



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 991, 23 March 2012

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Bloomberg News

ElBaradei Says Iran to Develop Atomic Weapons if Israel Attacks

By Aibing Guo

March 21, 2012

Mohamed ElBaradei, the former head of the world's atomic-energy watchdog, said an Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would only persuade the Islamic republic to build a nuclear arsenal.

"You can bomb their facilities, but you cannot bomb their knowledge," ElBaradei, former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said today in Hong Kong. "If you were to bomb Iranian facilities, there will be a lesson for Iran -- to develop nuclear weapons."

Israel accuses Iran of seeking to build nuclear weapons and hasn't ruled out a military strike to head off further development. The U.S. and European Union have tightened sanctions in an effort to persuade Iran to halt uranium enrichment and allow international inspections of its program, which it insists is for peaceful purposes.

ElBaradei, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate who in January decided not to run for president of Egypt, said Western countries need Iran to help stabilize a region dealing with conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon.

"They both need each other," he said. "Right now each one is waiting for the other side to blink first and that is not going to happen."

Restoring law and order is the most important challenge facing Arab countries that overthrew its leaders over the past year, he added.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-03-21/elbaradei-says-iran-to-develop-atomic-weapons-if-israel-attacks.html>

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FARS News Agency – Iran

March 21, 2012

Leader Warns of Iran's Crushing Response to US, Israeli Aggression

TEHRAN (FNA) - Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei renewed Iran's steadfast opposition to the acquisition and possession of nuclear arms, but meantime stressed Tehran's military preparedness to give a crushing response to any possible aggression against the country.

"We do not possess a nuclear weapon and we will not build one, but we will defend ourselves against any aggression, whether by the US or the Zionist regime, with the same level (of force)," Ayatollah Khamenei said, addressing thousands of Iranian people in the holy city of Mashhad, the provincial capital city of Iran's Northeastern province of Khorassan Razavi, on Tuesday.

The Leader said Washington and its allies are well aware that Iran is neither in possession nor in pursuit of nuclear weapons and the real reason behind their enmity against Iran is their thirst for the nation's oil.

Referring to enemies' efforts to create despair and discouragement among Iranian nation, Ayatollah Khamenei stated that heads of hegemonic powers and their agents in the region, by all their means, are trying to intimidate Iranians.

Though the ill-wishers struggled to show that Iranians are incompetent, the nation has repeatedly demonstrated that "it can", Ayatollah Khamenei said.

Iran has repeatedly warned that its Armed Forces are fully prepared to immediately deliver a crushing response to any offensive on the Iranian territory.

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Earlier this month, the Iranian Armed Forces lauded the massive public support for the Islamic establishment in March 2 parliamentary elections, and stressed that it will take every possible option to confront enemies, thanks to the Iranian nation's support.

"The Armed Forces ... remind the enemies that they, graced by the Almighty God and backed up by the people's huge support, are prepared to take all options against ill-wishers, aggressors and intruders," the General Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces said in a statement at the time.

The Iranian Armed Forces also cautioned the United States and Israel to stop their warmongering rhetoric since such a policy only leads to loss, damage and trouble for the European and American people.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9012152803>

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Trend News – Azerbaijan

Iran Not to Pull Out of NPT, nor Halt Nuclear Energy Program

21 March 2012

Iran rules out pulling out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) but insists it will not abandon the right to peaceful nuclear technology, Press TV reported.

In an interview with France 24 TV news channel, Iranian Ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Ali Asghar Soltanieh said the country is determined to continue its nuclear energy program under the UN agency's control.

Asked about the possibility of Iran's withdrawal from the NPT, Soltanieh said the Islamic Republic has remained committed to its international obligations despite sanctions, war threats and even the assassination of its nuclear scientists.

He vowed Iran will not abandon its "inalienable" right to nuclear technology while it will continue to cooperate with the IAEA and not pull out of the NPT.

The Iranian official rejected remarks indicating that US-led Western pressure on the country to halt its nuclear activities has yielded fruit, saying the claim is "a serious mistake and a serious miscalculation."

He noted that the involvement of the UN Security Council and its US-engineered sanctions have just prompted Iranians to more seriously pursue their nuclear energy program and speed up their efforts.

Soltanieh condemned Israeli war threats against Iran as a violation of international laws, particularly the resolution 533 of 1990 in the general conference of the IAEA, which prohibits "all armed attacks against nuclear installations devoted to peaceful purposes whether under construction or in operation."

He called on the world to condemn Israel's war rhetoric as an infringement of international law jeopardizing the peaceful use of nuclear energy, reminding that any strike against nuclear installations could lead to a radiation disaster beyond borders.

The ambassador reiterated Tehran's stance on negotiations as the right solution to the West's nuclear standoff with Iran, adding that Tehran has always called on other parties to join negotiations, rather than take the path of confrontation.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has always called for negotiations without any conditions, and equal footing based on mutual respect," he said.

Soltanieh said "the attitude and conduct of the Western countries and their miscalculations have created a complicated situation," and called for an end to the West's "carrot and stick" policy toward the Islamic Republic.

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"This is a time to change their attitude and conduct...they have been using the language and the policy of carrot and stick, or sanctions and negotiations -- these are a sort of neo-colonialist mentality," he urged.

"They have to talk and have a different approach: let's negotiate and talk in a civilized manner and a respectful manner. That is the only way for a solution to the nuclear issue."

<http://en.trend.az/regions/iran/2005772.html>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

Barak: Iran Not Completing Nukes Out of Fear

Defense minister says Tehran fears "actions" by the US or other actors, has been working to mitigate damage from possible attack against it.

By JPOST.COM STAFF

March 22, 2012

Defense Minister Ehud Barak said Thursday that Iran is not completing its proliferation of nuclear weapons due to the threat of military action against it.

"Iran fears actions against it" by the United States or "another actor," Barak told Israel Radio in a telephone interview from Germany, presumably referring to Israel.

The Islamic Republic, he said, has been working in recent years to reinforce and scatter its nuclear sites throughout the country in order to mitigate the damage of a possible military strike against them.

Saying that there is full intelligence cooperation between Washington and Jerusalem on the Iranian nuclear issue, the defense minister asserted that Israel cannot stand on the sidelines or allow itself to lose its freedom of action in the Iranian theater.

Speaking in another interview Thursday morning, Barak told Army Radio that 2012 will be a decisive year regarding the Iranian nuclear threat.

On Wednesday, Barak said in a meeting with his German counterpart that Israel will decide its own fate with regards to Iran.

Israel views the Iranian issue in "a way unique to us, and we are attentive to all our friends, but in the end, the Israeli government will be the one who will have to take the decisions on Israel's security and future," Barak said.

The international community has been pursuing a diplomatic approach to the Iranian nuclear program. Sanctions, led by the US and EU, have considerably damaged the Iranian economy. Israeli officials, however, have maintained the right to act independently if it assesses that Iran poses an immediate existential threat.

During the meeting, Barak also said that there was a "growing recognition in the international community that the Iranian military nuclear program is consistently approaching the zone of immunity, and that sanctions need to be stiffened, while talks need to be speeded up."

Earlier Wednesday, Barak signed a contract for the purchase of a sixth submarine for Israel's navy in Berlin. Wolf Rudiger, state secretary of the ministry of defense, signed for Germany.

During the signing ceremony, Barak said that the new submarine would act as a "force multiplier" for the IDF, and assist it in dealing with growing security challenges.

Yaakov Lappin contributed to this report.

<http://www.jpost.com/IranianThreat/News/Article.aspx?id=262907>

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Xinhua News – China

China Vows to Promote International Cooperation on Nuclear Security

March 20, 2012

China will promote international cooperation on nuclear security, Assistant Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu said Tuesday.

Ma made the remarks at a press briefing on President Hu Jintao's upcoming tour to attend the Nuclear Security and BRICS summits, as well as his visit to Cambodia.

He said, with the theme of strengthening the security of nuclear material and nuclear facilities, the Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul will place emphasis on promoting national strategy and international cooperation on nuclear security.

While attending the Nuclear Security Summit, Hu will make an important speech and elaborate on China's position, efforts made and important measures taken in the field of nuclear security, Ma added.

"As a huge country for nuclear energy development, China has always attached great importance to nuclear security and actively participates in the international cooperation on nuclear security," he said.

Ma said, China hopes the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit will further improve international consensus and promote international cooperation on nuclear security, and therefore make contributions to improve the level of global nuclear material and nuclear facilities security and promote the sustainable development of nuclear energy.

He also expressed China's willingness to actively participate in the discussion of the communique of the Seoul Nuclear Security Summit, which will be the outcome document from the summit.

"The communique will clearly manifest the consensus and resolution of the leaders to enhance international cooperation on nuclear security," he said.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency, there were more than 2,100 reports on cases of lose, steal and illegal obtain concerning nuclear and other radioactive materials from 1993 to 2011 among its members.

Leaders from 53 countries and international organizations are scheduled to attend the second nuclear security summit. The first was held in Washington in 2010.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2012-03/20/c_131478618.htm

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Korea Herald – South Korea

'N.K. Told U.S. about Satellite Plan Last Year'

Expert says North's inconsistency shows Kim Jong-un's immature diplomacy

March 21, 2012

By Kim Yoon-mi

North Korea had notified the U.S. about its plan to launch a satellite using long-range missile technology last year, days before the death of its leader Kim Jong-il, multiple news reports from Washington said Wednesday.

Pyongyang had contacted Washington through civilian channels three days before Kim died on Dec. 17 and said it would launch a satellite in commemoration of the 100th year of its late founder Kim Il-sung's birth.

After bilateral civilian contacts in New York, U.S. administration officials made it clear to the North that a satellite launch would directly violate U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874, news reports said.



The U.S. and the North held a third round of bilateral talks in Beijing last month which led to the Feb. 29 agreement on U.S. food aid in return for the North freezing nuclear facilities and a moratorium on long-range missile testing.

In the bilateral talks, Glyn Davies, U.S. special envoy to North Korea, warned Kim Kye-gwan, the North's first vice foreign minister, that a missile test for any purposes would breach their bilateral agreements, Yonhap News said quoting an unnamed source.

However, it has not been reported why the North still announced its satellite launch plan, even after it reached an agreement with the U.S. on Feb. 29.

An expert said the North's behavior came out of immaturity, rather than any complicated strategy.

Cheong Seong-chang, a North Korea analyst at the Sejong Institute in Seoul, said the North's decision to launch a satellite after its deal with the U.S. shows new leader Kim Jong-un's immature diplomacy.

"If North Korea wanted something more effective, the agreement should have come later than the announcement of the satellite launch," Cheong told The Korea Herald, adding that he agreed with the view that North Korea had thought about launching Kwangmyongsong-3 a long time ago.

"The decision dealt a heavy blow to the credibility of the Kim Jong-un regime. The North will not have much room to maneuver in future negotiations with the U.S. and it will not be able to expect nutritional assistance either," he said.

Such a miscalculation could appear in the transitional period of a new regime, he added.

Despite international pressure from China, Russia, Japan, EU and the U.S. to drop the plan, Pyongyang has repeatedly said it is its sovereign right to launch a satellite into space "for peaceful purposes" and that the launch had nothing to do with the agreement with the U.S.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/national/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20120321000992>

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Korea Times – South Korea
March 21, 2012

NK Brinksmanship Jolts 6-Way Talks

By Kim Young-jin

Even if the United States and North Korea avoid a stalemate over Pyongyang's planned long-range rocket launch, multilateral denuclearization talks — and the road back to them — remain fraught with major hurdles, experts said Wednesday.

Cautious hopes for increased diplomacy following a recent nuclear deal between the two countries are in limbo after the Stalinist state last week announced it would carry out a long-range rocket launch that it asserts is to put a satellite into orbit, but is widely seen as cover for a long-range missile test.

The Barack Obama administration says the launch would break the February deal that was to pave the way back to stalled six-party talks that also include the South, Japan, Russia and China. Still, the North is pressing ahead, inviting in U.N. nuclear inspectors as part of the agreement raising bewilderment over its intentions.

Whatever the case, seeing the deal through and resuming the six-way talks remain elusive tasks, Huh Nam-sung, professor emeritus at Korea National Defense University said at a security forum hosted by the Hansun Foundation in downtown Seoul.

"This agreement has a bunch of pitfalls and North Korea can run off with the carrots — we have seen that again and again in past negotiations," he said.

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Under the deal, the United States would provide food aid to the North in exchange for a U.N. monitored shutdown of its uranium enrichment program (UEP) at Yongbyon and a moratorium on missile and nuclear tests. Seoul believes the prospective launch aims at developing a long-range ballistic missile capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

Huh said the deal stipulates implementation only while productive dialogue continues, meaning Pyongyang could walk away when it pleases. He also said monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency did not include any of the North's other suspected sites where enrichment activities could be taking place. Seoul is likely to remain "negative" on the North's long held desire to obtain light water reactors as part of any multilateral denuclearization pact, he added.

Regional players want the North to improve cross-border ties in addition to concrete denuclearization steps before resumption of the talks the North left in 2009 over international sanctions for its missile and nuclear tests that year.

Still, the experts agreed that it was in the best interest of the South to push for the talks, in addition to other actions, to deal with the growing threat.

Lee Choon-kun, a senior research fellow at the Korea Economic Research Institute, challenged the notion that Pyongyang developed the program mainly as a deterrent to the United States or a bargaining chip.

"North Korea intends to prevent military attacks from the United States, and ultimately have the United States military to back out from the peninsula, so to achieve unification led by North Korea with an overwhelming strategic advantage," he said.

The six-party talks are also needed as a regional cooperative framework in an economically vibrant but diplomatically volatile region, including an increasingly "aggressive" China, according to Kim, Hyun-wook, a professor at Korea National Diplomatic Academy.

"We should use the six-party process not only for North Korea issue but for the broader security issues of East Asia so that we can prevent a conflict between the U.S. and China," he said.

Beijing, the North's closest economic and diplomatic partner, protected Pyongyang from international sanctions over its two deadly provocations in 2010.

Analysts say the rocket launch is tied to Pyongyang's campaign to consolidate power for leader Kim Jong-un, who took over as leader after the death of his father Kim Jong-il. It is slated to take place around April 15, the 100th anniversary of the birth of country founder Kim Il-sung, the current leader's grandfather.

The launch would be Pyongyang's third announced attempt since 1998 to send a satellite into space aboard a long-range rocket.

Despite the North's repeated claims to an inherent right to the peaceful use of space, any testing of multi-stage rockets has been banned under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874, which was put in place after the country's second nuclear test, in 2009.

Experts say North Korean engineers apply the learning that takes place during the launches to missile development.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/03/113_107403.html

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Yonhap News – South Korea
March 21, 2012

Pyongyang Threatens to View N.K. Statement at Seoul Nuke Summit as Declaration of War



SEOUL, March 21 (Yonhap) -- North Korea on Wednesday warned against raising the issue of its nuclear weapons program during an upcoming global summit in Seoul, saying it will regard any related statement as a declaration of war.

"In the event of a provocation such as a statement regarding the North Korean nuclear issue at the Seoul conference, it will be heinous blasphemy against the wishes of the great men of Mount Paekdu who left as their will the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and go down in history as another enormous crime," the North's Korean Central News Agency said in a dispatch monitored in Seoul. "Any provocation against us will be considered a declaration of war."

Mount Paekdu is a key feature of the personality cult surrounding the North's ruling family, and revered as the apparent sacred birthplace of late leader Kim Jong-il.

The communist country also claimed the North Korean nuclear issue "in fact does not exist" and has no reason to be discussed at the March 26-27 Nuclear Security Summit that is expected to draw top leaders from nearly 50 nations, including U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao.

The warning comes two days after South Korean President Lee Myung-bak said the summit is expected to serve as a venue to drum up international support for resolving the nuclear standoff with the North.

It also comes amid international condemnation of a planned rocket launch by the North, which Seoul and Washington view as a cover for a missile test, but Pyongyang insists is to put an earth observation satellite into orbit.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/03/21/90/0401000000AEN20120321003000315F.HTML>

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London Telegraph – U.K.

Crash Fears over North Korean Satellite Trajectory

Rudimentary technology and North Korea's limited experience in launching long-range rockets are raising concerns ahead of Pyongyang's plan to put a satellite into orbit on a rocket.

By Julian Ryall, Tokyo

21 March 2012

Japan, South Korea and the United States have already expressed concerns that the launch - scheduled for mid-April as part of celebrations to mark the 100th birthday of Kim Il-sung, the founder of the nation - is a thinly disguised test for a ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.

Experts are now suggesting that a "catastrophic failure" of the rocket could cause it to crash with little or no warning and that the most likely time that would happen would be in the early stages of the flight, when it is close to South Korean territory.

The domestically produced Unha-3 rocket is scheduled to be the first launched from the new aerospace facility at Tongchang-ri, close to the border with China in the far north-west of the country. Pyongyang has informed the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the International Maritime Organisation that the rocket will travel almost due south, with the propulsion stage likely to fall into waters just 87 miles off the west coast of South Korea.

The rocket will then proceed over the East China Sea bordering China, Japan and Taiwan before falling into the ocean an estimated 118 miles off the Philippines.

Aerospace analysts have told The Daily Telegraph that the flight path that North Korea has announced is consistent with the launch of an Earth-observation satellite, but it will only become apparent whether this is the regime's real aim or whether it is testing a long-range missile when the launch takes place.



There is, however, good reason for concern, they agreed. The only other time North Korea has attempted to put a satellite into orbit, in April 2009, the first stage of the vehicle fell into the Sea of Japan before the main body flew over northern Japan and crashed into the Pacific Ocean.

Despite North Korean claims that the launch had been a success and that the satellite was broadcasting revolutionary speeches from its leaders around the globe, other space agencies could find no evidence of the satellite.

Japan is presently drawing up plans to intercept the rocket if it approaches Japanese airspace and Tokyo is expected to deploy Patriot anti-missile batteries in Okinawa and Aegis destroyers in the Sea of Japan.

Aerospace experts believe that the rocket will be at its most vulnerable to failure in the initial stages of the flight, when it is required to make some directional changes.

The rocket will be subjected to incredible pressures, they said, and could "come apart" if it is poorly designed or constructed.

Given that the trajectory of the rocket is so close to South Korea, this could cause parts of the rocket and its fuel to fall onto South Korean territory, they warned.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/9157167/Crash-fears-over-North-Korean-satellite-trajectory.html>

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Chosun Ilbo – South Korea
March 22, 2012

China Developing 2nd Stealth Fighter Jet

China is reportedly developing a second stealth fighter jet, the medium sized J-60, which has greater mobility than J-20 currently in test flights, Hong Kong's Phoenix TV reported Wednesday citing U.S. magazine Aviation Weekly.

In contrast to the large J-20 that weighs 30 tons, the J-60 weighs 20 tons. If the J-20 is a rival to the best performing F-22 Raptor of the U.S., the J-60 competes against the U.S.' multipurpose F-35.

The March edition of a Hong Kong monthly also reported that China is developing a second stealth fighter dubbed Xuexiao and the first test flight will take place within this year. That is probably the same plane.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/03/22/2012032201390.html

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Korea Times – South Korea
March 22, 2012

Seoul Presses Pyongyang to Cancel Rocket Launch

Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan on Thursday "strongly" called on North Korea to abandon its plan to launch a long-range rocket, which sparked fresh tensions on the Korean Peninsula ahead of a global nuclear summit scheduled for next week.

The North's planned rocket launch will be discussed bilaterally and multilaterally on the sidelines of the two-day Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul starting Monday, Kim told reporters, as Seoul seeks to raise the issue to increase pressure on Pyongyang.

"North Korea's plan to launch a so-called 'application satellite' will be a clear violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1874," said Kim, referring to a 2009 U.N. resolution that bans "any launch using ballistic missile technology."



"The government strongly urges North Korea to immediately stop such a provocative action and comply with its international obligations," Kim said, calling the North's planned rocket launch a "highly provocative act to develop a long-distance delivery means for nuclear weapons by using ballistic missile technology."

While the nuclear summit is primarily aimed at preventing loose nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorists, the North's planned rocket launch will be a hot topic outside the gathering.

On the sidelines of the two-day summit, President Lee Myung-bak will hold a series of bilateral summit meetings with U.S. President Barack Obama, China's Hu Jintao, Russia's Dmitry Medvedev and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to discuss the issue of the North's planned rocket launch, Kim said.

Obama and Hu are also scheduled to hold a bilateral summit during the nuclear security conference.

South Korea has shared concerns over the North's planned rocket launch with the U.S., China, Russia and Japan, which are members of the stalled six-party talks aimed at ending the North's nuclear weapons program, Kim added.

Last week, North Korea announced its plan to launch a satellite atop a long-range rocket in mid-April, drawing international condemnation. South Korea, the U.S. and others view the North's plan as a cover for testing delivery systems for nuclear missiles.

The North's announcement appears to be in violation of the Feb. 29 deal with the U.S. that calls on Pyongyang to suspend its uranium enrichment and nuclear and missile tests in return for 240,000 tons of U.S. food aid.

The North's tactic marked the first tension, or possible diplomatic gamble with the U.S. for more concessions, generated by its new leader Kim Jong-un, who inherited power in December following death of his father, Kim Jong-il, analysts said.

The planned launch will mark the 100th birth anniversary of Kim Il-sung, North Korea's founder and grandfather of current leader Kim Jong-un. (Yonhap)

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/03/371_107451.html

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China Daily – China

DPRK's Rocket Launch to Be Discussed on Sidelines of Nuclear Security Summit

March 22, 2012
(Xinhua)

SEOUL, March 22 (Xinhua) -- South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan said Thursday the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s planned rocket launch can be discussed on the sidelines of a global conference next week.

"Heads of state are expected to discuss what needs to be done to stop the launch of Kwangmyongsong-3," Kim told reporters in a briefing.

"The issue will be discussed based on our shared understanding that the launch will violate a U.N. resolution."

The minister's remarks came after U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon reportedly said in Malaysia he will discuss the matter with heads of state attending the two-day Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, including South Korean President Lee Myung-bak.

The Seoul summit, aimed at discussing reducing and protecting radioactive materials and keeping terrorists at bay from nuclear materials and facilities, will bring together 57 heads of state and representatives of international organizations.



Last week, the DPRK's space technology committee announced it will go ahead with the plan to launch a "polar-orbiting Earth observation satellite" on an Unha-3 rocket between April 12 and 16 to mark the centenary of the birth of Kim Il Sung, the country's founding leader.

South Korea has repeatedly censured the move, calling it "an act of great provocation" and violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874 banning all launches using ballistic missile technology.

The DPRK, meanwhile, has said the April launch will "strictly abide by relevant international regulations" and accused countries opposed to the plan of continuing "hostile policy" toward Pyongyang

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/xinhua/2012-03-22/content_5489377.html

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Yonhap News – South Korea
March 22, 2012

Lee Says S. Korea, U.S. Expected to Reach Agreement on Extending Missile Range: Report

SEOUL, March 22 (Yonhap) -- South Korea expects to reach agreement with the United States in the near future to allow Seoul to possess or develop ballistic missiles that can reach deeper into North Korea, President Lee Myung-bak was quoted Thursday as saying.

Under a pact with the U.S., first signed in 1979 and revised in 2001, the range of South Korean ballistic missiles is limited to 300 kilometers and their payload weight to 500 kilograms. Seoul has sought to revise the agreement to match the range of missiles in the North Korean arsenal.

"It is for defense against North Korean attacks at times of contingencies that we say we need to expand our missile range," Lee was quoted as saying during an interview published in the Dong-a Ilbo newspaper Thursday. "We need an appropriate range."

The remark came as tensions have risen on the Korean Peninsula after North Korea announced last week it will launch a long-range rocket to put a satellite into orbit, a pretext the communist nation has used before to disguise banned missile tests.

Whenever North Korea rattles its saber with its missile or nuclear programs, calls spike in South Korea for longer-range missiles to counter threats from the provocative regime. Since 2010, South Korea and the U.S. have been in talks to revise the missile range pact, though few details have been released.

"Various realities and circumstances have changed," Lee said of the need for revising the agreement.

Lee said the U.S. views Seoul's demand as "fairly reasonable" and he believes the sides will be able to reach agreement in the near future, but gave no specific time frame.

"If North Korea attacks with missiles, they can reach even the (southern) island of Jeju. Therefore, we need to be symmetrical," Lee said. "There is an understanding between the South and the U.S. that it is right to extend our missile range to an appropriate level."

A presidential official said Seoul and Washington have been in talks on the missile range, but no specifics have been finalized.

Also Thursday, a South Korean government official said on condition of anonymity that the two allies could begin specific consultations on the missile range next month.

The two sides are expected to discuss the idea of extending the range to between 800 kilometers and 1,000 kilometers, a move that puts the entire North Korean territory within striking distance.



South Korea and the U.S. shared the need to "come up with countermeasures against the threat posed by North Korea's long-range missile," South Korea's defense ministry spokesman Kim Min-seok said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/03/22/90/0301000000AEN20120322003000315F.HTML>

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Chosun Ilbo – South Korea

Kim Jong-un's Barbaric Purge of 'Unsound' Military Brass

March 22, 2012

A bloody purge in North Korea following the sudden death of leader Kim Jong-il late last year saw barbaric methods including mortar rounds used to execute high-ranking military officials, a South Korean government source said Wednesday.

"When Kim Jong-un became North Korean leader following the mourning period for his father in late December, high-ranking military officers started disappearing," the source said. "From information compiled over the last month, we have concluded that dozens of military officers were purged." The source added Kim Jong-un ordered loyal officials to "get rid of" anyone caught misbehaving during the mourning period for Kim Jong-il.

But contrary to reports that an assistant chief of the Ministry of the People's Armed Forces was put in front of a firing squad for being drunk during the mourning period, he was executed using a mortar round in line with Kim's orders to leave "no trace of him behind, down to his hair."

The source said the official was placed on the spot where the round would hit, and the grisly execution obliterated him.

Besides the assistant chief and an assistant chief of the General Staff Department, frontline commanders were also executed, the source said.

Kim Jong-il also purged dissenters after the death of his father Kim Il-sung in 1994. Even those caught for minor infractions were executed by a firing squad.

But Kim Jong-un's methods appear even more brutal. A source familiar with North Korea said, "It appears that the loyalty pledged by the military did not satisfy the young leader, who is sensitive about his age." Kim junior is 28 or 29.

The source said the drastic measures may have been proposed by Kim's confidant Kim Jong-gak (62), the first deputy director of the General Political Bureau of the North Korean People's Army.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2012/03/22/2012032200933.html

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Pakistan Today – Pakistan

March 21, 2012

Taliban Commander Wants Pakistan's Nukes, Overthrow of Govt

Independent News Pakistan (INP)

WASHINGTON - One of the top leaders of the movement of the Taliban in Pakistan said the terror group sought to overthrow the Pakistani government, impose sharia, seize the country's nuclear weapons, and wage jihad until "the Caliphate is established across the world".

The statements were made by Omar Khalid al Khurasani, the al Qaeda-linked leader of the Taliban in Pakistan's branch in the Mohmand Agency, in a video that was released on jihadist web forums.



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The video, which also discussed the history and evolution of the Taliban Movement in Pakistan, was released by Umar Studios and has been translated by the SITE Intelligence Group.

In the video, Khalid said the Movement of the Taliban in Pakistan was united, strong and operating under the leadership of Commander Hakeemullah Mehsud. Khalid outlined five “important goals” of the Taliban: overthrow the Pakistani institutions; release both Pakistani and “foreign” fighters; impose sharia law; obtain a nuclear weapon; and establish a global caliphate.

“First of all, we aim to counter the Pakistani government, its intelligence agencies, and its army, which are against Islam and have oppressed the mujahideen and their families,” Khalid said, according to the SITE translation. The Taliban want to “avenge the oppression of the mujahideen in the tribal and urban areas” as well as the “humiliation of the mujahideen in Pakistani prisons”.

“Our second objective is to seek the safe release of Pakistani and foreign mujahideen in Pakistan,” Khalid continued. The term “foreign mujahideen” refers to members of al Qaeda and other outside terror groups such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

Khalid said the Taliban wanted to “replace the English system of democracy with Islamic Shariah” as “the Pakistani system has nothing to do with Islam”.

Khalid also said that the Taliban wanted to seize Pakistan’s nuclear weapons and “other resources”, including the army, to defend Islam.

<http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2012/03/21/news/national/taliban-commander-wants-pakistan%E2%80%99s-nukes-overthrow-of-govt/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Considering Cyber-Security Command

21 March 2012

The Russian government is considering setting up a dedicated cyber-security command, responsible for protecting the armed forces' information systems, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin said on Wednesday.

"We are currently discussing the question of setting up a cyber-security command," said Rogozin, who has responsibility for Russia's military-industrial complex. "This is in connection with guaranteeing information for the armed forces, and also the state infrastructure as a whole," he said.

Rogozin said that Russia would follow the steps of the United States and NATO as a whole aimed at staving off the growing threat of cyber attacks on vital military communications networks.

NATO was one of the first to announce a cyber defense policy package in response to cyber attacks against Estonia in 2007.

In May 2008, seven NATO nations and the Allied Command Transformation signed the documents for the formal establishment of a Cooperative Cyber Defense (CCD) Centre of Excellence (CoE) in Tallinn, Estonia.

On June 8, 2011, NATO Defense Ministers adopted a new cyber defense policy. The new policy focuses on prevention of cyber attacks and building resilience. The policy clarifies political and operational mechanisms of NATO's response to cyber attack and integrates cyber defense into NATO's Defense Planning Process.

Rogozin also confirmed on Wednesday that the government had prepared a draft bill on the establishment of an advanced military research agency, similar to the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) in the United States, and would submit it to the parliament in the near future.

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MOSCOW, March 21 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.ria.ru/russia/20120321/172301330.html>

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Voice of Russia – Russia

Russia to Raise Awareness about Missile Defense

By Mamonov Roman

March 21, 2012

A new conflict over an old problem is brewing in Russian-U.S. relations. Russia has received confidential information from Washington about components of the U.S.-led European Missile Defense, but some reports say that that Kremlin is dissatisfied with the contents of the documents it has found useless and is preparing to table its own arguments, which may happen at an international conference in May.

Earlier, Moscow demanded legal guarantees that the missile defense system that is currently being deployed in Europe is not directed against Russia. Instead, the U.S. State Department's special envoy for strategic stability Ellen Tauscher handed Russian Defense Ministry officials what was supposed to be classified data on the system's performance. The Kommersant newspaper quotes an unnamed military expert as saying that it's absolutely useless data. Yevgeny Boyko of the Center for Political Conjuncture remarked in this connection that yet another widely publicized gesture on Washington's part had proven to be utterly meaningless.

"This was an attempt to calm down public opinion rather than really share data and thus show that everything is transparent. In terms of an official viewpoint, it's by no means a concession. We see that the United States is not ready to curtail its program, something Russia expects it to do. The American side is just trying to buy time."

Sources in the Russian Defense and Foreign Ministries have made clear that Moscow is disappointed and indignant at the move that actually dashes hopes for a mutually acceptable solution.

Alexander Sharavin, Director of the Institute for Political and Military Analysis, argues that the very fact of Washington agreeing to share at least some information is positive:

"Any cooperation on the European missile defense is very important. We are trying to find a compromise, and so are the Americans and NATO. It's a very difficult process that involves experts, lawmakers, diplomats. The move symbolized a fairly large degree of openness. I understand, of course, that the missile defense technology is top secret. No matter what little information is disclosed, it's very important and should not be disregarded. In my opinion, any steps, from joint military exercises to technological exchange, are extremely important in this situation."

Unconfirmed reports suggest that Moscow is planning to launch an information campaign to raise awareness of the danger of the European missile defense system to the balance of forces in the region and to a Russian-U.S. nuclear parity. A deputy defense minister is to give a press conference on the issue.

http://english.ruvr.ru/2012_03_21/69155245/

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ITAR-TASS – Russia

21 March 2012

Russia Destroys over 60 Prc of Chemical Weapons

NIZHNY NOVGOROD, March 21 (Itar-Tass) — Russia has destroyed more than 24,157 tonnes of toxic agents, i.e. 60.4 percent of its stockpiles of chemical weapons. The rest may be destroyed faster than initially scheduled, a Kremlin official said.

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The presidential envoy to the Volga Federal District and the chairman of the State Commission on Chemical Disarmament, Mikhail Babich, met with a delegation of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons headed by OPCW Executive Council Peter Goosen and OPCW Technical Secretariat Director-General Ahmet Uzumcu on Wednesday, March 21.

Babich confirmed Russia's commitment to full disposal of all stockpiles of chemical weapons under international supervision.

"We are taking maximum effort to complete this process within the shortest time possible," Babich said.

Russia plans to use seven disposal facilities to destroy all of the stocks in 2012.

During the first stage, 400 tonnes of poison substances were eliminated by April 29, 2003, which made up 1 percent of Russia's chemical weapons (40,000 tonnes).

In the course of Phase Two, Russia disposed of 8,000 tonnes of chemical weapons. At the facility in the village of Gorny, 1,143 tonnes were eliminated, while the facility in the village of Maradykovsky accounted for 4,500 tonnes of eliminated agents out of the scheduled 7,500 tonnes.

The chemical weapons disposal plant in Kambarka, Udmurtia, has destroyed all 6,400 tonnes of lewisite that were kept at its depots.

The plant in Kambarka has been operating without failures since commissioning on March 1, 2006. Kambarka is one of the seven chemical weapons disposal plants built in Russia under a national programme of chemical disarmament. It stored 6,400 tonnes of lewisite since the 1940s, which made up 15.9 percent of all toxic agents inherited by Russia from the former Soviet Union.

The Pochev site in the Bryansk region stores over 7,500 tonnes of nerve gases and plays a special role in the final stage of the federal chemical disarmament programme. The site contains almost 19 percent of Russia's war gases. All of them have to be disposed of within the period of time prescribed in the Hague Convention.

The facility in the village of Leonidovka, Penza Region, is also involved in the implementation of the programme. Another facility is in the town of Shchuchye, Kurgan region.

The final stage of the programme envisions the destruction of 100 percent of chemical weapons by December 29, 2012. The plants in the town of Pochev, Bryansk region, and the town of Kizner, Udmurtia, will take part in the implementation of this stage.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/371949.html>

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Xinhua News – China

Deal between Russia, NATO on Missile Defense Still Possible: Medvedev

March 23, 2012

Russia and NATO are still likely to come to terms on the missile defense issue as the door is still open for the two sides to have talks on the matter, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Friday.

Speaking at a Euro-Atlantic security conference, the Russian president recalled some examples of successful interaction between Russia and NATO in the past years, saying that he was convinced the missile defense issue would be approached in the same way and then everything would be worked out well.

"To reach mutually acceptable agreements is in our interests," Medvedev said, adding that "we can come to terms."

However, he warned that the time for such dialogues was "running out," indicating the two sides should move at a much faster pace.

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Medvedev also reiterated that there should be a legal document to guarantee that the U.S. missile shield in Europe would not target Russia.

He said that the attempt to create a European missile shield without taking Russia's interest into account was an attempt to break nuclear parity.

During the conference, the president also called on NATO to advance relations with the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a body comprising Russia and six other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.

Moscow has failed to obtain written and legal guarantees that the U.S. missile shield in Europe will not target Russia. Disputes over the missile system have prompted Medvedev to threaten in November to take strong countermeasures, including the deployment of contemporary missile systems in the western and southern parts of Russia.

The missile defense shield involves the deployment of U.S. interceptor missiles and radars in Europe and is scheduled to be completed by 2020. The system will then be capable of intercepting long-range and intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Moscow has long opposed the deployment of U.S.-led NATO missile defense facilities near its border.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2012-03/23/c_131486061.htm

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Worldwide News Ukraine – Ukraine

March 22, 2012

Ukraine Completely Removes Highly Enriched Uranium

Kyiv, March 22, 2012. Today Ukraine has fulfilled its obligations and removed its entire stock of highly-enriched uranium (HEU), reported press office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine. Such transfer became possible through the support of the United States and the International Atomic Energy Agency, acknowledged the Ukrainian government.

On March 22 Ukraine moved the last batch of highly enriched nuclear materials to Russia finalizing its commitment to get rid of HEU before the 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit (March 25-26, 2012). "Such move has once again confirmed Ukraine's long-term commitment to nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation," reported Ukraine's foreign ministry.

In return Ukraine received an equivalent amount of low enriched uranium, special equipment and technology from the U.S. According to the bilateral agreement, the United States also started construction of the neutron source using the most up-to-date technology at the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology.

The above-mentioned agreement was signed by the United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Kostyantyn Gryshchenko on September 26, 2011, in New York. The agreement stipulated that the U.S. would assist in securing Ukraine's vulnerable nuclear materials as well as modernizing Ukrainian civil nuclear research facilities as the country gets rid of its stock of HEU by March 2012. When obligations are fulfilled, Ukrainian civil research facilities will operate on safer low-enriched uranium. The U.S. also provided USD 60 million of financial assistance.

Ukraine first announced its decision to get rid of the substance in April 2010 when the President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich participated in the Washington Summit on nuclear safety, initiated by the President of the USA Barack Obama.

In December 1994 Ukraine joined the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and proclaimed its non-nuclear status. Ukraine reaffirmed its non-nuclear status in its Constitution and the declaration "On the State Sovereignty of Ukraine". The last nuclear warhead was shipped from Ukraine to Russia in 1996 but a significant amount



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of enriched uranium remained in storage at the Kyiv Institute for Nuclear Research, the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology, and the Sevastopol National University of Nuclear Energy and Industry.

<http://wnu-ukraine.com/news/politics/?id=1497>

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London Guardian – U.K.

Scrapping Trident Nuclear Missiles 'would Save £83.5bn'

Savings could be spread over years until 2062 and jobs created on other defence projects, study finds

By Richard Norton-Taylor

Wednesday, 21 March 2012

Scrapping the Trident nuclear missile system would save £83.5bn and many of the jobs at risk could be transferred to alternative defence projects, according to an authoritative study published on Wednesday.

An average annual saving of £1.86bn would be made until 2062, it says. The study, commissioned by senior figures from all three main parties, points out that the savings would not be available immediately because cancellation and decommissioning costs would have to be taken into account.

The report, by Professor Keith Hartley, a leading defence economist, is published by a commission set up by the British American Security Information Council. The Trident commission is jointly chaired by the former Conservative and Labour defence secretaries Sir Malcolm Rifkind and Lord Browne and the former Liberal Democrat leader and foreign and defence spokesman, Sir Menzies Campbell.

The option of arming a new fleet of Astute submarines with nuclear-armed cruise missiles – which is being considered by an internal Ministry of Defence study – might cost £56.5bn up to 2058, the report says.

Under the worst case scenario, scrapping Trident could lead to the loss of 31,000 jobs, it says. Jobs linked to the Trident nuclear missile project are concentrated at the BAE Systems shipyards at Barrow-in-Furness, Rolls Royce in Derby, the naval shipyard at Devonport near Plymouth, and the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston in Berkshire.

Job losses would happen over a long adjustment period during which Britain would be producing nuclear-powered but conventionally armed Astute class submarines.

"Care is needed to identify myths, emotions and special pleading," the report says. "For example, industry will often claim that a decision not to replace the [Trident submarine] Vanguard fleet would have a 'devastating and catastrophic impact' on the United Kingdom's submarine industrial base and its continued capability to design and build nuclear-powered submarines ... Such claims, emotive language and special pleading need to be subject to critical analysis and evaluation of the supporting empirical evidence."

It adds: "The employment and skills impacts of a Trident replacement are not the main policy objectives of defence equipment procurement: such procurements are about the contributions of various equipment programmes to UK security, protection and peace."

The study emphasises that a decision on replacing the Trident system, due to be taken in 2016, should not be dominated by the impact on jobs or industry. "They are not central to a decision [on Trident replacement]" Hartley told the Guardian.

The report says: "Some of the high unemployment areas at risk have submarine work which will continue to about 2025. This means that there is a substantial adjustment period allowing government to decide on the future of the UK submarine industry and to introduce appropriate public policies to allow a smooth adjustment to cancellation."

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Submarine manufacture was particularly capital-intensive, so more alternative jobs could be created with the same investment, it said.

The MoD study on alternatives to Trident is part of the coalition government's agreement, but it is unclear how much of it will be made public.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/mar/21/trident-nuclear-missiles-savings?newsfeed=true>

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Los Angeles Times

Obama to Attend Nuclear Summit in South Korea

March 22, 2012

By Kathleen Hennessey

REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON -- President Obama is headed to Asia (again) for his first foreign trip of the year. The White House has not been shy about its attempts to try to strengthen U.S. relationships and economic ties in that part of the world: Obama's last trip abroad was an eight-day swing around the Pacific Rim.

The destination this weekend is Seoul, the third time in as many years that the president has visited South Korea. The draw this time is the second Nuclear Security Summit, a meeting of more than 50 foreign leaders on the topic of improving the security of nuclear material and preventing nuclear terrorism.

The summit is an Obama administration initiative, born out of his 2009 speech in Prague, the Czech capital, which outlined his broader plans for nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament. Obama set a goal of locking down all "vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years."

He convened the first summit in Washington in April 2010. That effort was welcomed by many nuclear policy experts who have warned for years that nuclear security was an overlooked and increasingly dangerous vulnerability. Al Qaeda has declared its interest in obtaining nuclear material.

In his assessment of the threat, Matthew Bunn, associate professor at the Belfer Center at Harvard, called the possibility of a group making a weapon using highly enriched uranium "very plausibly within capabilities of a sophisticated terrorist group."

Unlike nuclear safety, which refers to the safe operating of a nuclear reactor, nuclear security -- how a country locks down, stores or eliminates fissile material -- is not governed by a single international body or subject to international standards or monitors.

The Washington summit garnered dozens of voluntary commitments from countries eager to show they were in for the project. The commitments varied considerably in significance. Some were minor promises to hold a conference or improve training. Others, in the case of Chile, involved the removal of all highly enriched uranium from its territory.

Experts have been monitoring the follow-through closely. One report, released in the run-up to the Seoul sequel, found that 80% of the commitments have been completed. White House officials say they're happy with that record.

But among the countries that haven't made good on their commitments is the U.S. The White House had pledged to expedite ratification of two nuclear security treaties. The treaties have both been approved by the Senate, but legislation required to enact the measures has lingered in the perpetually jammed up Congress. The administration also aimed to complete the conversion of six remaining highly enriched uranium reactors to lower-grade fuel, but that effort is delayed.

Still, the U.S. fared pretty well in a study by the Nuclear Threat Initiative ranking countries on how well they secure nuclear material. The U.S. landed 13th on the list of 32 countries that store weapons-usable material. The countries were graded on many factors, including the amount of material, political stability and regulatory climate. Deeply

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Choubey, a senior director at NTI, noted that the U.S. standing was largely a result of the large amount of material within its borders. If that factor had been eliminated, the U.S. score would have shot to second place, she said.

The countries at the bottom of the list are China, India, Vietnam, Iran, Pakistan and North Korea — in that order. Choubey said that for some of those countries the poor marks were a reflection of secrecy. Those countries have guarded or refused to make public details about their security efforts.

That's something many experts would like the second summit to address, although few are optimistic. The first summit was dependent on voluntary efforts and did not institute any enforcement measures that might wade into sticky questions of sovereignty. The Seoul summit is not expected to push any further.

"I think it is deeply problematic," Bunn said. "The governance of nuclear security is weak, and much weaker than the world is willing to accept."

http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/world_now/2012/03/president-obama-nuclear-summit-south-korea.html

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Journal of Turkish Weekly – Turkey

U.S. Denies Disclosing Missile Defense Data to Russia

Thursday, 22 March 2012

RIA Novosti

The U.S. has never provided Russia with secret information concerning the deployment of its missile shield elements in Europe, a high-ranking U.S. Department of State official told RIA Novosti on Thursday.

"No classified missile defense information was provided to Russia," the source said.

Earlier this month media reports said that the United States allegedly planned to share with Russia unspecified "secret data," presumably on the SM-3 rocket, which is to become the staple interceptor rocket of the U.S. missile shield by 2020.

U.S. Department of State Spokesperson Victoria Nuland refused to comment on the reports that the secret data was handed over to Moscow during Special Envoy for Strategic Stability and Missile Defense Ellen Tauscher's visit to Moscow on March 13-15.

"Missile defense cooperation was one of the issues discussed at the meeting," the State Department official said. "I'm not going to go into the specifics of the discussions. I'll just say that we are committed to pursuing missile defense cooperation with Russia and are continuing discussions."

It is not yet clear exactly which data may be disclosed to Russia, which has for years strongly opposed American plans to deploy a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe, including Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic.

The White House insists the program is aimed against a potential threat from rogue states such as Iran and North Korea but Russia says its own missiles will also fall under the shield, destroying the nuclear balance that existed since the Cold War.

In November, news leaked that the White House was in secret talks with Russia about providing it with information on the velocity burnout of the modified version of the SM-3 rocket, which is to become the staple interceptor rocket of the U.S. missile shield by 2020. However, the U.S. administration denied at the time that it proposed to disclose the data on the rocket's crucial parameter to Moscow.

Experts say the speed of interceptor rockets is the only thing the Russian military needs to know to determine whether the U.S. missile shield really poses a risk to Russian rockets.

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/132795/u-s-denies-disclosing-missile-defense-data-to-russia.html>



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Bloomberg News

Iran Diplomats Cased NYC Landmarks, Police Official Says

By Jeff Bliss

March 21, 2012

Iranian diplomats may have carried out “hostile reconnaissance” of sites in New York as many as six times, a warning sign that the city might be targeted for terrorist attack, according to a police official.

The incidents occurred between 2002 and 2010 and involved videotaping or photographing landmarks, rail service and bridges, said Mitchell Silber, director of the city police department’s intelligence analysis unit, in testimony before a U.S. House panel today.

Hezbollah, a militant group allied with Iran that has been designated a terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department, also has ties to the New York region, he said.

“The city remains the most likely venue for global tensions with Iran to spill over onto American soil,” Silber told the House Homeland Security Committee.

Tensions with Iran have increased over the country’s unwillingness to scale back its nuclear program.

Last month, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano said she was concerned that Hezbollah would attempt a terrorist attack on American soil and that she had been in touch with U.S. Jewish groups. Napolitano said she wasn’t aware of any specific threats to the groups or other U.S. targets.

Operatives in U.S.

Government officials estimate “hundreds” of Iranian and Hezbollah operatives are in the U.S., said Representative Peter King, a Republican from New York who is the homeland security panel’s chairman.

“We have a duty to prepare for the worst,” he said.

Representative Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, the panel’s senior Democrat, complained that Obama administration officials weren’t among the witnesses at the hearing.

“I am concerned about whether the testimony we received will be based on current information,” said Thompson. “We should not engage in a public discussion that creates fear and delivers misinformation.”

New York police are facing criticism for conducting surveillance of Muslim communities. The New York-based Human Rights Watch yesterday requested in a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder that the Justice Department formally investigate the city department’s actions.

Economic Sanctions

The U.S. and Europe have tightened economic sanctions on Iran since a Nov. 8 United Nations atomic inspectors’ report raised questions about Iran’s nuclear program. The sanctions are meant to pressure Iran’s leaders to abandon weapons-related work and head off a potential conflict in the Persian Gulf region that holds more than half the world’s oil reserves.

The Iranian surveillance has been going on for years, Silber said. In February 2010, federal air marshals found four people who said they worked for the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting Co. videotaping and photographing the Wall Street heliport, he said. One person held a camera at waist level, focusing on the structure and not the helicopters in the air, he said.

Several members of the Iranian delegation to the United Nations in 2008 were seen taking pictures of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority train tracks inside Grand Central Station, Silber said. In the early to mid-2000s,



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police interviewed people with ties to the Iranian government who were taking pictures and videotaping infrastructure, he said.

Terror Plots

Police have been examining recent terrorist plots in India, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Thailand that may be connected to Iran, Silber said.

An alleged Iranian plot last year to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the U.S. shows that Iran doesn't fear conducting American operations, said Matthew Levitt, director of the Stein Program on Counterterrorism and Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy in Washington.

"America and its allies are already involved in a shadow war with Iran," he said.

Hezbollah's presence in the New York region has been uncovered in investigations, Silber said. Twenty-six people, including a former Brooklyn resident, were indicted in 2009 for conspiring to provide material support to Hezbollah by obtaining weapons, and raising money through the sale of fraudulent passports and other schemes, Silber said.

Past cases have shown that Hezbollah operatives, whose primary purpose was to raise money and provide supplies to the group, can have a "potential lethal nature," said Chris Swecker, a former assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Intelligence officials have told the committee's staff that "Hezbollah is the group most capable of flipping its nationwide network of criminal fund-raising cells into an operational terror force capable of great violence," King said.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-03-21/iranian-diplomats-cased-landmarks-police-official-says.html>

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Sydney Morning Herald – Australia

Nuclear Watchdog Chief Accused of Bias on Iran

By Julian Borger

March 24, 2012

LONDON: The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the nuclear watchdog at the heart of the growing Iranian crisis, has been accused by several former senior officials of pro-Western bias, over-reliance on unverified intelligence and of sidelining sceptics.

Robert Kelley, a former US weapons scientist who ran the agency's action team on Iraq at the time of the US-led invasion, said there were worrying parallels between the West's mistakes over Iraq's supposed weapons of mass destruction and the IAEA's assessment of Iran now.

"Amano is falling into the Cheney trap. What we learned back in 2002 and 2003, when we were in the run-up to the war, was that peer review was very important, and that the analysis should not be left to a small group of people," he said.

"So what have we learned since then? Absolutely nothing. Just like Dick Cheney, [the head of the agency, Yukiya] Amano is relying on a very small group of people and those opinions are not being checked."

Other former officials have also raised concern that the IAEA is becoming an echo chamber, focused on suspicions over Iran's program, without the vigorous debate that characterised the era of Amano's predecessor Mohamed ElBaradei.

They point to Amano's decision, in March last year, to dissolve the agency's office of external relations and policy co-ordination (Expo), which under ElBaradei had second-guessed some of the judgments made by the safeguards department inspectors.

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Expo cautioned against the publication of IAEA reports that the Bush administration might use to justify military action. Some inspectors believed that amounted to censorship and Western governments said it was not the agency's job to make political judgments.

"There has been a concentration of power, with less diversity of viewpoints," a former official said.

Hans Blix, a former IAEA director general, also raised concerns over the agency's credibility. "There is a distinction between information and evidence, and if you are a responsible agency you have to make sure that you ask questions and do not base conclusions on information that has not been verified," he said.

The IAEA would not comment, but diplomats in Vienna, where the IAEA has its headquarters, defended Amano, pointing out that much of the material on weaponisation had been raised when ElBaradei ran the agency, albeit in less detail.

Guardian News & Media

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/nuclear-watchdog-chief-accused-of-bias-on-iran-20120323-1vpaa.html>

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The Hill

OPINION/Congress Blog

Nuclear Weapons Policy: It's 2012, Not 1992

By Heather Hurlburt, executive director, National Security Network

March 20, 2012

From speeches by Rep. Turner (R-Ohio), to an op-ed by former White House staff in these pages, the debate over U.S. nuclear policy appears to be heating up. Recent weeks have seen a concerted effort to portray the ongoing Pentagon review of our nuclear deterrence stance – how many warheads, deployed against what threats, how best safeguarded – as putting the nation's security at risk, or even "dangerous."

As a former White House speechwriter myself, I was pleased and bemused to see my counterparts from the George H.W. Bush administration calling attention to nuclear issues. Their rhetoric is tremendous -- but as policy, it is simply wrong. Bipartisan military leaders and security experts say – and have said for years – that we can maintain our security at levels even lower than what's under consideration.

We can make changes to our force posture – how we deploy our weapons – that would increase our own security and that of our allies. And in an era where our greatest security challenges are not nuclear superpower rivals, and where every defense dollar is under close scrutiny, the Pentagon itself has higher priorities.

Let's look at the facts in context.

First, the United States has no shortage of warheads – some 5,000 active and inactive, in fact, of which 1,790 are currently deployed. A single U.S. nuclear-armed submarine – of which we have a dozen – can by itself obliterate all of the world's major cities. The United States and Russia between us hold 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons – and the Russians are expected to continue to diminish their holdings. Where does that leave the rest of the world? Our allies Britain and France retain around 500 between them, while Israel is thought to have between 75 and 200; China, alarmist rhetoric to the contrary, is believed to have about 240 total warheads; North Korea, the potential for a dozen; India, up to 100; and Pakistan, 70 to 90.

Looking at that math, military strategists and deterrence theorists have quietly been debating how low we can go for a number of years now. The results will surprise armchair strategists from the "more is better" school of planning. A bipartisan Harvard task force on U.S.-Russia security interests called on the U.S. to negotiate levels under 1,000 warheads. Air Force analysts – no peaceniks – have written that the U.S. could "maintain a stable deterrence" with only 311 weapons.

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Second, a growing number of senior statesmen have pointed to ways that changes in how U.S. nuclear weapons are deployed – i.e. deploying fewer – would increase U.S. and global security.

There are two reasons for this: U.S. and Russian reductions in deployments would, as George Shultz, William Perry, Henry Kissinger and Sam Nunn have written, “set an example for the world,” in particular for deployments in India and Pakistan. As fewer weapons are deployed worldwide, the risk of theft or unauthorized use – the goal of al Qaeda and the nightmare of every American security planner – declines.

Finally, those who assert that the U.S. cannot possibly manage with one weapon less – or should even be building more – have simply missed the evolution in military strategy since the end of the Cold War. A large nuclear force was a key determinant of superpower status in the 20th century. But, as Major General (ret.) Paul Monroe has written, justifications for a large arsenal, which may have made sense “in 1962,” are “flimsy” if not “irresponsible” in 2012, especially when weighed against the needs of our armed forces and threats of terrorism, weapons proliferation, and cyberattack.

At the beginning of Obama’s presidency, former National Security Adviser (and the Bush-era boss of The Hill op-ed writers) Brent Scowcroft co-chaired a Council on Foreign Relations task force that similarly urged the administration to exert leadership by unilaterally reducing nuclear weapons and materials deemed in excess to defense needs.

While the Pentagon nuclear planners debate internally what level of deployed warheads the U.S. needs for a safe, responsible nuclear deterrent as one still-relevant but diminishing piece of a 21st-century defense policy, now is a good time for pundits and policymakers alike to get up to speed on a nuclear policy debate that, like the rest of national security, has moved well beyond the world of George H.W. Bush.

Hurlburt is the executive director of the National Security Network. She previously served as special assistant and speechwriter to President Clinton, and has also worked in the U.S. State Department and on Capitol Hill.

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/homeland-security/217007-nuclear-weapons-policy-its-2012-not-1992>

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Los Angeles Times
OPINION/Op-Ed

Not the Same Old North Korea?

North Korea appears to be reneging on a nuclear deal with the U.S., but the agreement could still pave the way for a new American strategy: targeted social change.

By Michael J. Mazarr

March 21, 2012

Well, that didn't take long. Not even a month after the much-heralded accord in which North Korea agreed, among other things, to halt long-range missile testing, Pyongyang announced its intention to launch a satellite — with a long-range missile.

This is, if nothing else, clever. The United States has put a lot of eggs into the basket of a denuclearization process and of improved relations supposedly inaugurated by the February nuclear deal. But if Washington stands by its position that this proposed satellite launch — a transparent ploy to test powerful rocket technology — would be a deal breaker, we'll be right back at square one.

Pyongyang has us right where it wants us, in a sense, which shows again the bankruptcy of a policy designed to bargain for nuclear and missile concessions that the North is never going to provide. The nuclear agreement was never likely to get Pyongyang to halt nuclear or missile research. But it could offer a gateway to a new strategy, one that transfers our main emphasis to using dramatic economic and social changes underway in the North to promote long-term U.S. and allied interests.

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This is not, of course, the official line on the deal, in which the North promised a moratorium on new nuclear and missile tests and suspension of uranium enrichment at its main Yongbyon nuclear site. Washington, as one U.S. official said, saw this as the beginning of "credible negotiations leading to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula." Such an outcome is almost unimaginable. The nuclear program was a core achievement of the late Kim Jong Il. His son and the North's new ruler, Kim Jong Un, is not going to hand it over to the country's sworn enemies. Seeing Moammar Kadafi disarm and be thrown from power appears to have solidified Pyongyang's view that nukes remain an essential shield.

Instead, North Korea has likely signed up for what it views as a very typical process of negotiating ploys: give away some disposable assets while promoting its long-term interests. Some believe, for example, that the Yongbyon uranium site is a distraction while the regime builds secret enrichment facilities elsewhere. Making a deal directly with Washington allowed North Korea to cut South Korea out of the process, and driving a wedge between Washington and Seoul is among the North's most cherished objectives.

Almost any chance to constrain the North's nuclear work and reassert long-term denuclearization principles makes sense. But the real significance of the deal could be in opening the way to a new U.S. strategy toward North Korea.

North Korea has changed dramatically since the 1990s under the influence of two key forces: markets and information. With its post-Cold War economic crisis and the collapse of its public distribution system for food, Pyongyang had to free up its citizens to engage in far more private trading to make ends meet. Thousands of official and unofficial markets emerged, selling everything from food to electronics to pirated South Korean videotapes. Today, estimates from defectors and outside visitors suggest that many North Koreans get 80% or more of their daily needs from these markets.

This trend has helped to produce a "market class," people who earn money and social standing through the burgeoning capitalist activity. From grandmothers and housewives who buy and sell fish or small textiles to bureaucrats who oversee large-scale networks of transportation and supply, people engaged in markets are gaining wealth and power and changing the character of society.

Meantime, North Koreans, especially among the elite classes, have unprecedented access to outside information — from visitors, the Internet, smuggled South Korean DVDs and magazines, and many other sources.

None of this suggests that a "Pyongyang Spring" is just around the corner. But it does point to a possible new strategy using the twin forces — markets and information — to alter the system.

The fundamental U.S. goals would be peace, stability and a gradual process of reform and evolution in the North that could eventually change the character of the regime. Unlike traditional proposals for engagement, this approach would not try to use trade and economic benefits to change the North's behavior. Instead, it would use targeted direct foreign investment, people-to-people contacts, training programs for North Korean technocrats and more to accelerate the rise of alternative power centers in the North.

Pursuing such a strategy would be complicated; North Korea is suspicious of contacts and investments, especially with a U.S. label. But by working with regional and global partners and thinking creatively, Washington could assemble a meaningful package of initiatives.

The barrier to such expanded contacts with the North has been Pyongyang's nuclear intransigence. Although the nuclear deal may not lead to denuclearization, it could create a fleeting opportunity to shift strategies. The North's satellite announcement last week makes clear that Washington will need to overlook misbehavior on the edges of the accord as it remains focused on its main objective: targeted social change. Such change in the character of its system, gradual and incremental as it may be, is the only authentic means to achieve U.S. and allied interests in the long run.

Michael Mazarr is a professor at the U.S. National War College in Washington. The views expressed here are his own and do not reflect the position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. government.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-mazarr-nkorea-nukes-20120321,0,6156972.story>



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Korea Times
OPINION/Op-Ed
March 21, 2012

North Korea: Now What?

By Ralph A. Cossa

Now what? Just when we thought things were getting better, North Korea pulled the rug out from under everyone, including itself, by announcing a planned satellite launch to celebrate "Great Leader" Kim Il-sung's 100th birthday.

Pyongyang pretends to believe that there is a difference between long-range ballistic missile tests (which it recently foreswore) and satellite launches using the same launch vehicle; a distinction lost on most others, very specifically including the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which has banned "all missile activity" by North Korea, including "any launch using ballistic missile technology."

So what is Pyongyang up to? Nobody knows for sure, of course, but many are speculating that the contradiction between its Feb. 29 declaration of a moratorium on nuclear and missile tests and the satellite launch announcement reflects a power struggle between the foreign ministry and the military and party leadership. That's possible, but recall that the leap day announcement came a week after bilateral U.S.-DPRK negotiations; the foreign ministry had plenty of time to vet the agreement.

It is at least equally possible that this was the plan all along. Raise hopes and then test the others by trying to fly a rocket through a (real or imagined) perceived loophole in the agreement. This action is sure to prompt heated debates — especially within South Korean political circles — over whether or not to yield to the North's interpretation and turn a blind eye to UNSC resolutions or to allow the Feb. 29 "breakthrough" to break down. Sound familiar? Creating divisions within and between its interlocutors has long been a DPRK ploy.

North Korea experts can no doubt come up with a dozen more explanations. Announcing the decision now, for example, will draw attention away from the South's diplomatic success in hosting next week's second nuclear security summit while drawing attention to itself instead. (Pyongyang doesn't mind being despised but it hates to be ignored or overshadowed.) While the organizers have said repeatedly that the summit is about the security of nuclear materials and not about North Korea, it's a pretty easy guess where the focus of at least some media attention will now lie.

Rather than continuing to guess what Pyongyang is up to, however, it's more important for the rest of us to know what we are going to do in response. Seoul has already branded the North's announcement a "grave provocative act against peace and stability," but the opposition is sure to find a way to blame the renewed stalemate not on Pyongyang's duplicity but on the Lee Myung-bak administration's "hard-line" policy toward the North.

Washington has also branded the announced launch a "direct violation" of UNSC mandates, a threat to regional stability and "inconsistent with North Korea's recent undertaking to refrain from long-range missile launches." This poses a slight dilemma for the Barack Obama administration since it has been trying to persuade others that the leap day announcements were not a "food for freeze" deal, arguing that the food aid was based strictly on humanitarian considerations. The North, on the other hand, has trumpeted the link but claims, by its convoluted definition, that the impending "rocket launch" does not technically violate its pledge.

Such nuances notwithstanding the United States has (correctly) placed the food aid "on hold" while it waits to see if the North actually attempts to place a satellite in orbit during its announced April 12 to 16 launch window. The odds are extremely high that they will try (but less certain they will succeed).

Some pundits have expressed surprise over the North's action, given its need to demonstrate during the April 15 anniversary celebrations that it has become a "strong and prosperous nation," assuming that outside food aid was essential to making this claim. But the promised U.S. nutritional assistance is neither in the form nor quantity desired



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and comes with monitoring strings attached. Besides, deliveries would not have started until well after April 15. Why put up with such indignities when Beijing continues to provide for all your needs with no apparent strings attached and despite your bad behavior?

Alas, once again, it all comes down to China. In 2009, when faced with a similar impending satellite launch, the United States (and almost everybody else) made it clear to Pyongyang that this would be a violation of UNSC resolutions and that there would be serious consequences. The Chinese (and Russians) were more circumspect. They had to be dragged into a mild presidential statement condemning the activity, after the fact, as a violation. It was not until after the subsequent nuclear test that any strong UNSC measures were again taken.

This time around, the Russians are already on board, expressing "serious concern" over the North's announcement while calling on Pyongyang to avoid confrontation and refrain from actions which could delay resumption of the six-party talks.

One would have thought that China, having learned the lessons of 2009, would have done likewise. Wrong! Beijing has "taken note" of Pyongyang's announcement but the most we have gotten thus far is another one of its maddening calls for "all parties" to act constructively, as if "all parties" were somehow equally to blame for yet another Pyongyang-induced confrontation.

It's time for Beijing to stop empowering the North. At a minimum, it should state unequivocally that any launch would be a violation of UNSC resolutions and would open the North up to new sanctions. (Enforcing current mandatory sanctions would also be a nice gesture.) It could then demonstrate its displeasure by allowing currently detained North Korean refugees to proceed to the South rather than returning them home to face severe punishment.

Beijing could also take a page from Seoul's 2009 play book by announcing in advance that a resumption of missile or nuclear tests would result in China's joining the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI).

Rather than follow its own counter-productive past patterns — blocking or watering down and then half-heartedly enforcing UNSC resolutions and providing aid and assistance regardless of bad behavior — Beijing needs to join the rest of the international community in demonstrating that bad behavior has bad consequences.

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Korea Herald – South Korea

OPINION/Op-Ed

March 21, 2012

South Korea, Israel Share Fear of Nuclear Catastrophe

By Lee Byong-chul

SEOUL — The United States is now wrestling with the nuclear fears of two of its close allies, Israel and South Korea. Israel's alarm at the prospect of Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon is existential in nature. The same is true of South Korea, whose capital sits only 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the border with the North.

On Feb. 29, the U.S. and North Korea reached an agreement in which the North promised to halt its nuclear weapons development in exchange for food aid. But South Koreans know that the poverty-stricken North is highly unlikely to give up its nuclear weapons programs, no matter what it promises. Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates's complaint that he was "tired of buying the same horse twice" from North Korea appears to have been forgotten.

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To be sure, U.S. President Barack Obama's administration has had some positive influence on the North, which has now agreed to a moratorium on long-range missile launches, nuclear tests, and nuclear activities at its Yongbyon facility. Moreover, the North's hermetic communist regime will accept International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors in exchange for food aid. But such promises are usually short-lived.

Moderate pundits argue that the allure of humanitarian aid might dissuade the North from continuing to advance its nuclear weapons program, but they fear that South Korean President Lee Myung-bak's government may refuse to assist the U.S. efforts. Some South Koreans hope that the latest agreement will pave the way for revival of the six-party talks between the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Japan, and Russia, which have been dormant since late 2008, as well as for dialogue on a wide range of strategic and economic issues.

South Korea's government has, in the eyes of liberal and left-leaning pundits, paid a severe price for turning its back on North Korea from the moment Lee came to power. The cost has included the North's sinking of the South Korean warship, *Cheonan*, and shelling of Yeonpyeong Island, in 2010. But Lee's progressive opponents must also share some of the blame for undermining him.

Now it is the U.S.-South Korea alliance that is being tested by worries about North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The Republic of Korea/U.S. Mutual Security Agreement, signed in 1954, following the Korean War, has remained unchanged since its inception, despite South Korea's rise as an industrial power and the nuclearization of the North. Considering the risks that the South faces, and the priority that America now gives to its relationship with China, maintaining this status quo indefinitely is likely to prove impossible.

Indeed, pessimists now see a fundamental change in how South Koreans perceive the U.S. While it is unlikely that either the government or the people will turn away from America and pivot toward China, South Koreans have begun to wonder whether the U.S. is still willing to guarantee their core security interests.

Koreans' perceptions of America are no longer shaped solely by the 1950-53 war. Conservatives insist, quite rightly, that America's sacrifices in the Korean War not be forgotten. But these memories are growing dim.

Indeed, the bitterest expressions of anti-Americanism today come from the younger generation. Those who suffered through the war and dictatorship do not criticize the U.S. military presence on South Korean territory. But the younger generations feel humiliated by this and want a more equal partnership.

Unless the two countries' recent free-trade agreement, in effect as of March 15, helps to resolve the widening economic gap between Korea's rich and poor, it could incite more anti-American sentiment. Opposition parties and left-leaning critics assert that the agreement will merely deepen the inequality of the bilateral relationship.

In a letter addressed to Obama, South Korea's opposition parties urged him to reconsider the free-trade pact. With April's general election in mind, the main opposition Democratic Unified Party has declared that it will demand that America renegotiate — a hypocritical stance, given that the party endorsed most of the pact during President Roh Moo-hyun's term. These "dogmatic liberal" skeptics see America, as the late Roh once quipped, through the prism of the 1980s, when the U.S. backed the South Korean dictatorship.

The bilateral alliance with South Korea has represented the cornerstone of U.S. strategic doctrine for Northeast Asia for 58 years. Both countries continue to have a supremely important common interest: non-proliferation and containment of the North's nuclear program. Moreover, the allies share essential values and commitments: democracy, a free-market economy, human rights, and the rule of law.

But there is an old saying in Korea: "After the rain, the ground becomes more solid." If the sunny facade of the status quo continues, South Koreans fear that their country, faced with the North's obsession with nuclear weapons and uncertainty about America's security guarantee, could become a wasteland. In this respect, Israel is not alone.

Lee Byong-chul, formerly on the national-security planning staff for Presidents Kim Young-sam and Kim Dae-jung, is a senior fellow at the Institute for Peace and Cooperation, Seoul.



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<http://www.koreaherald.com/opinion/Detail.jsp?newsMLId=20120321001199>

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/Opinion Asia
March 21, 2012

You Can't Teach a New Kim Old Tricks

In an unusually witless move, Pyongyang's missile launch shoots down its own strategy to get food aid.

By ANDREI LANKOV

After decades spent watching North Korea, one cannot help but get annoyed when it is described as an "irrational" country. Traditionally this has not been true: Pyongyang always knows perfectly well what it is doing as it see-saws between talks and aggression, which is a major reason why it usually outsmarts far more powerful adversaries. Yet now, suddenly, there are indications that Pyongyang may be losing its wits. This might be worrying for regime-watchers on the outside, but it is also a serious danger to the regime itself.

The big surprise is the news last week that Pyongyang will launch what it describes as a "working satellite" in mid-April. This comes immediately on the heels of an international agreement in which North Korea promised to forgo such provocations in return for desperately needed food aid. While the regime has often vacillated between raising tensions and soothing them, it has rarely switched so quickly. That's raising a lot of eyebrows. The U.S. has condemned the proposed launch and Japan has threatened to shoot down the missile. But even China and Russia have adopted a surprisingly strong tone.

To some extent, of course, this is predictable. The launch will commemorate the birthday of Kim Il Sung, the dynasty founding father. Pyongyang's news agency claims that this will be a part of a peaceful space program and hence cannot be viewed as a violation of agreements prohibiting long-range ballistic missiles. While no one should be fooled by the latter claim, there is a certain logic to the former. Pyongyang has tried to launch satellites twice before. Both were failures, but state media told the North Korean people the launches were successful. A third try would certainly help boost the legitimacy of the newly installed Kim Jong Eun.

However, what is unusual about this situation is the context. Pyongyang usually tests nukes or launches missiles when it needs to heighten tension, on the assumption that the West will blink and give North Korea some concessions as a reward to change behavior. These calculations have normally worked well to force the issue.

This time, Kim has already gotten a concession in the form of 240,000 tons of food aid promised by the U.S. just 16 days prior to the statement of the planned launch. This was an important deal, since it marked a resumption of large-scale U.S. aid, which the regime clearly wants. Now this agreement is almost certainly dead. The Obama administration has already described the North's plan as a deal breaker. For the foreseeable future, the U.S. is likely to take a hard line or ignore Pyongyang. Either outcome will make it much harder for Kim to get more concessions later on.

This truly is a puzzling turn of events. Pyongyang could have easily avoided these complications by postponing the food aid negotiations with the U.S. for few months. That is, it could have launched the satellite in April, and then haggled with the U.S. As in the past, it would have still squeezed concessions, while enjoying all political and strategic benefits of the launch itself.

So why did it not do this? With North Korea, there's rarely a clear answer, but it might reflect some long-reaching strategy. For example, the North Korean leaders might have decided to show to their U.S. adversaries that they do not really care for such small change and hope for much more than 240,000 tons of grain. Perhaps they expect to be mollified with a light-water reactor.

But there are other, more intriguing, possibilities. The mixed signals could reflect poor interagency coordination. Given the lead times involved, clearly the decision to launch the satellite was made before the death of Kim Jong Il in

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December. Kim also initiated the talks with the U.S. that ultimately led to the aid deal. When he died, it might be that nobody in the bureaucracy bothered to notice that launch preparations and negotiations essentially canceled one another out, and never changed plans. This would suggest that absent Kim Jong Il, there is not (yet) anyone in Pyongyang capable of managing complex strategic matters the way he did.

Equally plausible is the theory that Pyongyang changed course because of clashes between different factions within the leadership. The military is always eager to flex its muscles and given that they have much of the power in this closed system, Kim Jong Eun might have decided to placate them. If this is true, it strongly suggests the insecurities of the baby-faced dictator. He has to build a power base with the military. Or he's desperate to show his countrymen something grand in the form of a "satellite launch"—at whatever diplomatic expense.

Chances are that bureaucratic inefficiency, factional rivalry or at least a sense of domestic insecurity are beginning to influence strategic decision making in Pyongyang. That is unusual for a regime once capable of cold calculations. It is a bad sign for the leadership whose survival depends on its ability to skillfully manipulate powerful partners and adversaries. That means it's a good sign for everyone else.

Mr. Lankov is a professor at Kookmin University in Seoul.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304636404577295142198126620.html>

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The Hill

OPINION/Op-Ed

Seizing Momentum in the Quest for Nuclear Security

By Alexandra Toma

March 21, 2012

It's time to decide if one of the world's biggest threats will be confronted by some of the world's best defenses. Next week, President Obama will join more than 50 world leaders in Seoul, South Korea, to agree on a strategy to lock down and strengthen global defenses to prevent vulnerable nuclear materials from falling into the hands of terrorists. While much progress has been made in recent years on nuclear security, bold action is needed.

Nuclear terrorism is both one of the greatest threats to national security and one of the most preventable. There have been 20 cases of theft or loss of fissile material ... and that's only what we know about. According to credible American intelligence assessments, al Qaeda has been after a nuclear weapon for more than a decade. It was only last fall that Moldovan police broke up a smuggling ring attempting to sell nuclear bomb-making materials. The North African buyer and a suspect thought to possess a kilogram of weapons-grade uranium remain at large. Preventing nuclear terrorism requires marshaling the resources of our international allies to close nuclear security gaps.

In a time when partisanship is casting long shadows over Washington, there is a clear consensus on the importance of preventing nuclear terrorism. America's bipartisan 9/11 Commission warned: "The greatest danger of another catastrophic attack in the United States will materialize if the world's most dangerous terrorists acquire the world's most dangerous weapons." Echoing former President George W. Bush before him, Obama said, "It is increasingly clear that the danger of nuclear terrorism is one of the greatest threats to global security — to our collective security."

The world in the 21st century demands that we confront the challenges of terrorism head-on. Fortunately, American leadership has been central to efforts to lock down vulnerable nuclear materials. Two years ago, 47 leaders gathered in Washington to strengthen frontline defenses to prevent nuclear terrorism. More than 60 pledges were made by countries to strengthen nuclear security, and the results are impressive: Eighty percent of those pledges have been achieved, according to a new independent research report.

Much progress has been made. This year, the final portion of Mexico's weapons-grade uranium was secured and returned for safekeeping to the United States. It was the latest success of America's Global Threat Reduction Initiative,

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which has removed all weapons-grade uranium from Serbia, Chile, Romania, Libya, Taiwan and Turkey since 2009. Thanks to America's successful Megaports program, radiation-detection equipment is being installed in ports in the United Arab Emirates to prevent materials from being smuggled out of countries and onto the black market.

But progress combating nuclear terrorism is far from complete. Although the majority of the 47 countries that attended the first Nuclear Security Summit have accomplished the voluntary goals they set for themselves, bolder action is needed. Even if all nations fulfill their pledges, there will still be many additional steps to secure all vulnerable nuclear material. And while 80 percent is an impressive number, it's not 100 percent. You wouldn't be satisfied with getting rid of just 80 percent of the rats in your home, nor can we be satisfied with partial progress on nuclear security. Every single percentage of the world's vulnerable nuclear materials poses a threat — particularly when 1 percent of the world's nuclear material is still enough to create 1,000 nuclear weapons.

The spread of loose nuclear material is not something a single country, acting alone, can prevent. There is no unilateral solution. Proliferation respects no borders. It's a shared international threat with shared global consequences. In Seoul, countries must fulfill their remaining pledges, expand those promises and move toward finishing the job on nuclear security. Additional gaps must be identified and measures taken to encourage other countries to join in this global cooperative effort.

In the United States, important anti-terror nonproliferation programs including the Global Threat Reduction Initiative and the National Nuclear Security Administration's Office of International Material Protection and Cooperation should be fully funded. Let's put our money where our mouth is. In the longer term, the International Atomic Energy Agency should be given watchdog authority to ensure that all nations are living up to their word on nuclear security. Both measures are essential to create an effective one-two punch to combat nuclear terrorism.

The challenge posed by one of the world's greatest threats offers the opportunity for some of America's greatest action. Real momentum has been achieved to secure weapons-grade nuclear materials, but decisive and bold action is needed. The 2012 Seoul Nuclear Security Summit next week will not fix nuclear security, but it's a step in the right direction in building global support to combat this global threat. Serious challenges demand serious action.

Toma is executive director of the Connect U.S. Fund and co-chairman of the Fissile Materials Working Group, a nonpartisan nongovernmental organization.

<http://thehill.com/opinion/op-ed/217455-seizing-momentum-in-the-quest-for-nuclear-security>

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Playing Pyongyang's Games

North Korea is testing how much the Obama administration will give to maintain the fiction of diplomatic progress.

By MICHAEL AUSLIN

It took barely two weeks for North Korea to play its old game of bait and switch, this time gutting the Feb. 29 "Leap Day Agreement" with the Obama administration that promised a moratorium on nuclear and missile testing. In an Ides of March announcement, Pyongyang revealed it would conduct a "satellite launch" on April 15, which coincides with the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung, founder of the North Korean regime.

Such a disguised missile test not only violates U.N. resolutions, it forces U.S. President Barack Obama either to swallow a brazen insult or scrap a deal he hoped would show his leadership in resolving the long-running nuclear crisis. The president must resist the temptation to turn the other cheek. If he fails to do so, North Korea's new leadership will be emboldened to more reckless behavior.

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In a sense, the Obama administration has only itself to blame for this mess. For three years, it wisely avoided playing Pyongyang's games. Unlike the Bush administration, which became increasingly desperate to patch holes in a flawed policy of making ever more concessions for little in return, the Obama team kept contact with former leader Kim Jong Il at a minimum, and refused to enter the Alice in Wonderland world of reaching agreement with the North only to face provocation and demands for more concessions.

All that seemed to change with death late last year of Kim Jong Il and the accession of his youngest son, Kim Jong Eun. The sudden February agreement seemed an incomplete attempt to stop nuclear activity at one site in North Korea, along with missile tests, in exchange for several hundred thousand tons of food aid. The agreement was a gamble by the Obama administration that an overture to the new leader could break the logjam over the nuclear crisis, and also be a foreign policy coup for the president heading into an election year.

The gamble failed, and President Obama finds himself squarely where Presidents Clinton and Bush were before him. The administration was mistaken in thinking that Kim the younger would be any different from his father. In all likelihood, Kim Jong Eun is a figurehead, controlled by his powerful uncle and senior military leaders. The Kim regime is a corporate entity, running the North's illicit economy, and the younger Kim is but a front for the Board of Directors. Thus, any American hope that a Pyongyang Spring was coming to the North was bound to be dashed.

Pyongyang is doing two things at once to force a new crisis: trying to circumvent U.N. bans on any missile testing, and testing how much the Obama administration will give away to keep the fig leaf of diplomatic progress. A "satellite" launch on top of an intercontinental ballistic missile may be technically different from a regular missile launch, but the result is the same—the North is seeking de facto U.S. approval to flout U.N. resolutions. It also is a reminder that the crisis with the North has always been about nukes and missiles together, not just nuclear weapons alone.

There are few good options for the White House. If President Obama accepts the satellite launch at face value, and refuses to halt food aid, then the North will have won a significant victory and almost certainly will move to speed up its ballistic missile program, which has Iran as one of its key potential customers. Moreover, Pyongyang will almost certainly attempt new provocations to get more aid from Washington.

Yet if the Obama administration refuses to provide the promised aid, the North is unlikely to back down fully, fearing a loss of face for its new leader. Not only will it likely conduct the missile test, it may use the American decision as a pretext to do more nuclear tests. Either of these would lead to a further crisis where the North will demand more U.S. concessions.

The best path forward to is to accept that we're back to playing Pyongyang's games, but refuse to follow the rules. If the North launches its satellite, the U.S. should refuse to provide any food aid, but also cut off any further negotiations with Kim Jong Eun. That will force Pyongyang to decide if isolation serves its purposes best. Let the pieces sit where they are, since any further move will only result in further cheating by the North.

Mr. Auslin is the director of Japan studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304724404577297360728872218.html>

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OPINION/Analysis

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North Korea's Planned Rocket Test: Why It Matters

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea may have the bomb, but it hasn't perfected ways to put one onto a missile that could strike faraway enemies like the United States.

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This is why Pyongyang's announcement that it will launch a satellite on a long-range rocket next month is drawing so much attention: Washington says North Korea uses these launches as cover for testing missile systems for nuclear weapons that could target Alaska and beyond.

Although North Korea isn't on the official agenda of next week's Nuclear Security Summit in the South Korean capital, here's a look at why the launch will be a major point of discussion when President Barack Obama and other world leaders gather in Seoul:

THE HISTORY

North Korea has spent decades trying to perfect a multistage, long-range rocket.

Next month's launch — set to happen around the April 15 centennial of the birth of founder Kim Il Sung — would be the fourth of its kind since 1998, when Pyongyang sent a long-range rocket hurtling over Japan.

A 2006 test was considered a failure, but North Korea grabbed attention shortly after with its first nuclear test blast. The U.N. Security Council later banned North Korea from any further nuclear or ballistic missile testing.

North Korea's third launch, in 2009, was a partial success, with two of the three stages pushing the rocket over the Pacific. The third stage failed, and, despite North Korea's claims of success, no satellite was put into orbit, the U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command said.

That test was condemned by the U.N. Security Council. Pyongyang protested that it was testing satellite technology for peaceful purposes. It subsequently abandoned six-nation nuclear disarmament talks and, weeks later, carried out a second nuclear test.

The next year saw violence blamed on North Korea that killed 50 South Koreans, including an attack on a warship and the North's shelling of a front-line island.

THE TECHNOLOGY

Experts and governments will scrutinize next month's launch of what the North's state media call an Unha-3 rocket, presumably the next version of the Unha-2 rocket used in the 2009 test.

Unha-2 represented a significant advancement over previous rockets, according to an analysis written by missile experts David Wright and Theodore Postol. It was roughly 100 feet (30 meters) long and may have been designed around Soviet missile components, the writers said.

Next month's rocket is set to fire from a new site on the North's west coast, according to GeoEye and Google Earth satellite imagery posted by Tim Brown, an analyst for GlobalSecurity.org. The Tongchang-ri site is about 35 miles (56 kilometers) from the Chinese border city of Dandong, across the Yalu River from North Korea.

Positioned only 45 miles (70 kilometers) from the North's main Yongbyon nuclear complex, it has better roads and facilities, and allows a southerly flight path that keeps the rocket from flying over other countries, according to Wright, technical researcher at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The new rocket will probably have better boosters and engines — and might even succeed in putting a satellite into space if it contains one, said Sohn Young-hwan, a South Korean rocket scientist who heads the privately funded Institute of Technology and Management Analysis in Seoul.

North Korea may have loaded the rocket's third stage with more fuel to increase capability, Wright said by email, part of improvements that "would translate to greater range if that technology was used to build a long-range ballistic missile."

North Korea says the launch is meant to contribute to "international trust and cooperation in the field of space scientific researches."



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But because ballistic missiles and rockets in satellite launches "share the same bodies, engines, launch sites and other development processes, they are intricately linked," said Mark Fitzpatrick, an analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

THE HURDLES

So far, Pyongyang can only deliver a nuclear bomb "by boat, by van or by airplane, not by missile," according to scientist Siegfried Hecker of the Center for International Security and Cooperation at Stanford University.

After half a century of persistence, North Korea is thought to have a fairly small nuclear arsenal.

While it has enough plutonium for about four to eight "simple" bombs similar to what the U.S. dropped on Nagasaki in 1945, Hecker estimates, it doesn't yet appear to have the ability to make bombs small enough to mount on a missile.

Miniaturized warheads would require more nuclear tests, and Hecker warns that if North Korea breaks its nuclear test moratorium, "it will almost certainly be a test of a miniaturized design."

THE DIPLOMACY

Governments and experts are worried that a new rocket launch will spur a chain of events that will mirror 2009, resulting in a breakdown of diplomacy, another nuclear test and soaring tensions, threats and bloodshed.

The United States has warned the launch would jeopardize a diplomatic deal settled last month that would ship U.S. food aid to the impoverished North in exchange for a moratorium on missile and nuclear tests, as well as a suspension of nuclear work at Yongbyon.

U.S. officials will be pushing China to pressure its ally Pyongyang, and U.S. President Barack Obama is expected to raise the issue during a key meeting with Chinese President Hu Jintao on the nuclear summit's sidelines. There could also be meetings among the U.S. and its Asian allies, Japan and South Korea.

An unidentified North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said Friday that his country "remains unchanged in its stand to sincerely implement" the nuclear deal, but warned in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency that "any sinister attempt to deprive" the North of its rights will lead to unspecified "countermeasures."

Hecker, however, said a rocket launch "makes a mockery" of the U.S.-North Korea nuclear deal.

"You use the same technology in long-range rockets that you do in long-range missiles," he said. "The only difference is what you put on top."

Associated Press writer Sam Kim contributed to this report.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/nation-world/north-koreas-planned-rocket-1395640.html>

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