear capability has been completed, which was previously based on two prongs; land based ballistic missiles and air based bombers. With the appearance of this tier on Indian nuclear capability showcase, the magnitude of threat for Pakistan would increase many folds in future. The development also comes in line with the US grand strategy in the region, ramping up the Indian military, economic and political might against China. But here hundred million dollar question is that why Russia, which is the second powerful competitor of US in the region, is taking such steps that indirectly feed the US strategic interests? This is because of only economic interests or something else, which is working on behind the curtain? To put the matter in perspective, the deterrence in South Asia is highly complicated with the presence of China factor. The complex triangular behavior of South Asian nuclear deterrence is further complicated with the inherent asymmetries on conventional and strategic levels. Extra regional and regional nuclear powers, those are technologically and economically strong, have been benefiting from this complexity by either fueling the arms races through their discriminatory approaches towards regional disputes between these three nuclear armed countries.

United States and Russia (former Soviet Union) have sold mountainous arms to China, India and Pakistan not only in Cold War but also after that to feed their economic and geopolitical interests. The United States' total arms sale to South and Near East Asia from 1950 to 2009 remained \$230,440,906,000, almost 47 percent of its total arms supply to whole World. Russia can also be estimated as the second largest arms exporter to these regions.

Same as United States and Russia, India also exploited this triangular complexity not only on strategic but also on tactical level. Bulk of Indian conventional and strategic forces is concentrated against Pakistan, where as it has always argued that their developments are not meant for Pakistan, but for China. By using this argument India has become the World largest arms importer. According to the report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, India accounted for 9 per cent of all international arms imports in the period from 2006 to 2010, and it is expected to keep the top spot for the foreseeable future.

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Pakistan being economically poor than that of India and China, has always avoided the unnecessary arms imports. On conventional front, Pakistan is ranking on 13th position as compared to India, which ranked 1st, six times more than that of Pakistan. Similarly on strategic front Pakistan never even think about the development of ballistic missile defence (BMD) system, which India is developing with the help of US and Israel. Neither has it ever thought about the development of third tier of its nuclear capability. Beside this it is firm on its minimum credible deterrence stance, the minimum level of nuclear capability to deter aggression from any adversary or enemy.

One thing is clear that with the acquisition of nuclear submarine by India, Pakistan's nuclear posture, command and control and nuclear arms control policies have been complicated and paradigm shift of policy could be expected. Most probably Pakistan can consider it a rational option to follow the same pursuit. Because Indian assured second strike capability and its BMD system (under development) would give her confidence of first strike capability that means a successful first strike, which totally eliminates the enemy's retaliatory capability. Beyond political rhetoric that India will not use its nuclear weapon first against any nation, it is imperative for security planners of Pakistan to take Indian weapon developments seriously. They must plan now what is inevitable to restore the balance at strategic level.

If capability is present, intent would be near about (intent vs capability). According to a report released by Federation of American Scientists in February 2011, India had stockpiles of weapon grade plutonium worth to be making of 80-100 weapons. Former official of Indian elite intelligence agency Research & Analysis Wing (RAW), J.K Sinha claimed that India is capable of producing 130 kg of weapon grade plutonium per year, which is worth to be making of 26-30 weapons per year. Moreover India is also aggressively working on its BMD system with the help of some regional and extra regional powers.

Against this backdrop, one can easily guess about the Indian real intentions towards Pakistan. The Chakra II will be loaded with nuclear-tipped Granat Cruise Missiles, which clearly means it is clearly Pakistan specific development. This cruise missile, which is Russian Built, has a range of 300 to 3000 km and can wreck havoc on any specific target trough out of Pakistan. Moreover it is equipped with inertial-Doppler radar/terrain map system with accuracy of 6 to 9 meters, which has made it a counter force killer. Pakistan's command centers, nuclear weapons, delivery means, early warning and communication centers would be potential targets in an eventuality of Indian first strike (which could be surprised and decapitative in nature).

Pakistan must develop or acquire its nuclear submarine to restore the deterrence stability in region. Because it is so costly to develop or acquire a nuclear submarine and one has to overcome certain economic and technological obstacles. For the time being acquisition of passive sonar detection system and mining of Pakistan's sea vicinities would be a rational choice. At diplomatic and political front Pakistan should condemn not only India but also that powerful states, which are inducing instabilities in the region for their short term economic gains. If in future this region becomes the victim of nuclear winter, the responsibility will be on the shoulders of these merchants of death.

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<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=138246>

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Bloomberg News  
OPINION/Editorial

## **Don't Fall for Persian Fairy Tales in IAEA's Talks on Iranian Bomb: View**

By the Editors  
February 1, 2012

The International Atomic Energy Agency has wrapped up its visit to Iran, with its chief inspector, Herman Nackaerts, saying "we had a good trip" and announcing plans for another "in the very near future."

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The Iranians are in agreement. “We’ve always tried to put transparency as a principle in our cooperation with the IAEA,” said Ali Akbar Salehi, the country’s MIT-educated foreign minister.

We’ve heard this Persian fairy tale before. Faced with increasing international pressure, Iran makes nice with the agency, trying to beguile its inspectors and 35-member governing board with explanations and evasions. Judging by Iran’s continuing failure to live up to its legal obligations under the Nonproliferation Treaty, the goal is to play for time until an Iranian nuclear weapon is a fait accompli and the world lives uneasily ever after.

Details of the IAEA’s mission will probably not be revealed until its next quarterly report in a few weeks. In the meantime, the agency has announced that another meeting will take place in Tehran on Feb. 21-22. Iran’s receptiveness to the team’s visit suggests a willingness to take seriously the allegations about its nuclear program’s “possible military dimensions” -- to use the IAEA’s almost-smoking-gun phrase from its report in November-- rather than dismissing them out of hand as lies and fabrications as it has in the past.

### **Sanctions That Bite**

That gives us another hopeful sign: that the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and its allies, including a European embargo on Iranian oil to take effect this summer, are having an effect. The isolation of Iranian banks from the international financial system has sent prices of basic goods higher and cut the value of the rial against the dollar by more than 50 percent, bringing home to ordinary Iranians the consequences of their leadership’s actions. Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei must weigh whether Iran’s economy, and his regime’s rule, can withstand such growing pressure over the one to two years that analysts estimate Iran still needs to build a nuclear weapon.

If ever there were a place and time to, as Richard Nixon famously said about Chile, “make the economy scream,” it would be Iran now. Given the dismal alternatives of military action or a nuclear-armed Iran, sanctions must be stiff enough to lead Iran’s supreme leader to the right conclusion. We welcome the urgency that Congress has attached to this issue, with three new bills in the works that target Iran’s oil industry and finances.

At the same time, sanctions must strengthen rather than fracture the coalition behind them. To execute the delicate diplomacy involved, President Barack Obama’s administration must have leeway in enforcing such measures. To our minds, some of the legislation that’s been proposed doesn’t provide the necessary maneuvering room. The Senate Banking Committee will mark up draft legislation Thursday that will, among other things, impose a six-month deadline on investigating and sanctioning any company listed on U.S. stock exchanges that has conducted activities sanctionable under U.S. law, or has affiliates that have done so. This is a tight timeframe and a very wide net. Although the committee has taken pains to blunt any charges of extraterritoriality, its far-reaching provisions on foreign subsidiaries may raise hackles in Europe and elsewhere.

There’s little doubt that the Iranians’ new willingness to talk to the IAEA is an attempt to sow division between their most hard-line critics and those countries still hoping Iran will change its ways; dissension over potentially overreaching sanctions could produce much the same effect.

### **Sharing Intelligence**

In addition to laying on tighter, smarter sanctions, there are steps the world can take to help the IAEA. These include providing the agency with more intelligence evidence that it can actually show the Iranians -- many intelligence agencies now share information with the IAEA on the condition that it be kept from Iran. This wouldn’t necessarily persuade the Iranians to admit to illicit activities, but it would put a stop to Iran’s complaints on that score and help to maintain the agency’s present effectiveness and future credibility. (The debacle of Iraq, with its slam dunks and still-missing weapons of mass destruction, has left the IAEA’s professional staff understandably concerned about being led up the garden path.)

The IAEA should also be encouraged to use its authority for so-called special inspections, which can be undertaken quickly when the information provided by a state is inadequate, even without the signing of an additional protocol. And, moving forward, the agency’s board of governors needs to make its voting records public. Let those

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member countries that have refused to help in stopping the spread of nuclear weapons confront greater public scrutiny -- as they will, ultimately, history's verdict.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-02-02/don-t-fall-for-persian-fairy-tales-in-iaea-s-talks-on-iranian-bomb-view.html>

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New York Times  
OPINION/Sunday Review  
February 2, 2012

## Envisioning a Deal with Iran

By WILLIAM H. LUERS and THOMAS R. PICKERING

"If you deal in camels, make the doors high," an Afghan proverb cautions. As the dangers mount in the confrontation between the United States and Iran, both sides will have to raise the doors high for diplomacy to work, and to avoid conflict.

A diplomatic strategy must begin with the United States' setting its priorities and then defining a practical path to achieve them. To achieve its top priorities, it will have to learn what Iran needs. Since the United States will not get total surrender from Iran, it must decide what it can put on the table to assure that both sides can reach a deal that will be durable.

American leaders have been masterly at diplomatic strategies — "building high doors" — to make deals. Franklin D. Roosevelt opened relations with the Soviet Union in 1933 to balance the ascendance of menacing forces in Germany and Japan. He was acting for geopolitical reasons, and in spite of his objection to Communism. Richard M. Nixon opened relations with China to enhance American leverage in dealing with the Soviet Union. He re-framed — but did not give up on — the American commitment to Taiwan to accomplish his objective. In each case, the presidents were acting against the advice of most of their close advisers.

In our own time, President Obama's initial instincts on Iran were correct: only he can lead the United States to agreements with Iran that advance American national interests.

The first question is how to get such diplomacy started, and on that, Nixon's strategy toward China is instructive.

Before traveling to Beijing in 1972, Nixon outlined on his ubiquitous yellow pad three analytical pillars of his strategy: What do they want, what do we want and what do we both want? The Chinese, he continued, wanted to "build up their world credentials," to recover control of Taiwan and to get the United States out of Asia, while the United States wanted to succeed in Indochina, establish communication "to restrain Chinese expansion in Asia" and, in the future, "reduce threat of confrontation by China Super Power." The United States and China both wanted "to reduce danger of confrontation and conflict, a more stable Asia, a restraint on U.S.S.R."

In the Shanghai Communiqué, issued at the culmination of the meeting in Beijing, the continuing differences were highlighted, but both sides agreed to expand the common ground between them.

In developing a diplomatic strategy toward Iran, President Obama might respond to Nixon's three questions as follows: Iran wants recognition of its revolution; an accepted role in its region; a nuclear program; the departure of the United States from the Middle East; and the lifting of sanctions. The United States wants Iran not to have nuclear weapons; security for Israel; a democratic evolution of Arab countries; the end of terrorism; and world access to the region's oil and gas. Both Iran and the United States want stability in the region — particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan; the end of terrorism from Al Qaeda and the Taliban; the reincorporation of Iran into the international community; and no war.

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With those assumptions as a skeleton, the shape of a final agreement with Iran is imaginable. The United States would agree to full recognition and respect for the Islamic Republic, and Iran would agree to regional cooperation with the United States in Afghanistan and Iraq. Both sides would agree to address the full range of bilateral disputes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Security Council could accept an Iranian civil nuclear program in return for Iran's agreeing to grant inspectors full access to that program to assure that Iran did not build a nuclear weapon. Once international agencies had full access to Iran's nuclear program, there could be a progressive reduction of the Security Council's sanctions that are now in effect. Iran would agree to cease making threats against Israel, and the United States would agree to support efforts toward achieving a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

It would be important to make arrangements for Israel's security; the exact shape of those measures would have to be worked out in the negotiations. An agreement in which there would be full access to Iran's nuclear program, with a monitored limitation of 5 percent enrichment, would offer Israel additional reasons for confidence in the deal.

Both sides would agree to cooperate in reducing the influence of the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan; in combating drug trafficking; and in keeping open the routes through which energy flows to the world from the Persian Gulf. Both sides would agree that while wide differences between the two nations remained, those differences must be resolved peacefully.

The China analogy for American-Iranian relations falls short in some areas. The most important is that Mao was ready for an American approach, while Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, is not. Instead, he is convinced that the United States will not work with Iran until his regime is gone.

For Iran's leadership, the notion that the United States is bent on overthrowing its rulers is rooted in historical experience: the United States did overthrow Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953, supported the Shah afterward, supported Saddam Hussein's war against Iran in the 1980s, and now backs increasing efforts to weaken and isolate Iran.

Reducing the malign influence of this legacy on the thinking of Ayatollah Khamenei will be essential to achieving any deal. Simply "keeping the door open to diplomacy" will not be sufficient. So the Iranian leader must be approached directly, but discreetly, by someone he trusts who conveys assurances from President Obama that covert operations and public pressure have been demonstrably reduced. The interlocutor might be a leader from a country in the region, enlisted when the American president felt the time was right.

Ayatollah Khamenei will have to be convinced by actions, not just messages. Just as Nixon halted covert action in Tibet before approaching China, a similar signal will be needed with Iran.

There is no guarantee that diplomacy will succeed. But that is also true of war. And only diplomacy can offer Iran's current rulers a stake in building a secure future without a nuclear bomb. Only diplomacy can achieve America's major objectives while avoiding the mistakes committed in Iraq or Vietnam.

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<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/03/opinion/sunday/envisioning-a-deal-with-iran.html>

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## Obama's Turn on Nuclear Weapons

*The White House and its Warheads*

By Joseph Cirincione

When U.S. President Barack Obama took to the podium during a rare visit to the Pentagon [1] early last month, he announced a new strategy for the country's military posture abroad. The United States would shift from being able to fight two major wars simultaneously to increasing its focus on Asia. But the president also explained that reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal would be key to future defense: "We will continue to get rid of outdated Cold War-era systems," he said, "so that we can invest in the capabilities we need for the future."

Policy, meet budget. After having been separated for a decade, as the Pentagon operated essentially free from fiscal considerations, the two have been reunited in Washington's new age of austerity. On nuclear weapons, that fact should work in Obama's favor. In his first major foreign policy speech, delivered in Prague in April 2009, he vowed to "put an end to Cold War thinking" and "reduce the role of nuclear weapons in our national security strategy and urge others to do the same." Obama negotiated the New START agreement with Russia, which both countries signed a year later. It lowered the ceiling for deployed U.S. and Russian strategic warheads by 30 percent and restored reciprocal inspections, vital to verifying the reductions. Obama also oversaw a Nuclear Posture Review, which formalized his Prague goals as policy.

But in the past year, Republican opponents and a resistant nuclear bureaucracy have stymied further progress. Contracts raced ahead of policy -- Congress pushed through budgets to develop a new generation of nuclear arms before the president and the Pentagon could agree on the specifics of the new course. Unless this is reversed, in the coming decade Washington may actually spend more on the country's nuclear weapons programs than it has in the past [2]. If the president wants to reduce the country's costly nuclear weapons burden he now has a chance. Last summer, as part of the April 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, the Pentagon started compiling a new, highly classified report with options for the structure and size of the nuclear force -- how it is composed, who and what it targets, and whether it continues to be postured to launch a devastating first strike on multiple states.

Now, the National Security Council staff at the White House is working with the Defense Department and other agencies to further shape policy options for the president's consideration. The package will likely be ready for him this month. Whatever Obama decides will then be codified in a presidential policy directive that will form the basis of the country's new strategic nuclear war plan. Since the end of the Cold War, every U.S. president has done this once. This is Obama's turn.

Most observers have not expected much from this process. Amy Woolf, a nuclear weapons analyst at the Congressional Research Service, told a Washington audience last month [3] that "any changes you see now are going to be modest." Russia is waiting to see if Obama is re-elected before committing to any new negotiated reductions. The president's political advisers also want protection during an election year -- when national security issues traditionally skew rightward -- and hesitate to give his opponents any fodder for the "weak and naive" meme. Finally, there are far more entrenched officials and contractors that benefit from the sprawling nuclear complex than officials who believe in the president's stated vision. To put it simply, Obama has let the bureaucracy suffocate his plan to move step by step toward, as he said in Prague, "the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Although modesty may reign, there will likely be some options for deep cuts in the arsenal. These flow from the consensus formed in recent years among the core of America's security elite -- one that underpinned the Obama vision of 2009 -- that the United States has room to cut. Undersecretary of Defense Michèle Flournoy echoed this view at the Pentagon last month, when she said, "We can maintain deterrence at lower levels of forces." Senator Carl Levin (D-Mich.), the chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, went further, telling reporters last month [4], "Nuclear weapons are way overdone, we have way more than are needed to carry out their mission." The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review, conducted by the Defense Department, reported that "the massive nuclear arsenal

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we inherited from the Cold War era of bipolar military confrontation is poorly suited to address the challenges posed by suicidal terrorists and unfriendly regimes seeking nuclear weapons."

Ever since President Dwight Eisenhower, U.S. presidents upon taking office have asked the same question: Why does the country need so many nuclear weapons? The short answer is targeting. Current guidance requires the U.S. military to be prepared at any moment to unleash a first strike against targets in five countries: Russia, China, Iran, Syria, and North Korea. This thinking dates back to the targeting guidance developed by the Defense Department in the 1950s. The 1974 guidance, the most recent to be de-classified, details in 18 pages the types of facilities to be destroyed, including nuclear weapons and bases, conventional military installations, military and civilian command-and-control centers, and political and economic resources. In 1974, this included training "at least one weapon on an industrial facility in the top 250 urban areas in the Soviet Union and in the top 125 urban areas in the People's Republic of China," so as "to prolong their post-war recovery." This is the strategy that justifies the approximately 5,000 weapons in the U.S. arsenal today.

Here is where the budget squeeze could give nuclear reductions a new impetus. Current nuclear policy is very expensive. Each leg of the United States' nuclear triad -- long-range missiles, bombers, and submarines -- is reaching the end of its expected operational life. The Pentagon estimates that the U.S. Navy will have to spend \$350 billion to build and operate a new fleet of 12 nuclear-armed submarines that it plans to slip into the water starting around 2030. The Office of Management and Budget recommended last December that the Navy build only ten, and some outside experts have suggested that eight would suffice. But the Navy argues that since submarines need time to get to and from port and undergo routine maintenance, it needs at least 12 subs to keep five on station at all times. Why would the Navy have to keep five of these new subs (two in the Atlantic and three in the Pacific), each with 16 missiles carrying up to eight nuclear warheads apiece, at sea ready to fire? Because the current nuclear policy guidance says it must.

That need not be the case. Obama could rewrite those policies to shrink the target list, eliminate the need to launch weapons in minutes, and make other common-sense improvements. For example, by dropping the requirement to launch approximately 1,000 weapons at targets within 20 minutes, he could reduce the number of submarines required on station, allowing for a secure submarine force of eight boats. That would save \$20 billion over ten years and \$120 billion over the life of the program. Delaying the new strategic bomber would save \$18 billion over ten years, and canceling it, \$68 billion over 20 to 30 years. Reducing the current arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles from 420 to 300 would save billions more, although no one is sure how much, because the government has never done what most businesses do routinely -- that is, cost out the options.

Whatever Obama decides will remain secret. But the results will speak for themselves in budget submissions, program schedules, and whether the United States accelerates reductions required under the New START treaty. Rightsizing the nuclear force would strengthen U.S. global leadership, enhance the country's ability to deter new nuclear weapon states, accelerate efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism, and greatly reduce the danger of the use of nuclear weapons from miscalculation, misunderstanding, or accident. It would make us all safer. More than budget decisions, these are fundamental security issues that tell the world a great deal about U.S. leadership, intentions, and values. Updating the nuclear posture from that of the Cold War era could be one of the most lasting legacies of the Obama presidency. He has already made promises; the time has come to deliver on them.

Links:

[1] <http://bit.ly/yFvffp>

[2] <http://bit.ly/wtOpdL>

[3] <http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/arms-control-proponents-question-us-nuclear-readiness-doctrine/>

[4] <http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/washington-whispers/2012/01/26/senator-puts-us-nuclear-arsenal-in-doubt>

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<http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/137075/joseph-cirincione/obamas-turn-on-nuclear-weapons?page=show>

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