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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

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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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Daily Star – Lebanon

Drone Row Suggests U.S. Stepping Up Iran Watch: Reports

December 08, 2011

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

WASHINGTON: Revelations about a U.S. reconnaissance drone which crashed in Iran last week suggest Washington is stepping up surveillance and pressure on the Islamic republic over its nuclear program, media reports say.

The New York Times reported Thursday that the unmanned stealth drone was part of a surveillance program that has frequently sent the hard-to-detect aircraft into Iran to map suspected nuclear sites.

Citing foreign officials and American experts who have been briefed on the effort, the Times said the drone was part of the most secret of many intelligence-collection efforts against Iran, but that the crash effectively blew the program's cover.

The Washington Post said the drone program indicates that U.S. officials believe covert action and economic pressure may be the only means of pressing Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions.

Citing current and former US officials, the Post said the administration's strategy includes expanded use of remote-controlled stealth aircraft, such as the one that came down in eastern Iran last week.

The report said the effort also includes stepped up sales of bunker-busting munitions, fighter jets and other military hardware to Gulf states as well as Israel to counter a potential threat from Iran.

The officials told the Post the new strategy suggests Washington is losing patience with efforts to negotiate a deal with Tehran to halt its nuclear program suspected of being used to create weapons.

The RQ-170 Sentinel high-altitude stealth drone was on a surveillance mission when it crashed in eastern Iran.

According to the Post, the CIA is thought to have a dozen or so of the batwing-shaped, radar-evading aircraft which can capture a range of intelligence material, including high-resolution images, radiation measurements and air samples.

US officials said that aircraft had been en route to Afghanistan at the time of the crash.

Iran's military claimed it shot down the drone inside its territory near the Afghan and Pakistani borders, and threatened to retaliate for the violation of its airspace. The Pentagon said there was no indication that the drone was shot down.

An identical stealth aircraft to the one lost in Iran reportedly was used by US Navy SEALs in the operation last May that killed al-Qaida chief Osama bin Laden in Pakistan.

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2011/Dec-08/156328-drone-row-suggests-us-stepping-up-iran-watch-reports.ashx#axzz1fxcXePmM>

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Kuwait Times – Kuwait

Iran Says Downed US Drone Was Deep in Its Airspace

December 8, 2011

Associated Press (AP)

TEHRAN: The unmanned US spy plane was deep inside Iran's airspace, flying over an eastern town famous for Persian carpets and saffron when it was downed by Iranian armed forces, state radio reported yesterday. The

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report said the stealth-version of the RQ-170 drone was detected by Iranian forces over the eastern town of Kashmar, some 140 miles (225 kilometers) from the border with Afghanistan.

The US smart plane was captured by Iranian anti-aircraft units somewhere in the sky over Kashmar in the east of the country," the radio said. It did not speculate as to why the drone flew over the town, which lies in an agricultural area known for the production of saffron and Persian carpets. The radio added that Iran will "soon" broadcast video footage of the downed drone. Iran first reported the downing on Sunday but did not say when the incident happened. At the time, the official IRNA news agency said Iran's armed forces had shot it down - a claim later rejected by US officials who said the drone crashed over the weekend but that there was no indication it had been shot down.

Meanwhile, US officials, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss classified information, have said the drone had spied on Iran for years from a US air base in Afghanistan. According to these officials, the US built up the air base in Shindad, Afghanistan, with an eye to keeping a long-term presence there to launch surveillance missions and even special operations missions into Iran if deemed necessary.

The RQ-170 - known as the Sentinel - has been used in Afghanistan for several years. It gained notoriety earlier this year when officials disclosed that one was used to keep watch on Osama bin Laden's compound in Pakistan as the raid that killed him was taking place. Yesterday, Iran's hardline Kayhan daily quoted an unnamed military expert as saying Iranian forces did not shoot down the drone. The expert, though, said the Iranian military is capable of bringing it down in such a way that the "body of the plane and its parts remain intact.

Another conservative daily, Mellat, said Iran may transfer intelligence from the drone to regional allies Syria and Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group. Iran confirmed for the first time in 2005 that the US has been flying surveillance drones over its airspace to spy on its nuclear and military facilities. In January, Tehran said two pilotless spy planes shot down over its airspace were operated by the US, and in July, media said Iranian military officials showed Russian experts several US drones reportedly shot down in recent years.

Faced with international sanctions over its controversial nuclear program, Iran has been trying to build up its own military technology. It unveiled its first domestically built unmanned bomber in 2010, calling the aircraft an "ambassador of death" to Iran's enemies. Two year earlier, Tehran announced it had built an unmanned aircraft with a range of more than 600 miles (1,000 kilometers), far enough to reach Israel. Both Israel and the United States have not ruled out a military option against Iran's nuclear facilities, which the West suspects aim to make atomic weapons - a charge Iran denies.

http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=NzI3MzU0NTE0OA==

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Tehran Times – Iran

China, Russia Want to Inspect Downed U.S. Drone

Political Desk

Thursday, 08 December 2011

TEHRAN - An informed source in the Iranian military has said that Russian and Chinese officials have asked for permission to inspect the U.S. spy drone that was recently downed by the Iranian Armed Forces, Nasimonline.ir reported on Wednesday.

On Sunday, an unidentified Iranian military source said that the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic had downed an advanced RQ-170 unmanned U.S. spy plane, which had violated the country's airspace along the eastern border.

There are unconfirmed reports that Iran may put the drone on public display.



According to the Washington Post, the RQ-170 drone has been used by the CIA for highly sensitive missions into other nations' airspace, including months of surveillance of the compound in Pakistan in which Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden was allegedly hiding before he was killed in an attack by Special Operations forces on May 1, 2011.

On Monday, U.S. military officials said that they are concerned that Tehran may now have an opportunity to acquire information about the classified surveillance drone program, AP reported.

U.S. officials considered conducting a covert mission inside Iran to retrieve or destroy the stealth drone but ultimately concluded such a secret operation wasn't worth the risk of provoking a more explosive clash with Tehran, a U.S. official said, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday.

<http://www.tehrantimes.com/politics/93294-china-russia-want-to-inspect-downed-us-drone>

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FARS News Agency – Iran
Thursday, 08 December 2011

Iran Displays Downed US Drone

TEHRAN (FNA) - The Iranian state broadcaster Thursday evening released the first images of the highly advanced US stealth spy drone which was downed through a cyberattack by Iranian military forces last week as it was flying over the country's airspace.

According to the TV report, the wing-to-wing width of the RQ-170 Sentinel drone is around 26 meters with a length of 4.5 meters and height of 1.84 meters.

The drone is equipped with highly advanced surveillance, data gathering, electronic communication and radar systems, the report said.

The batwing-shaped, radar-evading aircraft, which are capable of being fitted with different sensor payloads meaning they can be equipped to capture a range of intelligence material, including high-resolution images, radiation measurements and air samples.

The US officials and western diplomats said the stealth drone was part of a fleet of secret aircraft that the CIA has used for several years in an escalating espionage campaign targeting Iran's nuclear facilities.

The aircraft, built by Lockheed Martin, is best known for its role in surveilling the compound in Pakistan where Osama bin Laden was killed. "But it wasn't only being flown in Pakistan," the former official said.

Iran has already shot down more than a dozen of such aircraft during the last 4 to 5 years.

US officials have described the loss of the aircraft in Iran as a setback and a fatal blow to the stealth drone program.

Among the United States' main concerns is that Iran could use an intact aircraft to examine the vulnerabilities in stealth technology and take countermeasures with its air defense systems. Another is that China or other US adversaries could help Iran extract data from the drone that would reveal its flight history, surveillance targets and other capabilities.

The drone was programmed to destroy such data in the event of a malfunction, but it failed to do so. The blow has been so heavy that the US officials do not still want to accept that Iran brought down the plane by a cyberattack. Instead, explanations have focused on potential technical failures. The aircraft cover great distances and depend on satellite links. A lost connection or other malfunction could cause them to turn back home or start automatic explosion.



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<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9007276579>

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DAWN.com – Pakistan

Experts Argue over Iran Nuclear Bomb Timeline

By Reuters

December 8, 2011

VIENNA: Iran could likely build a nuclear bomb in six months or less, a US defence analyst said on Wednesday, but another Western proliferation expert dismissed this as unrealistic.

The differing estimates show the difficulty in trying to assess how long it could take Iran to convert its growing uranium stockpile into weapons-grade material and how advanced it may be in other areas vital for any bid to make a bomb.

Such an assessment could determine the West's room for manoeuvre in trying to find a diplomatic solution to the long-running dispute over Iran's nuclear programme which has the potential to spark a wider conflict in the Middle East.

Laying out one of the shortest potential timelines for Iran to acquire an atomic bomb, Greg Jones of the Washington-based Nonproliferation Policy Education Center (NPEC) said Tehran was moving "ever closer" to such arms.

"If Iran were to now make an all-out effort to acquire nuclear weapons, it could probably do so in two to six months," Jones wrote in a paper posted on the NPEC's website, which features endorsements by several big name US conservatives.

London-based expert Mark Fitzpatrick said: "This is not realistic. He is basing his assessment on a series of worst-case assumptions, including Iran utilising a method of enrichment that has never been used before for nuclear weapons."

Iran says its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes, dismissing allegations of weapons ambitions as based on forged evidence.

A UN nuclear watchdog report last month fuelled concern in the United States, Israel and Europe that Iran is seeking to develop the capabilities needed to make atomic arms.

The report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which said that Iran appeared to have worked on a nuclear weapon design, also stoked speculation that Israel, might launch preemptive strikes against Iranian nuclear sites.

Jones said the report "outlined in unprecedented detail the substantial progress Iran has made in the development of the non-nuclear components needed to produce nuclear weapons".

ONE BOMB WOULD BE "SUICIDAL"

But Iran had no need to make an all-out drive for a nuclear weapon in view of the "ineffectiveness of Western counteraction", Jones said on the website.

"Rather Iran will probably continue on its current course, producing an ever-growing stockpile of enriched uranium and carrying out additional research to produce non-nuclear weapons components."

Refined uranium can be used to fuel nuclear power plants, Iran's declared aim, or provide material for bombs if processed much further, which the West suspects is its ultimate intention.

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Jones sparked debate in September when he argued that, if Iran decided to make a bomb, it could produce enough highly enriched uranium (HEU) in about eight weeks.

Other analysts said significantly more time would be required, stressing that Iran would need to turn any weapons-usable uranium into the core of a nuclear missile if it wanted more than a crude device, adding to the timetable.

Fitzpatrick said he believed it would take Iran at least “over a year” to make a bomb, adding it was getting closer to this capability but that it would make no sense to produce just one weapon.

“To take the risk of breaking out of the NPT (nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) they would want to be able to assemble at least a handful of weapons. Going for one would be suicidal,” said Fitzpatrick, a director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies think tank.

The Arms Control Association, a Washington-based research and advocacy group, said a nuclear-armed Iran was “neither imminent nor inevitable”.

“Sanctions have bought time and helped improve negotiating leverage, but the time available must be used constructively.

Sanctions alone will not turn Tehran around,” it said.

<http://www.dawn.com/2011/12/08/experts-argue-over-iran-nuclear-bomb-timeline.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Moscow Sees ‘No Military Component’ in Iran’s Nuclear Program

9 December 2011

There is no military component in Iran’s nuclear program, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Friday.

Western powers and Israel suspect Iran of seeking to build nuclear weapons. Iran denies this, saying its program is civilian in nature. Speculation has been building that Israel is considering a preemptive strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

“We have verified data showing that there is no reliable evidence for the existence of a military component,” Ryabkov said.

“There is no proof of a military component in Iran’s nuclear program.”

It is essential to “clear all the remaining doubts through negotiations,” he said, adding that it was important for Iran to closely cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA said in a report released in early November that Iran continued nuclear weapons research and technology development after 2003, at a time when it declared a halt in its nuclear program. The report said that Iran had temporarily frozen nuclear activities, but that there was evidence the program continued to be carried out at a more modest pace.

Iranian officials slammed the report as a distortion of facts aimed at satisfying U.S. political interests.

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano has urged Iran to provide the requested clarifications regarding possible military dimensions to its nuclear program.

MOSCOW, December 9 (RIA Novosti)

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<http://en.ria.ru/world/20111209/169515956.html>

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FARS News Agency – Iran
Friday, 09 December 2011

Downed US Drone Means Declaring War on Iran

TEHRAN (FNA)- Iran's recovery of a downed US surveillance drone publicized America's ongoing covert war on Iran, a part of the Obama administration's strategy even more bellicose than his predecessor's.

US actions towards Iran are being couched as an attempt to prevent their attainment of nuclear weapons, despite a failure to put forth a shred of evidence that a weapons program is underway, the antiwar said.

In a statement on Thursday, President Obama reiterated this confrontational approach with a popular euphemism for international aggression: "No options off the table means I'm considering all options."

And many options are indeed being carried out. Antiwar.com columnist and former CIA agent Philip Giraldi wrote this week that sources have revealed to him secret presidential findings "authorizing stepped-up covert action" against Iran.

"A 'finding,'" he explained, "is top-level approval for secret operations considered to be particularly politically sensitive." President Bush had issued a number of findings authorizing "the use of intelligence assets to disrupt Iranian Islamic Revolution Guard Corps" as well as one in 2007 that authorized "attacks against Iranian nuclear scientists" and the use of "computer viruses to disrupt the Iranian computer network."

But President Obama has gone a step further. He recently issued a finding which "extends existing initiatives and is intended to strangle Iran by creating insurgencies along all of the country's borders," primarily by supporting Iranian dissident groups to conduct domestic terrorism and undermine the Islamic Republic.

In addition to those efforts, according to the Washington Post, the "White House also has boosted sales of bunker-busting munitions, fighter jets and other military hardware to Persian Gulf states as well as to Israel, building on long-running efforts to boost the military capabilities of key US allies in the region" in a broad effort to garrison Iran's surroundings with provocative militarism.

The Iranian government issued a formal complaint and summoned Swiss ambassador Livia Leu Agosti, who handles diplomacy for the US in Iran. Iranian officials said the US drone they are now in possession of is evidence of espionage efforts inside Iran and that Iran "strongly protests the violation of an RQ-170 spy aircraft deep into its airspace," and asked for "an urgent response and compensation from the US government".

Rhetoric from the White House and Congress remains aggressive and threatening towards Iran, despite being exposed as the aggressors themselves. Surely, if the US had uncovered a number of Iranian spy operations and terrorism-funding programs inside America, Washington would be doing much more than issuing formal complaints.

<http://english.farsnews.com/newstext.php?nn=9007276671>

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Korea Times – South Korea
December 7, 2011

'Ball in NK's Court for More Talks with US'

By Kim Young-jin

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The United States is open to more talks with North Korea but the isolated state must show it is ready to act responsibly first, a visiting U.S. official said Wednesday.

Glyn Davies, U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy, told reporters upon arriving here that Pyongyang should live up to its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions before a fresh round of dialogue, adding that Washington was waiting for a response from the communist state.

The remarks came as both Seoul and Washington weigh whether to hold another round of talks with Pyongyang in a bid to kick-start the stalled six-party talks on its denuclearization. The sides held talks in July and October but have yet to agree with the North on what steps it should take before they resume.

Davies, who was recently tapped for the post, said he would focus on hearing Seoul's opinions on the North Korea nuclear problem before heading off to Japan and China to complete his nine day trip.

The former top envoy to the International Atomic Energy Agency will meet today with Lim Sung-nam, Seoul's point man to the stalled six-party talks. He will also meet with Foreign Minister Kim Sung-hwan and Unification Minister Yu Woo-ik.

He will be accompanied by Clifford Hart, the U.S. special envoy to the talks.

The North walked away from the talks, which also include Japan, Russia and China, in 2009 in response to international sanctions for its nuclear and missile tests.

Analysts expect regional players to eventually resume the forum that seeks to swap dismantlement of the North's nuclear weapons program in exchange for economic and energy assistance. But bullish predictions on when that could happen have been tempered by the reclusive state's unwillingness to take concrete denuclearization steps.

The allies want the North to shut down its uranium enrichment program (UEP) in a verifiable manner, but Pyongyang says the talks should start again without preconditions.

The North recently claimed its UEP and construction of an experimental light-water reactor were progressing smoothly, casting doubt on hopes for a timely resumption.

"A third round would be expected to go beyond the first two," said Yoo Ho-yeol, a North Korea watcher at Korea University. "So Seoul and Washington need some more time to adjust their stance or they have to wait for North Korea to assume a more flexible attitude."

Analysts say the North is desperate to secure food aid ahead of next year, when it has promised to emerge as a "strong and prosperous" nation in time for the 100th anniversary of the birth of its founder, Kim Il-sung.

The other parties see the forum as a way to manage tensions in the economically vibrant region.

This is especially true next year, when Seoul and Washington will hold presidential elections. Analysts also suggest that a tricky power handoff underway from North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to his youngest son could be accompanied by military provocations.

Tension is still running high after the North twice attacked the South last year, killing a total of 50.

Meanwhile, Derek Mitchell, Washington's special representative for Myanmar, arrived for talks to brief Seoul officials on U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's visit to Myanmar last week.

Seoul is said to be trying to warm ties with the resource-rich country after its recent democratic reforms. Officials say it will resume development assistance to the Southeast Asian country, halted in 2005 over the regime's repression of human rights.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/12/113_100352.html

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Korea Times – South Korea

December 7, 2011

[Exclusive] Seoul to Deploy 150 Bunker Busters

By Lee Tae-hoon

South Korea has sealed a deal to procure GBU-28 bunker-busting bombs, one of the world's largest and deadliest laser-guided weapons, from the United States, multiple sources said Wednesday.

A National Assembly official confirmed that Seoul and Washington concluded a contract last month for the acquisition of some 150 GBU-28s, initially developed in 1991 to penetrate hardened Iraqi command centers located deep underground.

Seoul purchased them through the Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program for 80 billion won (\$71 million), according to a senior official of the Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA).

He said the United States will supply all of them in 2013, making the South the second country to be allowed to acquire the bunker buster, following Israel which reportedly purchased 100 GBU-28s under a secret deal to counter Iran's nuclear facilities.

The DAPA official noted that Washington strictly restricts the export of GBU-28s as they are classified as high-end strategic weapons, but agreed to their sales to Seoul in June 2009, following North Korea's second nuclear test in May that year.

"DAPA first attempted to acquire them (in 2002) as an offset for the FX-I program, through which Korea purchased 40 F-15K fighters from the American aerospace company Boeing, but to no avail," he said.

The Israelis first requested the bunker busters in 2005, only to be rebuffed by the U.S. government.

In the event of war, the official said, the F-15K fighters will carry the massive bombs to destroy North Korean missiles and fighter jets stored underground, as well as shelters for North Korean military leaders.

"The deployment of GBU-28s will significantly improve the country's deterrence against North Korea's weapons of mass destruction," the official said.

The GBU-28 is a 2,268 kilograms (5,000 pound) bomb that can be carried by the F-15 fighter jet. The 7.6 meter-long bunker buster has been proven to penetrate more than 6 meters of concrete and 30 meters of earth before exploding. It contains a 4,400 pound warhead.

The GBU-28 is thought to be the ideal weapon to destroy the North's artillery hidden in caves and tunnels along the heavily fortified border and elements of its nuclear program suspected to be hidden underground.

North Korea is believed to have the world's largest artillery force.

The front of the bomb contains a guidance system. Once ground forces or aircraft pinpoint a target with a laser, the bunker buster's laser-guided control system tracks the beam and fixes on the target.

The GBU-28 does not have a rocket or motor propulsion system, but falls at high speed due to its heavy weight and slim dart-like shape.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2011/12/113_100327.html

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Star Tribune – Minneapolis, MN

Indonesia Ratifies Global Ban on Nuclear Test Explosions

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By Associated Press (AP)
December 6, 2011

JAKARTA, Indonesia - Indonesia says it has ratified a global treaty banning nuclear test explosions.

Negotiated in the 1990s, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty specified that the 44 countries with nuclear power or research reactors at the time needed to give formal approval before it could take effect.

With the endorsement Tuesday by Indonesia's parliament, the treaty is now only awaiting ratification from the United States, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea and Pakistan.

Indonesian lawmaker Mahfudz Siddiq urged the remaining countries — especially the U.S. and Israel — to get off the bench and sign.

Indonesia, a nation of 240 million, has three research atomic reactors.

<http://www.startribune.com/world/135078393.html>

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National Journal

Russia Training Myanmar Officers in Nuclear Science, Missile Design

By Global Security Newswire Staff
December 8, 2011

A large number of military officials from Myanmar have received training at Russian universities in atomic science and missile design, *Time* magazine reported on Wednesday.

Under a 2001 deal, Russia agreed to construct a small atomic reactor for the Southeast Asian nation. The agreement also called for Moscow to provide training for "300-350 nuclear-energy specialists." The \$150 million contract, finalized in 2007, required that the reactor be used only for medical and scientific purposes, but the deal was cause for concern, given that the Burmese junta spends far more money on military operations than on public health.

A report by a dissident group, the Democratic Voice of Burma, accused the junta of covertly researching nuclear weapons, with technical assistance from North Korea. The Burmese government rejected the claim, and later declared that it would not pursue an atomic program because of lack of funding; it seemed that the issue had been resolved. Russia also backed off the reactor deal.

The Obama administration played down concerns of a nuclear-weapon program in Myanmar as Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visited the country last week for talks with the new civilian government.

A *Time* investigation, however, revealed that a significant number of Burmese military officials are still receiving atomic and missile education at Bauman University in Moscow. The school and other Russian institutions first began admitting large groups of Burmese military students in 2001.

Burmese army defector Sai Thein Win, who provided the stolen documents and photographs that formed the basis of the Democratic Voice of Burma's report, told *Time* he believed approximately 10,000 Burmese citizens have taken classes at technical colleges in Russia. The majority of the students come from the armed forces and many focus on nuclear science, he said.

Sai Thein Win, who is in hiding, said in 2001 he was in a doctorate program in Bauman University's missile-engines department. "There was one guy from North Korea, one guy from Iran, and me," the defector said. "The only guy who completed the degree in the end was the North Korean, so his rockets would be the ones flying tests over Japanese islands by now." When he left Moscow, Sai Thein Win said, he began working at a military plant in

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Myanmar that focused on building components for a nuclear-arms effort. While many machines were acquired from German firms, the majority of the workshop's sensitive equipment was purchased from Pyongyang.

Bauman University missile-design lecturer Valery Gostev told the magazine that he is teaching about 12 students from Myanmar this semester, which he said is a typical number. He confirmed that other departments are educating Burmese students in atomic science.

Russia would not be in breach of any international pacts for providing schooling to Burmese students in missile design. "The Russians would just be showing pretty bad taste in what they are teaching people," said former International Atomic Energy Agency official Robert Kelley, who authored the Democratic Voice of Burma report.

He noted that the type of missiles Burmese students are studying at Bauman University could be configured to carry biological and chemical warfare agents. "We do think Russia should be careful about providing a lot of this training to Burma," Institute for Science and International Security analyst Andrea Stricker said. "There are still a lot of suspicions about a possible [nuclear]-weapons program."

Kelley and Stricker said they both leaned toward believing that Moscow would refuse if asked by Myanmar to educate students in nuclear-warhead design.

Bauman spokeswoman Anna Lustina declined requests to provide information on what specific classes Burmese students were taking at the school. "There is a clause in our contract that keeps us from disclosing what the [Burmese] students study or for how long. With any other foreign students it would be fine, but we have a special agreement with the Burmese."

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/nationalsecurity/russia-training-myanmar-officers-in-nuclear-science-missile-design-20111208>

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Reuters India

Myanmar Denies Working with North Korea on Atomic Weapons

By Aung Hla Tun

Friday, December 9, 2011

YANGON (Reuters) - Myanmar denied it had been cooperating with North Korea on nuclear weapons technology, the first time it has commented on speculation that the two internationally ostracised states might be working together to build atomic weapons.

The denial follows a landmark visit just over a week ago by Hillary Clinton in the first trip by a U.S. Secretary of State to the country in 55 years, setting the stage for rapprochement with Myanmar after decades of isolation from the West.

The weekly Pyi Myanmar quoted parliament speaker Thura Shwe Mann as telling reporters after he met Clinton last week that Myanmar did not have any cooperation with North Korea on nuclear technology.

It was the first time a top official has publicly commented on the issue.

"During my visit to North Korea as a general, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperating between the two armed forces. It was not on nuclear cooperation as is being alleged," the weekly quoted the 64-year-old Shwe Mann as saying.

"We studied their air defence system, weapons factories, aircrafts and ships. Their armed forces are quite strong so we just agreed to cooperate with them if necessary," said Shwe Mann, who had been number three in the former military government.

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He is thought to have led a high-level delegation to North Korea in late 2008. Exile media published documents and pictures relating to the visit in 2009.

During her brief visit, Clinton urged Myanmar's new leaders to end illicit contacts with North Korea, which has long been trying to build a nuclear arsenal and for which it had been heavily sanctioned by the international community.

Reporting by Aung Hla Tun, Editing by Jonathan Thatcher and Ron Popeski

<http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/12/09/myanmar-north-idINDEE7B809320111209>

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Times of India – India

Extremists' Within Reach of Pakistan Nukes, Says Gingrich

Press Trust of India (PTI)

December 8, 2011

WASHINGTON: With the Pakistani Army so penetrated by extremist elements, its nuclear assets of about 100 weapons are not safe, a leading Republican presidential candidate has said.

"My guess is Pakistan has well over 100 nuclear weapons. And that the Pakistani military is so penetrated by extremist elements you have no idea if one morning they're going to lose three or four of them," Newt Gingrich, who is now leading among all Republican candidates according to latest polls, told the CNN in an interview.

When asked why he thinks that the Pakistani military is not capable of protecting that nuclear arsenal, the former Speaker of the US House of Representatives said, "well, the Pakistani military was capable of protecting bin Laden for six years".

CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer asked if he believed that Pakistan knew about the presence of Osama bin Laden, who lived in a safe house in Abbottabad before being killed by US Special Forces, Gingrich said, "It's inconceivable that he (bin Laden) could have been in -- that was a national military city.

"Their major military university is one mile from his compound. Now, do I think bin Laden was sitting a mile away from national military university and nobody noticed it in their intelligence service? It's inconceivable," Gingrich argued.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/Extremists-within-reach-of-Pakistan-nukes-says-Gingrich/articleshow/11030341.cms>

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The Nation – Pakistan

Australia Refuses to Lift Uranium Sale Ban on Pakistan

December 9, 2011

SYDNEY (AFP) - Australia's Defence Minister Stephen Smith said India represented a "unique" case for uranium sales Thursday and denied that lifting its export ban to New Delhi opened the door to countries like Pakistan.

The ruling centre-left Labour party voted to overturn its long-standing ban on uranium sales to India at its national policy summit last weekend despite the fact that it was still not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Smith, on an official visit to India, said the decision had been "warmly welcomed" but rebuffed suggestions that Pakistan may want a similar arrangement.

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"The circumstances for India so far as export of uranium is concerned are, in my view, unique," Smith told ABC television from India. "Pakistan does not have the same record so far as proliferation is concerned. There have been serious expressions of concern about proliferation in the past."

Though India had not signed the NPT - Labour's rationale for withholding sales until the weekend's policy u-turn - Smith said it had agreed to split its civilian and military nuclear programmes and vowed not to engage in atomic tests. It had also submitted to the authority of civil nuclear regulators.

"India is the world's largest democracy. There's never been any serious suggestion or any evidence of proliferation on India's part," he said.

He described the ban as "an irritant or a grain of sand in the relationship (that) is now gone" and said he and Indian officials had agreed that they could and should do more to boost strategic cooperation.

"The whole world is moving to the Asia Pacific and the Indian Ocean, and India is very much a central part of that," he said.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Politics/09-Dec-2011/Australia-refuses-to-lift-uranium-sale-ban-on-Pakistan>

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Russia Today (RT) – Russia

Good Intentions Temporary, Military Potential Permanent – Lavrov

08 December 2011

By Robert Bridge, RT

As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization continues to promise that a US missile defense system in Europe is no threat to Russia, Moscow says it will be forced to take measures to ensure its security.

Responding to European criticism over Russia's recent announcement that it will deploy short-range ballistic missiles in Kaliningrad unless an agreement on missile defense is reached, Moscow insists it reserves the right to protect its territory.

"Russia wants our partners to respect our right to ensure the security of our territory exclusively by our own forces," Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a NATO-Russia Council ministerial meeting in Brussels on Thursday. "And when NATO missile defence elements are planned to be deployed so as to leave exposed a considerable part of the Russian territory, of course, we will have questions."

Lavrov reiterated Moscow's request that NATO provide legal guarantees that the system will never be aimed at Russian territory, while reminding the alliance of Russia's military potential to protect its territory.

"Apart from common words on trust and guarantees that missile defense is not directed against us, juridical guarantees must be given because good intentions are temporary while the military-technical potential is permanent," he said.

Meanwhile, Russia's permanent envoy to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, who met with US Permanent Representative on the NATO Council Ivo Daalder and US Assistant Secretary of State Philip Gordon, dismissed a US proposal for a so-called adapted sectoral missile defense system as "a lot of drivel."

Rogozin asked the American diplomats to explain the essence of the adapted sectoral missile defense initiative that Daalder had mentioned in an interview with Kommersant, the Russian daily.

"There's nothing new about it," Rogozin told Interfax on Thursday. "Just a lot of drivel."

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Russia's frustration with the negotiation process, which has thus far failed to produce any sort of agreement that brings Russia on board the missile defense project, was summed up by Lavrov who said that NATO is not ready for serious co-operation with Russia.

"Our partners from NATO are not ready for serious co-operation on a whole range of issues, including missile defense," Lavrov told a press briefing following talks with NATO foreign ministers.

NATO officials, however, continued to utter the same empty promises that are driving the talks into an impossible and potentially dangerous impasse.

"NATO's missile defence system is not directed against Russia," Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General, said. *"We do not consider Russia an enemy, we do not consider Russia an adversary, we consider Russia a partner, and we want to develop a true strategic partnership as we decided one year ago in Lisbon."*

Rasmussen went on to say that *"it is part of that true strategic partnership that we also co-operate on missile defence."*

The NATO General seemed genuinely incredulous at Moscow's argument that the system could become a security concern in some indeterminate future.

"We have reiterated it is not directed against Russia, and invited Russia to co-operate so that they can see with their own eyes that it is not directed against Russia," he said.

The NATO chief then suggested that Russia and NATO reaffirm at the Chicago summit, scheduled for May 2012, their commitment not to use force against each other .

In 1997, Russia and NATO approved the Founding Act, which was the first document to lay out the groundwork for NATO-Russia relations.

Rasmussen hailed his offer *"a serious political statement, a serious political guarantee."* However, NATO's top official did not say if the 28-member military bloc would be willing to formally legalize the document, as demanded by Russia.

Aside from the issue of European missile defense, Russia expressed its concern over the possibility of the "Libyan scenario" being repeated in future conflicts.

"NATO proposes to consider the Libyan model an example," Lavrov said. *"We categorically are against this."*

At the same time, he said, *"Russia is holding the conversation on Libya with NATO in order to understand the Alliance's new strategic concept."*

In March 2011, the United Nations adopted Security Council Resolution 1973, which opened the door for NATO military intervention in Libya. Although the resolution limited the Alliance to actions that protected civilians, Russia and other countries, accused NATO of overstepping its mission, taking sides with the rebel forces and causing many deaths with its air strikes.

On 28 October 2011, there was global condemnation following the death of Muammar Gaddafi, who was summarily executed after being discovered near Sirte, the place of his birth.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin slammed NATO forces following the death of the Libyan leader, asking: *"Who gave them the right to kill him?"*

Clearly, Russia is becoming increasingly concerned over the direction NATO has taken of late, and the standoff on missile defense is only adding to those sentiments.

<http://rt.com/politics/lavrov-nato-rasmussen-council-missiles-355/>

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Global Security Newswire

Russia Urges Verification Powers be Added to Bioweapons Treaty Regime

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Russia would like to see a mandatory verification system established for the Biological Weapons Convention to ensure that member nations are abiding by their obligations not to develop or store disease materials for offensive purposes, ITAR-Tass reported on Wednesday (see *GSN*, Dec. 7).

Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov said a verification protocol was needed as "ordinary transparency measures, with all their importance and usefulness, cannot give such certainty."

The Biological Weapons Convention prohibits the development, purchase or possession of disease agents or toxins that lack a peaceful justification, as well as associated delivery systems. The treaty lacks a formal verification mechanism, relying instead on voluntary measures -- such as the optional submission of public reports by state parties.

Member nations this week opened the seventh five-year treaty review conference for the accord in Geneva, Switzerland.

The United States does not support a binding verification mechanism, partly on the grounds that the biological science research community is too diffuse and complex for such a regime to be practical. Speaking at the conference yesterday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged that the pact's annual reporting section instead be amended to "ensure that each party is answering the right questions, such as what we are each all doing to guard against the misuse of biological materials."

Gatilov called for membership of the Biological Weapons Convention be expanded to include all nations. To date, 165 nations have ratified the pact.

"We cannot but be worried by the fact that three dozen states remain outside the convention," the Russian deputy minister said. "Some of them are located in areas of regional instability, which exacerbates the situation further. ... We believe that this situation is extremely dangerous. To make the convention universal is our common priority."

He urged all states parties to "comply with their obligations in good faith" to ensure that extremists and criminals are not gaining access to dangerous pathogens.

"We regret that there are still many state parties where laws to implement the convention have not been put into effect or do not exist at all," the Russian diplomat said, urging that the conference be used to address the deficiency. He added that Moscow is ready to supply specialists to assist other nations in improving their domestic regulations to bring them into compliance with the convention.

"We have to note again that more than half of the states parties ... still fail to comply with their obligation to annually submit information on their biological facilities and biological activities," he said. "The lack of information concerning biological activities of any country inevitably makes us question whether the convention is being implemented in good faith."

Gatilov urged more attention be paid to monitoring the latest developments in biological research and technology for potential projects that "conflict with the [BWC] provisions."

He called for the convention to consider what key areas of biotechnology development should come under further scrutiny. "We cannot let the biological research cross the thin line that can open the way to the production of biological weapons" (ITAR-Tass, Dec. 7).

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http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20111208_7788.php

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Moscow Times – Russia

Lavrov and Rogozin Rap NATO Missile Shield

09 December 2011

By Alexandra Odynova

BRUSSELS — Officials clashed at a NATO-Russia meeting over a missile defense shield in Europe on Thursday, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reiterating a Kremlin threat to deploy missiles in Kaliningrad after NATO's chief accused Russia of wasting money.

Lavrov said Russia's position on the issue hadn't changed and reminded NATO officials of President Dmitry Medvedev's warning last month that Russia was ready to point missiles in Kaliningrad and other parts of the country at the U.S.-led shield unless Russian concerns were met.

Lavrov complained that NATO was not yet ready for cooperation that would answer concerns that the shield might pose a security threat to Russia and asked NATO member states not to underestimate Russia.

"We would like our intellectual abilities and our military expertise, which also exists, to be treated with respect when we are called for cooperation," Lavrov said, speaking in Russian at a brief news conference after the two-day meeting in Brussels.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Wednesday that Russia's missile deployment plan was "a waste of valuable money" against "an artificial enemy."

On Thursday, Fogh Rasmussen rejected Russian criticism that NATO was ignoring its concerns and added that the defense alliance did not "consider Russia as an enemy." He expressed hope that the missile defense shield flap could be resolved by a NATO summit that Russia has been invited to attend in Chicago in May.

Considering Russia's tough position and the scant progress achieved over the past year, the deadlock could well continue after the summit.

Thursday's meeting was preceded by "unprecedentedly harsh rhetoric from Russia," a NATO diplomatic source told The Moscow Times on condition of anonymity, citing a lack of authorization to comment on the issue. "And everyone sees here that Medvedev's remarks can't assist the progress in the conflict's resolution."

As an example illustrating Russia's concerns, Lavrov mentioned that the defense missile plan includes a U.S.-Turkey agreement to set up a "powerful radar" on Turkish territory against the perceived threat of a missile attack from Iran. "A similar radar is already located there. The new radar will double up with the existing one and will also cover a great part of the Russia territory," Lavrov told reporters.

The NATO source replied: "But Russia has radars that cover Europe, so why can't other radars cover Russia?"

Russia's NATO envoy, Dmitry Rogozin, linked Kremlin support for NATO's Afghanistan campaign to a resolution on missile defense. "Mr. Lavrov said that for us, cooperation is a complex of all the projects," Rogozin told reporters, Reuters reported. "You can't say to us: 'No on the anti-missile shield, but yes for the other projects.'"

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/lavrov-and-rogozin-rap-nato-missile-shield/449543.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia May Skip 2012 NATO Summit – Foreign Ministry

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9 December 2011

Russia may skip the 2012 Russia-NATO Council summit in Chicago if U.S-Russian talks on the European missile defense shield fail, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Friday.

"If we agree on the missile defense issue, it would be much easier for us to make a positive decision about the summit. We do not know whether or not we will agree," Ryabkov said in an interview with the state-owned Rossiya 24 television, adding that Russia and the United States would continue talks.

In any case, no decision will be made before presidential elections scheduled for March 4, 2012, he said.

The forthcoming summit in Chicago is the next strategic event on the NATO-Russian calendar following the 2010 Lisbon Summit, when both sides agreed to cooperate on the European missile defense shield. However, the negotiations have stalled since then over differences in approaches.

Moscow considers the NATO-backed missile defense program a direct threat to its strategic potential and demands written guarantees that the shield will not be targeted against it. The United States refuses to provide the guarantees, saying the shield is directed against threats from Iran and North Korea.

MOSCOW, December 9 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.ria.ru/russia/20111209/169516630.html>

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Space War.com

Romania Ratifies US Missile Shield Agreement

By Staff Writers

Bucharest, Agence France-Presse (AFP)

December 6, 2011

The Romanian parliament on Tuesday ratified an accord to host US missile interceptors on its soil, a day before a meeting of the 28 NATO members in Brussels.

The Senate unanimously adopted the draft law ratifying the Romania-US agreement signed in September that would allow the establishment and operation of a US land-based ballistic missile defence system in Romania as part of NATO's efforts to build a continental missile shield.

"The location of some elements of the US missile shield represents a very important contribution to the security of Romania, the US and the entire alliance," Foreign Minister Teodor Baconschi told senators, according to Mediafax news agency.

The draft law was adopted by the lower house in November and is now set to be promulgated by President Traian Basescu.

The deployment of the missile interceptors is expected to take place in 2015 at a former airbase in southern Romania.

The missile shield, which is based on US technology, is one of the transatlantic alliance's main development axes for the coming years, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has said.

Along with Romania, Turkey, Poland and Spain have also agreed to take part in the project.

http://www.spacewar.com/reports/Romania_ratifies_US_missile_shield_agreement_999.html

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

Clinton Hits Back over Missile Threat

8 December 2011

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

BRUSSELS, Dec 8, 2011 (AFP) _ US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton hit back on Thursday at a Russian threat to deploy weapons in response to a NATO missile shield as the two sides failed to defuse a rift over the US-backed system.

"We will continue to press forward on missile defence," Clinton told a press conference in Brussels after talks between NATO foreign ministers and their Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

"It does not affect our strategic balance with Russia and it's certainly not a cause for military counter-measures," she said.

Despite the disagreement, the two sides agreed to forge ahead with negotiations on cooperating in the system but Lavrov warned that time was running out.

Seeking to allay Russian fears that the defence system to be deployed partly in former Soviet bloc countries will undermine Russia's strategic arsenal, Clinton said it was mainly aimed at countering a threat from Iran.

"This is not directed at Russia, it is not about Russia. It is frankly about Iran and other state or non-state actors who are seeking to develop threatening missile technology," she said.

President Dmitry Medvedev last month announced that Russia was ready to deploy intermediate range Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad exclave that borders EU members Poland and Lithuania.

Russia later also switched on a new radar warning system against incoming missiles in Kaliningrad and said it reserved the right to strike NATO's European shield components if its demands were not met.

Top Russian General Nikolai Makarov has warned that Moscow was "being pushed" into a new arms race. Clinton already angered Russia this week by voicing "serious concerns" about the country's parliamentary elections. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin accused her of provoking post-election protests.

The US chief diplomat defended her remarks, saying she was "supportive of the rights and aspirations" of the Russian people to seek "a better future."

NATO and the United States have sought to improve ties with Russia since President Barack Obama took office in 2009.

The former Cold War foes agreed last year to explore ways to cooperate in the system, being set up with interceptor missiles based in Romania and Poland, missiles aboard US ships in Spain and a radar system in Turkey.

Russia wants NATO to provide a legally-binding document stating that the anti-ballistic missile system is not pointed at it, but the alliance says it has made enough statements to that effect.

"We want to have clear guarantees that the missile defence capabilities will not be targeted against our strategic capability," Lavrov told a news conference.

Moscow also suggests that both sides operate a joint missile shield, but NATO insists on keeping two separate systems with the former Cold War foes sharing data.

"We stand ready to dialogue provided legitimate interests of all parties are taken into account," Lavrov said. "We still have some time, but time is running out every day."

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said he hopes a deal will be struck at the next NATO summit in May 2012 in Chicago.

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Despite lingering suspicions between the former Cold War foes, Russia has allowed the alliance to use its territory to send vital supplies to troops in Afghanistan.

The transit route through Russia has become all the more important since Pakistan shut down supply lines in anger at a deadly air strike on the Afghan border last month that killed 24 Pakistani troops.

But Russia's ambassador to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, suggested that a deal on the missile shield could not be separated from cooperation agreements in various other fields, including the transit route.

"We can't be told no on the missile shield project and then be required to say yes to other projects," he told reporters. "If this shield is not a shield, if it is something offensive ... this would be negative for us."

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/269906/clinton-hits-back-over-missile-threat>

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel
9 December 2011

Obama: U.S. Won't Allow Iran to Develop Nuclear Weapons

U.S. President says Iran could end its growing isolation by acting 'responsibly' and foreswearing the development of nuclear weapons, which would still allow them to pursue peaceful nuclear power.

By Natasha Mozgovaya

Iran won't be allowed to reach nuclear weapons' capabilities, U.S. President Barack Obama said in a statement yesterday, adding that Iran was isolated in the international community as a result of American efforts.

Earlier Thursday, Iran claimed to have evidence of covert American efforts against it, displaying what it said was a downed U.S. surveillance drone on official Iranian television.

"Military experts are well aware how precious the technological information of this drone is," the Fars news agency quoted a chief Iranian military officer as saying.

Regarding American efforts to stop Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons capabilities, Obama reiterated later Thursday that "no options off the table means I'm considering all options" in regards to Iran.

Obama said Iran could end its growing isolation by acting "responsibly and foreswearing the development of nuclear weapons, which would still allow them to pursue peaceful nuclear power, like every other country that's a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, or they can continue to operate in a fashion that isolates them from the entire world.

"And if they are pursuing nuclear weapons, then I have said very clearly, that is contrary to the national security interests of the United States; it's contrary to the national security interests of our allies, including Israel; and we are going to work with the world community to prevent that," the U.S. president said.

Obama also spoke of what he said were the lengths the U.S. had gone to ensure Iran would pay a price for its nuclear aspirations, saying that it was "very important to remember, particularly given some of the political noise out there, that this administration has systematically imposed the toughest sanctions on Iran ever."

Earlier yesterday, U.S. ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro said that Washington has been fully cooperating with Israel when it comes to the Iran and its nuclear program.

"There is no issue that we coordinate more closely than on Iran," Shapiro said during a briefing to reporters in Tel Aviv.

Shapiro's comments come against the backdrop of uncertainty regarding the U.S.-Israeli coordination on a possible strike on Iran.

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General Martin Dempsey, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said last month that he did not know whether Israel would alert the United States ahead of time if it decided to take military action against Iran.

<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/obama-u-s-won-t-allow-iran-to-develop-nuclear-weapons-1.400430>

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Xinhua News – China

December 7, 2011

China, U.S. Start Megaports Initiative Pilot Project to Boost Cargo Security

SHANGHAI, Dec. 7 (Xinhua) -- China and the United States kicked off a Megaports Initiative pilot project in Shanghai on Wednesday, amid efforts to improve security via radiation checks for cargo carriers at the city's Yangshan Port.

The initiative, an important part of the China-U.S. cooperation on fighting terrorism, is aimed at preventing the illegal transport of nuclear and other radioactive materials by installing detection systems in relevant ports.

The two nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the initiative in November 2005 and began technical talks on the MOU's 11 annexes in February 2006. The talks finished in May 2007.

According to the cooperation plan, the Yangshan Port pilot project will be jointly carried out by China's General Administration of Customs, China's Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, and the U.S. Department of Energy.

"Through the initiative, China and the United States have done lots of fruitful work in customs security cooperation and radiation detection technology training, which laid a solid foundation for the two countries to carry out cooperation in combating terrorism," Lu Peijun, deputy commissioner of the General Administration of Customs, said at an inauguration ceremony for the pilot project at Yangshan Port.

"Meanwhile, the Megaports Initiative has also become an important channel for China to boost safety and facilitation in its global trade sector," he said.

To date, 18 sets of radiation detection equipment have been installed at the Yangshan deep-water port, and a detection control center has also been built.

The start of the pilot project at Yangshan marks the 40th such port under the Megaports Initiative, as well as the initiative's first in China.

It reflects "the commitment of the Chinese government to interdicting nuclear material and in combating nuclear terrorism," Thomas D'Agostino, head of the National Nuclear Security Administration, said at the ceremony.

Yangshan Port had exported almost 3.9 million heavy containers in the first 10 months of this year, with 17.6 percent bound for the United States, customs statistics show.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2011-12/07/c_131293615.htm

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Bio Prep Watch

House Passes Bill to Protect U.S. Against Biothreats

By Daniel Purt

December 6, 2011

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On Tuesday, the House unanimously passed U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers (R-Mich.) bipartisan bill to protect the U.S. against pandemics and attacks from chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons.

"Terrorists continue to actively seek out biological or chemical weapons to carry out horrific attacks against us," Rogers, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee and a senior member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, said. "We must act to prepare for such threats that we continue to face on a daily basis more than 10 years after 9/11."

The bill, H.R. 2405, which is supported by the administration, reauthorizes portions of the Pandemic and All-Hazards Preparedness Act, including the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority that Rogers originally authored in 2006.

The Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority serves to bridge the funding gap that exists between early-stage research and the actual procurement of medical countermeasures, including vaccines and medications.

Rogers' bill also reauthorizes Project BioShield's Special Reserve Fund. The Special Reserve Fund was created as a means of procuring for the Strategic National Stockpile medical countermeasures against anthrax, smallpox, botulism and other threats.

Public health preparedness programs are also reauthorized by the bill, which also strengthens the FDA's role in reviewing medical countermeasures and enhances the role of the Department of Health and Human Services' Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response.

"I hope and pray that we never need to use such defensive measures, but they are critical to ensuring that the public stands protected," Rogers said. "We need to continue to expedite their development and strengthen the national stockpile. Quite simply, we must always prepare for the worst."

<http://bioprepwatch.com/news/296834-house-passes-bill-to-protect-us-against-biothreats>

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BusinessWeek

December 7, 2011

Clinton Warns of Bioweapon Threat from Gene Tech

By FRANK JORDANS, Associated Press

GENEVA (Bloomberg) - New gene assembly technology that offers great benefits for scientific research could also be used by terrorists to create biological weapons, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton warned Wednesday.

The threat from bioweapons has drawn little attention in recent years, as governments focused more on the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation to countries such as Iran and North Korea.

But experts have warned that the increasing ease with which bioweapons can be created might be used by terror groups to develop and spread new diseases that could mimic the effects of the fictional global epidemic portrayed in the Hollywood thriller "Contagion."

Speaking at an international meeting in Geneva aimed at reviewing the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, Clinton told diplomats that the challenge was to maximize the benefits of scientific research and minimize the risks that it could be used for harm.

"The emerging gene synthesis industry is making genetic material more widely available," she said. "This has many benefits for research, but it could also potentially be used to assemble the components of a deadly organism."

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Gene synthesis allows genetic material -- the building blocks of all organisms -- to be artificially assembled in the lab, greatly speeding up the creation of artificial viruses and bacteria.

The U.S. government has cited efforts by terrorist networks such as al-Qaeda to recruit scientists capable of making biological weapons as a national security concern.

"A crude but effective terrorist weapon can be made using a small sample of any number of widely available pathogens, inexpensive equipment, and college-level chemistry and biology," Clinton told the meeting.

She cited the Aum Shinrikyo cult's attempts in Japan to develop anthrax in the 1990s, and the 2001 anthrax attacks in the United States that killed five people.

Washington has urged countries to be more transparent about their efforts to clamp down on the threat of bioweapons. But U.S. officials have also resisted calls for an international verification system -- akin to that for nuclear weapons -- saying it is too complicated to monitor every single lab's activities.

<http://www.businessweek.com/ap/financialnews/D9RFKM6G0.htm>

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Politico.com

OPINION/Commentary

Time to Add Carrots to Iran Policy Menu

By BRIG. GEN. JOHN ADAMS & LT. COL. CHRIS COURTNEY

December 6, 2011

Talk of bombing Iran is again proliferating as a talking point among politicians who want to sound tough on national security. This happens every election season. It will no doubt be among the most repeated foreign policy themes in the 2012 campaign. But sounding tough should not be mistaken for smart policy.

We have to keep in mind that Iran's development of a nuclear-weapon capability has been motivated by its sense of vulnerability and the regime's fear for survival. The best way to motivate Iran to develop nuclear weapons is to keep threatening.

There's been a dearth of discussion about rational policy options to prevent a nuclear-armed Iran. Preventing a nuclear-armed Iran is part of preventing a regional war. A nuclear-armed Iran would tip the balance of power toward Tehran, reduce Israel's qualitative military superiority and destabilize the entire region. This risks a war that would engulf our regional allies — not to mention our own forward-deployed forces.

Let's be clear: A U.S. attack on Iran runs a great risk of starting a regional war — our fourth war in 10 years. Isn't that what we want to avoid in the first place?

Here are U.S. policy options to stop this from happening:

First, tougher sanctions. Though sanctions have inflicted great costs on the Iranian economy, they haven't stalled Iran's nuclear aspirations. We need to ratchet up sanctions by focusing sharply on the Iranian petrochemical industry, the Iranian Central Bank and Revolutionary Guard assets.

Washington last month announced economic sanctions targeting the petrochemical and financial entities, which represent a significant step in the right direction. But further expansion of sanctions should increase pressure on these key Iranian vulnerabilities.

This will most likely weaken the hard-liners intent on reaching the nuclear threshold and encourage Iran's moderate factions that oppose development of a nuclear-weapons capability.

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Second, Washington should demonstrate U.S. and allied air and naval capabilities in the region. This communicates directly to Tehran that its investment in the nuclear program creates clear risks, as well as increasing uncertainty about potential strikes against its nuclear infrastructure. U.S. military cooperation with Turkey and the Gulf Cooperation Council can also reassure our allies in the region

This strategy is more effective than basing U.S. ground forces in the region. Our large military presence in the Gulf region has only heightened Iranian perceptions about U.S. threats. It may well have contributed to Iran's increased nuclear efforts.

In addition, U.S. ground force bases in the Middle East increase the vulnerability of our troops in the event of a regional war. Yet they also limit our use of these troops in the event of real crises.

Most important, and most difficult to achieve, Iran must not only be dissuaded from the bomb but perceive a positive stake in regional cooperation. We're good at brandishing "sticks" but should offer an array of "carrots" as well.

For starters, the U.S. should:

- Open new lines of communication. Our policymakers suffer from a lack of information about the situation in Iran. There is no routine contact with Iranian decision makers — much less opposition figures. It's time to change this foolish policy. Opening up routine diplomatic exchange — even at low levels — means a more informed policy, as well as the ability to react quickly in crises with a reduced risk of military conflict. Engagement does not equate to endorsement of Iranian actions. But it does provide a new way to influence Iran's decision making while better informing our own.
- Refrain from military threats against Iran, explicit or implicit — "all options are on the table," after all, is a threat. Our intent should be to deny hard-liners a rallying call and strengthen reformists in the internal political debate.
- Invite Iran to participate in Persian Gulf regional security activities. There's a lot of important groundwork to be laid before this. But combined with demonstration of U.S. and allied air and naval capabilities, even incremental steps in this direction would reduce the risk of regional conflict.

We must choose policy options likely to prevent both a nuclear-armed Iran and the outbreak of regional war.

Rather than hurling the chips off the table by going directly to the war option, we need to keep our eyes on the prize: Reducing the risk of regional conflict by a graduated series of policy options that encourage Tehran to change direction in its march to a nuclear weapons capability.

Brig. Gen. John Adams and Lt. Col. Chris Courtney, both retired, served in the U.S. Army. They are members of the Consensus for American Security.

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1211/69884.html>

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ITAR-TASS – Russia
OPINION/Editorial

Russia's Concerns over Missile Defence in Europe Understandable - Opinion

07 December 2011

BERLIN, December 7 (Itar-Tass) — Russia's concerns over missile defence in Europe is understandable, Philipp Missfelder, Spokesman for Foreign Affairs of the CDU/CSU Fraction and Member of the German Parliament, said.



"In Russia many politicians and ordinary people take the creation of the missile shield in Europe as something that is directed against them and for this reason mistrust this idea," Missfelder said in an interview with Suedwestrundfunk Radio on Wednesday, December 7.

In his opinion, the deployment of the missile defence system in Europe is a "bold step" from the political point of view.

However he thinks that its creation is a correct and justified decision designed to protect the continent from potential dangerous states such as Iran.

Russia has opposed the deployment of U.S. missile defence elements in Europe as a threat to its own strategic nuclear forces.

Moscow insists on legally binding guarantees that the missile defence system being created by the United States and NATO in Europe won't be aimed against it.

This issue was raised at a meeting between Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov and U.S. Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Ellen Tauscher in St. Petersburg earlier this year.

"The Russian side stressed the importance of ensuring legally binding guarantees that the missile defence system being created by the United States and NATO won't be aimed against Russia's strategic nuclear forces," the Foreign Ministry said.

Tauscher had recalled that two years ago in Prague U.S. President Barack Obama had declared America's commitment to "to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

The United States hopes for further cooperation with Russia on missile defence, Mark Toner, Deputy Department of State Spokesman, said earlier this month.

"We've been clear all along, for many years now, that this system is not directed against Russia. In multiple channels, we've explained to Russian officials that the missile defence systems being deployed in Europe do not and cannot threaten Russia's strategic deterrent," he said.

Commenting on President Dmitry Medvedev's statement that Russia may pull out of the START if the U.S. develops missile defence in Europe, and may place Iskander missiles in the Kaliningrad region, Toner said, "The New START Treaty benefits the security and stability of both our countries, and its implementation is going well, and we see no basis for threats to withdraw from it."

He stressed, "We don't see any reason for Russia to take any military countermeasures to missile defences that won't affect the strategic balance between the U.S. and Russia."

"We're going to continue to try to engage with them constructively on missile defence. We want that kind of cooperation because we believe it's in both our interests, Europe's interests, and Russia's interests," Toner said, adding, "... our focus and commitment remains on how to work productively and constructively with Russia on a cooperation on missile defence."

Toner said the U.S. missile defence reflects "a growing threat to our allies from Iran that we're committed to deterring". "Our focus is on cooperation, is on making clear to Russian authorities that this is in no way a system that's directed at Russia. It's directed, as I said, from a threat to our allies in Europe, and in Russia, in fact, from Iran," he said.

NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Russia and NATO need tactical cooperation instead.

NATO and Russian Defence Ministers met in late June to discuss the next steps in our missile defence cooperation. "We all understand that the foundation for our cooperation must be confidence and trust," Rasmussen said.



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"The threats to Russia come from elsewhere. And our invitation to cooperate on missile defence is proof of that," he said, adding that NATO posed no threat to Russia and was not considering it as a threat.

However Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in a televised address on November 23 that Russia would take strong measures, such as enhancement of its strategic capabilities and deployment of attack systems, in response to further implementation of U.S. plans to create missile defence in Europe.

He said Russia would reserve the right to give up further disarmament and arms control measures and might withdraw from the START Treaty.

Medvedev stressed that if other measures prove insufficient, Russia would deploy modern attack systems in the west and south of the country which will be able to destroy the U.S. missile defence elements in Europe. He mentioned in particular Iskander systems in the Kaliningrad region.

Rasmussen believes that if Russia starts investing heavily in countermeasures against an enemy that does not exit, it will only waste money that could otherwise be used for the needs of the Russian people and modernisation.

He said relations between Russia and NATO have developed actively over the past year but admitted that progress on missile defence was slower than expected.

Rasmussen expressed hope that the alliance and Russia will be able to reach a compromise on missile defence at the NATO summit in Chicago in the spring of 2012.

These issues will be discussed at a meeting of the Russia-NATO Council at the level of foreign ministers on December 8.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/292035.html>

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Los Angeles Times
OPINION/Commentary

North Korea's New Course

It's courting Beijing now; normalizing ties with the U.S. is no longer a priority.

By Robert Carlin and John W. Lewis

December 8, 2011

The legacy of the late North Korean leader Kim Il Sung's decision in the early 1990s to pursue a strategic partnership with the United States has run its course. In its place, the focus of Pyongyang's policies has decisively shifted to Beijing. However wary the North Koreans may be of their neighbor, the fact is that from Pyongyang's viewpoint, the Chinese have delivered and the United States did not.

Any shards remaining from the North's previous, decades-long effort to normalize ties with the U.S. were swept away by current leader Kim Jong Il's trip in May to China, his third in barely a year. Based on our discussions with Chinese officials, we believe that during that visit, Pyongyang and Beijing came to an understanding that, in preparation for planned, major domestic political events in 2012, both sides require sustained political stability, a convergence of interests that provides the opportunity for expanding bilateral relations beyond anything enjoyed in the past. The North is building toward a "prosperous and powerful" nation in celebration of the Kim Il Sung centenary in April; the Chinese are looking toward their 18th Party Congress scheduled for late next year. In both cases, it was apparently decided, stability on the Korean peninsula would serve economic programs and the succession of a new generation of leaders.

In the arrangements — formal and informal — that emerged from Kim Jong Il's discussions with his hosts, Pyongyang agreed not to "make trouble" (as the Chinese described it to us) in the short term, presumably meaning no deliberate military provocations, no third nuclear test and no launch of another ballistic missile.

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Beyond that, the talks ended in a compromise that neither side found entirely satisfactory. Kim came away with less aid and a smaller Chinese commitment of support than he had sought, though Pyongyang typically asks for more than it can get.

The North did, however, receive increased access to both Chinese capital and technology in spite of United Nations and other foreign sanctions. Kim also obtained, through the establishment of joint economic zones with China along the Yalu River, a locale to test adjustments necessary to economic development, adjustments that would fall short of what Beijing considers genuine economic reform. Chinese President Hu Jintao, we were told, had to settle for Kim's promise to cause less trouble but without a North Korean commitment to serious steps toward denuclearization.

We believe that this pivot toward Beijing is no routine oscillation in North Korean policy. The drive to normalize relations with the U.S. from 1991 to 2009 had been real, sustained and rooted in Kim Il Sung's deep concern about the regime's future in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Perhaps there was no better demonstration of the North's approach in those years than the situation on Oct. 25, 2000 — the 50th anniversary of the entry of the Chinese People's Volunteers into the Korean War. Who was in Pyongyang on that date meeting Kim Jong Il? The Chinese defense minister? No, he was cooling his heels while Kim met with the U.S. secretary of State. That was no accident of scheduling on Pyongyang's part; it would not happen again today.

If the paradigm shift is real, we expect the North in the near to medium term to make far less overt trouble. Less tension on the Korean peninsula? What could be wrong with that? Nothing, as long as it is understood that such tranquillity will also provide a veil for the North's continuing pursuit of nuclear weapons and increasingly sophisticated delivery systems. With the onset of stability and growing Chinese-North Korean cooperation, Pyongyang may well calculate that the outside world's focus on the North Korean nuclear program will become diffuse. Indeed, the North Koreans have long assumed that given enough time, the world would resign itself to their nuclear weapons, as happened with India and Pakistan.

To help things along, it isn't out of the question that Pyongyang might even agree to some U.S. efforts to contain the nuclear program through a series of what Washington calls "pre-steps." The North has repeatedly expressed willingness to consider discussion of its uranium enrichment program and moratoriums on missile and nuclear tests. As unilateral actions, these would have short-term benefits by further stabilizing the situation to provide additional room for discussions. But in the absence of long, serious negotiations between the two sides, they will turn out to be no more meaningful than the ill-considered agreements of the now moribund six-party talks.

All of which brings us back to the deepening North Korean-Chinese ties, and the downgrading in Pyongyang's calculations of relations with the United States. There was considerable momentum behind the North's strategy for engaging the U.S. in past negotiations. That is no longer the case, with consequences we have only started to feel.

Robert Carlin is a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation. John W. Lewis is professor emeritus of Chinese politics at Stanford. Both have visited North Korea several times, including the only American visit to the uranium enrichment facility at Yongbyon in November 2010.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/la-oe-carlin-nkorea-20111208,0,4374866.story?track=rss>

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Washington Post
OPINION/Editorial

The Wrong Signals to Iran

By Editorial Board
December 8, 2011

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IRAN HAS BEEN showing signs of increasing nervousness about the possibility that its nuclear program will come under attack by Israel or the United States. From the West's point of view, this alarm is good: The more Iran worries about a military attack, the more likely it is to scale back its nuclear activity. The only occasion in which Tehran froze its weaponization program came immediately after the U.S. invasion of Iraq, when it feared it might be the next American target. That's why the Obama administration, like the Bush administration before it, regularly repeats that "all options are on the table."

What doesn't make sense is a public spelling out of reasons against military action — like that delivered by Defense Secretary Leon Panetta last Friday before a U.S.-Israeli conference in Washington. Mr. Panetta said that a strike would "at best" slow down Iran's program for "maybe one, possibly two years"; that "some of those targets are very difficult to get at"; that a now-isolated regime would be able to "reestablish itself" in the region; that the United States would be the target of Iranian retaliation; and that the global economy would be damaged.

Some of Mr. Panetta's assumptions are debatable: For example, would Arab states — many of which have been quietly hoping for a U.S. or Israeli strike on Iran — really rally behind a regime they regard as a deadly enemy? And if bombing destroyed thousands of Iranian centrifuges, which are manufactured from materials Tehran cannot easily acquire, would it really be so simple to rebuild?

But even if every point were true, there is no reason for the defense secretary to spell out such views in public. No doubt President Obama and the Israeli defense ministry are well aware of the Pentagon's views, but alarmed Iranian leaders could well conclude that they have no reason for concern after all.

The public disparaging of the force option is not the administration's only waffling signal to Tehran. Though Mr. Obama boasted Thursday that his administration has orchestrated "the toughest sanctions that Iran has ever experienced," he is resisting pressure from allies such as France and from Congress to sanction the Iranian central bank. Last week the Senate passed 100-0 an amendment to the defense authorization bill that would sanction foreign banks that conduct transactions with the Iranian central bank, with an option for a postponement if the White House determines that the effect on the oil market would be too severe. The administration opposed the measure and is trying to narrow its scope in a conference committee.

Officials say they worry about the damage such sanctions could cause to the economy or to relations with allies such as South Korea and Japan. Iran, they argue, could end up benefiting if oil prices spike. While these are not unreasonable concerns, the administration's stance resembles Mr. Panetta's message. In effect, it is signaling that it is determined to prevent an Iranian nuclear weapon — unless it means taking military or diplomatic risks, or paying an economic price.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-wrong-signals-to-iran/2011/12/06/gIQAvzNYgO_story.html

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Global Times – China

OPINION/Interview

New US Strategy Brings Risk of New Arms Race

December 08, 2011

By Global Times (GT) with Fan Gaoyue

Editor's Note:

"AirSea Battle (ASB)" is a US strategic plan that envisions China as the main opponent. In a recent press conference, Spokesman of China's Ministry of National Defense Geng Yansheng stated that the plan is nothing new and is the result of a cold war mentality. Why has the US developed such a plan? How should China respond?

Global Times (GT) reporter Yu Jincui talked to Fan Gaoyue (Fan), a senior colonel in the People's Liberation Army and research fellow at the PLA Academy of Military Science, on these issues.

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GT: How do you interpret the ASB concept?

Fan: According to the 2010 US Quadrennial Defense Review, the ASB concept is intended to defeat adversaries across the range of military operations, including adversaries equipped with sophisticated anti-access and area denial capabilities. The concept will address how air and naval forces will integrate capabilities across all operational domains to counter growing challenges to the US.

Although there is no official statement that the plan mainly targets China, the intention is obvious. Confronted by a rising China, the US is panicky. It worries China may replace it as the biggest economy and challenge its global leadership.

GT: What're the prospects of the ASB plan, given US defense cuts?

Fan: Land forces and the US Marine Corps played a major role in the US anti-terrorism wars, such as in Iraq and Afghanistan. The land forces also have the upper hand in resource allocation.

From 2007 to 2010, the number of soldiers in land forces were increased by 38,000 soldiers, compared to 3,000 in the air force and 11,000 in the navy. Due to budget cuts, the air force and navy need to emphasize their importance in future possible wars. That's why they are promoting the ASB concept.

Generally speaking, the ASB concept could reduce expenditure, since it concentrates on equipment rather than soldiers. Equipment is less costly than human resources in the long run. Therefore, the concept is favored by the Pentagon.

GT: The US is enhancing its deployment in the Asia-Pacific region, including setting up the military base in Darwin, Australia and strengthening its alliances. Is this linked to the ASB plan?

Fan: Yes. The US is constantly expanding air and navy bases in Guam and increasing the military presence there. It deployed the Washington, an extremely advanced aircraft carrier, to the Yokosuka base in Japan to check the Chinese air and navy forces.

The US also shifted the headquarters of its land forces' first army from Washington State to Japan to enhance the command and management abilities of the US Pacific Command.

The US is increasing its combat capacities in the coastal regions of East Asia as well as building or renting new military bases in Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam and Australia to improve its rapid response ability.

Due to the economic crisis, the US has become unable to deal with opponents with strong anti-access and area denial capability by itself, nor is it willing to. So the US has managed to get its alliances involved. It highlights the "China threat" and China's increased military strength by taking advantage of the Diaoyu Islands disputes and the South China Sea disputes to seduce its allies to join its ASB plan.

GT: What changes will the ASB bring?

Fan: The ASB concept symbolizes that the US now sees anti-access and area denial capabilities as its main threat rather than terrorism and extremism.

After the 9/11 attacks, the US waged a 10-year war against terrorism, but now it considers China's anti-access and area denial capabilities the main threat to its interests in the West Pacific. Its attention has shifted from non-traditional threats such as terrorism back to traditional threats from countries like Iran and China.

The possible battlefields may be shifted from Middle East and Southeast Asia to the West Pacific. In a future war, the US may fight against opponents simultaneously in the space, cyberspace, air and maritime theaters. Ensuring free US movement in the West Pacific and containing China's rise will become the top US goal.

GT: What challenges it will bring to China?



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Fan: As a matter of fact, nowadays, the political implications of the concept are bigger than its military ones. The ASB concept hypes the "China threat," satisfying the US domestic demand to contain China. The concept helps build US credibility in protecting its alliances by targeting China and it also satisfies the interests of US military groups.

However, it damages China's interests. Promoting such a concept will have a negative influence on building strategic mutual trust between China and the US, and it will result in an escalation of tensions in the Asia-Pacific region.

More severely, it may risk a new round of arms race. Besides the US, countries like Japan and Australia are all involved. They have to upgrade their military power to narrow the gap between them and the US.

In a future war, the US may fight against opponents simultaneously in the space, cyberspace, air and maritime theaters.

These countries are active participants while China and other countries in the region are passive ones. Under the threats of the US ASB plan, they have to make some preparations, such as increasing military funding, developing new joint operation theories and new type of weapons, and enhancing military strength to avoid being on the back foot if a war occurs.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/NEWS/tabid/99/ID/687727/New-US-strategy-brings-risk-of-new-arms-race.aspx>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

OPINION

A Terrifying Blockage

By Jonathan Power (Power's World)

9 December 2011

Some of us believed that at the end of the Cold War in 1991 American and Soviet nuclear rockets would be left to rust and rot in their silos. Indeed, we actually saw the Ukraine, where the Soviets made most of their rockets and based many, calling in American engineers to help dismantle them. Moreover, Ukraine decided to forsake nuclear power status—for which the world should give more praise than it does.

President George H.W Bush and even more so Ronald Reagan before him did quite a lot for nuclear disarmament. At a summit in Iceland, Reagan and Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev, panicked most of their advisors and western commentators when they nearly agreed to total nuclear disarmament. Only Reagan's persistence in demanding to keep alive research into "star wars" anti-missile systems and Gorbachev's unwillingness to agree to this stymied an agreement. Both sides were equally at fault.

Despite all his rhetoric and bear hugging of Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin, Bill Clinton achieved very little. His successor, George W. Bush did only a bit more. Hopes were focussed on Barack Obama who was chosen be honoured with the Nobel Prize partly because it was thought he would be a standard bearer for disarmament. Apart from an initial agreement with Vladimir Putin to reduce superpower long-range rockets down from 2,200 warheads each to 1,500, still enough to blow up most of civilisation, Obama has done precious little. The resistance in Congress to ratifying this pact was immense and passage only came on the promise of spending \$80 billion to modernise nuclear forces. Even Bush junior's plan to base an anti-ballistic missile system on Polish soil to deter Iranian missiles has been modified only somewhat in an attempt to satisfy legitimate Russian concerns about it being used to intercept a Russian attack. More American compromise is needed on this, such as moving the site to Romania, nearer to Iran and further from Moscow and finding a way for Moscow to share the running and control of the system.

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Turning the page, the US has not ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, which would help stymie the further spread of nuclear arms to other countries. If you can't test you don't know if you have a workable bomb.

The next stage in the disarmament process should be getting rid of short-range tactical missiles base in Europe. Moscow is insisting that the first step must be the US removing all its tactical weapons from Europe, which is fair given their proximity to Moscow.

Obama has pledged to fight for "a new treaty that verifiably ends the production of fissile materials intended for use in state nuclear weapons". The idea behind this is to stop in their tracks any country thinking of building a nuclear armoury whilst setting limits on the renewing of warheads by those who already have them. Meanwhile the main issue — the number of long distance super-destructive rockets held by Russia and the US — is not on the agenda despite Obama's pledge in Oslo to work towards zero possession. The US Senate is an immovable brake on Obama. And the Russians, observing the power of the US Senate to probably refuse to approve any new treaties, stops them suggesting opening negotiations.

But how is it, 11 years after the end of the Cold War, that either side can justify nuclear weapons? Is Russia an enemy or is it not? Successive American presidents have said it is not. The Russians say the same thing about the US and Europe. Non-enemies don't have nuclear weapons pointed at each other. At least that is what basic morality and common sense would say. Certainly they are never going to be used.

So what is it all about? Don't the US and Russia want to set an example to the rest of the world, as is their sworn obligation under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty? After all sauce for the goose is good for the gander might say the Iranians and those in the Middle East that will probably emulate Iran if it does go nuclear.

Obama is checkmated. Therefore the world is checkmated. What a terrifying impasse this is.

Jonathan Power is a veteran foreign affairs commentator

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=§ion=opinion&xfile=data/opinion/2011/December/opinion_December38.xml

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The Nation – Pakistan

OPINION/Editorial

Building Defences

December 9, 2011

Taking into account India's unremitting hostility towards Pakistan, the reinforcement of defences on the common borders with India by our army, as the Indian government has apprised its Parliament, should not come as a surprise to anyone. Lodging protests with our Rangers and at the Flag Meetings does not make sense. New Delhi has only to recall that following a terrorist attack on Parliament it had deployed its full might in battle readiness on the international borders with Pakistan for nearly an entire year. The attack blamed on Pakistan – India's standard knee-jerk reaction to any untoward incident on its territory – finally turned out to be the handiwork of a local militant outfit, according to the judicial verdict. The armed build-up on the international borders was accompanied by Indian leaders' threatening statements. And the scenario raised the tension between the two countries to the highest pitch. There were fears that the prolonged standoff might erupt into a full-scale war, even ending with a nuclear conflagration. Indeed, then US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, claimed that had he not used his good offices, a devastating nuclear clash could have occurred. Whatever the truth about the claim, it became obvious that it was Pakistan's nuclear capability that, in the ultimate analysis, acted as an effective deterrence to ward off the war. Without this deterrence, the pugnacious leadership at New Delhi would certainly have imposed a war on Pakistan. That should serve as a lesson to the peacenik opponents of the possession of nuclear weapons by Pakistan.

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With this hindsight, Pakistan Army was justified in building more bunkers, outposts and observation towers after the Indians, leaders as well as the media, had accused Pakistan of staging the Mumbai carnage. They went on to trumpet the charge in world capitals, bringing undue pressure on Pakistan, but till today New Delhi has not furnished us with credible evidence of Pakistani elements' involvement. Thus, improving our defences, as we have done, is not only legitimate, but also a purely defensive measure and hardly shows any offensive intent. The fact is that the defenders of our territorial sovereignty have every right to take any steps needed to firm up our defences.

A peep into India's cruel mindset towards Muslims is evident from its treatment of the Kashmiri protesters demanding an end to its forcible rule of their homeland and the right to self-determination. According to Kashmiri leaders, Syed Ali Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, the Indian security forces are using chemical weapons and other harmful substances on these peaceful demonstrators, which cause serious debilitating illnesses among the victims. The crime constitutes a clarion call to the world's human rights organisations to intervene. Against such an enemy, the greater precaution the Pakistan armed forces take the better.

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Opinions/Editorials/09-Dec-2011/Building-defences>

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