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

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Bloomberg Business Week

Iran Keeps Options Open to Make Nukes, Clapper Says

Thursday, February 10, 2011

By Tony Capaccio

Feb. 10 (Bloomberg) -- Iran is keeping its options open on building nuclear weapons by pursuing 'various nuclear capabilities,' the U.S. intelligence chief said today.

The U.S. does not know if Iran will ultimately build weapons, but its programs "position it" to do so, said James Clapper, President Barack Obama's director of national intelligence.

"There is a real risk that its nuclear program will prompt other countries in the Middle East to pursue nuclear options," he said in testimony before the House Select Committee on Intelligence. Iran will build weapons "if its leaders choose" to proceed, he said.

"We do not know, however, if Iran will eventually decide to build nuclear weapons," he said. Still, "Iran's nuclear decision-making is guided by a cost-benefit approach, which offers the international community opportunities to influence Tehran," Clapper said.

Iran's leadership "undoubtedly consider Iran's security, prestige and influence, as well as the international political and security environment when making decisions about its nuclear program," Clapper said.

Clapper gave his assessment during the intelligence committee's annual unclassified hearing on worldwide threats.

Clapper said Iran last year displayed a new rocket engine design for its Simorgh space launch vehicle "that could be used for an ICBM-class vehicle."

"We are watching developments in this area very closely," Clapper said.

Latin America Inroads

Iran also continues to "reach out" to Latin America "as a way to diminish its international isolation and bypass international sanctions," Clapper said.

So far, he said, those relations have developed "only significantly" with Venezuela, Bolivia and Brazil.

"Most moderate governments have responded coolly to Tehran outreach although an increasing number of Iranian embassies are attempting to spread" the country's influence.

"We expect Tehran to continue offering economic and other incentives to try to expand its outreach," he said.

Editors: Steven Komarow, Bob Drummond

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2011-02-10/iran-keeps-options-open-to-make-nukes-clapper-says.html>

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Arirang News – South Korea

February 10, 2011

Iran Provides N. Korea with US\$2 Bil., Receives Enriched Uranium

Iran has reportedly provided North Korea with two billion US dollars over the past three years in exchange for enriched uranium.

Japan's Sankei Shimbun newspaper said Thursday that North Korea exported enriched uranium from its nuclear facility in Yongbyon to the Middle Eastern nation as Tehran needed the material for its nuclear program.

North Korea is said to have received hard currency to purchase the necessary equipment and centrifuges to build other nuclear plants.

The newspaper adds that an Iranian delegation traveled to Pyongyang once a year since 2008 to handle the financial transactions.

http://www.arirang.co.kr/News/News_View.asp?nseq=112466&code=Ne2&category=2

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Times of India – India

Korea Talks 'Collapse' in Setback for Nuclear Dialogue

By Reuters
February 9, 2011

SEOUL: Military talks between the rival Koreas have "collapsed," a unification ministry official in Seoul said on Wednesday, dealing a setback to efforts to restart international aid-for-disarmament talks.

Tensions have eased on the divided peninsula since the start of the year, with both sides calling for dialogue, raising hopes the neighbours could rebuild relations shattered over the past two years by a series of deadly attacks and failed nuclear talks.

Colonels from the two Koreas, still technically at war since their 1950-53 civil conflict ended in a truce, not a treaty, talked for two days but failed to get past the first hurdle of the preliminary meeting -- setting the agenda for senior discussions.

"The talks have collapsed; they haven't even agreed on a date for their next meeting," the official told Reuters, referring to the first meeting since the North's attack on the southern island of Yeonpyeong in November, which killed four people and raised the threat of possible all-out war.

The South's defence ministry said in a statement that the North's representatives had "unilaterally walked out of the meeting room".

Seoul said the offer for senior-level military talks still stood, but on the condition the North "takes responsible steps regarding" last year's attacks, a ministry official said.

The talks also became bogged down over the procedural issue of what rank any senior talks would take, with the South demanding either a ministerial or four-star general confab while North insisted on vice-ministerial dialogue.

While the failed talks underline the deep divisions and distrust between the rivals, analysts said they were hardly surprised and that any talks would follow a stop-start pattern.

"I thought it would take some time due to a gap in views of the both," said Park Syung-je, an expert at the Asia Strategy Institute. "Next time ahead of talks, South Korea should check if North Korea truly wants them."

Tensions rose on the divided peninsula last year when 46 South Korean sailors were killed in an attack on a naval vessel. North Korea, which denies responsibility for that attack, also revealed major advances in its nuclear programme in November.

Beijing and Washington had set inter-Korean dialogue as a prerequisite to restart six-party talks which offer the North aid and diplomatic recognition in return for disabling its nuclear arms programme. Tokyo and Moscow are the other six-party members.

The North has said it wants to return to the broader negotiations, but Seoul and Washington have questioned its sincerity about denuclearising -- pointing to its revelations about a uranium-enrichment programme.

"Without having the bilateral talks between the two Koreas, holding six-party talks also looks unclear now," said Kim Seung-hwan of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The North quit the six-way talks in 2009, declaring the process dead, in protest against U.N. sanctions for conducting nuclear and missile tests.

The North's shelling of Yeonpyeong, the first attack against civilians on South Korean soil since the Korean War, set off a wave of war-like rhetoric that worried financial markets in a region home to one-sixth of the world's economy.

Under pressure from their main allies, the United States and China, the neighbours have stopped their combative language and reopened a hotline at their border.

And the two sides showed some signs of cooperation on Wednesday, with Seoul sending a telegram to Pyongyang saying it was ready to discuss humanitarian issues.

During the preliminary military talks this week, the South demanded the North acknowledge its role in shelling of Yeonpyeong and the attack on the vessel, the defence ministry said.

North Korea repeated that it was not responsible for the sinking the naval vessel and blamed the Yeonpyeong attack on the South's live-fire drills in disputed waters.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/Korea-talks-collapse-in-setback-for-nuclear-dialogue/articleshow/7462286.cms>

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Bandon Sun – Canada

US Intelligence Says NKorea may have Several Uranium Enrichment Facilities.

By Matthew Pennington, The Associated Press
10 February 2011

WASHINGTON - U.S. intelligence agencies believe North Korea may have several uranium enrichment facilities to advance its nuclear weapons program and may have received outside assistance, America's spy chief said Thursday.

Last November, North Korea showed U.S. visitors a facility at Yongbyon that it said contained 2,000 centrifuges confirming American suspicions the North has a second way of making fissile material in addition to its plutonium-based program.

Director of National Intelligence James Clapper said in written testimony to the House Intelligence Committee there is a "clear prospect" that the North has built other uranium enrichment-related facilities in its territory.

That would deepen concern about the extent of the North's nuclear program, which Clapper said posed a "serious threat" to security in East Asia. He said the communist country has already conducted two nuclear tests and tests of a ballistic missile that could reach portions of the United States.

The United States has said since 2002 that the North has a uranium-based program, which Pyongyang denied for years.

Clapper said the scale of the facility at Yongbyon and the progress made in construction showed North Korea had likely been pursuing enrichment "for an extended period of time." He said to progress so far within the 20 months claimed by North would not be possible without previously conducting extensive research, testing and assembly, or without receiving "outside assistance."

Clapper did not elaborate on where that assistance would have come from, but he could be alluding to former Pakistani chief nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan, who ran a rogue trafficking network until 2003. Clapper identified North Korea itself as a known proliferator which had exported of ballistic missiles and associated materials to several countries, including Iran and Syria.

While he said North Korea has the capability to build nuclear weapons, it was not clear if they actually had any and if they did, would likely only use them against the U.S. if it was on the verge of military defeat.

Multination talks aimed at encouraging the impoverished North to give up its nuclear ambitions in return for aid have been in limbo since 2009, when the North pulled out in anger at international censure of a long-range rocket test.

Clapper said the North wants to resume the talks to mitigate international sanctions, bolster ties with its chief ally China and to try to gain "tacit international acceptance for its status as a nuclear weapons power."

Tensions have been running high on the Korean peninsula in recent months, after the March sinking of a South Korean warship that killed 46 sailors and a November artillery barrage on a front-line South Korean island that left four dead. That plunged ties between the rival Koreas to the lowest since their 1950-53 war in which the U.S. fought on the side of the South.

Military talks between the Koreas that were hoped to reduce tensions collapsed this week.

Clapper said U.S. intelligence agencies viewed the island attack in November as partly aimed at burnishing the military credentials of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il's designated successor, Kim Jong Un.

He said the succession process is still subject to "potential vulnerabilities" particularly if Kim Jong Il — who reportedly suffered a stroke in 2008 — dies before his 27-year-old youngest son consolidates his authority.

<http://www.brandonsun.com/world/breaking-news/us-intelligence-says-nkorea-may-have-several-uranium-enrichment-facilities-115723294.html?thx=y>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
February 11, 2011

N. Korea may Conduct Nuke Test in Late 2011 or Early 2012: Analyst

SEOUL, Feb. 11 (Yonhap) -- North Korea could conduct its third nuclear test between late this year and early next year if the regime feels the need for a breakthrough for its power succession plan or for the standoff over its atomic programs, a state-run think tank analyst claimed Friday.

Yun Deok-min, a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, told a security forum in Seoul that the communist nation could go ahead with a test to sharpen its plutonium bomb technology or it could test a bomb made of highly enriched uranium.

"Now that the North's enriched uranium production capabilities are proven, it is inevitable for us to fundamentally review our nuclear policy on North Korea as it is based on the existing negotiation and information systems," Yu told the forum.

North Korea carried out two nuclear test explosions, first in 2006 and the other in 2009, based on its plutonium bomb program. Concern about Pyongyang's nuclear capabilities has escalated further after the North revealed in November that it has a uranium enrichment facility.

Uranium, if highly enriched, can be weapons-grade. North Korea claims the facility is to produce fuel for a light water reactor under construction for power generation. But few believe the claim by a nation that has pursued atomic ambitions for decades.

Analysts have said that North Korea's provocations in recent years such as the March sinking of the South's warship Cheonan and the November shelling of the South's border island of Yeonpyeong could be in part aimed at building credentials for the heir-apparent son of leader Kim Jong-il.

The son, Kim Jong-un, was made a four-star general and given high-level posts in September in Pyongyang's first official step to put the inexperienced son in his 20s in line to take over the family dynasty. The regime has since been trying to extract loyalty for him from the hunger-stricken population.

In Washington, Director of National Intelligence James Clapper predicted Thursday that the North's leader could attempt further provocations to boost the standing of his heir-apparent son, saying the North's shelling attack was believed to be part of such efforts.

"Kim Jong-il may feel the need to conduct further provocations to achieve strategic goals and portray Jong-un as a strong, bold leader, especially if he judges elite loyalty and support are in question," Clapper said in written testimony to the House Intelligence Committee.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2011/02/11/37/0401000000AEN20110211004900315F.HTML>

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Sify News – India

Pakistan's Nuclear Assets Well Protected: Indian Official

Indo-Asian News Service (IANS)

February 10 2011

New Delhi, Feb 10 (IANS) Pakistan's nuclear weapons were well protected through the dispersal of various components and chances that terrorists would get their hands on one were remote, an Indian official said Thursday.

Pakistan has not maintained its atomic assets at one place and components of nuclear weapons in that country are dispersed, making it impossible for terrorists to obtain the arsenal, according to Joint Secretary S.K. Gupta, who is currently in the National Security Council (NSC) of India.

NSC, headed by the national security advisor to the prime minister, is the apex body looking into the political, economic, energy and strategic security concerns of India.

Gupta was speaking on 'Pakistan's Nuclear programme' - a lecture organised by the Indian Pugwash Society at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Analyses here.

'Pakistan's nuclear weapons are so well protected. It is not easy for a person to enter (nuclear complexes),' Gupta said.

He said Pakistan has dispersed its nuclear complexes at different places. 'They are being watched, they are under surveillance every time,' he said.

The official said Pakistan's nuclear programme was essentially under the army of that country and 'the Pakistan army is well trained and they cannot take chances'.

They have a well-planned structure created for managing nuclear assets, he said.

'The total number of structure groups is eight. Their roles are established, their locations are established.'

Asked if keeping the components of nuclear weapons at a distance from each other would be a disadvantage in case of an emergency, Gupta said Pakistan had proven through drills its ability to assemble and deploy the arsenal in just three hours.

'It is a matter of time for Pakistan to assemble nuclear devices, missiles at a short notice of time. Earlier they would take six hours but now they take only three hours from storage to deployment,' he said.

The remarks from the Indian official come days after it was revealed that Pakistan had doubled its nuclear weapons' inventory in the past decade stockpile to over 100, causing worries in the global community.

Gupta said he was speaking on the basis of inputs and imagery India had acquired independently.

'Over the years we have got our own technical inputs. We never relied on the US (for such inputs),' he said.

There have been concerns that Islamist militant groups, including the Al Qaeda, have been attempting to steal nuclear material from Pakistan's reactor and recruit scientists to build a 'dirty bomb'.

But Gupta ruled it out saying an insider may try to do so. 'That possibility cannot be ruled out but that is also remote. They (nuclear assets) are well protected by codes. Anyway, it is not even going to act as a dirty bomb.'

Gupta, however, said that the Pakistan's nuclear programme was essentially an extension of Chinese as Beijing has been helping Islamabad to build atomic weapons.

'Pakistan's nuclear programme is not independent. In each and every field they are getting Chinese assistance,' he said, adding the country was also diverting foreign for financial backing of nuclear reactors.

'Diversion (of foreign aid) is definitely there. The financial backing also comes from countries especially from Saudi Arabia,' he said.

<http://www.sify.com/news/pakistan-s-nuclear-assets-well-protected-indian-official-news-national-lckrugaecdc.html>

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Deccan Chronicle – India

'Pak has Started Construction of 4th N-Reactor'

February 10th, 2011

Press Trust of India (PTI)

Washington: Pakistan has started construction of its fourth nuclear reactor at Khushab in Punjab province, signaling its ambitious effort to modernize and expand the nuclear arsenal.

Institute for Science and International Security said that the latest satellite imageries obtained by it shows that the reactor building is relatively early in its construction, but the footprint is that it is nearly of the same size as that of the second and third Khushab reactors.

US and other reports had indicated that China and Pakistan had recently concluded an agreement under which Beijing would construct the fourth reactor at Khushab.

"A new construction staging and storage area can be seen south of the new construction. The new construction is located several hundred meters south of second and third Khushab reactor compound," said a report authored by David Albright and Paul Brannan.

The Washington Post said, 'the new reactor, if verified, would signal yet another step forward in Pakistan's ambitious effort to modernize and expand its nuclear arsenal.'

Last month, the paper had reported that Pakistan's stockpile was estimated to have grown more than 100 deployed weapons and to have surpassed that of India and even the UK.

Pakistan made its first nuclear reactor operational at the Khushab site in 1998 and began construction of a second reactor at the site after 2002. In 2006, Pakistan began building a third reactor, adjacent to the second Khushab reactor.

"In first commercial satellite imagery from December 2009, vapor could be seen rising from some of the second reactor's cooling tower fan blades, indicating that the second reactor was at least at some stage of initial operation. Vapour can again be seen rising from some of the second reactor's cooling towers in the January 15, 2011 imagery, though none can be seen yet over the third reactor's cooling towers," ISIS said.

"Another reactor just hammers the point that Pakistan is determined to make a lot of plutonium for nuclear weapons, frankly far more than they need or is healthy for the region and the world," Albright was quoted as saying by The Post.

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/international/pak-has-started-construction-4th-n-reactor-690>

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Hindustan Times – India

Pak Test Fires Nuclear-Capable Hatf-7 Cruise Missile

Press Trust of India (PTI)

Islamabad, February 10, 2011

Pakistan today test fired nuclear-capable Hatf-7 cruise missile with a range of 600 km that can hit targets in India. The test of the indigenously developed missile was "part of a process of validating the system," said a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations. The statement did not say where the test was conducted. The successful test of Hatf-7 or Babur cruise missile was witnessed by Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Chairman Gen Khalid Shamim Wynne, who said the launch would "go a long way in consolidating Pakistan's strategic deterrence capability and further strengthening national security."

"Pakistan's resolve and commitment to continue its strategic programme will remain paramount," he said. The test was "warmly appreciated by the President and Prime Minister," who congratulated the scientists and engineers on their success, the statement said.

The Director General of the Strategic Plans Division, Lt Gen (ret'd) Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, Army Strategic Force Command chief Lt Gen Jamil Haider, senior officers from the military and strategic organisations, scientists and engineers also witnessed the test.

The Babur can carry strategic or conventional warheads and has stealth capabilities, the statement said. It is a "low flying, terrain-hugging missile with high manoeuvrability, pin-point accuracy and radar avoidance features." The missile also incorporates modern cruise missile technology of terrain contour matching (TERCOM) and digital scene matching and area co-relation (DSMAC), the statement said.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/pakistan/Pak-test-fires-nuclear-capable-Hatf-7-cruise-missile/Article1-660683.aspx>

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Times of India – India

Al-Qaida Committed to Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction: US

Press Trust of India (PTI)

February 11, 2011

WASHINGTON: Pakistan-based al-Qaida's senior leadership remained committed to acquiring weapons of mass destruction including nuclear weapons, a top Obama administration official said.

In his testimony before the House permanent select committee on intelligence, Michael Leiter, director of National Counter-terrorism Center said, "We assess that al-Qaida's senior leadership in Pakistan remains committed to obtaining all types of weapons of mass destruction."

"But thanks to some outstanding and effective offensive action against al-Qaida senior leadership in Pakistan, we also assess that their ability to do so is greatly diminished since 9/11," Leiter said in response to a question from Congressman Mike Rogers, chairman of the committee.

"So you would rate their intention as high to try to secure that?" Rogers asked. "Yes" answered Leiter.

"I think the intent remains high, in particular in Pakistan and in Yemen," Leiter said.

Expressing concern over the current situation in Pakistan, Congressman Ben Chandler said, "Pakistan is one of the most dangerous places on the planet.

"You have got a state in Pakistan which has enormous volatility and nuclear weapons. What can you tell us about the security of the nuclear weapons under the control of the state of Pakistan? Are we in decent shape there? And what needs to be done to make sure that those weapons are secure?" he said.

"I think what I can say in public is that our assessment is that the nuclear weapons in Pakistan are secure. And that's probably all we should say about that in public," said James Clapper, director of National Intelligence.

CIA director Leon Panetta said his greatest concern was to avoid another 9/11.

"The reality is that our biggest concern about al-Qaida was that they could conduct 9/11-type attacks in this country. We have focused on that. I think as a result of the work that's been done at going directly at them in the FATA, I think we've seriously undermined their ability to be able to conduct those kinds of attacks," Panetta said.

"Having said that, they are now resorting to other ways to come at this country. And those ways are through trying to inspire sleepers, to try to go after lone wolves, to use the Inspire magazine, to use Awlaki, who's basically been urging people to do whatever they can to do something in a terrorist way, someplace, somehow, somewhere," he said.

That's the nature of the kind of threats that US was now dealing with, which concerns the entire country. "And it is in that arena where we've got the toughest job, because while these are less sophisticated, they're tougher to find," he added.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/Al-Qaida-committed-to-acquiring-weapons-of-mass-destruction-US/articleshow/7474203.cms>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia, NATO Discuss Anti-Missile Defense in Brussels

10 February 2011

Russia and NATO began talks in Brussels on Thursday on the creation of European anti-missile defense.

NATO and Russia agreed to cooperate on the missile defense project at a summit in November 2010. The parties agreed to formulate terms for missile defense cooperation by June 2011.

"These talks are very important and should lay the groundwork for determining the scope of possible cooperation in the European missile defense project," Russia's ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin said on Wednesday.

Moscow insists on setting up a joint European missile defense network with NATO to ensure that the planned placement of elements of a U.S. missile defense system in a number of European countries will not threaten Russia's national security.

NATO, however, proposes creating two separate systems that would exchange information.

BRUSSELS, February, 10 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20110210/162535794.html>

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BBC News – U.K.

February 9, 2011

David Cameron 'Committed to Full Trident Replacement'

David Cameron has said he is committed to a "full" replacement for Trident nuclear weapons after claims the Lib Dems could force it to be cancelled.

Tory MP Julian Lewis said the Lib Dems were boasting about key decisions being delayed until after the next election.

And he urged the prime minister to guarantee he would not scrap Trident as the price of a coalition in the event of another hung Parliament.

The exchange came at Prime Minister's Questions in the Commons.

BBC deputy political editor James Landale said Mr Lewis was engaged in a "constant tussle" with Mr Cameron over Trident and had been "very disappointed" when the final "main gate" decision, which would see the key contracts signed, was delayed until after 2015 for a "mixture of financial and political reasons".

The Conservatives wanted to avoid a "row" with the Lib Dems before the election but it was significant, said former Labour foreign secretary Jack Straw, that for the "first time he (Cameron) has added the critical adjective 'full' to the replacement for Trident".

'Boasting'

There has been speculation that the number of Trident submarines could be cut or continuous sea patrols ended to save cash - or even that a cheaper alternative to the sea-borne system could be commissioned.

In the Commons, Mr Lewis said Mr Cameron had promised Tory MPs at the time the coalition was being formed that the Lib Dems would support a replacement for Trident.

But now that the decision had been delayed, the Liberal Democrats "from their president down have been boasting that this was their achievement" - and he asked Mr Cameron for reassurance that it would not be scrapped as the price of another coalition deal.

Mr Cameron assured him that "the replacement for Trident is going ahead".

"The reason for the delay is that we had a value for money study because we desperately need to save some money in the Ministry of Defence so that we can invest in frontline capability

"In terms of the future, all I can say... is that I am in favour of a full replacement for Trident, for continuous at-sea deterrent, and to make sure we keep our guard up.

"That is Conservative policy. It will remain Conservative policy as long as I am the leader of this party."

'All-party support'

Labour MP John Woodcock, whose Barrow-in-Furness constituency builds the Trident submarines, also asked Mr Cameron for reassurance that he would not go back on his word.

Mr Cameron said: "I profoundly believe we should maintain our independent nuclear deterrent. I have looked at all of the alternatives over the years and I am completely convinced that you need a submarine based alternative - a full replacement for Trident in order to guarantee the ultimate insurance policy for this country."

He said he believed there was "all-party support" for his position.

In their election manifesto, the Lib Dems, who have traditionally been in favour of nuclear disarmament, opposed a "like-for-like" replacement for Trident on cost grounds.

It was one of the issues on which they were allowed to continue expressing a different view to the Conservatives in the coalition agreement.

But they were accused of "playing politics" with the issue last year when Lib Dem defence minister Nick Harvey said delaying the decision until after the next election would turn Trident into a political "hot potato" for Labour.

Labour have supported replacing Trident since the 1990s but some of their MPs are thought to be unhappy with the policy.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12406073>

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Cain's Chicago Business

Boeing to Keep Developing 'Bunker Buster' Bomb

By Paul Merrion

February 08, 2011

(Crain's) — The Air Force awarded Boeing Co. an additional \$15.2 million to continue development of a 30,000 pound, precision-guided "bunker buster" bomb, according to a Pentagon announcement.

The Massive Ordnance Penetrator is a 20.5-foot-long conventional bomb designed to destroy hardened targets buried deep in the ground, such as nuclear weapons facilities in Iran and North Korea. It carries a special fuse that delays explosion until the bomb reaches an underground target.

Boeing's contract modification calls for flight test support services, three additional weapons for testing, a new fuse design and 16 fuses.

When Boeing won the original, sole-source contract in 2009, the Air Force planned flight tests by June 2011 with expectations to have the required weapons available a year later, according to a Pentagon contracting announcement.

<http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20110208/NEWS05/110209868/boeing-to-keep-developing-bunker-buster-bomb#axzz1DTYvKjjF>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

New US Military Strategy Looks Beyond Afghan War

By Reuters

9 February 2011

WASHINGTON - The US military on Tuesday issued its first new statement of strategy in seven years, moving beyond a focus on the war in Afghanistan to address the rise of China and other strategic challenges.

The 2011 national military strategy by the Joint Chiefs of Staff reaffirmed US commitment to fighting violent extremism with allies in Afghanistan and Pakistan but said the military must broaden its horizons to address developing threats elsewhere.

“While we continue to refine how we counter violent extremism and deter aggression, this strategy also rightly emphasizes that our military power is most effective when employed in concert with other elements of power,” Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, wrote in his “Chairman’s Corner” blog. The strategy is a broad statement on how the military intends to use its forces and prioritize aid and training to help achieve US security goals.

Military officials say a “whole-of-nation” approach involving not only security forces but diplomacy and nongovernmental organizations will be necessary to address many future security challenges.

“This whole-of-nation approach to foreign policy, with civilian leadership appropriately at the helm, will be essential as we address the complex security challenges before us,” Mullen said.

While the last national military strategy, produced in 2004, called for the military to protect the United States, prevent surprise attacks and prevail against adversaries, the current document goes beyond that.

In addition to countering violent extremism and deterring aggression, the 2011 strategy seeks to strengthen global security through regional and international partnerships and aims to reshape the military force to meet future challenges.

“We focus more toward the future and strengthening global and regional stability and shaping the future force,” a senior military officer said on condition of anonymity.

The national military strategy addresses in broad general terms how the military forces will be used. By law it must be reviewed every two years, but it is not necessarily revised unless changes are needed.

The senior military officer said the security environment facing the United States had changed substantially in seven years since the 2004 strategy was issued.

The United States faces a broad range of challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, from the rise of India and China, to North Korea’s nuclear program, the shifting global economic balance and a fierce competition for natural resources, he said.

The strategy calls for improving global security by forging deeper military-to-military relationships and cooperation with China and other Asia-Pacific countries.

The senior officer said the US military had to “achieve our mission” in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also must look beyond those conflicts and “start recognizing that the strategic environment that’s elsewhere needs to be dealt with.”

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=§ion=international&xfile=data/international/2011/February/international_February281.xml

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Washington Times

Justice Plans for WMD Attack Called Inadequate

‘Fragmented,’ watchdog testifies

By Jerry Seper, The Washington Times

Wednesday, February 9, 2011

The Justice Department’s top watchdog says counterterrorism continues to be the department’s highest priority and top management challenge, but she’s concerned that its plans for responding to a potential incident involving a weapon of mass destruction are “uncoordinated and fragmented.”

Acting Inspector General Cynthia A. Schnedar told a House subcommittee Wednesday that while the FBI had taken appropriate steps to prepare for its response to a WMD attack, the Justice Department as a whole and its other law enforcement components had not implemented adequate response plans.

In particular, she said, the department had not assigned or designated an office or a person to be responsible for central oversight of WMD response activities and, other than the FBI, department components provided little to no training for responding to an incident and rarely participated in WMD exercises.

“In addition, while the department had designated the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) as the lead agency to coordinate the use of federal law enforcement resources to maintain public safety and security if local and state resources are overwhelmed during a WMD incident, ATF had not adequately prepared for this role,” she said.

Ms. Schnedar, a 22-year Justice Department veteran who formerly served as deputy inspector general before assuming the top job Jan. 29, cited as “another example of insufficient counterterrorism coordination among department components” the failure of the FBI and the ATF to coordinate their response plans to explosives incidents.

“Federal law gives the FBI and ATF concurrent jurisdiction over most federal explosives incidents,” she told the House Appropriations subcommittee on commerce, justice, science and related agencies. “In an October 2009 review, we determined that the FBI and ATF had developed separate and often conflicting approaches to explosives investigations and explosives-related activities such as training, information sharing and forensic analysis.

“These conflicts resulted in unnecessary competition and duplication of effort and also could result in problematic responses to terrorist incidents involving explosives,” she said. “Moreover, this lack of coordination is not cost-efficient, particularly with regard to training and forensic analysis.”

She said that in response to the report, Justice issued a new protocol in August designed to improve coordination between the FBI and the ATF, but she added that the department “needs to ensure that its protocols are workable and are enforced, and that the FBI and ATF consistently coordinate and cooperate in explosives investigations.”

Ms. Schnedar also outlined for the committee other areas of concern, including:

- The challenge of hiring specialized employees with foreign-language capabilities or expertise in information technology. She said a review of the FBI’s Foreign Language Translation Program found that “significant amounts of material collected for counterterrorism, counterintelligence and criminal investigations” had not been reviewed because of a lack of qualified linguists.
- Allegations regarding the enforcement of federal voting-rights law by the Civil Rights Division. She noted that her office is reviewing the enforcement matter now. She said the review will include the types of cases being brought, any changes in enforcement policies or procedures, whether the Voting Section has enforced the civil rights laws in a nondiscriminatory manner, and whether any section employees have been harassed. That investigation was sparked by the department’s handling of a civil complaint against the New Black Panther Party.
- Suspected major deficiencies in Project Gunrunner, an ATF initiative targeting drug and firearms trafficking and the violence they bring on both sides of the southwestern border. She said ATF does not exchange intelligence with its Mexican and some U.S. partners, that ATF intelligence personnel do not routinely share firearms trafficking intelligence with each other and that ATF focuses largely on gun dealers and straw buyers rather than on higher-level traffickers, smugglers and the ultimate recipients of the trafficked guns.

“The department has made progress in addressing many of its top management challenges, but improvements are needed in important areas,” she said. “These challenges are not easily resolved and will require constant attention and strong leadership by the department.”

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/feb/9/justice-plans-for-wmd-attack-called-inadequate/>

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Global Security Newswire

DHS Better Prepared to Handle Potential WMD Threats, Secretary Says

Thursday, February 10, 2011

By Martin Matishak, *Global Security Newswire*

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Homeland Security Department is more prepared than ever to deal with the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction, agency chief Janet Napolitano told lawmakers yesterday (see *GSN*, Feb. 9).

"I would say that we are more prepared now than we were two years ago, and two years ago we were more prepared than two years before then," Napolitano said in testimony to the House Homeland Security Committee. "But there still is much work to be done."

The department continues to work at the "science and technology level" to develop effective detection mechanisms for those biological, chemical, radiological and nuclear threats, she added.

"We have funded and are continuing to fund pilots of different types with laboratories and universities, and actually private sector entities around the country, particularly in the CBRN arena," the Homeland Security secretary said, citing the department's "Securing the Cities" program as one example.

That initiative, a federally funded pilot project that deploys detection technology to protect New York City and the surrounding region from a radiological or nuclear attack, is a coordinated effort involving the department's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, the New York City Police Department and numerous regional law enforcement agencies in New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. Securing the Cities has received more than \$70 million in funding to date, though the Obama administration has tried to halt federal support for the program (see *GSN*, Sept. 23, 1010).

The detection office was established by presidential directive in 2005 to coordinate federal efforts to protect the United States against nuclear terrorism, leading efforts to deploy nuclear sensors around the country. The Homeland Security branch has spent roughly \$230 million over the last several years attempting to develop and field the Advanced Spectroscopic Portal systems, intended to detect potential radiological and nuclear weapons materials being smuggled into the United States. The agency has come under harsh criticism from Capitol Hill and independent auditors for rushing the ASP technology into the field without proper testing (see *GSN*, Jan. 14).

Homeland Security also runs the Biowatch system, which has deployed detectors in more than 30 U.S. cities to test collected air samples for the presence of biological warfare materials such as anthrax and smallpox.

Last week the "West Coast Maritime Pilot program" operation in California, which was established in 2009 to detect nuclear and radiological materials being smuggled by small vessels into the country, was turned over to local authorities. The department spent about \$8 million on the program and delivered funding for more than 250 radiation sensors and other relevant technology, according to an agency press release (see *GSN*, Feb. 9).

The department does not have a specific budget line item for WMD-related activities as efforts and programs are spread across the nearly two dozen agencies, including the Domestic Nuclear Detection Office, Customs and Border Protection and the Transportation Security Administration.

In 2009 the high-profile Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism concluded that an attack involving an unconventional system is likely to occur somewhere in the world by the end of 2013 unless significant security improvements are made.

The congressionally mandated panel also stated that there was a greater likelihood of a biological attack than a nuclear strike because of the worldwide prevalence of deadly pathogens and other disease materials.

Last year the commission gave the Obama administration an "F" in a final "report card" for failure to develop a comprehensive strategy against a disease-based attack (see *GSN*, Jan. 26, 2010).

Yesterday, committee Chairman Peter King (R-N.Y.) said he had a "particular interest" in biological and chemical weapons. "It's very likely that the next attack against a major city in this country will be launched from the suburbs," said King, who represents the state's suburban Third Congressional District.

"The nightmare scenario would be to have that attack involve a dirty bomb, which would put that metropolitan area off limits, besides the massive loss of human life that would result," the New York lawmaker said.

Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups have expressed a desire to obtain unconventional weapons such as a radiological "dirty bomb," which would use conventional explosives to disperse radioactive materials.

Testifying alongside Napolitano, National Counterterrorism Center chief Michael Leiter identified a Yemen-based offshoot of al-Qaeda as the leading threat to attack the United States (see related *GSN* story, today). Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula is believed to be behind the plot to mail hidden bombs to the United States in 2010.

"The terrorist threat to the homeland is, in many ways, at its most heightened state since 9/11," Napolitano told the panel. "This threat is constantly evolving, and, as I have said before, we cannot guarantee that there will never be another terrorist attack, and we cannot seal our country under a glass dome. However, we continue to do everything we can to reduce the risk of terrorism in our nation."

Napolitano said in addition to its own efforts, her department is working with Health and Human Services on pandemic planning and the development of medical countermeasures for a potential biological attack on the United States.

"We have been working with them on protocols. Who would do what, when and where? Do we have the surge capacity to handle, say, if there were to be an anthrax attack? We've been table-topping some of these things," the DHS chief told the panel without citing specific examples.

She declined to say whether the DHS Health Affairs Office, which is meant to serve as the department's principal authority for all medical and health issues, is adequately resourced and staffed to be effective in the event of a deliberate disease outbreak.

"All I can say is, we believe the biological threat is real and we believe it is something that we need to keep maturing our efforts about," Napolitano said.

One national security observer said homeland security efforts must be reorganized in both the legislative and executive branches first before assessing how well one department can respond to WMD threats.

"Response to chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear terrorism requires the highly coordinated efforts of dozens of federal organizations plus state and local governments and the private sector. Which committee in Congress has the responsibility to ask if America is prepared? There isn't one with the proper oversight authority," said Randall Larsen, chief executive officer of the WMD Center in Washington.

"But it's not just the legislative branch that requires reorganization," added Larsen, who served as chief of staff to the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism.

"Today there are more than two dozen presidentially appointed, Senate-confirmed individuals with some responsibility for biodefense, but not one has it for a full-time job, and no one is in charge -- not exactly a recipe for success," he told *Global Security Newswire* yesterday by e-mail.

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20110210_6950.php

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SpaceWar.com

U.S. Helps Secure Soviet-Era Nuclear Stock

By Staff Writers, Washington (UPI)

February 10, 2011

U.S. nuclear experts have helped Kazakhstan move Soviet-era nuclear materials, enough to build an estimated 775 nuclear weapons, to safety, officials said.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Sandia National Laboratories provided security and logistics assistance to complete the transfer of 11 tons of highly enriched uranium and 3.3 tons of weapons-grade plutonium from the busy Caspian Sea port of Aktau in western Kazakhstan to a secure long-term storage location in the country's northeast.

The National Nuclear Security Administration oversaw the project as part of its Global Threat Reduction Initiative, a Sandia labs release said Thursday.

"We're making things safer in the world," Dave Barber, who worked for Sandia's Global Physical Security Program, said. "Before it was protected, the materials were vulnerable to theft by those who would steal them to build nuclear weapons. This project has secured enough material to make 775 nuclear weapons. That gives us a great feeling and should make people feel much better."

The transfers began in February 2010, and the last concrete and steel cask containing nuclear materials was transferred in a journey of 1,860 miles on Nov. 18.

"The United States was very worried about this material not being protected well enough and that it could be stolen, so the United States offered to protect this material," Barber said. "In the interior, it would be much more difficult for adversaries to try to steal it."

http://www.spacewar.com/reports/US_helps_secure_Soviet-era_nuclear_stock_999.html

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The Daily Star – Bangladesh

OPINION

Wednesday, February 9, 2011

Pakistan's Nuclear Stockpile Worries US

BY HARUN UR RASHID

India and Pakistan, both neighbours with nuclear arms, have different perceptions of security, which complicates the security situation in South Asia. While India defines its security position in light of China's military strength, Pakistan assesses its security concerns against India's position. This has resulted in nuclear arms and missiles race in South Asia.

It has been reported by US intelligence that Pakistan has become the world's fifth largest nuclear weapons power, overtaking Britain. The deployed weapons now number more than 110, according to recent estimates of US intelligence. Pakistan says that it is a credible, minimum nuclear deterrent, and people should not get unduly concerned about the stockpile of nuclear weapons.

Observers say that Pakistan has been infuriated by the nuclear deal between Washington and New Delhi, arguing that it has freed India's homemade fuel to produce new weapons. As a result, Pakistan argues that it has no choice but to bolster its own production.

It is reported that the US has spent \$100 million helping Pakistan to build fences, install sensor systems and train personnel to handle the weapons. But the US is deeply concerned that weapons-usable fuel, which is kept in laboratories and storage centres, is more vulnerable and could be diverted by insiders in Pakistan's vast nuclear complex.

Another concern is not the weapons but the increase in production of material, especially plutonium. Pakistan is completing work on a large plutonium production reactor, which will greatly increase its ability to produce a new generation of weapons.

The biggest concern for the US is theft from the plants that produce plutonium. It is reported that Al Qaeda has been attempting to procure nuclear material and recruit scientists in order to build a "dirty bomb."

Western security chiefs told a Nato meeting in 2009 that Al-Qaeda was planning a programme of "dirty radioactive improved explosive devices" which could be used against soldiers fighting in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Al Qaeda papers found in 2007 convinced security officials that greater advances had been made in bio-terrorism than previously feared.

There have been attempts by rogue organisations to smuggle weapons grade material. A freight train on the Kazakhstan-Russia border had carried weapons-grade material, and a small dealer in Lisbon had tried to sell radioactive plates stolen from Chernobyl.

How is Pakistan financing the new weapons production at a time of financial stress in the country?

During his election campaign, US President Barack Obama expressed his support for the goal of disarmament. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin expressed similar sentiments in a speech in September when he talked of how it would be better to "close this Pandora's box."

The United States and Russia have made an historic agreement to reduce their nuclear arsenals to between 1,500 and 1,675 warheads, down from a maximum of 2,200 each now permitted, as part of a new arms control treaty that signals a dramatic improvement in relations between the two superpowers.

The Obama administration sees the adoption of Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty as important, and US officials reportedly say efforts are now underway to find a way to start negotiations in new forums, away from Pakistan's influence. Pakistan is opposed to the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty because that would cut into its ability to match India's arsenal.

The world faces threats of nuclear proliferation and nuclear terrorism. Because of this, it is a reality is that nuclear weapons diminish the security of all states. Indeed, states which possess them themselves become targets of nuclear weapons.

In his book "Engagement: Australia faces the Asia Pacific," Paul Keating, former prime minister of Australia, argues for scrapping nuclear weapons. He writes: "Three possibilities exist with regard to nuclear weapons and three only. First, they will be used, either deliberately or accidentally. Second, that they will not be used but will be managed forever by wise, prudent and well-meaning governments and military forces and will never fall into the hands of terrorists, Or third, that we agree to get rid of them. The first possibility offers catastrophe to the human race. The second requires us to make assumptions about the future that run completely counter to logic and experience. The third is the only possibility that can secure our safety."

The only complete defence is the elimination of nuclear weapons and assurance that they will never be produced again.

An organisation called Global Zero has emerged recently. In the US, the debate was kick-started by a joint call for "getting to zero" from a group of veterans of the Cold War, including Henry Kissinger and George Schultz.

Global Zero consists of 100 leading figures seeking practical steps towards nuclear abolition and gaining public support for that goal. They include former US president Jimmy Carter, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, former Brazilian president Fernando Cardoso, businessman Sir Richard Branson, Ehsan UI-Haq, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Pakistan, and Brajesh Mishra, former Indian national security advisor.

Polling in 21 countries for Global Zero found an average of 76% of the population favouring an agreement to eliminate nuclear weapons within a time-bound agreement. But members of Global Zero emphasise the need for more public information, particularly to educate the post-Cold War generation for whom the dangers of nuclear weapons may be more remote.

The Global Zero group believes that reducing the large US and Russian stockpiles -- which make up 96% of all the nuclear weapons in the world -- should be amongst the first steps, which in turn can then draw in third parties and other nuclear powers into a wider and deeper process.

Finally, unless the big powers take concrete steps to eliminate nuclear weapons, there is no hope that other countries will get rid of them. Nuclear weapons not only reflect power and prestige of a country but also prevent a stronger power from attacking a non-nuclear power.

The writer is a former Bangladesh Ambassador to the UN, Geneva.

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/news-details.php?nid=173366>

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The Citizen – Tanzania

OPINION

Unfounded Worrying about China's Military Strength

Wednesday, 09 February 2011

Why the worry about China's growing military power? It is still miniscule compared with the US which spends as much as all the other countries in the world combined. Look at a graph of expenditure and you will see the US still climbing and almost reaching the top of the page while China is at the bottom, hugging the lower axis, with a rather small turn up the last few years.

The worry over China's homemade Stealth bomber, its building of two aircraft carriers and more destroyers, its deployment of more submarines have become in some quarters emotionally charged. Yet it's peanuts compared with US power, just about good enough to give Taiwan some worry and not much more.

In October 1964, China exploded its first nuclear weapon. Then China went on to build a small, unsophisticated and highly vulnerable nuclear armoury. For more than three decades its modernization of the force was slow and gradual. China believed that even if it was subject to a massive attack at least one of its rockets would get off the ground and devastate Los Angeles or Moscow.

This is all that Mao Zedong wanted, and after him Deng Xiaoping. Both thought there were better things to do with China's money. Both viewed nuclear weapons as tools for deterring an attack and countering coercion, nothing more. Mao famously described America's nuclear weapons as "paper tigers". Even after the two died this remained China's strategy.

Only in the mid 1990s did China seek a second strike ability which would make it able to withstand an attack and retaliate with all its force. It is building rockets that can be moved by lorry along the road or railway, making them very hard to detect. It is building a nuclear-powered submarine force armed with nuclear missiles.

Some scholars, senior military officers and congressmen are arguing that China is moving towards a war-fighting strategy. Others point to the challenge that these new forces may pose to stability.

Much of this debate resolves around whether China is pursuing minimum deterrence (as before) or limited deterrence. Minimum deterrence means threatening the lowest level of damage to prevent an attack with as few nuclear weapons as possible. Limited deterrence demands a war-making machine able to inflict a high level of damage on the enemy at every rung on the ladder of escalation, thus denying the adversary victory in a nuclear war. Most experts believe China's doctrine still remains minimum deterrence.

How many nuclear weapons are in China's arsenal? The best estimates suggest that a decade after China exploded its first nuclear bomb it had 75 nuclear warheads and tens of gravity bombs able to be loaded on its bombers. Another decade later, after its confrontation with the Soviet Union effectively ended, it had around 150 but with

only 40 intercontinental ballistic missiles. Today it has less- perhaps 120. This is not much more than Pakistan has. And Pakistan appears to be still building up its arsenal. Pakistan's possession is something to really worry about.

Between 1964 and 1996 (the year it signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty- which the US has still not ratified) China conducted only 45 nuclear tests, less than 3 per cent of the number of tests carried out by the Soviet Union and the US. It also says it adheres to the doctrine of "no-first-use" unlike the US. Moreover, the experts say that China does not have plans to significantly expand its nuclear arsenal.

It prefers to update its ageing rockets which are based on missile technology developed in the 1960s and 70s. Gradually it is replacing its liquid-fuelled missiles with solid-fuel ones. Solid-fuel rockets increase reliability by eliminating the dangerous process of fuelling rockets and enhance survivability in case a fuel-storage is destroyed in an attack.

In more than two decades China has not substantially changed its nuclear strategy or its force structure. Chinese nuclear thinkers appear to concur that the tenets of Mao and Deng Xiaoping still guide traditional nuclear strategy and the primacy of the doctrine of mutually assured destruction. (MAD as the acronym would have it.)

Chinese leaders have long believed that once mutual deterrence was achieved a larger arsenal would be costly, counterproductive and self-defeating. Besides that they believe they are unusable on the battlefield. Chinese leaders, unlike America's and Russia's, have never equated the size of their arsenals with China's national power or prestige. The worriers, the panickers, have not studied these facts. There is only a little smoke and no fire.

Mr Power's column on world affairs is syndicated internationally

<http://thecitizen.co.tz/editorial-analysis/-/8078-unfounded-worrying-about-chinas-military-strength>

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Arab News – Saudi Arabia

OPINION/Editorial

Thursday, February 10, 2011

A New START?

The US-Russia arms treaty is a good beginning, but we have a long way to go

While the world attention has been fixated on the unfolding drama in Cairo's Tahrir Square, the United States and Russia have inked a treaty that is being billed as the most ambitious since the end of Cold War between the two superpowers. Amid little fanfare, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and her Russian counterpart Sergey V. Lavrov, have exchanged instruments of ratification marking a new era in nuclear disarmament.

The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) commits the two sides to slash their nuclear arsenals by 30 percent. The pact also revives a critical monitoring system that ended in December 2009 with the expiry of an earlier arms deal. The US and Russia will have the right to conduct on-site inspections beginning 60 days from the agreement coming into effect. The two countries have seven years to meet the treaty's central limits.

Of course, any initiative or effort to rid the world of the mountains of weapons of mass destruction on which the US and Russia have been sitting deserves to be welcomed and wholeheartedly supported.

However, amid this celebration in Washington and Moscow, it must be pointed out that even when the two sides decide to discard 30 percent of their deadly payload, they would still be left with enough nukes to blow each other — and this beautiful planet of ours — several times over. So limiting each side to 1,550 strategic warheads, down from 2,200, is certainly a good start but it's not enough and doesn't make our world any less insecure.

This is why it is imperative for the international community to continue to press Washington and Moscow and other nuclear powers to commit themselves seriously and sincerely to a world genuinely free of nukes and other weapons of mass destruction.

US President Barack Obama deserves to be acknowledged for his efforts to make the new nuclear disarmament treaty a reality. It was in his historic Prague speech in 2009 that the US leader gave out a passionate call for total disarmament, seeking a new START with Russia.

So it's just as well that the second START comes nearly 20 years after the first one was signed on July 31, 1991. Persuading the bickering Republicans and the Russians to back the treaty wasn't a small feat either. While the new START is not perfect, it is nonetheless a move in the right direction. The goal of a world totally free of nuclear weapons will remain one as long as the big powers do not take really bold steps.

If nuclear proliferation remains a big threat to mankind and the NPT has been a total disaster, it is largely because of the continuing double standards and hypocrisy of the big powers.

The elite club of the US, Russia, China, Britain and France continues to deny to the rest of the world what they have had in their possession for half a century. They hardly practice what they preach. This is perhaps why some — Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea — found a way to beat the big powers at their own game. So as long as the world community does not confront this disgraceful duplicity in affairs of men and nations, we will be stuck with the big boys and their dangerous toys, forever living on the edge.

<http://arabnews.com/opinion/editorial/article255835.ece>

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Independent – U.K.
ANALYSIS

Will the New US-Russian Arms Treaty Blunt the Nuclear Threat?

Pulitzer-winning author David E Hoffman explains why it will take much more to end the atomic age

Friday, 11 February 2011

On 15 January 1986, the Soviet Union's leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, introduced Kremlin plans to eliminate all of the superpower's nuclear weapons by the year 2000. The proposal was visionary, but also a bit of a propaganda ploy. One that immediately caught Ronald Reagan's attention. Later that day, when Secretary of State George Shultz went to the White House, Reagan asked him: "Why wait until the end of the century for a world without nuclear weapons?"

Reagan's question still echoes today. He and Gorbachev reversed the direction of the arms race, but in the end they didn't eliminate all nuclear weapons. Last week, a new strategic arms treaty entered into force between the United States and Russia. The treaty will lead to further modest reductions in the arsenals, which are far smaller than at the peak of the Cold War. But this is no time to heave a sigh of relief. We should be asking whether the atomic bomb and its dangers will have as much sway over the world in the 21st century as it did in the last.

Nuclear deterrence is based on the idea that a rational attacker will be restrained by the credible threat of retaliation. The concept was credited with keeping the peace in the years of superpower competition, but it also led to some of the most risky moments of the era. Repeatedly, there were harrowing false alarms of missile attack, including one in 1983 when a Soviet early-warning system lit up with signs of an impending onslaught – signs that turned out to be incorrect. Thanks to a knowledgeable watch officer, there was not an overreaction.

The need to create a credible deterrent drove planning sometimes to the absurd. For example, in the 1980s, the Soviet leadership struggled with how to guarantee retaliation if the Kremlin itself were suddenly wiped out. If the leaders were gone, they reasoned, they could not be certain to retaliate, and this left them feeling vulnerable. So they designed and built a semi-automatic Doomsday machine, known as the Dead Hand, which would be able to launch a retaliatory strike with land-based missiles even if the Kremlin were destroyed in a flash. The system was semi-automatic because the final decisions about whether to press the button were left to a few duty officers in a deep underground bunker. Oddly, the Soviets kept the entire contraption secret during the final years of the Cold War, meaning that it had very little or no value as a deterrent, since no one outside knew about it.

Today's security threats are far more diffuse and elusive than the tense stand-off of the Cold War. Nuclear-tipped missiles are not likely to stop suicidal terrorists or cyber-attackers – deterrence has less value against opponents who are nearly impossible to identify. These are the adversaries of today, and tomorrow.

Despite President Barack Obama's pledge to seek a world without nuclear weapons, both the United States and Russia are trapped in a Cold War mindset, and cling to nuclear arsenals that are far larger than they need to be. Both countries tend to regard warheads as assets, as chips in a power game. The doctrine of mutually assured destruction – the cocked-pistols approach that came to symbolise the era – has lost its relevance but, strangely, remains in effect.

It is time for a serious reconsideration of our reliance on nuclear deterrence, starting with the US and Russia, which together possess 95 per cent of the nuclear weapons on the globe today, but eventually also bringing in Great Britain, France and China, which have far smaller arsenals.

One of the first things that both Washington and Moscow could do would be to take nuclear weapons off launch-ready alert. What is the point of keeping land-based, nuclear-armed missiles ready to fire in four minutes, as they are in the United States today? It is not appropriate or necessary for the kind of relationship both countries aspire to. Russia can be independent and aggressive in pursuing its own interests, but it is certainly not an adversary in the same way that the Soviet Union was. The current missile-alert status could be modified, with a bilateral agreement to build in delays, say hours or days, before a launch could be carried out. At the very minimum, both sides should revive an idea that has been kicking around for a decade: to build a joint data-exchange centre to avoid surprises.

It seems odd, but the new US-Russia treaty does not cover thousands of existing nuclear weapons. Left out of the pact were about 2,000 strategic or long-range warheads in a special US "reserve", and thousands of Russian tactical or shorter-range nuclear warheads, as well as the West's smaller stockpile of them. The next stage of negotiations ought to reduce or eliminate these overhangs from the Cold War, which are subject to no verification, and there is not even a decent warhead count on each side. It is also urgent that Russia and the United States agree on a way to co-operate in missile defence, a divisive issue that could otherwise stall hopes for further arms-control negotiations.

For the 21st century, we need to rethink the basic concepts of deterrence. For example, the US and Russia still roughly calculate how many weapons they need based on targeting the other side's weapons. This is known as counterforce: each side aiming largely at the other side's military targets. With such calculations, the two countries reached the agreement in the new treaty on 1,550 strategic nuclear warheads and 700 launchers for each. But there is no magic in these numbers. Deterrence could be based on a different measure: the minimum necessary to dissuade the other, which would be far fewer. One study by US Air Force thinkers concluded that a stable nuclear deterrence could be maintained by the United States with as few as 311 warheads.

Nuclear weapons cannot be uninvented. But even if the knowledge continues to exist, must we keep all the hardware, or would it be sufficient to preserve just the designs on paper? Consider that chemical and biological weapons have been banned, but the knowledge of how to make them has never been eradicated. Could the same be done with nuclear weapons? Some experts are discussing an idea known as "virtual deterrence", based on the credible threat of assembling a given number of warheads. The deterrence value would be the knowledge and means to assemble them, rather than the actual weapons.

In a world with far fewer nuclear weapons, we will also need to think of new methods to verify that no one is cheating or has the ability suddenly to restore an outsized arsenal. Perhaps this could be a new task for the brilliant minds at the nuclear weapons research facilities: invent a way to build-down, safely. Obama's vision of a nuclear-free world won't come soon, but it won't come at all if there isn't careful preparation for it.

In a very real sense, nuclear deterrence, as it was known in the Cold War, has lost its overwhelming potency as the backbone of security. While the bombs won't go away, there's an urgent need to create modern instruments for getting results in international relations: persuasion, coercive diplomacy, defence and resilience against foes. Just building the threatening weapons of nuclear destruction is no longer enough.

'The Dead Hand: Reagan, Gorbachev and the Untold Story of the Cold War Arms Race' by David E Hoffman (Icon £20) won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for General Nonfiction.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/will-the-new-usrussian-arms-treaty-blunt-the-nuclear-threat-2211192.html>

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Asahi Shimbun – Japan
OPINION

POINT OF VIEW/ Nobumasa Akiyama: For U.S., Global Stability Takes Priority over Nukes

February 11, 2011

In calling for a "world without nuclear weapons" in his historic address in Prague in April 2009, U.S. President Barack Obama effectively told the international community that this concept, introduced two years before by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and three other prominent U.S. policy leaders, was not just an ideal but a goal that must be attained. And Obama raised the moral issue that inevitably goes with any discussion of nuclear weapons by noting, "As the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act."

But no matter how deep Obama's commitment to realizing a nuclear-free world may be, or how sincere his desire to take moral initiative may be, present political circumstances around the world are anything but conducive to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

On Dec. 22, 2010, the U.S. Senate ratified the new START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), signed in April that year by Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Prague. Russia's lower and upper chambers also ratified the treaty in late January.

However, Obama's initiative alone cannot make the world nuclear-free. It is vital that all countries--nuclear nations as well as non-nuclear nations that are protected by the nuclear umbrella--share the view that there is little necessity for countries with nuclear weapons to use them in a war and that the role of nuclear weapons has diminished. At the

same time, every effort must be made to reduce the threat or risk of not only a nuclear war, but also of nuclear proliferation and nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists.

For the United States, I believe, stabilizing the world order is a higher priority than eliminating all nuclear weapons. So long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States cannot do away with its nuclear capability because it serves as a deterrent. The situation is quite volatile. In South Asia, for example, India and Pakistan, both nuclear powers, are at odds. The United States believes it must hold on to its nukes if it is to remain involved in the region's dynamics.

Need for regional dialogue

Unlike during the Cold War when the confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union was global, regional power games are being played independently today. In the world in which we live, disarmament cannot be achieved within a global framework alone.

I believe the Middle East is the first region Obama must deal with. An international conference is slated for 2012 to discuss the concept of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East, but Israel, a key player, is refusing to participate. The United States has a vital role to play in bringing Israel to the negotiating table, and the outcome will affect the handling of Iran's nuclear problem.

In East Asia, discussing nuclear disarmament with China is Obama's major challenge. While the United States centers on long-range strategic nuclear capability, China's focus is on intermediate-range missiles. To protect its mainland from China, the United States needs defense against strategic nuclear weapons only. But to provide an effective nuclear umbrella for its allies, Japan and South Korea, it needs to deal with China's short- and medium-range missiles. China is in the process of modernizing its military capabilities.

China has cited its inferiority to the United States in nuclear capabilities as a reason for not disclosing the number of warheads it possesses or the capability it has to deliver them. Nor has it offered any information on actual deployment of the warheads and delivery vehicles.

Even so, China insists that it is leading nuclear disarmament initiatives by repeatedly stressing its "no-first-use" policy. Given this obvious gap in perception and nuclear capabilities, it is crucial that China and the United States hold stepped-up strategic dialogue.

The threat of nuclear terrorism was raised as far back as in the 1960s. But the threat only took on greater significance after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States. Obama warned in his Prague address: "One nuclear weapon exploded in one city ... could kill hundreds of thousands of people. And no matter where it happens, there is no end to what the consequences might be ... to our ultimate survival."

Our present world requires a comprehensive understanding of the nuclear menace, including terrorist threats.

More countries today are turning to nuclear power generation to secure energy security and to counter global warming. This move is referred to as a "nuclear power renaissance." But increased use of nuclear power for peaceful purposes also raises the possibility of greater proliferation of nuclear substances and nuclear fuel recycling technologies. It will be extremely important to verify that nuclear substances used in civilian reactors are not being put to military use, and to prevent attacks on nuclear facilities and thefts of nuclear substances by terrorists. There is also the question of how thoroughly minor countries will be able to enforce security measures, and who should bear the costs involved. These issues need to be addressed.

To prevent nuclear proliferation, each country must voluntarily abide by international rules, but the rules must be made binding enough to deal with offenders. However, as proven by the examples of Iran and North Korea, there is no perfect verification procedure, and it is difficult to take effective sanction measures against offenders. The sorry reality is that the international community is incapable of taking firm, concerted enforcement against nations violating nonproliferation rules.

The United States took the lead last year in exempting India from the export restriction guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This action represents a new trend to selectively allow nuclear proliferation, and as such is angering non-nuclear nations that are being forced to live with the unfairness of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. What should be done to bolster the efficacy of the NPT framework and ensure the universality of its rules?

To realize a world free of nuclear weapons that Obama called for, each of the above-mentioned challenges must be addressed. And for that, it is vital that all other nations, both nuclear and non-nuclear, participate in the process initiated by Obama. Instead of waiting for the United States to come up with a policy, every nation must do what it can. We need a system of genuine international cooperation.

This article was compiled from an interview by Toshiaki Miura.

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