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Boston Globe

Russia's Upper House Unanimously OKs New START

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

By Vladimir Isachenkov, Associated Press

MOSCOW — Russia's upper house of parliament unanimously ratified the New START nuclear arms pact with the United States on Wednesday, the centerpiece of President Barack Obama's efforts to "reset" ties with Moscow.

The treaty limits each country to 1,550 strategic warheads, down from the current ceiling of 2,200, and also re-establishes a system for monitoring that ended in December 2009 with the expiration of a previous arms deal.

The approval by Russia's Federation Council came one day after it was passed by the lower house of parliament. It now has to be signed by President Dmitry Medvedev.

The pact was approved by the U.S. Senate last month after Obama pressed strongly for its passage, telephoning a handful of hesitant Republicans to lock in their votes.

Democrats sought to appease some Republican senators by allowing them to raise concerns about the treaty in an accompanying resolution. The resolution didn't affect the text of the treaty, but Russian legislators felt compelled to offer their own interpretation of the pact's provisions in their ratification bill and accompanying statements.

While the Senate resolution said the treaty shouldn't restrict U.S. plans to develop a missile defense system, the Russian ratification bill states that the treaty can only be fulfilled if emerging missile defense systems don't erode the Russian nuclear deterrent.

The Russian bill also mimics the Senate resolution's concerns that the remaining nuclear arsenal is effective by emphasizing the need to modernize Russia's nuclear forces.

Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov told the upper house Wednesday that Russia was working to develop its own missile defense system, but didn't give any specifics.

Addressing concerns about Russia being forced to disarm under the treaty, he said that Russia now has a significantly smaller number of missiles and bombers than the treaty allows anyway.

"The treaty doesn't constrain us in any way," Serdyukov said. "Its parameters considerably exceed our potential today."

Even after a decade of beefing up its arsenals, Russia won't reach the treaty's upper limit, he said, adding that Russia doesn't need a larger number of nuclear weapons to protect itself.

"We have a program envisaging how many missiles we will put on duty in the next decade ... but even then we still won't reach the treaty's parameters," Serdyukov said.

Aging Soviet-built-missiles still form the core of Russia's nuclear forces, and the military has struggled to build their replacement. The Bulava missile, intended for the latest generation of Russia's nuclear submarines, has suffered a string of test failures and it remains unclear when it will be ready.

In Brussels, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen welcomed the ratification, saying it was "good news for international security and stability."

"It will make an important contribution to strengthening transparency, predictability and cooperation," he said in a statement. "I also hope that political momentum generated by this treaty will help (NATO) and Russia to make concrete progress in their strategic partnership, including in the field of missile defense."

NATO has approved a plan for a U.S.-led missile defense in Europe last fall and invited Russia to join. Medvedev was receptive of NATO's proposal but has not made a definite commitment.

Associated Press reporter Slobodan Lekic contributed to this report from Brussels.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2011/01/26/russias_upper_house_ratifies_new_start/?rss_id=Boston.com+%2F+Boston+Globe+++World+News

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Russia Today – Russia

Russia's Upper House Adopts New START Ratification Bill

January 26, 2011

Following the approval of a bill on the ratification of the New START treaty in the State Duma, Russia's upper house, the Federation Council has unanimously adopted the draft law on Wednesday.

The Federation Council also approved a statement accompanying the ratification bill.

"The Federation Council considers extremely important the provision of the new treaty, which establishes the interconnection between strategic offensive weapons and strategic defensive weapons," the document says.

In the statement, the parliamentarians also point out that, while complying with the treaty, Russia must take a number of political, economic, and military steps to secure *"the reliability and efficiency of Russia's strategic potential."*

In this regard, speaking at the Federation Council, Russia's Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said that the New START treaty does not affect Russia's defense capabilities.

"As for the anti-missile defense system of our country, we will continue working on it," he noted, adding that, *"All planned programs will be fulfilled."*

The Federation Council outlines that the ratification of the treaty is a significant step towards nuclear disarmament and strengthening international stability and non-proliferation regime.

"Cuts in strategic offensive weapons, which will be carried out under the new treaty, will lead to a completely new situation in the field of nuclear non-proliferation," the statement reads. This "new situation" will allow the involvement of other nuclear powers in the nuclear disarmament process.

After making a certain number of amendments, parliament's lower house, the State Duma, adopted the draft law in the third reading on Tuesday. The amendments provide for terms and conditions under which Russia can withdraw from the treaty. Under the bill, Moscow is free to withdraw if the scale of the US anti-missile elements in Europe becomes a threat to Russia's national security. Another major amendment implies mainstreaming Russia's defense capabilities and development of strategic nuclear forces.

<http://rt.com/politics/upper-house-start-ratification/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Continue Developing Missile Defense System

26 January 2011

Russia will go forward with plans to develop its own missile defense system after the ratification of a strategic arms reduction treaty with the United States, Russia's Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said on Wednesday.

The upper house of the Russian parliament, the Federation Council, ratified on Wednesday the new arms reduction pact, replacing START 1, which expired in December 2009.

The agreement, signed in Prague last April by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama, slashes the Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals to a maximum of 1,550 nuclear warheads, down from the current ceiling of 2,200.

"As far as our missile defense system is concerned, we have been developing it and will be further developing it," Serdyukov said at a session of the Federation Council.

Russia is currently in talks with NATO on building a joint missile defense shield in Europe. However, President Medvedev said on Monday that Russia will have to deploy a nuclear missile grouping if no agreement is reached.

Russia and NATO agreed to cooperate in the creation of the European missile defense system in Lisbon in November last year. The parties agreed to formulate terms for missile defense cooperation by June 2011.

Serdyukov also said Russia's armament program for the next 10 years is in compliance with the limit set for the number of strategic missiles and warheads under the new START treaty.

"For the next 10 years we have a program on what amount of missiles will be placed on combat alert, but even then we will not reach the parameters stated in the treaty," he said.

Russia currently has a higher number of nuclear weapons than that permitted by the new treaty, but will scrap large numbers of older weapons and introduce much smaller numbers of new systems.

"The potential we have today is enough to ensure full security of the Russian Federation," Serdyukov said.

MOSCOW, January 26 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110126/162310669.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russian President Calls for Further Arms Reductions

27 January 2011

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said he was ready to sign a law on the ratification of the new START treaty and urged the United States to continue joint efforts aimed at further strategic arms reduction.

Both houses of the Russian parliament have ratified the new arms reduction deal between Russia and the United States, paving the way for the president to sign the ratification into a law.

"When I come back from Davos, the text of the ratified treaty will be put on my table," Medvedev said on Wednesday at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland.

The president added that he had already agreed with his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama on how to exchange the instruments for ratification.

"However, we must not stop at that and we must continue our efforts in the reduction of strategic offensive weapons and limitations in the related area of missile defense," Medvedev said.

The new arms reduction pact, replacing START 1, which expired in December 2009, was signed by Medvedev and Obama in Prague in April, 2010. The document slashes the Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals to a maximum of 1,550 nuclear warheads, down from the current ceiling of 2,200.

The U.S. Senate ratified the deal on December 22, 2010, but added several amendments to the resolution on ratification, including a demand to build up U.S. global missile defenses.

Russian lawmakers also added some provisions to the ratification document and issued two supplementary statements to the resolution on ratification of the agreement.

DAVOS (Switzerland), January 27 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20110127/162323351.html>

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YahooNews.com

Russia, US Set Date for New Nuclear Arms Pact

By Dmitry Zaks (AFP)

January 28, 2011

MOSCOW — Moscow said Friday that the world's first nuclear arms deal in two decades would come into force early next month when US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meets her Russian counterpart in Munich.

A senior Russian official announced the February 5 meeting between Clinton and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov only moments after President Dmitry Medvedev put his name on the ratification of the new US nuclear disarmament agreement.

"Today I signed the ratification document on the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START)," Medvedev said at a meeting with top security officials in comments broadcast on state television.

The pact will come into force the moment Clinton and Lavrov swap their respective ratification documents during the annual Munich Security Conference -- an event born in the 1960s at the height of the Cold War.

The exchange of notes will seal a tortuous process that began more than a decade ago but only came to life with US President Barack Obama's arrival in the White House.

The treaty to eliminate some of the world's most deadly weapons is the centrepiece of Obama's vision of a world without nuclear weapons and a landmark feature of his effort to "reset" the previously-stalled relations with Russia.

The new START reduces previous warhead ceilings by 30 percent and limits each side to 700 deployed long-range missiles and heavy bombers.

The original 1991 pact expired at the end of 2009 amid stark differences over how the two sides planned to proceed amid the emergence of smaller nuclear powers and the rise of hard-line regimes.

Many analysts see the new round of cuts as largely symbolic because the chances of these heavy long-range weapons being used today are negligible.

But the pact provides an important starting point for far more pertinent discussions concerning smaller -- but potentially more dangerous -- nuclear weapons and other high-tech arms.

It will restore vital weapons verifications procedures and require the two sides to try and find a compromise over their seemingly irreconcilable differences over the United States' plan to deploy a missile shield in Europe.

START only became a reality after the US Senate and Russia's parliament adopted a series of non-binding amendments that allowed each country to essentially agree to disagree over what the treaty actually says.

Most of the disagreements concern Washington's missile shield idea and plans to develop new space-based weapons that Russia will not be able to match for many more years.

Russia fears that the European defence system may one day be turned into an offensive weapon and demands an equal say in how the shield works.

Medvedev pointed to those disagreements by noting that Russia's parliament had introduced certain amendments "that are commensurate to those made by the US parliament -- they are symmetric."

"They answer the concerns that our deputies shared about how corresponding provisions of the treaty were being interpreted," said Medvedev.

Medvedev and US President Barack Obama signed the new START in Prague on April 8, 2010 as the two sides tried to "reset" relations that soured under the eight-year Republican administration of George W. Bush.

The Obama administration pushed the treaty through a sceptical Senate in December by in part arguing that it would boost the Medvedev presidency and hurt the position of more hawkish forces in the Kremlin.

Medvedev hailed the treaty's ratification Friday as "a very significant event for our country."

But his military lieutenants were busy piling more diplomatic pressure on NATO as it pushes ahead with the shield idea.

Russian General Staff chief Nikolai Makarov admitted that Moscow's joint system proposal has so far fallen on deaf ears.

"But if we are each going to own ABM systems, the consequences will be catastrophic," he told ITAR-TASS.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20110128/pl_afp/russiausnuclearpoliticstreaty_20110128161620

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Tehran Times – Iran

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

‘West’s Approach to Istanbul Talks Rekindled Distrust’

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN - Supreme National Security Council Secretary Saeed Jalili has said that the approach adopted by the representatives of Western countries at the Istanbul talks "rekindled" distrust between Iran and the West.

On January 22, Iran and the 5+1 group (the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China, and Germany) wrapped up two days of talks in Istanbul without achieving concrete results.

The Istanbul meeting was the second round of talks since the negotiations resumed last month in Geneva, breaking a 14-month hiatus.

"The Western countries didn't want to reach an agreement with Iran at the Istanbul talks, and despite Turkey's efforts, they rekindled distrust," ISNA quoted Jalili, who represented Iran at the talks, as saying in a recent interview with the Turkish daily Yeni Safak.

On the claim that the Istanbul talks broke down because Iran set preconditions for talks on a nuclear fuel swap, Iran's main negotiator said, "At such talks, nations' rights should be respected," and added that Western countries should not describe Iran's insistence on its rights as setting preconditions.

During the Istanbul talks, the six major powers sought to convince Iran to consider a nuclear fuel swap proposal but said the terms of the proposal, first discussed in 2009, should be modified.

In response to the move, Jalili said that a nuclear fuel swap based on the Tehran Declaration could be a good area for cooperation, implicitly rejecting the major powers' proposal.

On May 17, 2010, Iran, Brazil, and Turkey signed the Tehran Declaration, according to which Iran would send 1200 kilograms of its low-enriched uranium to Turkey in exchange for 120 kilograms of 20 percent enriched uranium to fuel the Tehran research reactor.

On Saturday, some media outlets reported that Iran set two preconditions for talks on the West's new fuel swap proposal: first, Iran's right to enrich uranium should be recognized, and second, the sanctions imposed on Iran should be lifted.

Later Reuters quoted EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who represented the major powers at the Istanbul talks, as saying at a press conference held after the end of the negotiations that the six major powers were "disappointed" with the stance taken by Iran during the talks, and its preconditions were unacceptable.

In response to Ashton's remarks, in which she said the door remains open for Iran, Jalili said Iran is still ready to engage in more negotiations in the future.

"We have also kept the door open for talks. We have always invited them to continue the talks because we take steps in line with the correct logic we have adopted. We believe in this logic and announce that we are always ready for talks," he said.

Iranian officials have made it clear that Iran will not negotiate or compromise on its inalienable nuclear rights but said they are always ready to hold talks with the major powers on major international issues, including nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Jalili thanked Turkey for playing a positive role in the discussions on Iran's nuclear program and said it was extremely important for Iran that the talks were held in an Islamic country.

http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=234695

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Tehran Times – Iran

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

Tehran Only Trusts Russia in Nuclear Fuel Exchange: Iranian Envoy

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN - Iran's permanent ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Organization has expressed Iran's readiness to directly exchange uranium with Russia without the participation of the United States and France.

According to the Interfax news agency, Ali Asghar Soltanieh made the remarks in a live interview with the Moscow-based radio network "Echo of Moscow" on Friday.

On May 17, 2010, Iran, Turkey, and Brazil issued a declaration, according to which Iran was to ship 1200 kilograms of its low-enriched uranium to Turkey to be exchanged for 120 kilograms of 20 percent enriched nuclear fuel to power the Tehran research reactor, which produces radioisotopes for cancer treatment. According to the agreement, the exchange was to take place in Turkey under the supervision of the IAEA and Iran.

-No need for U.S., French intervention in nuclear fuel exchange

Soltanieh said, "There is no need for the project involving the Americans; the Russians would be responsible for enrichment," the University 5 Daily News reported.

Iran only trusts Russia in the issue of nuclear fuel exchange, he added.

"The French do not have to take part," Soltanieh said. "I am convinced that, with existing technology in Russia, Moscow can make those fuel rods (uranium), so there is no need to involve the French."

So far, the Russians have insisted that France's collaboration is essential to carry out the project.

He expressed Iran's readiness to negotiate with the Vienna group (the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United States, France, and Russia).

"I do not know why Russia and other countries do not want to sit at the negotiating table with us in Vienna," he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian ambassador said that Iran has not and will not abide by the UN Security Council resolutions since they are politically-motivated, lack legal weight, and violate the international law.

The hegemonic powers including the United States are using the UN Security Council as a tool, Soltanieh stated. However, they have failed to pressure Iran, the top diplomat added.

http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=234706

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FARS News Agency – Iran
Thursday, January 27, 2011

Official Reiterates Peaceful Nature of Iran's N. Activities

TEHRAN (FNA) - Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Ahani underlined Iran's sincerity and honesty in reporting its peaceful nuclear activities to the world, and said that Tehran will never give up its inalienable right of access and use of nuclear energy for civilian applications.

"The Islamic Republic fulfills its duties within the framework of the NPT," Ahani said on Wednesday.

He emphasized that Iran's nuclear program is entirely aimed at peaceful applications, saying, "Iran will go ahead with its nuclear activities which are the country's right."

The Iranian official criticized countries that imposed sanctions on Tehran and expressed the Islamic Republic's readiness to hold further negotiations in the future.

He pointed out that inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have made at least 30 snap inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities "but their reports included no evidence on production of nuclear weapons in Iran's nuclear activities."

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

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

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

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

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=8911070571>

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The West Australian - Australia
January 26, 2011

Obama Backs Seoul and Demands North Korea Give Up Nukes

by Andrew Quinn and Jack Kim

U.S. President Barack Obama told North Korea to stick to its commitment to abandon atomic weapons, throwing his support behind ally South Korea ahead of talks to try to calm tension on the divided peninsula.

Seoul announced on Wednesday that it would hold its first meeting with North Korean officials since a deadly artillery attack on an island in the South in November.

"On the Korean peninsula, we stand with our ally South Korea, and insist that North Korea keeps its commitment to abandon nuclear weapons," Obama said in his State of the Union address on Tuesday night.

The two Koreas will meet at the border truce village of Panmunjom on February 11 for preliminary military talks to discuss last year's two deadly attacks against the South's Cheonan warship and the island of Yeonpyeong.

Seoul has held out the prospect of high-level military talks, possibly at ministerial level, if Pyongyang accepts responsibility for the attacks and agrees not to carry out such provocations again.

North Korea's foreign ministry said, without referring directly to the South's proposal for nuclear talks, that it was prepared to engage in any form of dialogue as long as it helped to reduce tension.

"It is our position that each party eliminate actions that will be seen as provocation by the other side by building confidence through dialogue and negotiations, and we are prepared to work to make that happen," an unnamed ministry spokesman said in comments carried by the official KCNA news agency.

North Korea denies it had anything to do with the sinking of the Cheonan and says the South provoked its artillery attack.

"To establish peace on the Korean peninsula and see true development of North-South relations, the North must accept these proposals," a South Korean unification ministry spokesman told a news briefing.

The South also wants separate bilateral talks with the North to ascertain its sincerity about denuclearization, an effort that comes as the Pyongyang urges regional powers to resume aid-for-disarmament negotiations -- so-called six-party talks -- it walked out of two years ago.

Few believe the North has any intention of honoring its 2005 pledge to denuclearize, citing revelations last November about its uranium program which give it a second route -- alongside its plutonium program -- to make a nuclear bomb.

"REGRET" ENOUGH?

Washington and Beijing, the North's only major ally, have both pressed the two Koreas to resolve their latest standoff before returning to the broader six-party process.

But analysts doubt the North will change its stand on the Cheonan attack, in which 46 sailors were killed, by admitting responsibility.

More likely, they say, Pyongyang may indicate regret about the killings of civilians during the Yeonpyeong attack.

U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg arrived in Seoul on Wednesday to discuss North Korea's recent efforts to restart dialogue, as well as Pyongyang's uranium enrichment program.

"We're beginning to make progress in persuading all the parties that we need to see concrete steps and sincere moves by North Korea to move forward, and if North Korea is prepared to move in that direction than we are prepared to do so as well," he told reporters.

Steinberg will also visit Japan and China.

Additional reporting by Danbee Moon and Jeremy Laurence in Seoul; Editing by Jonathan Thatcher

<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/a/-/world/8716975/obama-backs-seoul-and-demands-north-korea-give-up-nukes/>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
January 26, 2011

Senior U.S. Diplomat Calls for Strong Int'l Response to N.K. Uranium Program

By Chang Jae-soon and Lee Haye-ah

SEOUL, Jan. 26 (Yonhap) -- The U.S. deputy secretary of state called for a strong international message against North Korea's uranium enrichment program Wednesday, suggesting that Washington would work harder to take the matter to the U.N. Security Council.

James Steinberg also said that the North should understand a "clear message" from last week's summit between U.S. President Barack Obama and Chinese President Hu Jintao that its uranium program breaches its international obligations and must be rolled back.

"It's very important that the international community send a strong message that the uranium enrichment program, indeed any uranium enrichment program by North Korea, would be inconsistent with its international obligations, with Security Council resolutions and with its own commitments," U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg said.

"I think the strong position that we've all taken and I think the clear message coming out of the summit between President Obama and President Hu should help drive that message home," the diplomat said after talks with South Korean Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan.

North Korea revealed in November that it is running a uranium enrichment facility, adding to international concern about the communist nation's nuclear capabilities. Uranium, if highly enriched, can be used to make weapons, providing Pyongyang with a second way of building atomic bombs after its existing plutonium-based program.

The issue was a key topic at last week's summit between Obama and Hu in Washington. In a joint statement issued after the meeting, the two leaders "expressed concern" about the uranium program while also calling for "sincere and constructive" dialogue between the two Koreas.

China's agreement to voice concern about the North's uranium program was a step forward because Beijing had been reluctant to even acknowledge the program's existence, citing the lack of firsthand evidence. The North's last remaining major ally, China does not usually criticize Pyongyang.

South Korea has called for referring the matter to the U.N. Security Council, and the apparent change in China's stand about the program brightened such prospects. Beijing's backing is crucial for the move because it is one of the five veto-holding permanent members at the Council.

Steinberg's calls for a strong international message to the North suggest that Washington could be working harder to try to persuade China to agree to bring the matter to the Council.

"We agreed to continue to work closely together over responses from the international community, including the Security Council," a senior South Korean official said on condition of anonymity. Steinberg is expected to discuss the issue with Chinese officials later this week, he said.

Steinberg arrived in Seoul earlier Wednesday as part of a regional tour that will also take him to Japan and China later this week. He met with Foreign Minister Kim and Seoul's chief nuclear envoy, Wi Sung-lac, and was scheduled to pay a visit to President Lee Myung-bak and hold talks with national security adviser Chun Yung-woo.

His trip came as the two Koreas prepared to reopen dialogue after a spike in tensions following the North's deadly shelling of the South's border island Yeonpyeong in November.

As part of its charm offensive toward Seoul, North Korea proposed last week that the two sides hold high-level defense talks to discuss the island attack as well as its March sinking of the warship Cheonan.

South Korea accepted the offer and proposed Wednesday that the two sides hold preparatory defense talks at the border village of Panmunjom on Feb. 11. It also urged the North to agree to separate bilateral talks on the North's nuclear programs.

Reiterating its commitment to the denuclearization of the "entire Korean Peninsula," North Korea hours later released a statement justifying its nuclear development by citing what it called the threat of nuclear war by the U.S.

The foreign ministry spokesman's statement, released through the official Korean Central News Agency, also warned against setting "unilateral pre-conditions" or trying to manipulate the order of talks, calling on foes to focus on common interests first.

South Korea and the United States have urged the North to take responsibility for the island shelling and the March sinking of the warship Cheonan and take concrete steps demonstrating its commitment to give up nuclear programs if six-party nuclear disarmament talks are to reopen.

But the senior South Korean official said that Pyongyang's apology for the two attacks is "not a direct precondition" for six-party talks, stressing that it is more important for the North to prove its denuclearization commitment if the nuclear talks are to reopen.

"Even if North Korea takes responsible measures over the Cheonan and Yeonpyeong issues, six-party talks cannot resume as long as it does not demonstrate through action its seriousness about denuclearization," he said.

Steinberg said Beijing understands the importance of improved relations between the two Koreas.

"China understands the importance of moving forward initially with North-South dialogue," he said. "Rebuilding trust here in South Korea is a critical first step towards being able to move forward to a broad-based dialogue."

The American diplomat also urged the North to refrain from further provocations, saying Pyongyang cannot achieve what it wants "through intimidation, through coercion" and that additional belligerence will only "deepen their isolation and lead to even more effective implementation of the measures that we have adopted in response to previous provocations."

Steinberg also expressed satisfaction with the way Seoul and Washington work together.

"I found that our views are very much in sync, that we are working together enormously," he said. "As we thought together to think about how to characterize the relationship, we concluded that the United States and South Korea are like sticky rice cake."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2011/01/26/30/0401000000AEN20110126011000315F.HTML>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
January 27, 2011

N. Korea to Develop Nuclear-Capable ICBMs within Decade: Adm. Mullen

By Hwang Doo-hyong

WASHINGTON, Jan. 27 (Yonhap) -- North Korea will likely develop intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads within the coming decade, the chief U.S. military officer said Thursday.

"There's little doubt in my mind, unless North Korea is deterred, that sometime in the next, I'm not sure but, five to 10 years, the provocations ... will continue at a much higher threat level, which could include a nuclear-capable ICBM," Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said in an interview with Financial Times, according to a transcript released by the Pentagon. "That's what I believe we're looking at. I can't be precise about the time and say it's exactly here but clearly there is evolution going on there where the threat becomes much more serious."

Mullen's statement is in tune with Defense Secretary Robert Gates, who said earlier this month that North Korea's missiles and nuclear weapons will pose a threat to the U.S. within five years. Gates also urged North Korea to impose a moratorium on nuclear and missile testing to help revive the six-party nuclear talks.

A six-party deal signed in 2005 by the two Koreas, the U.S., China, Japan and Russia calls for the North's nuclear dismantlement in return for massive economic aid and diplomatic and political benefits. The talks, however, have been deadlocked for more than two years over the North's nuclear and missile tests and other provocations.

North Korea also revealed in November a uranium enrichment plant that could serve as a second way of building nuclear bombs in addition to its existing plutonium program, despite Pyongyang's claims it is producing fuel for power generation.

"I think we all agree it's a more dangerous place now than it was a few months ago and that the provocations -- and this is all tied to the succession thing and Kim Jong Il, who's been a pretty unpredictable guy for a long time -- the worry tied to this revelation on the nuke, the uranium enrichment piece, all of that, that it's now more dangerous than it was a few months ago," Mullen said.

The North's recent provocations, including the artillery attack on a South Korean border island and the sinking of a warship, are widely believed to be linked to the ailing North Korean leader Kim's plans to transfer power to his third and youngest son, Jong-un, in the unprecedented third generation hereditary power transition.

The 28-year-old heir apparent, who like his father lacks a proper military background, is believed to be trying to rally support from the military, the only power base in the impoverished, but nuclear-armed communist state.

North Korea detonated nuclear devices in 2006 and 2009, and conducted long-range missile tests three times - in 1998, 2006 and 2009 - which were seen as a partial success.

Pyongyang is believed to have at least several nuclear weapons, with some experts saying it could have already developed nuclear warheads small enough to be mounted on ballistic missiles with the help of China or Pakistan.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2011/01/28/17/0301000000AEN20110128000900315F.HTML>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

N.Korea Will Not Drop Nuclear Program - Kim Jong-il's Son

28 January 2011

North Korea will not halt its nuclear activities as long as there is a confrontation with the United States, Kim Jong-nam, the country's leader Kim Jong-il's eldest son who resides in Macao, said in an interview with a Japanese newspaper.

"The power of the North Korean state comes from the nuclear atom. Amid continuing confrontation with the United States, the possibility [of North Korea] dropping it remains minute," Kim Jong-nam told the Tokyo Shimbun paper.

North Korea has been subjected to several rounds of UN Security Council sanctions since it declared itself a nuclear power in 2005. The state broke off talks with South Korea, China, the United States, Japan and Russia on its nuclear program in April 2009, after the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution condemning its missile tests.

In late November that year, Pyongyang disclosed to visiting U.S. experts an operational uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon, prompting fears that the secretive state had again begun developing nuclear weapons.

Before Pyongyang officially declared last year Kim's younger son, Kim Jong-un, heir apparent, Kim Jong-nam was widely speculated to become the country's next leader.

Commenting on the issue, Kim Jong-nam said his father initially opposed the appointment of a successor.

"Even China's Mao Zedong did not have a successor. It is against socialism," Kim Jong-nam, 39, said, adding: "But I understand that this has been done to strengthen the statehood. Instability in North Korea will lead to instability in the region."

He also admitted that living standards in North Korea left much to be desired.

"My heart breaks when I hear news [from North Korea]. I don't think that the living standards [there] are improving. I want North Korea to be stable, its economy to recover and its people to be wealthy," Kim Jong-nam said.

TOKYO, January 28 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20110128/162345729.html>

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Hindustan Times – India

Pak Blocks N-Talks with India

Press Trust of India

Colombo, January 26, 2011

Pakistan has blocked negotiations on the fissile material cutoff treaty (FMCT) at the UN conference on disarmament, claiming that a "discriminatory waiver" provided by the NSG to India will help it stockpile bomb-making atomic materials in the region. The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) waiver, Pakistan's Ambassador Zamir Akram told the Conference on Disarmament on Tuesday, "will further accentuate the asymmetry in fissile materials stockpiles in the region, to the detriment of Pakistan's security interests.

"For the last two years, Pakistan nearly blocked any progress on the FMCT negotiations. It maintained that "selective and discriminatory action of certain states in violation of their own national and international commitments, in pursuit of profit" has tilted the nuclear balance in favour of India.

Over the last 10 years, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is nearly paralysed as it is unable to negotiate any major nuclear arms treaty.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Pak-blocks-N-talks-with-India/Article1-655050.aspx>

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Bloomberg.com

Pakistan's Block on Nuclear Treaty Talks Tests U.S. 'Patience'

By Viola Gienger

January 27, 2011

Pakistan's refusal to allow international talks to proceed on a treaty to stop production of plutonium and uranium for nuclear bombs prompted the U.S. to say today that it's losing patience and looking for "options."

U.S. nuclear arms negotiator Rose Gottemoeller said she sought to convey to a conference in Geneva today "that patience is running out."

"We need to be thinking about this as an all-out effort this year," Gottemoeller said in a telephone interview after her speech at the latest session of the Conference on Disarmament, which is charged with negotiating the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty and requires consensus to proceed. "But if not, we're going to have to consider other options."

Most participants believe they need to make progress this year, she said, declining to specify what alternatives the U.S. is considering.

The delay reflects traditional tensions between India and Pakistan, which both tested nuclear weapons in May 1998. The U.S. has embraced India's pursuit of nuclear energy for civilian use while tussling with Pakistan over its weapons program and threats from militants on its soil.

"Pakistan and India continue to produce fissile material and don't want to stop," said Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, a nonprofit group in Washington that tracks the process. "And the other countries don't consider this serious enough an issue to make it a priority in their bilateral relations with the two countries."

Bomb Fuel

As of November, Pakistan had enough highly enriched uranium and plutonium to build 80 to 100 bombs, and India had sufficient supplies for 140, according to Kimball. Pakistan's leaders say they need to produce more to keep pace with India.

The United Nations General Assembly called for negotiations toward a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons in 1993. Pakistan has blocked talks since then, most recently after a brief breakthrough in May 2009, when the Conference on Disarmament agreed on a work plan.

Zamir Akram, Pakistan's envoy to the United Nations in Geneva, said his country objects to the treaty because it would enable India to divert its fissile material to military uses, according to a Jan. 14 report by the Press Trust of India.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appealed to the Geneva conference yesterday for progress, and the U.S. is offering to send experts to help discuss verification standards in hopes of swaying "the countries who have concerns."

"I don't expect a serious breakthrough any time soon," Kimball said.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-01-27/pakistan-s-block-on-nuclear-treaty-talks-tests-u-s-patience-.html>

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Sify News – India

Pakistan Threatens to Undertake Nuke Arms Race over India's NSG Membership Bid

Indo-Asian News Service (IANS)

January 28, 2011

Pakistan has threatened to activate a new nuclear arms race in South Asia after the United States supported a move that Islamabad claims will allow India to further expand its weapons programme.

Islamabad believes that Washington's decision to support Indian membership of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group following an agreement to help India develop its civil nuclear power industry, will help New Delhi to further increase its nuclear weapon arsenal.

Pakistan's military leadership is determined to maintain the current ratio of Indian to Pakistani nuclear warheads, and is already concerned that India is pulling ahead following the 2009 launch of a domestically produced nuclear submarine, The Telegraph reports.

Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament told delegates this week that Washington's decision in this regard would "destabilise the security environment in South Asia."

"Membership of the NSG will enable our neighbour to further expand upon its nuclear co-operation agreements and enhance its nuclear weapons and delivery capability. As a consequence, Pakistan will be forced to take measures to ensure the credibility of its deterrence," Zamir Akram told the conference.

Pakistan's National Command Authority, headed by Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and a retired army general, had voiced its concern on the implications of the new civil nuclear co-operation deal between India and the US for Pakistan's security, Akram added.

Pakistan also opposed Washington's decision to support Indian membership of the Missile Technology Control Regime, the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement.

<http://www.sify.com/news/pakistan-threatens-to-undertake-nuke-arms-race-over-india-s-nsg-membership-bid-news-international-lb2oOigaebb.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Insists on Equal Part in European Missile Defense

27 January 2011

Russian experts must be involved in the development of the European missile defense network on a permanent and equal basis, the chief of the Russian General Staff said.

Russia and NATO agreed to cooperate in the creation of the European missile defense system in November last year. The parties agreed to formulate terms for missile defense cooperation by June 2011.

"The main condition for joint work [in the area of missile defense] should be the permanent participation of Russian experts in drafting the European missile defense architecture," Gen. Nikolai Makarov said at a meeting of the Russia-NATO Council on Wednesday.

NATO earlier proposed creating two separate systems that would exchange information, while Russia proposed a unified missile defense network, which would include joint centers for establishing threats and be based on joint decisions.

NATO also suggested that the creation of the European missile defense architecture should be a gradual, step-by-step process.

Makarov said on Wednesday that this approach was unacceptable because Moscow wanted to see clearly the real purpose of the European missile shield and Russia's role in it from the very beginning.

"We want to understand the entire design of this 'house', its purpose and cost, and the role Russia will play in it," the general said.

MOSCOW, January 27 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110127/162324376.html

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Global Security Newswire

Next Bulava Launch Scheduled for Summer

Thursday, Jan. 27, 2011

Concerns about the safety of a Russian submarine prompted Moscow to delay until summer the 15th test flight of its experimental Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missile, the Xinhua News Agency reported (see *GSN*, Dec. 16, 2010).

"The launch was supposed to be done in December last year, but heavy ice in the White Sea would make it unsafe. The launch will be conducted in this summer," Interfax quoted missile designer Yuri Solomonov as saying.

The Bulava is designed to carry up to 10 nuclear warheads as far as 5,000 miles. Seven of the missile's 14 trial launches to date have been successes, including a pair of tests conducted in October.

Advancements gained in the Bulava missile's development has benefited work on land-based strategic delivery systems, the expert said.

"Approximately half of what was realized in the Bulava was applied to the RS-24 Yars missile as well," according to Solomonov.

Still, the Bulava missile's current design is not suitable for deployment on land, he said.

"It would be nonsense to say that the Bulava could be used by ground-based systems in its present form. No one is speaking about such an option," Solomonov said.

Russia would keep the land-based Topol-M missile on active duty for 20 years or longer, he said, adding the Defense Ministry would produce analyses necessary for the weapon's life extension (Xinhua News Agency, Jan. 27).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20110127_3676.php

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Strategic Missile Forces Upgrade Command and Control Systems

27 January 2011

Russia's Strategic Missile Forces (RVSN) are introducing fourth generation automated control systems with triple-redundant communication links, the service's head Lt Gen. Sergey Karakayev said on Thursday.

The new automated control systems are based on digital alert transmission systems. "The RSVN is currently introducing fourth generation automated control systems. Each system will have guaranteed triple communications redundancy," Karakayev said in an interview in Izvestia newspaper.

Karakayev said that the importance of command and control links increased as strategic nuclear launch systems aged.

MOSCOW, January 27 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20110127/162333117.html

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Voice of Russia – Russia

Russia Creates Invulnerable Nuclear Weapons

By Vyacheslav Solovyov

January 28, 2011

Russia is developing new warheads for its intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), media reports said on Friday. They quoted Yury Solomonov, the Chief Designer of the Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology (MIIT), as saying that the new warheads would be able to overcome any existing and future missile defense systems.

Mainly focused on developing sophisticated ICBMs, the MIIT is also involved in an array of civilian projects, not least in the space sector, Solomonov explained.

He touted advanced characteristics of an ICBM equipped with the new warheads, which were developed by the MIIT in 2010. Such a missile, he said, has the so-called multiple warhead dispensing mechanism, which enables the missile to simultaneously destroy several targets without being tracked by enemy missile defenses. Some media outlets went as far as calling the new Russian ICBM an invulnerable nuclear weapon.

Meanwhile, most experts remain downbeat about the project that they say has yet to be put into practice. Viktor Yesin, of the Russian Security Council, subscribes to this standpoint.

It remains to be seen whether the project, which is still on paper, will finally be fulfilled, Yesin says, citing significant sums, which are yet to be allocated for the purpose. I do hope, he adds, that the project's implementation will ultimately see the light of day especially given that a number of previous pertinent experiments proved the project's feasibility. If fulfilled, the project will certainly help to increase the nation's strategic deterrent capability, Yesin concludes, touting the new ICBM as sort of Russia answer to Washington's push for a global missile shield.

Earlier, NATO formally invited Russia to join a missile shield in Europe in an overture that commentators contend may prompt Moscow to scrap its strategic nuclear modernization plans. This best-case scenario could contribute to curbing a possible new arms race, which is fraught with grave political and economic consequences both for Russia and the rest of the world...

<http://english.ruvr.ru/2011/01/28/41687239.html>

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Global Security Newswire

Obama Touts Administration's Nonproliferation Accomplishments

Wednesday, January 26, 2011

By Martin Matishak

WASHINGTON -- U.S. President Barack Obama last night touted his administration's nuclear nonproliferation achievements, including a new arms control treaty with Russia and increased international pressure on North Korea and Iran to curb their controversial atomic efforts (see *GSN*, Jan. 28, 2010).

"American leadership can ... be seen in the effort to secure the worst weapons of war," the president said during his second State of the Union address. "Because Republicans and Democrats approved the New START treaty, far fewer nuclear weapons and launchers will be deployed."

Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev last year signed the successor agreement to the expired 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. The pact would require the two sides to cut their fielded strategic nuclear weapons to 1,550 warheads and limit their respective deployed nuclear delivery vehicles to 700, with another 100 platforms in reserve.

The U.S. Senate ratified the deal in a 71-26 vote last month after a deeply contentious debate. Both chambers of the Russian parliament signed off on the pact this week (see related *GSN* story, today). Usually, both countries wait until their respective legislative approval processes are complete before exchanging the documents that constitute the "instruments of ratification."

The pact would allow for inspections of nuclear sites and other verification measures that were suspended after the 1991 START treaty expired.

In a speech focused primarily on the domestic economy and jobs, the president noted the April 2010 Nuclear Security Summit in Washington in which world leaders and dignitaries from nearly 50 countries pledged to secure global stocks of nuclear material within four years.

"Because we rallied the world, nuclear materials are being locked down on every continent so they never fall into the hands of terrorists," Obama told the joint session of lawmakers.

A second security summit is scheduled for 2012 in South Korea.

Obama also touched on his administration's work to rein in the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea.

"Because of a diplomatic effort to insist that Iran meet its obligations, the Iranian government now faces tougher sanctions, tighter sanctions than ever before," he said.

Western powers believe Tehran's atomic program is aimed at developing nuclear warheads. Iran has vehemently denied the charge, saying its effort is for civilian energy purposes.

Since Obama's last State of the Union address, the Persian Gulf state has been hit by a multitude of additional economic sanctions, including a new U.N. Security Council resolution that significantly expanded the list of conventional weapons Tehran cannot buy and barred Iranian activity on ballistic missiles that could be topped with nuclear warheads.

A flurry of economic penalties soon followed from other international partners, including the European Union, which banned investment by member states in Tehran's energy sector.

On the Korean Peninsula, the United States stands "with our ally South Korea, and insists that North Korea keeps its commitment to abandon nuclear weapons," according to Obama.

Pyongyang has conducted two nuclear tests and has failed to follow through on denuclearization agreements signed in 2005 and 2007. In November, it allowed visiting U.S. experts to see a previously unknown uranium enrichment facility, which could give the North another route to creating nuclear-weapon material.

The regime is widely considered responsible for the March 2010 sinking of a South Korean naval vessel. It also launched an artillery attack in November on an inhabited South Korean island. The two incidents killed 50 South Koreans.

Tensions skyrocketed on the peninsula in the wake of the incidents, though Seoul and Pyongyang this month have moved toward establishing new military talks. This week, officials in Seoul said they would also seek direct talks with the North about its nuclear program (see *GSN*, Jan. 24).

Last week the United States and China issued a joint statement expressing concern about the uranium enrichment facility and called on the North to abide by its international denuclearization commitments.

Together, the administrations' efforts are "a part of how we're shaping a world that favors peace and prosperity," Obama said.

The Republican response to the president's address avoided touching on nonproliferation matters, emphasizing instead issues including the national debt and the sweeping health care legislation passed last year.

International observers are likely to notice that Obama made no mention of a world without nuclear weapons, said James Acton, an associate in the nuclear policy program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. That goal was a key point in the sweeping nonproliferation agenda the president detailed in Prague in April 2009.

"What everyone is going to ask themselves is does this signal a retreat from the Prague agenda or is it merely that economy is the big issue right now and in speech to domestic audience on domestic issues there simply wasn't enough time to discuss any issue beyond the economy?" Acton told *Global Security Newswire* today.

If indeed the administration is not backing away from the Prague agenda it "should make that clear to the world sooner rather than later," according to Acton.

There was little focus on nonproliferation last night because the administration is busy preparing to implement New START after an already "exhausting" debate on the agreement, according to Micah Zenko, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.

In addition, White House officials "are still doing their homework on what comes next," Zenko told *GSN* today. He said the administration has yet to decide whether to address tactical nuclear weapons drawdowns or move forward with its promised pledge to pursue Senate ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

"The real story of nonproliferation in the State of the Union is that President Obama unfortunately doesn't have much to crow about," Christopher Ford, director of the Center for Technology and Global Security at the Hudson Institute, said today by e-mail. "One might think his famous Prague speech in April 2009, and his disarmament-anticipatory Nobel Prize, had never occurred. The State of the Union tells us more about where U.S. policy isn't than where it actually is."

Ford said the president correctly noted that sanctions on Iran have become tougher, but argued the penalties do not seem likely to accomplish their main goal of reversing Iran's suspected rush toward a nuclear weapons capability.

He also noted that Obama only voiced continued insistence for North Korea to fulfill its denuclearization promises. Pyongyang is in no danger of actually doing so, according to Ford.

"All this is, of course, is pretty thin gruel for a 'transformative' president whose administration bragged that it would finally solve the world's problems -- including proliferation -- by diplomatic engagement and 'soft power,'" he told *GSM*.

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20110126_7855.php

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The Star – Malaysia
Wednesday, January 26, 2011

Nuclear Weapons Risk Spreading Due to Impasse - Ban

By Stephanie Nebehay

GENEVA (Reuters) - A deadlock in global negotiations on fissile material has increased the risk that nuclear weapons could spread or fall into the hands of violent political groups, the head of the United Nations warned on Wednesday.

Addressing the Conference on Disarmament, which has been unable to launch negotiations on any issue for more than a decade, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the impasse had "ominous implications for international security".

"The longer it persists, the graver the nuclear threat -- from existing arsenals, from the proliferation of such weapons and from their possible acquisition by terrorists," Ban told the United Nations-sponsored forum.

Halting production of bomb-making fissile material is widely seen as the next step in multilateral nuclear arms control.

But for the past year, Pakistan has blocked consensus to launch talks to halt production of plutonium and highly-enriched uranium. It insists that existing fissile stocks should also be included, to counter India's perceived strategic advantage.

One or two members should not be able to block indefinitely the required consensus at the 65-member forum, Ban stressed.

Pakistan's ambassador Zamir Akram said on Tuesday that U.S. moves to support Indian membership in four key multilateral export control regimes that allow trade in nuclear materials had boosted Islamabad's opposition to fissile talks.

Pakistan believes that substantive progress could be made on other core issues and is ready to enter talks on wider nuclear disarmament and preventing an arms race in outer space, he said.

"TO DO" LIST

The United States says that in line with President Barack Obama's nuclear agenda laid out in Prague in 2009, to eventually rid the world of nuclear arms, a fissile material "cut-off" treaty is at the top of its "very ambitious 'to do' list".

Washington's preference is to launch full-fledged fissile negotiations as part of a programme of work requiring formal adoption, but it could agree to a robust discussion in the meantime, U.S. disarmament ambassador Laura Kennedy says.

"We're realistic about the way ahead, but committed," she told a briefing last week.

The Conference's members include all five official nuclear powers (Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States), nuclear-armed India and Pakistan, and Israel, widely assumed to have atomic weapons. Iran and North Korea, both under sanctions for their nuclear programmes, are also members.

As the world's sole disarmament negotiating forum, the CD risks losing all credibility unless it engages in serious discussions, Ban said: "Continued inaction will only endanger its future as a multilateral negotiating forum," he warned.

"The future of the CD is in your hands."

The forum has been unable to gain traction despite other recent advances in arms control, including the New START treaty clinched by the United States and Russia last April, he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Russia's parliament ratified the pact which the U.S. Senate approved last month. It commits the countries to ceilings of 1,550 deployed strategic warheads in seven years.

Editing by Laura MacInnis and Alastair Macdonald

http://www.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2011/1/27/worldupdates/2011-01-26T222734Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-544253-1&sec=Worldupdates

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency
OPINION & ANALYSIS

Ratifying New START Treaty amid Mutual Mistrust

26 January 2011

By RIA Novosti military commentator Ilya Kramnik

The most recent U.S.-Russian arms reduction agreement looks set to become a reality, after all. A bill on the ratification of the new START treaty has already passed through Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, and was approved by the upper house on Wednesday, January 26.

The path toward ratifying the treaty has not been a smooth one, and it is likely to face more difficulties even after it goes into effect. Signed in Prague on April 8, 2010, the new START is meant to replace the first such treaty, which expired in December 2009 fifteen years after its adoption, as well as the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Accord. The latter was a revised version of the second START, signed in 1993, but never ratified.

Under the new treaty, each party is allowed a maximum of 1,550 warheads and no more than 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and heavy bombers equipped for nuclear arms. Another 100 are allowed if they are not operationally deployed.

The new START is seen as a fair treaty, one that lets the United States continue developing its missile defense system while at the same time allowing Russia to build up its own nuclear forces without feeling threatened by the American missile defense system, at present and in the foreseeable future.

Mutual benefits

Here are some of the treaty's provisions from which Russia stands to benefit:

Unlike the original START, the new treaty sets no limitations on patrol zones for land-based mobile missile systems such as the Topol, the Topol-M and the Yars. Nor does it restrict their deployment zones, in terms of total area or in number.

Also, the accord imposes strict restrictions on the breakout potential and dramatically lowers the launcher ceiling, thereby narrowing the gap between Russia and the U.S. in maintaining their nuclear arsenals. These restrictions apply, among other things, to ballistic missiles with non-nuclear warheads.

Under the new START, the sides are free to establish the structure of their nuclear triads and can deploy new types of missiles and other warhead carriers with prior notice.

One other point advantageous to Russia is that the treaty does not put any limits on the deployment of missiles with multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRV). Which means the country will retain its arsenal of heavy launchers such as the RS-20 and the RS-18, and will also be able to develop new MIRVs.

The new START bans the deployment of strategic offensive weapons beyond the sides' respective borders. This provision will help prevent the recurrence of something like the Cuban Missile Crisis and will also allow the sides to have greater control over the strategic armaments of the other.

For the United States, the advantages include the lack of limits on the deployment of missile defense systems and sea-launched cruise missiles, as well as the rules for counting warheads on heavy bombers. While each warhead on a ballistic missile is counted as one warhead, a heavy bomber is counted as carrying "one warhead," even though it may carry 12 to 24 of them. Thus, the actual number of warheads will be about 2,100 for Russia and 2,400 for the United States, as the latter holds a larger number of heavy launchers in its arsenal. However, this gap will narrow over time, as more American B-1B bombers will be discharged and converted into non-nuclear weapons.

Concessions on both sides

Despite the obvious advantages for both sides, the treaty has faced harsh criticism both in Russia and in the United States. The arguments put forward by each are remarkably similar - ultra-nationalist groups on both sides of the Atlantic have expressed the concern that the new START makes too many concessions to the other side.

Detractors of the treaty in the United States are above all concerned about the U.S. missile shield, which they think is threatened by the link made in the new START between defensive and offensive weapons. Whereas opponents in Russia are most unhappy about the treaty's lack of legally binding provisions to limit the development of such missile defense systems.

There has also been criticism of the lack of restrictions on the number of sea-launched cruise missiles and the rules for counting warheads on heavy bombers.

The sides have gone ahead with the ratification, but each has provided itself with certain safeguards. The U.S. Senate has adopted a resolution to ensure that no limitations will be set on its missile defense shield. The Russian legislature, meanwhile, has reserved the right to withdraw from the treaty in case the nuclear missile parity between Russia and the U.S. is upset.

Despite all these reservations, the treaty's original text has remained almost intact. Its enactment will mark a significant step forward in U.S.-Russian relations over the last three years.

Hopefully, Russia and the U.S. will not lose momentum on this even if Barack Obama fails to win re-election in the 2012. A new arms race is the last thing the two nations need.

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

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20110126/162308906.html>

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Montreal Gazette – Canada

ANALYSIS

Analysis: Why Pakistan Wants to Expand its Nuclear Arsenal

By Rob Crilly, The Daily Telegraph

January 27, 2011

Pakistan is desperate to increase the size of its nuclear arsenal as it eyes India's rapidly growing economy and population.

Although the numbers of weapons held by either country are small in comparison, the result of the nuclear competition between the two countries is reminiscent of the Cold War arms race between the U.S. and USSR.

In India's case, the perceived threat is China. For Pakistan, the presumed enemy is India. Paranoia is driving the acceleration of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

The two countries have fought three wars since partition in 1947 and today Islamabad knows that its conventional forces would be swamped by those across the border.

Unable to match India's defence expenditure, economy and population, Islamabad has, since the 1970s, relied on nuclear technology to provide a deterrent.

The latest escalation in tensions - with Pakistan saying it wants to maintain parity of stocks with India, which recently unveiled a nuclear-powered submarine - will come as no surprise to analysts.

Diplomatic cables released by WikiLeaks have provided snippets of information on Pakistan's nuclear program.

In a memo dated December 2008, Peter Lavoy, an intelligence officer briefing Nato permanent representatives on Afghanistan and Pakistan, said that despite looming economic meltdown, "Pakistan was producing nuclear weapons at a faster rate than any other country in the world".

Earlier that year, Indian and U.S. signed a civil nuclear accord, sending shock waves through Pakistan where the deal was seen as allowing Delhi access to international supplies of uranium for civilian projects - freeing domestic reserves for military use.

Other leaked cables also suggest that analysts believe Pakistan is concentrating on developing smaller, mobile nuclear devices to counter India's conventional battlefield forces, and so need more fissile material.

Since then India has won backing from America to join a series of international nuclear forums, increasing Pakistan's sense of isolation and nudging it closer to China, which recently announced plans to build a fifth civilian reactor for its ally.

The result is a South Asian nuclear build-up.

The balance of terror

India

Nuclear warheads: 60-80

Defence expenditure (2008): \$31.54bn

Military Personnel 4,767,000: (including reservists and paramilitary forces)

Navy: 45 warships, 16 tactical submarines

Air Force: 632 combat aircraft

Pakistan

Nuclear warheads: 70-90

Defence expenditure (2008): \$4.42bn

Military Personnel: 1,451,000 (including reservists and paramilitary forces)

Navy 7 warships: 8 tactical submarines

Air Force: 383 combat aircraft

Sources: The International Institute for Strategic Studies and The Bulletin of Atomic Sciences

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/Analysis+Pakistan+wants+expand+nuclear+arsenal/4179729/story.html>

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