



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 982, 21 February 2012

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Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats and countermeasures. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

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London Telegraph – U.K.

Iran Risks Nuclear Cold War

Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction is threatening to trigger a "new Cold War" that poses an even greater threat of nuclear conflict than the stand-off between the USSR and the West, William Hague warns.

By Robert Winnett, and Benedict Brogan

17 February 2012

Dealing with the Iranian nuclear programme is a "crisis coming down the tracks" which could lead to military conflict in the Middle East, the Foreign Secretary warns.

In an interview with The Daily Telegraph, the Foreign Secretary says that Iran is threatening to spark a nuclear arms race in the Middle East which could be more dangerous than the original East-West Cold War as there are not the same "safety mechanisms" in place.

"It is a crisis coming down the tracks," he said. "Because they are clearly continuing their nuclear weapons programme ... If they obtain nuclear weapons capability, then I think other nations across the Middle East will want to develop nuclear weapons.

"And so, the most serious round of nuclear proliferation since nuclear weapons were invented would have begun with all the destabilising effects in the Middle East. And the threat of a new cold war in the Middle East without necessarily all the safety mechanisms ... That would be a disaster in world affairs."

Mr Hague repeatedly stressed that "all options must remain on the table" when confronting the Iranian regime, despite Liberal Democrat concerns that the Government may be dragged into another military conflict.

He added that we "have to be concerned" that Britain could be in range of Iranian nuclear weapons – or that nuclear materials could fall into the hands of terrorists.

The Foreign Secretary spoke out over the growing crisis amid speculation that Israel may be preparing to launch missile strikes against Iranian missile facilities in the run-up to the US presidential Election in the autumn. He will discuss the growing crisis in Parliament on Monday.

Western diplomats believe that the Israelis are calculating that they have to destroy the Iranian facilities this year, before they are hidden too deep underground and while the election puts Barack Obama under added pressure to support the action.

American intelligence chiefs were this week forced to announce that "to the best of their knowledge" Israel was not poised to launch an attack. But Western officials believe an Israeli strike is likely over the summer.

Several Israeli diplomats have also been targeted by Iranian hit men around the world over the past few days.

In today's interview, Mr Hague says that the British Government has urged Israel not to strike.

He said that Iran being "attacked militarily" would have "enormous downsides".

"We are very clear to all concerned that we are not advocating military action," he said. "We support a twin-track strategy of sanctions and pressure and negotiations on the other hand."

He added: "We are not favouring the idea of anybody attacking Iran at the moment."

Mr Hague also said that Britain was not taking part in any "secret war" against Iran following the killings of several Iranian nuclear scientists in Tehran.

He added: "It is not our way of dealing with this to have assassinations or to advocate military action. Although I do stress again, we are taking nothing off the table."

In the interview, the Foreign Secretary also disclosed details about other areas in his growing in-tray. He said:

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*Britain is not “escalating any argument or manoeuvre” over the Falkland Islands and will “carry on the same way” amid a growing war of words with Argentina.

“Falkland Islanders have settled there since 1765, [when] Argentina didn’t exist in its current form,” he said. “So this is not about territory, this is about political rights in the 21st century. Political freedoms in the 21st century.”

*Greece is paying the “price” of its ongoing membership of the euro.

The Foreign Secretary also disclosed that Britain is now fully-prepared for Greece leaving the single currency.

“Contingency planning is in full place for whatever may happen in the eurozone,” he said.

*It is in Britain’s interests to tackle Somalia as the country is the new breeding ground of terrorism which presents a direct threat to Britain.

“That directly affects the security of people in the UK,” Mr Hague said ahead of a major international conference in London next week on Somalia. “That’s why we are so heavily engaged in Somalia.”

The Foreign Secretary, regarded as the de facto deputy leader of the Conservative Party, also launched a strong defence of the Coalition’s domestic record. He insisted the Government was not creating an “anti-business culture” in the wake of rows over banker pay and bonuses.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9089995/Iran-risks-nuclear-Cold-War.html>

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Fort Worth Star-Telegram – Ft. Worth, TX

AP Exclusive: Iran Poised for Big Nuke Jump

Saturday, February 18, 2012

By GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press

VIENNA — Iran is poised to greatly expand uranium enrichment at a fortified underground bunker to a point that would boost how quickly it could make nuclear warheads, diplomats tell The Associated Press.

They said Tehran has put finishing touches for the installation of thousands of new-generation centrifuges at the cavernous facility - machines that can produce enriched uranium much more quickly and efficiently than its present machines.

While saying that the electrical circuitry, piping and supporting equipment for the new centrifuges was now in place, the diplomats emphasized that Tehran had not started installing the new machines at its Fordo facility and could not say whether it was planning to.

Still, the senior diplomats - who asked for anonymity because their information was privileged - suggested that Tehran would have little reason to prepare the ground for the better centrifuges unless it planned to operate them. They spoke in recent interviews - the last one Saturday.

The reported work at Fordo appeared to reflect Iran's determination to forge ahead with nuclear activity that could be used to make atomic arms despite rapidly escalating international sanctions and the latent threat of an Israeli military strike on its nuclear facilities.

Fordo could be used to make fissile warhead material even without such an upgrade, the diplomats said.

They said that although older than Iran's new generation machines, the centrifuges now operating there can be reconfigured within days to make such material because they already are enriching to 20 percent - a level that can be boosted quickly to weapons-grade quality.

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Their comments appeared to represent the first time anyone had quantified the time it would take to reconfigure the Fordo centrifuges into machines making weapons-grade material.

In contrast, Iran's older enrichment site at Natanz is producing uranium at 3.4 percent, a level normally used to power reactors. While that too could be turned into weapons-grade uranium, reassembling from low to weapons-grade production is complex, and retooling the thousands of centrifuges at Natanz would likely take weeks.

The diplomats' recent comments came as International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors are scheduled to visit Tehran on Sunday. Their trip - the second this month - is another attempt to break more than three years of Iranian stonewalling about allegations that Tehran has - or is - secretly working on nuclear weapons that would be armed with uranium enriched to 90 percent or more.

Diplomats accredited to the IAEA expect little from that visit. They told the AP that - as before - Iran was refusing to allow the agency experts to visit Parchin, the suspected site of explosives testing for a nuclear weapon and had turned down other key requests made by the experts.

Iranian officials deny nuclear weapons aspirations, saying the claims are based on bogus intelligence from the U.S. and Israel.

But IAEA chief Yukiya Amano has said there are increasing indications of such activity. His concerns were outlined in 13-page summary late last year listing clandestine activities that either can be used in civilian or military nuclear programs, or "are specific to nuclear weapons."

Among these were indications that Iran has conducted high explosives testing and detonator development to set off a nuclear charge, as well as computer modeling of a core of a nuclear warhead. The report also cited preparatory work for a nuclear weapons test and development of a nuclear payload for Iran's Shahab 3 intermediate range missile - a weapon that could reach Israel.

Iran says it is enriching only to make nuclear fuel. But because enrichment can also create fissile warhead material, the U.N. Security Council has imposed sanctions on Tehran in a failed attempt to force it to stop.

More recently, the U.S., the European Union and other Western allies have either tightened up their own sanctions or rapidly put new penalties in place striking at the heart of Iran's oil exports lifeline and its financial system.

The most recent squeeze on Iran was announced Friday, when SWIFT, a financial clearinghouse used by virtually every country and major corporation in the world, agreed to shut out the Islamic Republic from its network.

Diplomats say the choke-holds are being applied in part to persuade Israel to hold off on potential military strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities - among them Fordo, a main Israeli concern because it is dug deep into a mountain and could be impervious to the most powerful bunker busting bombs.

Diplomats told the AP earlier this month that Iran had added two new series or cascades of old-generation IR-1 centrifuges to its Fordo operation, meaning 348 centrifuges were now operating in four cascades.

Olli Heinonen, who retired last year as the IAEA's chief Iran inspector, recently estimated that these machines, and two other cascades at Natanz can produce around 15 kilograms (more than 30 pounds) of 20-percent enriched uranium a month, using Iran's tons of low-enriched uranium as feedstock.

The low and higher enriched uranium now being produced "provides the basic material needed to produce four to five nuclear weapons," Heinonen said.

But he suggested "an altogether different scenario" - a much quicker pace of enrichment to levels easily turned into weapons-capable uranium if Iran starts using newer, more powerful centrifuges at Fordo. That, said the diplomats, is exactly what Iran appears to be on the verge of doing by finishing preparatory work recently for new centrifuge installations.



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Just three days ago Iran's semiofficial Fars agency reported that a "new generation" of Iranian centrifuges had gone into operation at Natanz, in central Iran.

A diplomat accredited to the IAEA, which monitors Iran's known nuclear programs, said the "new generation" of centrifuges appeared to be referring to about 65 IR-4 machines that were recently set up at an experimental site at Natanz.

Fordoo, which can house 3,000 centrifuges, was confidentially revealed to the IAEA by Iran in 2009, just days before the U.S. and Britain jointly announced its existence.

Iran announced last year that it would move its 20-percent uranium production to Fordoo from Natanz and sharply boost capacity. It started making higher grade material two years ago saying it needed it to fuel a research reactor.

But the U.S. and others question the rationale, pointing out that Iran rejected offers of foreign fuel supplies for that reactor and is making more of the higher-enriched material than that small reactor needs.

<http://www.star-telegram.com/2012/02/18/3744798/iran-says-stuxnet-virus-infected.html>

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Gulf Times – Qatar
Saturday, February 18, 2012

IAEA Visit to Be 'Last Chance' for Tehran

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Vienna - The UN atomic agency's second visit to Iran in a month next week could be Tehran's "last chance" to show goodwill on its nuclear programme and avoid sanctions, but analysts and diplomats are less than hopeful.

After a first visit on January 29-31 produced few results, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced it would return to Tehran on February 20-21. "I'm not optimistic that Iran will provide much more information because I think any honest answers to the IAEA's questions would confirm that Iran had been involved in weapons-related development work and Iran wouldn't want to admit that for fear of being penalised," Mark Fitzpatrick of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said.

The West has long contended that Iran is seeking the atomic bomb and insists it comply with UN Security Council resolutions to halt enriching uranium, but Tehran says its nuclear programme is merely for civilian purposes. Failure to make at least some concessions next week could bring about new pressure on Iran, which has already been targeted by four sets of UN sanctions and a series of unilateral US and EU measures. "The second meeting will be a last chance for Iran to make a significant gesture," said Mark Hibbs, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

If IAEA chief Yukiya Amano writes in his report to the agency's board of governors in March that Tehran did not cooperate, "that could trigger additional pressure from the Western group in the board on a resolution that would again raise the temperature, call for more sanctions."

"The IAEA report will be more condemnatory if Iran does not demonstrate some flexibility by answering some questions and it knows that, it will try to give the IAEA some basis for pulling its punches," Fitzpatrick added.

http://www.gulf-times.com/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=487480&version=1&template_id=37&parent_id=17

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Press TV – Iran

'P5+1 Talks Must Be Based on Iran's Proposals'

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Saturday, February 18, 2012

A senior Iranian lawmaker says Iran's proposals should shape the framework of Tehran's future talks with the world powers.

"Iran's talks with the P5+1 (China, France, Russia, the UK and the US plus Germany) should be based on the package proposed by the Islamic Republic," said Chairman of Iran's Majlis Committee on National Security and Foreign Policy Alaeddin Boroujerdi in a Saturday interview.

The Iranian legislator went on to say that besides Tehran's right to peaceful nuclear energy, the talks should discuss regional problems, terrorism and energy transactions.

Boroujerdi made reference to Iran's recent achievements in nuclear technology ahead of the P5+1 talks, adding that the European Union has perceived that Iran's progress will not be halted even if nuclear powers cease to collaborate with the country.

On Wednesday, Iran placed the first indigenous fuel rods into the heart of Tehran Research Reactor and 3,000 new generation centrifuges to its Natanz facility, increasing the production of 3.5 percent enriched uranium by 50 percent.

EU Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton has welcomed a letter from Iran indicating Tehran's readiness to resume talks with the major world powers over its nuclear program.

On Wednesday, Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Saeed Jalili announced Tehran's readiness to resume talks, saying that the success of negotiations is tied to the P5+1's constructive approach to the Islamic Republic's initiatives.

Iran and the P5+1 held two rounds of multifaceted talks in Geneva in December 2010 and in the Turkish city of Istanbul in January 2011.

While Tehran says it is ready to continue the talks based on common grounds, it has stressed that it will not give up any of its rights.

The United States, Israel, and some of their allies accuse Iran of pursuing military objectives in its nuclear program and have used this pretext to impose international and unilateral sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

Iran, however, maintains that, as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency, it has every right to develop and acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/227313.html>

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Press TV – Iran

Iran Building Modern Cyber Army

Sunday, February 19, 2012

Iran will soon have a cyber army. The idea to build the country's first ever cyber army was raised back in 2010 when the security officials identified a virus called Stuxnet that attacked the country's industrial sites, especially those that manage water supplies, oil rigs, and nuclear power plants.

The officials say they also plan to set up a national internet to minimize identity theft and potential cyber attacks.

Speaking to Press TV on the final day of the first national conference on cyber defense, head of Iran's Passive Defense Organization said they want to have a cyber army, after the successful launch of the cyber defense headquarters with support from more than 60 organizations, ministries and private entities.

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According to the officials, Iran is the first country ever in the Middle East to actually be engaged in a cyber war with the United States and Israel.

If anything, they said, the recent cyber attacks were what encouraged them to set up the Passive Defense Organization - which gathers computer scientists, programmers, software engineers and cyber security specialists.

Experts say it makes sense for Iran to build a cyber army because it is a heavily wired country with more than 36 million internet users, more than 50 percent of the total population.

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/227564.html>

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Tehran Times – Iran

Iran Is a Rational Actor, Top U.S. General Tells CNN

Political Desk

Monday, February 20, 2012

TEHRAN – Tehran has not decided to make a nuclear weapon, Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in an interview with CNN’s “Fareed Zakaria GPS,” which was scheduled to be broadcast on Sunday.

“We are of the opinion that Iran is a rational actor,” Dempsey said. “We also know, or we believe we know,” that Iran has not decided to make a nuclear weapon, Army General Martin Dempsey stated, according to the Bloomberg.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Dempsey said that an Israeli attack on Iran would be “destabilizing.”

“It’s not prudent at this point to decide to attack Iran,” Dempsey said, adding that the U.S. government is confident the Israelis “understand our concerns.”

The White House National Security Adviser Tom Donilon began a two-day visit to Israel on Saturday to discuss Iran and other issues, such as the issue of Syria.

“A strike... would be destabilizing and wouldn’t achieve their long-term objectives,” Dempsey said of the Israelis.

Crude oil prices increased 4.8 percent in February on concern the tensions between Iran and Israel will lead to a military conflict that disrupts oil supplies from the Persian Gulf.

Iran is OPEC’s second-biggest producer. Iranian officials have threatened to cut off the Strait of Hormuz, through which about a fifth of crude oil trade passes.

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/component/content/article/95625>

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Bellingham Herald – Bellingham, WA

Monday, February 20, 2012

UN Nuclear Inspectors to Press Iran on Weapons

By NASSER KARIMI, Associated Press

TEHRAN, IRAN - U.N. nuclear inspectors starting a two-day visit to Tehran on Monday sought to meet Iranian nuclear scientists and visit a key military facility as they try to gauge allegations that Iran is pushing toward making an atomic weapon.

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The trip is the second in less than a month by the International Atomic Energy Agency team, reflecting growing concerns over alleged weapons experiments - something Iran has so far both denied and refused to discuss.

Herman Nackaerts, a senior U.N. nuclear official, said in Vienna before the team departed on Sunday that he hoped for progress in the talks but his careful choice of words suggested little expectation the meeting will be successful.

The trip came as Iran announced air defense wargames to practice protecting nuclear and other sensitive sites, the latest in a series of military maneuvers viewed as a message to the West that Iran is prepared both to defend itself against an armed strike and to retaliate.

The U.S. and Israel have not ruled out military action against Iran's nuclear program, which they say is geared toward making weapons. Iran denies the charges and insists the program is for peaceful purposes only, such as power generation.

Iran's state radio said Monday the IAEA inspectors hope to meet Iranian nuclear scientists and visit the Parchin military complex. The report said the IAEA had requested to visit Parchin, an Iranian military base and conventional weapons development facility outside of Tehran. The site has also been suspected of housing a secret underground facility used for Iran's nuclear program, a claim denied by Iranian authorities.

IAEA inspectors visited the site in 2005, but went to only one of four areas of potential interest within the grounds. At the time, the nuclear watchdog did not report any unusual activities but the Parchin site was prominently mentioned in the agency's report last year.

The report asserted that Iran constructed "a large explosives containment vessel" in which to conduct experiments on triggering a nuclear explosion, apparently 11 years ago, adding that it had satellite images "consistent with this information."

"Whatever the reasoning of the agency is, it proves the IAEA is not loyal to its previous commitments," the Iranian radio said. The tone of the commentary suggested the visit to the military complex would likely be denied.

The IAEA visit comes as Iran last week announced what it described as key advancements in its nuclear program, inserting the first domestically made fuel rod into a research reactor in Tehran and installing a new generation of Iranian-made centrifuges at the country's main uranium enrichment facility in the central town of Natanz.

Beyond concerns about the purported weapons work, Washington and its allies want Iran to halt uranium enrichment, which they believe could eventually lead to weapons-grade material and the production of nuclear weapons. Iran has been enriching uranium up to 20 percent, while uranium enriched to more than 90 percent can be used for a nuclear warhead.

The IAEA team wants to talk to key Iranian scientists suspected of working on an alleged weapons program. They also hope to break down opposition to their plans to inspect documents related to nuclear work and secure commitments from Iranian authorities to allow future visits.

The IAEA summarized its information last November in a 13-page document drawing on 1,000 pages of intelligence. It stated then for the first time that some of the alleged experiments can have no other purpose than developing nuclear weapons.

Iran has denied alleged weapons experiments for nearly four years, saying they are based on "fabricated documents" provided by a "few arrogant countries" - a phrase authorities in Iran often use to refer to the U.S. and its allies.

Also Monday, Iran's official news agency reported that the military had begun a four-day air defense war game dubbed "Sarollah," or "God's Revenge," in the south of the country.



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Anti-aircraft batteries, radar, and warplanes will be involved in the maneuvers aimed at increasing coordination between the regular military and the powerful Revolutionary Guard in defending sensitive facilities including nuclear sites, IRNA reported.

The exercises will be held over 73,000 square miles (190,000 square kilometers) near the port of Bushehr, the site of Iran's lone nuclear power plant.

Iran has held multiple air, land, and sea maneuvers in recent months as the tensions increase.

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

<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2012/02/20/2402102/un-nuclear-inspectors-to-press.html>

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Indian Express – India

Iran Says UN Nuke Inspectors Will Not Visit Sites

By Agencies

Tuesday, February 21, 2012

A UN team visiting Iran has no plans to inspect the country's nuclear facilities and will only hold talks with officials in Tehran, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast said today.

The remarks by Ramin Mehmanparast cast doubt on how much the UN inspectors would be able to gauge whether Iran is moving ahead with its suspected pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The two-day visit by the International Atomic Energy Agency team, which started Monday, is the second in less than a month amid growing concerns over alleged Iranian weapons experiments.

Iran denies charges by the West that it seeks atomic weapons, insisting its nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes only, such as power generation.

Mehmanparast said the visiting IAEA team was made up of experts, not inspectors. He told reporters that the IAEA team was holding discussions Tuesday in Tehran to prepare the ground for future cooperation between Iran and the UN watchdog. He said this cooperation is at its "best" level.

"The titles of the members of the visiting delegation is not inspectors. This is an expert delegation. The purpose of visit is not inspection," said Mehmanparast. "The aim is to negotiate about cooperation between Iran and the agency and to set a framework for a continuation of the talks."

Visits to individual Iranian nuclear sites were also not part of the IAEA earlier visit three weeks ago. But yesterday, Iranian state radio said the UN team had asked to visit the Parchin military complex outside Tehran, a known conventional arms facility that has been suspected as a secret weapons-making location and also to meet Iranian nuclear scientists involved in the country's controversial program.

"Iran's cooperation with the IAEA agency continues and is at its best level," added Mehmanparast.

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/iran-says-un-nuke-inspectors-will-not-visit-sites/914885/0>

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London Telegraph – U.K.

Iran 'Will Take Pre-Emptive Action if Tehran Feels Threatened'

Iran would take pre-emptive action against its enemies if it felt its national interests were endangered, the deputy head of the Islamic Republic's armed forces was quoted as saying on Tuesday.

Tuesday, 21 February 2012

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"Our strategy now is that if we feel our enemies want to endanger Iran's national interests, and want to decide to do that, we will act without waiting for their actions," Mohammad Hejazi told Fars news agency.

Iran is facing growing international pressure and isolation over its disputed nuclear activity. Expanded Western sanctions aim to block its economically vital oil exports and Tehran has said it could retaliate by shutting the Strait of Hormuz shipping lane vital to global energy supplies.

Yesterday Tehran launched military exercises aimed at boosting anti-air defences around its nuclear sites as United Nations officials arrived for talks designed to extract more information about the country's atomic weapon ambitions.

The official IRNA news agency said four days of manoeuvres would deploy missiles, anti-aircraft artillery, radars and fighter jets.

"These exercises aim to reinforce the co-ordination between the military and the Revolutionary Guards for a total coverage of the country's sensitive facilities, especially nuclear sites," the agency said.

Covering 73,400 square miles of southern Iran, the manoeuvres were code-named "Sarollah", a word borrowed from Arabic meaning "God's vengeance".

The statement coincided with increasing speculation that Israel is planning pre-emptive air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities, despite warnings from Washington and William Hague, the Foreign Secretary, that sanctions should be given more time to alter Tehran's posture. Iranian leaders have repeatedly denounced the Jewish state's right to exist.

Mr Hague on Monday reiterated concerns that allowing Iran to build a nuclear bomb would spark a Middle East arms race.

"If Iran set about the development of nuclear weapons then other nations in the Middle East would do so as well," he told MPs.

"I therefore do believe there would be a nuclear arms race in the region."

Mr Hague said he opposed a backbench motion on Iran to rule out military action as it would boost Iran's confidence.

Five officials from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency arrived in Tehran led by Herman Nackaerts, its chief inspector, for two days of meetings in another attempt to meet nuclear scientists, inspect documents related to nuclear work and visit the Parchin military base believed to have been used for high-explosive tests relevant to nuclear warheads.

In a three-day IAEA trip last month the Iranians kept discussion to "talks about talks", according to Western officials.

Mr Nackaerts said on departure from Vienna that he wanted "concrete results" from the talks, but Ali Akbar Salehi, the Iranian foreign minister, quickly dampened speculation about increased IAEA access.

"No. Their work has just begun," he told the student news agency ISNA.

The nuclear agency summarised its information last November in a 13-page document drawing on 1,000 pages of intelligence which stated for the first time that some of Iran's experiments could have no other purpose than developing nuclear weapons.

Its next report will be published within a week and given Tehran's limited co-operation could well provide further fuel for Israel's argument that time is running out to cripple uranium enrichment and other sites for a significant period of time.

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Tehran, which insists its nuclear programme is strictly designed for civilian use, last week said it had used domestically-made nuclear fuel in a reactor for the first time, as well as developing faster, more efficient uranium enrichment centrifuges.

A semi-official news agency meanwhile reported that Tehran was considering extending a largely symbolic oil embargo on France and Britain, which import only a tiny proportion of their oil from Iran, to other European countries.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9095265/Iran-will-take-pre-emptive-action-if-Tehran-feels-threatened.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
February 18, 2012

Pyongyang's Call for Troops Pullout 'Especially Unacceptable,' U.S. Says

By Lee Chi-dong

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 (Yonhap) -- The United States made clear Friday that North Korea's demand for the pullout of American troops on the Korean Peninsula is not negotiable.

"I think you know that we have said, for quite some time, that we are not prepared to accept preconditions for the resumption of talks," State Department spokesperson Victoria Nuland said at a press briefing. "And that precondition in particular would be unacceptable."

Her comments came as the U.S. and North Korea are scheduled to hold high-level talks in Beijing next week to see if they can resume the six-party talks on the communist nation's nuclear program. The other participants are South Korea, China, Russia and Japan.

The U.S. has around 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea, a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War.

In a closely monitored New Year's joint editorial of its mouthpiece newspapers, the North renewed a call for the withdrawal of U.S. forces, which it claims are a fundamental obstacle to peace on the peninsula.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/02/18/13/0401000000AEN20120218000100315F.HTML>

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The Star – Malaysia
Sunday, February 19, 2012

North Korea Ruling Party to Meet, May Make Succession Official

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea's state media said on Monday its ruling Workers' Party will hold a key conference in April, the first since 2010, in which it is likely to make official the succession of power to its third generation of leadership.

The conference, to be held in mid-April, will come around the time of the centenary of the state founder Kim Il-sung's birth, which the North has planned to mark the launch of a new era as a "strong and prosperous nation."

"The Political Bureau of the WPK Central Committee decides to convene the WPK Conference in mid-April Juche 101 (2012) to glorify the sacred revolutionary life and feats of Kim Jong-il for all ages and accomplish the Juche cause, the Songun revolutionary cause, rallied close around Kim Jong-un," the North's KCNA news agency said.



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Juche is the North's homegrown state ideology mixing Marxism and extreme nationalism, preached by the state founder Kim Il-sung. Songun is his son's own ruling doctrine that translates to "military first."

Kim Jong-un, who is believed to be in his late 20s, was appointed vice chairman of the Workers' Party's Central Military Commission at a rare conference in September 2010, taking his first official title in rapid preparations for succession.

That meeting was the first of its kind in more than 30 years. Experts said the conference is reserved for making official special moves in the country's power hierarchy.

His father Kim Jong-il died in December last year, leaving the reclusive state in the hands of his untested son. Kim is believed to be backed by royal family members and aides, headed by the young leader's uncle and a top army general.

Kim Jong-un has been called "supreme commander" and has been at the head of state functions honouring his dead father.

So far he has appeared at ease in his new role and presided over "birthday" celebrations for his dead father in Pyongyang last week.

Reporting by Jack Kim; Editing by David Chance

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2012/2/20/worldupdates/2012-02-19T225936Z_1_TRE81IOP9_RTROPT_0_UK-KOREA-NORTH-PARTY&sec=Worldupdates

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Korea Times – South Korea
February 21, 2012

N. Korean Envoy Arrives in China for Talks with U.S.

BEIJING/SEOUL (Yonhap) -- North Korea's top negotiator arrived in China on Tuesday for talks with his U.S. counterpart as part of diplomatic efforts to resume long-stalled negotiations on ending Pyongyang's nuclear weapons programs.

North Korea's First Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan did not make any comment to reporters at an airport before being whisked away in a car.

Kim is expected to stay in the North Korean embassy to prepare for the high-level meeting with U.S. envoy on North Korea, Glyn Davies, scheduled for Thursday.

Davies is expected to arrive in the Chinese capital on Wednesday.

The third round of bilateral meetings would mark the first contact between the two sides since the December death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. It is expected to test whether Kim's youngest son and new leader Kim Jong-un will abandon his country's nuclear programs.

South Korea's deputy chief negotiator to the six-party talks, Cho Hyun-dong, will leave for Beijing on Thursday to coordinate pending issues with Davies, a foreign ministry official in Seoul said.

"Cho plans to visit China for coordination with the U.S. delegation with regard to the third round of U.S.-North Korea high-level dialogue," the official said on the condition of anonymity.

After the Beijing talks, Davies will also visit South Korea on Saturday to debrief on the outcome of the talks, the official said.

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North Korea has not shown any signs of giving up its nuclear programs. The North recently praised the late leader for elevating the country to a nuclear state. North Korea conducted two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009, drawing international condemnation and tightened U.N. sanctions.

South Korea and the U.S. have insisted that the North accept a monitored shutdown of its uranium enrichment program to show its sincerity toward denuclearization before reviving the disarmament-for-aid talks.

In 2010, North Korea revealed that it was running a uranium enrichment facility. Highly enriched uranium can be used to make weapons, providing Pyongyang with a second way to build nuclear bombs in addition to the existing plutonium program.

The talks, which involve the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia, were last held in Beijing in late 2008. (Yonhap)

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/02/120_105356.html

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Economic Times – India
21 February 2012
Press Trust of India (PTI)

India, Pakistan Agree to Extend N-Risk Reduction Pact for 5 Years

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan today announced that they had agreed to extend a pact on reducing the risk from accidents related to nuclear weapons for another five years.

The two sides agreed to extend the validity of the 'Agreement on Reducing the Risk from Accidents Relating to Nuclear Weapons' for five years with effect from today in line with an understanding reached during the sixth round of bilateral expert-level talks on nuclear confidence building measures held in Islamabad on December 27, 2011.

The agreement had entered into force on February 21, 2007 for an initial duration of five years, said a statement from Pakistan's Foreign Office.

"It aims at reducing the risk from accidents related to nuclear weapons," it said.

During the talks held in December, India and Pakistan decided to move forward on proposals to extend two key agreements related to pre-notification of ballistic missile tests and reducing the risk from accidents related to nuclear weapons.

The two sides reviewed a range of existing nuclear and conventional CBMs and discussed proposals for additional measures in areas where the two countries could make forward movement.

A proposal for an agreement to prevent "incidents at sea", involving naval vessels of the two countries, also came up during those talks.

The talks on nuclear and conventional CBMs were part of the peace process that resumed last year after a gap of over two years in the wake of the 2008 Mumbai attacks, which were blamed on the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba.

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics/nation/india-pakistan-agree-to-extend-n-risk-reduction-pact-for-5-years/articleshow/11977851.cms>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

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General Explains Human Factor in Failed Bulava Launches

18 February 2012

Unsuccessful launches of Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile happened due to human factor and were the result of unprofessional work of certain people, Chief of the Russian General Staff Gen. Nikolai Makarov said on Saturday.

Trials of Bulava began in 2004, six of the 18 full-scale Bulava trials failed. A series of successful launches began in October 2010.

"You know that there were several unsuccessful launches of Bulava. We stopped the trials, we carefully worked through the reasons of failures and to a greater extent it was a human factor, where a person did his work unprofessionally. You know, as there was no special control he did it "somehow" this was the main factor," Makarov said in an interview with radio station Echo of Moscow.

At the same time Chief of the Russian General Staff said that the military men initially did not understand what the problem was, as in different four launches there were discovered four unrelated problems.

"We realized that the technical solution itself was correct and we appointed a military officer who oversaw every process and after that all the launches were successful," general said.

On December 23, the strategic submarine Yury Dolgoruky launched two Bulava missiles. The Defense Ministry said that the launch was successful and it will now be adopted for service with the Russian Navy.

MOSCOW, February 18 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120218/171384035.html

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Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

Putin: \$800 Billion for 'New Army'

Monday, February 20, 2012

The Russian newspaper "Rossiiskaya Gazeta" on February 20 printed a lengthy article purportedly written Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, also the front-runner in the March 4 presidential elections.

In the article entitled "Being Strong Is a Guarantee of National Security for Russia," Putin outlines plans for military reform and rearmament that would see the Russian government spending 23 trillion rubles (some \$770 billion) over a 10-year period.

Putin writes, "It's obvious we cannot strengthen our international position, develop the economy and democratic institutions if we are not able to defend Russia."

Putin says the increased spending does not reflect the "militarization of the Russian budget" but he says the military has been "chronically underfunded" for years and it is now time "to pay the bill."

Putin said the potential for developing the military structure of the Soviet era "is completely exhausted" and the huge armies of the last century are outdated. He said a "new army" is needed to confront modern threats.

The man who looks to become Russia's president for at least another seven years, and possibly 14 years, complained that up until recently there have been military units that require up to five days to fully assemble. In the article he said that ground forces have "more than 100 regular and special brigades" that should be able to fully assemble in "one hour and be deployed to potential combat theaters within 24 hours."

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To support these forces, Putin said money will be spent to build "more than 400 modern intercontinental ballistic missiles" for ground and sea forces, 28 submarines armed with nuclear missiles, more than 50 military surface vessels, about 100 military space "apparatus," more than 600 modern warplanes, including fifth-generation fighters, more than 1,000 combat helicopters" as well as a broad deployment of the new S-400 anti-aircraft system and Vityaz anti-missile system, the Iskander-M missile system, some 2,300 new tanks and 2,000 self-propelled artillery pieces.

Putin commented on the anti-missile shield the U.S. and its allies are deploying in Europe despite Russian objections saying Russia would have an "effective and asymmetrical" response to the system.

The U.S. and NATO allies claim the system is defense against missiles from "rogue" states such as Iran or North Korea.

Putin wrote about reforms for servicemen saying that the armed forces would have approximately one million members by 2017 and 700,000 of these would be "professional" soldiers as opposed to conscripted troops. Putin said by 2020 only 145,000 of the one-million man armed forces would be conscripts. He also said money would be spent to provide "a package of social guarantees" for troops covering insurance, access to medical care, a "worthy" pension and greater opportunities to enter the workforce after being discharged from the armed forces.

Putin also pledged that "some 20,000" soldiers discharged during the 1990s without access to housing and who are still "waiting in municipal lines" for housing, would receive apartments before the end of 2012.

Putin writes in one section of the need to support the country's armed forces saying, "they need to be strengthened, otherwise you'll be 'forced to feed a foreign army (of occupation),' or even end up slaves to bandits or international terrorists."

Putin has cultivated an image as a tough man since first becoming Russia's president in 2000. Part of his popularity among Russians comes from his comments on Russia being a strong and influential country in the international community.

The more than 6,000-word article "Rossiskaya gazeta" credits Putin as authoring seems designed to further the image of a presidential candidate who supporters have been saying is the only candidate in the March 4 election who can guarantee Russian strength and security.

Written by the Central Newsroom

http://www.rferl.org/content/putin_military_russia_rearmament_reform/24489479.html

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Bulava Missile More Dangerous to Russia than to Enemy - Experts

20 February 2012

Russian experts on Monday questioned how wise it is to adopt the troubled Bulava intercontinental missile for service, suggesting it would cause more security problems than it would solve, the Kommersant daily said.

First Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Sukhorukov said on Sunday a presidential decree putting the missile into operation was drafted and ready to be signed.

However, military analyst Viktor Baranets said it was a "reckless" and "dangerous" move since the missile was underdeveloped.

"In its current form the missile could be even more dangerous for the [Russian] navy than for an enemy navy," he said.



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

Russia successfully test launched two Bulava missiles on December 23.

Only 11 of 18 or 19 test launches of the troubled Bulava have been officially declared successful.

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

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

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

MOSCOW, February 20 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20120220/171416917.html

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RT – Russia

‘We Will Join Missile Defense or Render it Useless’ - Medvedev

21 February 2012

Russia will not counter the proposed US-European missile defense shield if offered a role in its implementation, President Dmitry Medvedev said at the meeting with the missile forces' commanders.

“This does not mean a confrontation, this means only one thing – we cannot remain indifferent to their plans because they touch upon our strategic interests, this is why I had to make this statement,” Medvedev told the military referring to his address to the Federal Assembly in which he for the first time announced the plans to counter the proposed missile defense shield.

The president added that the plans can be reversed only on condition that Russia is offered some scheme of joint participation in an anti-missile system.

Medvedev also rejected the suggestions that the statement was excessively harsh.

“This was not a harsh statement because it lists all real circumstances that forced me, as the Supreme Commander, to make the corresponding decisions, and those reply measures that will be put into life. They are being fulfilled right now, you know about them and they will be carried out to the end, just like the figure on rearming the strategic missile forces, they will be rearmed 100 per cent by 2020, have no doubt. Everything is repaid in full so that everything is prepared and delivered to the troops,” Medvedev announced to the commanders.

“When we signed an agreement on limitations to the strategic offensive forces, we were basing it on the notion that we were in a certain parity, give or take. We understand that the missile defense is in essence an extension of the strategic missile force, though by different means and in essence it is an attempt to destroy this balance,” Medvedev stated.

The Russian president reiterated the thesis that Russia is going to take steps that will be difficult and costly, but still affordable, to balance the missile defense initiative.

“But if they abandon their plans, our colleagues will have demonstrated flexibility on this issue in some cases. We will also demonstrate flexibility in return,” Medvedev assured.



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But if the US and European countries persist in their plans to develop and build the missile defense system, Russia will act in response, Medvedev stressed. *"I want to underline it once again, this is not some sort of Russian militarism or Cold War relic, this is simply a sober analysis and we cannot act any other way,"* the president noted.

<http://rt.com/politics/missile-defense-medvedev-russia-851/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

S-400 Missiles Deployed in W. Russia

21 February 2012

New S-400 Triumf air defense systems have been delivered to Russia's Western Military District and will be put on alert duty in a month, district commander Arkady Bakhin said on Tuesday.

He did not say exactly where the missiles will be stationed.

Air Force Commander Alexander Zelin previously said S-400 systems would be deployed near Russia's borders in 2012.

Some of them will most likely be placed in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad in response to the planned European missile shield, which Moscow considers a threat to its national security.

Russia currently has two S-400 regiments protecting the airspace around Moscow.

State-controlled arms exporter Rosoboronexport has said Russia will not export S-400 systems before 2015 and may not start deliveries to Belarus and Kazakhstan until after 2014.

The S-400 (SA-21 Growler) air defense system is expected to form the cornerstone of Russia's theater air and missile defenses by 2020.

The S-400 can engage targets at a range of up to 400 kilometers and an altitude of 40,000-50,000 meters. The system uses an array of assets optimized for engaging ballistic and cruise missiles.

ST. PETERSBURG, February 21 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20120221/171436474.html

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News & Observer – Raleigh, NC

Saturday, February 18, 2012

Boldest Nuclear Cutters Recently? It's Been GOP

By ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press (AP), National Security Writer

WASHINGTON: The Obama administration's consideration of severe cuts in nuclear weapons generated a flurry of GOP criticism - "reckless lunacy" in the words of Arizona Rep. Trent Franks. But the historical record shows that in the two decades since the Cold War ended, Republicans have been the boldest cutters of the nuclear arsenal.

"Republican presidents seem to have a thing for 50 percent nuclear reductions," says Hans Kristensen, a nuclear arms specialist with the Federation of American Scientists, a think tank founded by many of the scientists who built the first atomic bombs.

For example, on President George H.W. Bush's watch, the number of deployed weapons as well as those held in reserve was nearly cut in half, from 22,217 to 13,708 warheads, according to official U.S. government figures. The

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number of deployed strategic warheads dropped from 12,300 to 7,114 in that same period, by Kristensen's calculations.

As part of that move, taken as fears of a nuclear Armageddon at the Cold War's end were diminishing, the Republican president announced in September 1991 that he unilaterally was retiring all ground-based U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe and South Korea and removing all nuclear weapons from U.S. naval surface ships.

Submarines remain armed with nuclear missiles as part of a "triad" of land-, air- and sea-based weapons that is the enduring core of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

President George W. Bush went further, cutting the total stockpile by 50 percent, from 10,526 to 5,273 warheads. By Kristensen's count, the number of deployed warheads fell to 1,968 by the time Bush left office in January 2009.

In his two terms, Democratic President Bill Clinton trimmed just a little more than 2,000 warheads from the stockpile.

No commander in chief, however, ever cut the nuclear force to as low a number as Obama might under a set of options that his administration is considering now.

One option is to cut the number of deployed long-range weapons to a range of 1,000 to 1,100; a second would drop it to between 700 and 800; a third is to go down to between 300 and 400.

That compares with the 1,550 warhead limit set by a U.S.-Russia arms pact, known as the New START treaty, which took effect one year ago.

Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, said Friday that he would be aghast at the notion of deep cuts to the nuclear force.

"Never before has a president done something like this," Turner said. "Yes, presidents since Truman have updated the nation's nuclear war plan. But I cannot find a precedent for a president to tell the national security team that, regardless of the nuclear weapons modernization programs of China, Russia, Pakistan, North Korea and others, the U.S. should plan to reduce to as low as 300 nuclear weapons."

Those three options, first reported by The Associated Press on Tuesday, have not yet been presented to Obama for a decision. James Miller, the Pentagon official who has led a study of U.S. strategic nuclear weapons requirements, said Wednesday that another option is to stick to the 1,550 limit. But Miller also suggested that getting below 1,500 is more likely.

Miller told a nuclear deterrence symposium that he believes the U.S. can strengthen deterrence and maintain its security obligations to allies, while reducing the risks of the spread of nuclear technologies and arms, with a smaller nuclear force.

"So that's a little bit of a hint" at what he will be advocating as Obama contemplates options for cutting the force, Miller said. He said options would be presented to Obama "soon."

It would be a major surprise if Obama chose to cut to 300 deployed warheads, not least because it seems highly unlikely that the Russians would agree to anything nearly that low. It's possible that Obama may make some unilateral reductions, with an expectation of reciprocal moves by Moscow. At any rate it may be years before U.S.-Russian negotiations even get started.

Rose Gottemoeller, the State Department's top arms control official, said Wednesday that preliminary discussions with the Russians are under way to try to set the stage for negotiations.

The eye-popping option of cutting to 300 weapons sparked a firestorm of criticism by Republicans on Capitol Hill.

"A 300 number would (mean) the Chinese would have more than we have," Arizona Sen. Jon Kyl said Thursday. "I mean, this is a number where anybody that wanted to could build up to that number and be a peer with the



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United States. The whole point of nuclear deterrent is to have so much and so great a capability that nobody ever messes with you."

Actually, the Chinese may have as many as 300 nuclear weapons but that is their total stockpile. If the U.S. cut to 300 deployed weapons it would still have many hundreds, if not thousands, of others on standby status for use in a crisis. At present the U.S. has about 1,790 deployed long-range nuclear weapons, and the total stockpile stands at about 5,000.

To put the numbers in perspective, the U.S. and Russia have about 90 percent of all nuclear weapons in the world.

Turner was among 34 House members to sign a letter Friday to Obama calling it "inconceivable to us" that his administration would make steep reductions in nuclear weapons, combined with what they called the president's abandonment of an earlier pledge for a long-term commitment - and tens of billions of dollars - to modernize the nation's nuclear weapons program.

"Surely you agree that blind ideology cannot drive a matter as important as U.S. nuclear forces over reality," they wrote.

<http://www.newsobserver.com/2012/02/18/1865335/boldest-nuclear-cutters-recently.html>

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U.S. News & World Report

Bird Flu Studies Can Be Published After All: WHO

Experts said security risk was outweighed by need to share findings on possible mutations by the virus

February 18, 2012

SATURDAY, Feb. 18 (HealthDay News) -- Research on a mutated, more contagious form of the bird flu virus can be published in full, the World Health Organization announced Friday, despite concerns that bioterrorists could use the information to start a pandemic.

The decision came during a special meeting of 22 bird flu experts in Geneva that was convened by the WHO to discuss the "urgent issues" that have swirled around possible publication of the two bird flu studies since last November, *The New York Times* reported Saturday.

Most of those at the meeting felt that any theoretical terrorist risk was outweighed by the "real and present danger" of similar flu virus mutations occurring naturally in the wild, and by the need for the scientific community to share information that could help identify exactly when the virus might be developing the ability to spread more easily, Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told the *Times*. Fauci represented the United States at the meeting.

"The group consensus was that it was much more important to get this information to scientists in an easy way to allow them to work on the problem for the good of public health," Fauci said. "It was not unanimous, but a very strong consensus."

However, Fauci added, the United States was not part of that consensus. U.S. bio-security chiefs had urged last November that critical specifics of the papers remain unpublished.

Although the bird flu virus, known as H5N1, rarely infects people, it appears to be highly lethal when it does. Of about 600 known cases, more than half have been fatal. If the virus were able to spread more easily from birds to humans, experts have estimated that millions of people could die after being infected.

The two studies at the center of the debate were to be published in the journals *Science* and *Nature* late last year. The papers, which were funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, describe how the H5N1 virus could

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mutate relatively easily into a strain that could spread rapidly among humans. The research was done by scientists at the University of Wisconsin and in the Netherlands.

The editors of both journals said they plan to publish the papers in full at a future date.

"Discussions at the WHO meeting made it clear how ineffective redaction and restricted distribution would be for the *Nature* paper. It also underlined how beneficial publication of the full paper could be. So, that is how we intend to proceed," Dr. Philip Campbell, editor-in-chief of *Nature*, said in a statement. "As was expressed at the WHO meeting, there is a need first to explore how best to communicate the issues of publication to a concerned public, and to review safety assurance of labs who would act on this publication. I fully support the WHO's further efforts in this regard."

Speaking at a scientific meeting in Vancouver, *Science* editor-in-chief Bruce Alberts had this to say about the WHO decision: "So, my reading is that both *Nature* and *Science* are to wait until we get some further information from the WHO and other authorities of when, in fact, we are to publish the full manuscript."

Before the two studies can be published, the experts at the WHO meeting said that security assessments must be made, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported.

Another meeting on the remaining issues will be held at a future date, the WHO said in a statement.

The scientists behind the research had agreed on Jan. 20 to honor a 60-day moratorium on further studies, the *Herald* reported, but that deadline will now be extended for an unspecified time to allow for a wider examination of the risks and for public discussion.

More information

For more on how the bird flu virus might be able to infect humans, visit the U.S. National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/news/articles/2012/02/18/bird-flu-studies-can-be-published-after-all-who>

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Times of India – India

UN Chief Calls on Countries to Ratify CTBT

By Indo-Asian News Service (IANS)

February 19, 2012

VIENNA: UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has called on the countries that have not yet ratified the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty (CTBT) to sign it so it can become global law.

The CTBT bans nuclear explosions on the Earth's surface, atmosphere, in outer space, underwater and underground. So far 182 countries have signed the Treaty, of which 157 have also ratified it. A global verification regime with over 300 sensors monitors the globe around the clock for nuclear explosions to detect any violations of the Treaty.

Speaking on the occasion of the passing of 15 years after the treaty was opened for signature, Ki-moon said Saturday: "There is no good reason to avoid signing or ratifying this Treaty. Any country opposed to signing or ratifying it is simply failing to meet its responsibilities as a member of the international community."

Eight countries that have yet to ratify the CTBT include China, North Korea, Egypt, India, Israel, Iran, Pakistan and the US.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/UN-chief-calls-on-countries-to-ratify-CTBT/articleshow/11945692.cms>

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Pakistan Observer – Pakistan

OPINION/Analysis

Sunday, February 19, 2012

Securing World Against Nuclear Terrorism

By Dr. Muqsudal Hassan Nuri and Usman Ghani

A surprise, successful nuclear attack by terrorists could spell a disaster. During these times of global terrorism securing the world from radiological attack is of immense importance. Nuclear security aims in preventing terrorists from acquiring Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) or plutonium, an essential ingredient of a nuclear weapon. Hence, security of nuclear materials is the sovereign responsibility of states. The binding global standard in force is the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, to secure these materials in international transit. Unfortunately, 2005 amendment regarding facilities and materials in domestic use has not yet been ratified. There are numerous non-binding international instruments and guidelines, but observance remains at best half-hearted and slipshod. As a result, considerable amounts of fissile material throughout the world remain poorly protected.

The horrors of unauthorized nuclear disaster were dramatized by the Fukushima nuclear plant accident due to natural mishap. But the detonation of an improvised nuclear device could be far more deadly than any kind of Fukushima disaster. Likewise, a sabotage attack on a nuclear facility or a sophisticated radiological attack could exceed in scale and complexity of Fukushima, albeit in different ways. The biggest challenge for a successful nuclear or radiological attack is how to acquire in the first place, the nuclear material. So the key in thwarting it is to secure fissile materials and other radiological sources. However their wide global use in many civil and non-military applications makes this a difficult task. In making effective radiological licensing laws, detecting illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological materials and effective law enforcement to respond to incidents of theft and attempted theft pose as major and daunting hurdles.

The Washington Nuclear Security Summit of 2010 gave a new impetus to international efforts for security of radiological materials. The second Nuclear Security Summit, to be held in Seoul March 2012 is a continuation of earlier efforts to make the world safe from radiological terrorism. The forthcoming Seoul Nuclear Security Summit will also focus on nuclear safety in addition to nuclear security. While nuclear safety and nuclear security are not synonymous, they share the common objective of protecting people from harmful radiation.

A core accomplishment of the 2010 Washington summit was that 47 nations attending it reached a consensus that nuclear terrorism is among the top global security challenges and that stringent nuclear material security measures should be the most effective way to prevent it. Since then significant progress has been made in a number of areas and states policies are in generally on track to fulfill their key commitments by 2012. Based on open source information, it has been conclude that approximately 60 percent of these national commitments have been realized, and notable progress has been made in another 30 percent. Some of the examples of these national commitments completed include: Chile sending all its highly enriched uranium (HEU) to the U.S; Kazakhstan securing enough HEU and plutonium to make 775 nuclear weapons; and Russia ending its plutonium production and signing a plutonium disposition protocol with the U.S.

Further, achievements made on national commitments include: China signing a memorandum of understanding with the U.S to work together on establishing a nuclear security Centre of Excellence in China; Ukraine removing over half of its HEU, to meet the pledge for eliminating of its HEU stock by the 2012 summit. This attempt made in implementing the national commitments demonstrates the promise of the Nuclear Security Summit process in improvements in global nuclear material security culture. Needless to say, preventive measures can never guarantee total/foolproof protection regime. No matter how much fissile and radiological material is secured in the former Soviet Union or how much funds are invested in sophisticated nuclear-detection systems for

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international border crossings, terrorists may still succeed in acquiring material that has been unaccounted for, and can still evade all mechanisms. This is especially true about the threat of radiological terrorism, because it is a far more existential threat as terrorists could acquire and weaponize radiological material to launch a nuclear strike.

If effective global nuclear security regime is not maintained and pursued there could be series of global risks. A successful act of nuclear terrorism can inflict large number of casualties and physical damage. Moreover, there would be a climate of terror, with exodus from big cities in the world, as the terrorist groups could threaten more attacks to paralyze civil societies. Any country subjected to such attack would face unbearable political pressure to respond with massive military force of its own against perceived groups residing within or outside its borders. Hence, a wider conflict, global economic disruption, and societal chaos could result. The dire consequences may even negatively impinge on climate change.

Presently many energy-starved countries are building nuclear power for being cheap and in attempts to lower carbon emissions. It seems likely that should there be a successful nuclear terrorist attack anywhere it would cause a backlash against anything nuclear, undermining political sustainability of global civil 'nuclear renaissance', and leaving in tatter national strategies for low-carbon energy generation.

Failure to confront nuclear security challenges could bear global costs, and jeopardize the long-term interests of states and peoples. The Washington Nuclear Security Summit has produced some notable gains and the effort should be to maintain the momentum. Unfortunately, the threat of nuclear terrorism is still far from being effectively addressed by the international community. Serious gaps in policy framework remain and there is a danger that some positive advances could lead to complacency and tardy implementation. It is paramount that the issue of nuclear security needs to stay high on the international diplomatic agenda and all nuclear and non-nuclear states need to deliver on the commitments agreed. For, if that does not happen, terrorist groups could continue to lurk around and pose global threats.

The writers work for Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI).

<http://pakobserver.net/detailnews.asp?id=140922>

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RT – Russia
OPINION/Op-Ed

Being Strong: National Security Guarantees for Russia

By Vladimir Putin
20 February 2012

Russian premier and presidential hopeful Vladimir Putin has outlined his ideas on developing Russia's defenses in an article published Monday in Rossiiskaya Gazeta.

The world is changing. The processes of global transformation currently underway may carry all sorts of risks with them, many of them unpredictable. In a situation of global economic and other kinds of hardships, it may be very tempting for some to resolve their problems at others' expense, through pressure and coercion.

It is no wonder that we already hear some voices saying that it is "only natural" that resources of global significance should soon be declared as being above national sovereignty.

We must exclude any such possibility, even a hypothetical one, with respect to Russia. This means that we should not tempt anybody with our weakness.

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This is why we will under no conditions give up our strategic deterrent capability. On the contrary, we will strengthen it. It was this capability alone that enabled us to maintain our national sovereignty during the extremely difficult period of the 1990s, when, let's face it, we did not have any other weighty material arguments.

Obviously, we will not be able to strengthen our international standing, develop our economy and democratic institutions, unless we are able to protect Russia – unless we consider the risks of potential conflicts, secure our self-sufficiency with respect to military technology and prepare a strong and appropriate military response as an extreme measure when responding to a challenge.

We have adopted and are implementing unprecedented programs for developing our Armed Forces and modernizing Russia's defense industry. Overall, we will allocate approximately 23 trillion rubles for these needs over the next decade.

To be frank, we had many discussions regarding whether such large-scale allocations were necessary and timely. I strongly believe that we have enough resources and we can afford it. More importantly, we can no longer delay our efforts to create a modern Armed Forces and comprehensively strengthen our defensive potential.

This does not mean that we are militarizing Russia's budget. Essentially, by allocating these funds today, we are compensating for the years when the Army and the Navy were regularly underfunded, when we practically did not purchase any new weapon systems – while other countries were consistently building up their military might.

A smart defense against new threats

We need response mechanisms not only for the dangers that already exist. We need to learn to look ahead, "over the horizon," and estimate threats for 30-50 years ahead. It is a serious task that requires that we mobilize the resources of civilian and military science and algorithms of reliable long-term forecasting.

What kind of weapons will the Russian Army need? What kind of technical requirements will our defense industry have? Essentially, we need to create a fundamentally new, smart system of military analysis and strategic planning that will offer recommendations and expediently implement them through our security agencies.

So, what does the future have in store for us?

The probability of a global war between nuclear powers is not high, as that would mean an end to civilization. As long as we keep the "powder" of our strategic nuclear forces, produced by the hard labor of our fathers and grandfathers, dry, nobody will dare to launch a large-scale aggression against us.

Yet we should take into account that technological progress in various areas, from new models of weapons and military hardware to information and communications technology, has fundamentally changed the nature of armed conflict. For instance, as high-precision long-range weapons with conventional charges become more common, they will become the means of achieving a decisive victory in conflicts, including a global conflict.

Space-based systems and IT tools, especially in cyberspace, will play a great, if not decisive role in armed conflicts. In a more remote future, weapon systems that use different physical principles will be created (beam, geophysical, wave, genetic, psychophysical and other types of weapons). All this will provide fundamentally new instruments for achieving political and strategic goals in addition to nuclear weapons. Such weapon systems will be as effective as nuclear weapons but will be more "acceptable" from the political and military point of view. Therefore, the strategic balance of nuclear forces will gradually lose its significance in the matter of deterring aggression and chaos.

Today, we see how new regional and local wars break out one after another. We see zones of instability and artificially maintained, managed chaos emerging. Furthermore, we see how some are purposefully provoking such conflicts in the immediate vicinity of Russia's borders – and those of our allies. We see the fundamental principles of international law being devalued and eroded, especially in the matter of international security.

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Under such conditions, Russia cannot rely on diplomatic and economic methods alone to remove contradictions and resolve conflicts. Our country faces the task of developing its military potential in keeping with the deterrence strategy and at the level of defensive sufficiency. Our Armed Forces, special services and other security agencies should be prepared to provide quick and effective responses to new challenges. It is a necessary requirement for Russia to feel secure and for our partners to listen carefully to what our country has to say in various international formats.

Also, together with our allies, we should strengthen the capabilities of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, including the Collective Rapid Response Forces. The CSTO is ready to fulfill its mission of the guarantor of stability in Eurasia.

Securing the dynamic development of the Armed Forces, the nuclear and space industries, the defense industry, military education, fundamental military science and applied research programs will remain a key priority of Russian government policy for year to come.

The Army has preserved Russia

The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the social upheavals of the 1990s affected all government institutions. Our Army went through several trials as well. There was practically no combat training. The units that used to make up the “first strategic echelon” in Eastern Europe were redeployed to unprepared locations. And since there was no money to prepare places for them, to build new military bases, training grounds and houses, it was these elite and most combat-ready units that were sacrificed.

Officers would go unpaid for months. To be completely frank, quite often it was a problem even to provide food for the personnel. Tens of thousands of servicemen retired. The number of generals, colonels, lieutenant colonels and majors exceeded the number of captains and lieutenants. Defense factories were standing idle, accumulating debts and losing their most valuable, one-in-a-million specialists.

The Armed Forces came under a devastating information attack. Some people simply could not live a single day without insulting and humiliating the Army, offending everything that has to do with things like the Oath, duty, serving the Homeland, patriotism and the glorious military history of our country. I have always considered it a real moral crime and an act of betrayal.

We should always remember how our country is indebted to soldiers and officers who, against all odds, preserved the army throughout the extremely difficult period of the 1990s and kept its units combat-ready at crucial times. Whenever necessary, they went into battle. They would lose their comrades and defeat the enemy. This is what happened in the North Caucasus, in Tajikistan and in other hotspots. These people preserved the spirit and the honor of the Army. They preserved Russia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. They protected the security of our citizens. They saved our country from humiliation and being written off.

Yet the Army had to pay a great price for mistakes that happened during numerous and inconsistent reforms, which were often limited to mechanical reduction.

In 1999, when gangs of international terrorists directly attacked Russia, we found ourselves in a tragic situation. To put together a 66,000-strong task force, we had to scrape it up, literally, piece by piece, with composite battalions and detached companies. Nominally, the personnel of the Armed Forces exceeded 1,360,000. Yet we had practically no combat-ready units that would be prepared to go into action without additional preparations.

Yet the Army fulfilled its mission. Our officers, sergeants and soldiers, those to whom the Oath mattered more than their life, health and well-being, fulfilled their duty. Most importantly, policymakers and ordinary people finally realized one simple truth: you must treasure the Armed Forces. You have to strengthen them; otherwise, you will have to “feed somebody else’s army” or even be enslaved by bandits and international terrorists.

We started with the most urgent things. We restored the system of basic social guarantees for servicemen. We put an end to shameful delays with salary payment. Year after year, we increased the share of Army and Navy

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allocations in the budget – and this after a period of time when there was no money even for the most urgent needs!

I remember 2002, when the chief of the General Staff suggested (because of material difficulties, of course) shutting down a naval base for our strategic submarines in Kamchatka. That would have left us without sea-based nuclear forces in the Pacific. I decided against it. Since there was no money available in the budget, we had to ask private corporations to help. I would like to thank them today. Surgutneftegaz and TNK without any hesitation offered enough funds to start rebuilding the base. Later, the government was able to provide some funds. Now we have a modern base in Vilyuchinsk, where next-generation submarines of the Borei class will soon go on combat duty.

In every strategic area, we have formed special units that are always combat-ready and that are manned with professional troops only. We have created self-sufficient combat groups. It was such a group that carried out the peace enforcement operation with respect to Georgia and protected the people of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in August 2008.

But the experience of past years had demonstrated that the potential of the old military structure that we had inherited from the Soviet Union had been exhausted. What was that structure, essentially? Thousands of depots, arsenals, warehouses, numerous headquarters and undermanned units. In a word, everything needed for a mobilization-type, multi-million strong army of the past century.

It was useless to feed manpower and equipment into the old structure; there would simply not be enough financial and human resources. Most importantly, it did not meet even today's requirements, let alone those of the future. Had we decided not to change anything, and limited ourselves to gradual and partial reforms, we could have sooner or later lost our military potential entirely. We could have lost the Armed Forces as a viable organism.

There was only one way out: to build a new Army. We needed a modern, mobile and constantly combat-ready army. It was a very difficult process that affected tens of thousands of people. This inevitably involves mistakes, offenses and discontent. Public reaction was strong, including in the Army community itself. It is not one person or ten people that carry out the reform. We are changing an extremely complex institution that has accumulated lots of defects. All kinds of errors, excessive zeal on the part of certain officials, insufficient information and the lack of feedback channels, formal implementation of instructions – these are all real problems of the current reform. We must identify all these problems and adjust certain decisions, at the same time continuing the general policy of systemic reforms in the Armed Forces.

What has been accomplished

We no longer have undermanned units in the Army. We have more than 100 brigades of general and special types in the Ground Forces. These are full-fledged combat units that are fully manned and have all the necessary equipment. They are expected to be ready to move out one hour after they receive their orders. The standard time for relocation to a potential theater of operations is 24 hours.

Formerly, units needed up to five days to get ready for a combat mission. The process of supplying all undermanned units with personnel and equipment to bring them up to “wartime standards” was expected to take almost a year. And this – in a situation where most conflict today last a few hours to a few days!

Why did we pick the brigade as our main tactical unit? First of all, based on our experience in Afghanistan and other campaigns, where instead of regiments and divisions, mobile assault groups provided with close air support and other auxiliary units proved to be the most effective unit.

The new brigade is smaller than a division, yet its attacking power is greater. It has much more firepower and more support units – artillery, air defense, reconnaissance, communications, etc. A brigade can operate autonomously or as a part of a bigger unit. I agree that their quality may not always be perfect. But soon we should be able to meet the standard completely.

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The Russian Army is getting rid of secondary, additional functions like economic or maintenance activities. Everything that distracts from combat training has been reduced to a minimum. Considering that we have reduced the term of service for conscripts to 12 months, this is the only way we can turn a rookie into a well-trained soldier. Soldiers and officers should be occupied with their immediate task, i.e., intense combat training and learning. This will also increase discipline and order in the Army and improve the reputation of the conscription service.

A serious reform of military education is underway. We are establishing ten major research and educational centers. All these institutions are part of a clear top-down system, and depending on their progress officers have an opportunity to receive advanced training. This approach is based both on our own traditions and international practice.

Without seriously developing our military research, we would be unable to have an effective military and military-technical doctrine. The General Staff would be unable to work effectively. We must recover the lost competencies of military institutions, integrating them with the developing system of military education, just like in the civilian sector of the economy. Military science should play a defining role in formulating tasks for the defense industry. Competent procurement agencies, the services of the Defense Ministry that are in charge of the defense order, should effectively formulate technical requirements for designers and manufacturers and supply them with desired characteristics of future weapons and military hardware.

Of course, normal development of military research would be impossible without partnership with civilian science, without using the potential of our leading universities and research centers. Scientists should have enough information about the current condition and future prospects of the Army and its weapons systems to advance their promising research projects, considering the possibility of applying them in the defense industry.

I would like to point out that administrative bodies in the Armed Forces have been slashed by fifty percent. We have established four big military districts: West, South, Center and East. They are in charge of the appropriate Air Force, air defense and Navy units. Essentially, these are operational-strategic commands. On Dec. 1, 2011, a new branch of the Armed Forces, the Aerospace Defense Forces, went on combat duty.

The Air Force has created seven major bases with solid infrastructure. The airfield network is being upgraded. We have repaired 28 airfields over the past four years – for the first time in twenty years. This year, we plan to repair another twelve military airfields.

We have seriously boosted the capabilities of our early warning system. New radars in St. Petersburg, Kaliningrad and Armavir are on combat duty now, and another one is being tested in Irkutsk. All aerospace defense brigades are equipped with the modern Universal-1S computer system. The entire fleet of Glonass satellites has been deployed in outer space.

We have secured the reliability and sufficiency of our land-, sea- and air-based components of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces. The share of modern land-based missile systems has grown from 13% to 25% over the last four years. Another 10 missile regiments will soon be equipped with Topol-M and Yars strategic systems. The Long-Range Aviation Command has retained its fleet of Tu-160 and Tu-95ms strategic bombers. They are currently being upgraded. We have commissioned a new long-range air-to-surface cruise missile for our strategic bombers. Since 2007, we have resumed regular missions by our strategic bombers in combat patrol areas. We have started developing a promising aviation system for the Long-Range Aviation Command.

Strategic submarines of the new Borei class will soon go on combat duty. Two submarines of this class, the Yuri Dolgoruky and the Aleksandr Nevsky, are already going through sea trials.

Our Navy has resumed its presence in the strategic areas of the World Ocean, including the Mediterranean Sea. This demonstration of the "Russian flag" will be regular now.

Goals for the decade

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We have embarked on a large-scale and comprehensive re-equipment of the Army, Navy and other military services ensuring our national security. The list of priorities includes nuclear forces, aerospace defense, systems of communication, intelligence, control and radio warfare, unmanned aerial vehicles and combat units, state-of-the-art transport aviation, personal protective gear, high-precision weapons and means of countering them.

Training programs for command units and troops should be streamlined to enhance their quality, make them more intensive and extensive. We need to focus on building effective multi-service units and boosting combat readiness.

Our specialists will have to lay out a future vision for the development of services and branches and define their goals and objectives in key guidelines. There is little doubt, though, that the role of the nuclear deterrent forces will remain unchanged. At least, until we design and adopt next-generation weapons and combat units, including high-precision weapons, whose capabilities, as I mentioned earlier, are close to those of nuclear deterrent forces. The next decade is also bound to see the growing role of the Navy, the Air Force and Aerospace Missile Defense.

We are forced to take decisive steps to bolster our national aerospace defense system to counter the U.S. and NATO efforts in the deployment of missile defense.

To secure the existing global balance of forces, we need either to design a domestic missile defense system, which will be a costly and yet ineffective one, or to protect our retaliatory potential by developing a capability to overcome any missile defense. This is the exactly the task of the Strategic Nuclear Forces and aerospace defense units. One cannot be 'too patriotic' about this issue. Russia's military response to the global U.S. missile shield, including its European part, will be effective and asymmetrical, a match for U.S. missile defense policy.

Our goal is the revival of a Navy capable of service in the Arctic Ocean and in the Pacific. The leading military powers have intensified their activities in the Arctic, which forces Russia to secure its interests in the region.

In the upcoming decade, Russia will deploy more than 400 advanced ground and sea-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, eight nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines, some 20 multi-purpose submarines, more than 50 combat ships, some 100 military spacecraft, more than 600 advanced aircraft including fifth-generation fighters, more than a thousand helicopters, 28 regimental kits of the S-400 anti-aircraft missile system, 38 battalion kits of the Vityaz air defense system, 10 brigade kits of the Iskander-M ballistic missile system, more than 2,300 modern tanks, some 2,000 self-propelled artillery vehicles and guns, and more than 17,000 military motor vehicles.

Today, more than 250 military units, including 30 air force squadrons, are using advanced military equipment. By 2020, the share of new armaments should be no less than 70 per cent. The systems remaining in operation will be significantly upgraded.

By and large, the goal for the decade is to equip our Armed Forces with next-generation armaments, which boast better visibility, higher precision, and faster response than the similar systems of any potential adversary.

The rest of the article is forthcoming shortly on our website.

<http://rt.com/politics/official-word/strong-putin-military-russia-711/>

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The Nation – Pakistan
OPINION/Columnist

FMCT and Pakistan's Rational Stand

By Momin Iftikhar
February 20, 2012

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He did not single out Pakistan, but UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's late January meaningful statement, concerning the stalled deliberations over the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) in the Geneva-based Conference on Disarmament (CD), left little doubt as to which country was being tipped as the spoilsport. "The tide of disarmament is rising, yet the CD is in danger of sinking. Let us restore the conference to the central role it can and must play in strengthening the rule of law in the field of disarmament," he said while talking to the delegates from 65 countries. What he was alluding to was not the steps needed to cut down the huge inventories of nuclear weapons held by the N-5 powers, or the dangers emanating from the projected deployment of nuclear weapons in space, but underscoring Pakistan's refusal to withdraw its veto that would let the deliberations commence to hammer out a draft FMCT in the CD. It might have stirred frustration and anger at the disarmament forum, but Pakistan's refusal to cut down fissile material production is principle-based; it cannot agree to enable discussions on the FMCT, until its fast developing fissile material gap with India, caused by preferential US treatment, is either closed or at least becomes manageable.

The CD was formed in 1979 as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, following the first special session of the UN General Assembly devoted to disarmament (1978). Having 65 members, it conducts its work by consensus and has been the negotiating forum for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). It reports to UNGA annually, meets on UN premises and draws its annual budget from it. And considering the US clout in the functioning of the global body, the CD's position on nuclear disarmament reflects a deep partiality to its pursuits. The CD's rather recently formed compelling focus on the FMCT has been developed on a track parallel to and in sync with the Obama administration's non-proliferation priorities that are strongly pegged to finalising the FMCT. The US stamp on the CD is evident from the fact that it is intent upon following up the FMCT track, while developing blind spots for three other core issues that form the bouquet on its disarmament agenda. These include nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) and negative security assurances; a term that refers to international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon states that they will not be attacked with nuclear weapons.

Halting the production of fissile material has acquired overriding priority at the conference, since the US and all major nuclear powers have accumulated large stocks of fissile material and fabricated enough numbers of nuclear weapons to provide them with nuclear security till eternity. They have declared a voluntary moratorium on further production of fissile material; additional accumulation being pointless and irrelevant. But this cannot be accepted by Pakistan for whom the nuclear capability has become the sole guarantor of maintaining a credible overall deterrence against India's burgeoning conventional and nuclear muscle.

For Pakistan, halting further production without bringing in the calculus the existing fissile holdings of other nations, particularly India, would be catastrophically dangerous. A wide disparity in fissile material stockpiles of India and Pakistan would erode the stability of nuclear deterrence and freeze in perpetuity the fissile gap to Pakistan's abiding disadvantage. Islamabad had agreed to a programme of work in 2009, hoping that some of its concerns would be addressed; but by early 2010, its opposition to the FMCT had begun to take a definite shape. In January 2010, Pakistan's National Command Authority responsible for the nuclear weapons programme announced that the country's position at the CD on FMCT would be based on "its national security interests and the objectives of strategic stability in South Asia."

Pakistan's fears are based on rational and realistic threat perception. The Indo-US nuclear deal and the Nuclear Suppliers' Group (NSG) waiver for India, which has been spearheaded by Washington, have irretrievably loaded the fissile material balance equation in its favour. The 'deal', signed into a law by President George Bush in October 2008, has lifted the 30-year old restrictions on the sale of nuclear material, equipment, and technology to India. The USA also played a leading role in convincing the NSG to exempt it from similar international controls. This has enabled India to overcome its debilitating shortages of uranium and provided a boost to its nuclear weapons programme by allowing its civil nuclear effort to be fed by imported resource, while diverting its indigenous uranium to generate fissile material for the fabrication of nuclear weapons. It is estimated that this



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would enable India to produce up to 200 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium enough for producing 40 weapons per year from its eight unsafeguarded heavy water power reactors alone.

This fillip will be an addition to India's already acquired large stockpile of plutonium that by 2009 were estimated at about 700 kilograms; sufficient for 140 weapons along with a sustained capability for producing more at the rate of about 30 kilograms per year. This is alarming enough, but the true magnitude of Indian stockpiles becomes manifest once the cache of 'unsafeguarded power reactor plutonium' - estimated at seven metric tons; sufficient for fabricating approximately 700 weapons - is included in the accounting. If India uses this in fast breeder reactors, it would be able to produce 90 to 140 kilograms of weapons-grade plutonium per year that is sufficient for almost 20 to 30 weapons per year. The difficulties for Pakistan to retain a manageable fissile material gap with India get further compounded when the loopholes in monitoring of its civilian nuclear cooperation signed with the NSG and the IAEA are considered. There are genuine fears that India will always find ways to dance around the FMCT through the leeway provided in the USA enabled civilian nuclear track.

Pakistan's objections to block the discussions on the FMCT are legitimate and based on a "well established principle of equal and undiminished security for all states." It feels that Washington cares little about its impact on the South Asian security paradigm, which is detrimental from the Pakistani perspective. Islamabad must, therefore, stand its ground on the FMCT issue and use all the leverage within its means to highlight to the international community its concerns about a fissile material gap with India. That, through a biased US attitude, is eroding the precariously held balance of overall deterrence in the subcontinent to Pakistan's perpetual and crippling disadvantage.

The writer is a freelance columnist.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/columns/20-Feb-2012/fmct-and-pakistan-s-rational-stand>

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London Guardian – U.K.
OPINION/Comment Is Free

Nuclear Alarmism over Iran Is Backing Us into a Corner

There are several untenable arguments against a nuclear Iran. It may be undesirable, but it's eminently containable

By Shashank Joshi

Tuesday 21 February 2012

Geoffrey Howe's resignation speech of November 1990 tends to be remembered for his lament on negotiating for Britain in Europe: "It is rather like sending your opening batsmen to the crease, only for them to find, as the first balls are being bowled, that their bats have been broken before the game by the team captain."

Last week, the US Congress attempted to break its captain's bat before a very important innings. Thirty two senators from both parties introduced a resolution to rule out "any policy that would rely on containment as an option in response to the Iranian nuclear threat". Closer to home, British foreign secretary William Hague echoed the logic. A nuclear Iran would spark off "the most serious round of nuclear proliferation since nuclear weapons were invented". It would result in "a new cold war in the Middle East" lacking all the "safety mechanisms" of the US-Soviet rivalry.

Comments like these reflect a growing nuclear alarmism that could drag us into an unwinnable and unnecessary war. A nuclear Iran is profoundly undesirable – but it's also eminently containable.

The first argument, that Iran is too crazy to be deterred, is historically untenable. Stalin's Soviet Union was viewed in exactly the same terms. NSC-68, one of the most famous American intelligence assessments of the cold war, judged Moscow to be "animated by a new fanatic faith, antithetical to our own", aimed at "domination of the

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Eurasian landmass". That was the year after the Soviets' first nuclear test. Mao Zedong, who was to acquire a bomb shortly thereafter, welcomed a nuclear war in which "imperialism would be razed to the ground, and the whole world would become socialist".

Senator Joseph Lieberman last week fumed that "containment might have been viable for the Soviet Union during the cold war, but it's not going to work with the current fanatical Islamist regime in Tehran". Well, fanaticism has pedigree. Stalin and Mao might have been bloodthirsty fanatics, but they were not suicidal. Nor is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Last week, two of America's top intelligence officials told a senate hearing two important things. First, any Iranian decision to build a nuclear weapon would be based "on a cost-benefit analysis". Even fanatical theocracies are governed by reason. Second, "Iran is unlikely to initiate or intentionally provoke a conflict". If Iran is deemed to be unlikely to start a conventional war, it's not going to start a nuclear war.

And there's a simple reason for this. The area around Tehran contains a fifth of Iran's population, and half of the country's industry. A single Israeli thermonuclear bomb would wipe this out in the blink of an eye. Iran's abhorrent calls to wipe Israel off the map are gestures as empty as Mao's nuclear posturing.

Even if Iran is not crazy enough to use a bomb, wouldn't it encourage brinkmanship in one of the most sensitive parts of the world? Hasn't Pakistan been emboldened by its own nuclear shield to ramp up support for militants in Afghanistan and India?

One important distinction is that Pakistan hosts militants on its own soil, whereas Iran largely helps them "off-site", in places like Lebanon and Palestine. India can't attack Lashkar-e-Taiba, responsible for the Mumbai attacks, without attacking Pakistan itself. Israel, by contrast, will continue to be able to strike at Hezbollah or Hamas regardless of Iran's nuclear status.

The second argument concerns safety. The implication here is that a tinpot republic like Iran can't possibly be trusted to look after something so powerful. For a start, this misses the point that nuclear weapons are not like pregnancy – you can be a little bit nuclear. As James Clapper, US Director of National Intelligence, put it last month, Iran – much like Japan – is "keeping open the option to develop nuclear weapons" rather than putting together a bomb and attaching it to a missile.

If Tehran did put together a bomb, it might not be deployed. Iran, a large country with substantial conventional strength, has strategic depth. It can wait for threats to develop before, say, mating warheads to missiles. Apartheid-era South Africa, for instance, built a handful of nuclear weapons, kept them stored unassembled in a vault, and eventually dismantled them.

India, for a decade after its first nuclear test, didn't even bother to prepare a bomb. When it eventually did, neither it nor Pakistan meaningfully deployed their weapons for another 10 years. The two countries have since defied William Hague's suggestion that emerging nuclear powers can't implement safety mechanisms.

The third and final charge is that Iranian nuclear advances would set in motion a uncontrolled proliferation cascade as other regional powers scrambled for their own bombs. Yet history suggests that nukes don't inevitably beget nukes. A declassified American document from 1964, the year China went nuclear, identified over a dozen nations "with the capacity to go nuclear" – yet only a tiny fraction ever did. When the Soviets got the bomb, Yugoslavia or Sweden – both on that list of proliferating risks – did not follow. Taiwan did not follow China. South Korea and Japan did not follow North Korea.

The obvious retort is that all of these states were allies or clients of the US – but so too are Iran's rivals today. There are technical and political challenges to bringing Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Turkey under the American nuclear umbrella – but these are lesser problems when compared with the consequences of a military strike on Iran.

The alarmist response to Iran's nuclear programme reflects a failure of imagination and ignorance of history. Iran has an obligation to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations to explain the possible

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military dimensions of its nuclear programme. But if we – like the senators who sought to tie their president's hand last week – fool ourselves into thinking that a nuclear Iran cannot be contained, we increasingly back ourselves into a corner from which we will eventually be able to do little but lash out.

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<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/feb/21/nuclear-alarmism-iran>

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OPINION/Columnist

Pakistan Needs to Start Giving Answers on Bin Laden

By David Ignatius
Tuesday, 21 February 2012

With Pakistan's civilian government and judiciary showing renewed signs of life, it's time for them to ask the question the country has been avoiding for nine months: How did Osama bin Laden, the world's leading terrorist, hide out in a military garrison city near Islamabad without anyone knowing?

To ask this question is not to accuse the Pakistani military or intelligence service of wrongdoing. So far, no "smoking gun" has emerged. But many puzzling issues surround bin Laden's stay in Abbottabad for six years. Nobody should want them answered more than General Ashfaq Kayani, the chief of army staff, who would gain new credibility at home and abroad by allowing such a probe.

General Michael Hayden, the former CIA director, sums up a feeling that's widespread among both Americans and Pakistanis when he says: "Without being accusatory, I think it's certainly in Pakistan's interest to clear the air."

Implausible as it may sound, U.S. officials say they don't have any evidence that Kayani or other top Pakistani officials knew of bin Laden's presence before the May 2 raid that killed the Al-Qaeda leader. This assessment is based on the review of materials taken from bin Laden's compound, plus the reactions of Kayani and other officials the night of the raid.

What makes an investigation seem possible now is that the Pakistani government, often under the military's thumb, has been asserting its independence. The Parliament has been examining how to "reset" the U.S.-Pakistan relationship; the Supreme Court has indicted Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in a corruption scandal and, notably, has also scolded the Inter-Services Intelligence directorate for its treatment of prisoners; and President Asif Ali Zardari has managed to stay in power despite perpetual rumors the military wants him out.

To lead Pakistan out of its wilderness of mirrors, Chief Justice Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry should form a special commission to examine the loose ends of the bin Laden story. Based on conversations with U.S., Pakistani and other officials, here are some questions that deserve answers:

First, how did bin Laden come to Abbottabad in 2005, and what did Pakistani officials know about his whereabouts? Kayani was ISI chief at that time, but the dominant figure was President Pervez Musharraf, the former army chief. The commander of the military academy at Abbottabad starting in 2006 was Lieutenant General Nadeem Taj, who succeeded Kayani as head of the ISI in 2007.

Second, who owned the compound in 2005 and how was it readied for the new guest? I'm told the original property records have disappeared, so the answers here are murky. But one intelligence source tells me the architect who worked on the compound was regularly employed by the ISI; the architect reportedly was told only that a "highly placed VIP" was coming.

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Third, what about the recent claim by former General Ziauddin Butt, former chief of the ISI, that the Abbottabad safe house was used by the Intelligence Bureau, another Pakistani spy agency? According to a December report in the Pakistani press, Butt said bin Laden's stay at Abbottabad was arranged by Brigadier Ijaz Shah, head of the bureau from 2004 to 2008, on Musharraf's orders. A Pakistani journalist named Arif Jamal recently published an article describing Shah as bin Laden's "handler."

Fourth, who did bin Laden contact while he was at Abbottabad? Though materials taken from the compound don't show direct links with top Pakistani officials, U.S. analysts have found evidence that the Al-Qaeda chief communicated with Mohammad Omar, leader of the Taliban, and with the Kashmiri militant group Lashkar-i-Taiba. The ISI is thought to monitor both groups closely; how did the messages slip through the net?

Fifth, what about the rumor that bin Laden was suffering from kidney failure and required dialysis? This canard was repeated for years, notably by Musharraf. CIA analysts were always dubious, and no dialysis machines were found at Abbottabad. So was this a deliberate piece of misinformation?

And what about bin Laden's claim in November 2001 to Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir that he had nuclear and chemical weapons? Was that a Pakistan-facilitated attempt to promote what bin Laden called his "deterrent" against a U.S. reprisal attack?

The list of unanswered questions goes on. But this sampling is enough to raise anyone's eyebrows. For Pakistan to step foursquare into the future, and put this dreadful decade of lies and suspicion behind, it's time for an official inquiry – not to please America, but to ensure the dignity of Pakistan.

The writer is a columnist and political commentator. This article first appeared in The Daily Star on Feb 20, 2012.

<http://english.alarabiya.net/views/2012/02/21/196016.html>

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