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MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 966, 21 December 2011

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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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Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) – Iran
December 17, 2011

US Unable to Prove Iran's Nuclear Program Not Peaceful: Analyst

Kuala Lumpur, Dec 17, IRNA – US writer and analyst Seymour Hersh said Washington had no documents to prove its claim that Iran's nuclear program was not for peaceful purposes.

He said in an article on Saturday that the White House is definitely after misleading the international public opinion.

Referring to the latest report by the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency on Iran's nuclear program, he quoted US Senate expert, George Tillman as saying no documents currently existed to indicate Iran's will to develop nuclear arms.

He said those who are trying to accumulate support for their plan of military attack against Iran have been compiling a report which would lead to aggression.

He said the US officials have always tried in the past years to work out documents to officially prove that Iran is engineering nuclear bombs to prepare the ground for attacks against Iran's nuclear facilities.

Hersh further stressed that analysts, in assessing Iran's nuclear program, should review the situation in 2002 when the then US President George W Bush accused Iran of possessing a nuclear program which was used to lead evil plans but failed to provide any documents to prove it.

<http://www.irna.ir/ENNewsShow.aspx?NID=30715777>

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Xinhua News – China

Iran Determined to Further Missile Program: Commander

December 19, 2011

TEHRAN, Dec. 19 (Xinhua) -- A senior Iranian military commander said that his country is firmly determined to further develop its missile defense system, the local English-language satellite TV reported Monday.

Deputy Chief of Staff of Iran's Armed Forces Brigadier General Mostafa Izadi was quoted as saying on Sunday that by developing its missile defense system Iran would upgrade its deterrence capabilities in face of any threat of aggression.

Izadi hailed Iran's missile capabilities and said the country's missile program was entirely developed and managed by local scientists and academic scholars.

He said the fact that the Islamic republic was currently in possession of ground-to-ground missiles and could utilize its home-built rockets to launch domestically designed and developed satellites into the orbit was an indication that Iran's missile program had advanced from the experimental level to maturity, according to the report.

Iranian missile program, first initiated and organized by the country's defense ministry, was moving ahead in full speed, he was quoted as saying.

Iran have developed and tested a number of short, medium and long-range missile systems in the past years. Iranian officials have said that the country's missile advancements have a purpose of deterrence.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/world/2011-12/19/c_131315452.htm

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RT News – Russia

‘Iran Cannot Be Scared Out of Having Nukes’ - Ex-IAEA Chief

20 December 2011

Nothing can stop Iran from developing nuclear weapons, but the country does not have them yet, and has probably stopped trying to make them, Hans Blix, former Head of International Atomic Energy Agency (1981 - 1997), told RT.

Threats by hawks in Israel and the US will not succeed in scaring the Iranians from their present course, Blix argued.

“I am somehow doubtful that one can scare a country away from going for nuclear weapons. Carrots are better for persuading them,” he said.

The former chief of the UN nuclear watchdog does not believe Iran actually has a nuclear weapon and the IAEA’s recent report on the country’s nuclear program also does not state definitely that Tehran is currently pursuing nuclear arms.

“They might stop short of a weapon,” he conjectured.

“Iran does not have a track record of aggression,” Hans Blix recalled. He said that even the aggressive rhetoric used by the Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, when he verbally wiped Israel off the world map, was not said with an Israeli audience in mind.

“Most people think he was really talking to the Arab streets. He wanted to destabilize Arab states that supported the United States,” Blix said.

“I do not see an immediate threat from Iran – but I can understand that the Israelis are nervous.”

Attack on Iran means pan-Middle East war

Blix said he hoped that Israel was fully aware of the dangers of using nuclear weapons for real and would not dare to attack Iran with or without them – because Tehran would retaliate immediately.

“Any kind of attack risks a total confrontation in the Middle East. The Iranian mullahs are not sitting to tittle-tattle, they will have a counter attack and maybe they will drag the US into the war. It is a terrible fire they are playing with,” Blix told RT.

Hans Blix, who was also Chief of the UN Inspections Commission on WMD in Iraq (2000 – 2003), agreed there are ominous similarities between the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and Iran’s nuclear program.

“In the case of Iraq, they talked about weapons that in fact did not exist. Today they are talking about Iranian intentions [to have nuclear weapons] that may or may not exist,” said the former weapons inspector.

At the same time, no one denies that Iran has a large number of nuclear facilities.

Iran should be treated as equal

The former IAEA head stressed that the international community should keep channels of communication open in order to persuade Tehran it will not need either nuclear weapons, or enrichment capabilities. But the colonial upper-hand tone that the West usually takes when addressing Iran should be forgotten altogether, because Iran should be treated as an important and equal partner.

“They are proud people as many other nations are,” Blix said.

The former IAEA chief said that plans for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East to be announced at next year’s conference in Helsinki will only be executable if both Iran and Israel agree to make concessions in this matter.

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"Israel does not admit it has nuclear weapons. They say that they will not be the first to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East," Blix said, expressing the opinion that, for everybody's sake, it would be better that neither Israel nor Iran had nuclear weapons or an associated industry.

<http://rt.com/news/iran-nuclear-israel-blix-237/>

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Arab News – Saudi Arabia

Iran Invites IAEA to Visit: Diplomat

By Fredrik Dahl, Reuters

December 20, 2011

VIENNA (Reuters) - Iran has invited the U.N. nuclear watchdog to visit for talks, a senior Western diplomat said on Tuesday, but it was not clear whether the IAEA would accept without a commitment from Tehran to address suspicions it is seeking atomic weapons.

Reflecting widespread Western skepticism, the envoy said the invitation included no promise that talks would cover issues raised last month in an International Atomic Energy Agency report that suggested Iran had worked on developing the means to build a nuclear weapon.

"Apparently the Iranians have invited agency officials, but the offer is clearly just part of their amateurish charm offensive," the diplomat said. There is "no commitment to talk substance ... same old movie."

IAEA chief Yukiya Amano has made clear that any new visit must address the agency's concerns about potential military aims of the nuclear program, which Iran says is strictly peaceful.

A second Vienna-based diplomat was unable to confirm that Iran had issued an invitation, but said the IAEA and Tehran had been in contact about a possible visit which could take place early next year. If agreed, this could be "good news," he added.

There was no immediate comment from the IAEA, the Iranian mission in Vienna or Iranian officials in Tehran.

The IAEA carries out regular inspections of Iranian nuclear sites but has not sent a senior official for talks since August, before it released its latest report containing what was described as intelligence showing Iran's nuclear military aims.

Western countries seized on the IAEA report last month to ratchet up economic sanctions.

Previous visits by senior IAEA officials have failed to make significant progress towards resolving the long-running row over Iran's nuclear program, which has the potential to spark a wider conflict in the Middle East.

IAEA Deputy Director General Herman Nackaerts, head of the agency's safeguards inspections worldwide, was granted rare access to a facility for developing advanced uranium enrichment machines when he visited in August.

But Western diplomats tend to see such invitations as attempts by Iran to buy time.

The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Fereydoun Abbasi-Davani, wrote to the IAEA in late October suggesting that a senior IAEA delegation headed by Nackaerts should visit for talks.

But Iran's angry response to the IAEA report cast doubt on those plans. Iran's IAEA ambassador said last month that "everything is messed up" by the report.

Amano said in November he had proposed sending a high-level team to Iran to "clarify the issues" raised in the report.



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Another Vienna-based Western diplomat said the IAEA director general would probably only agree to send his officials to Tehran in order to specifically discuss such issues.

"I don't think they want to have talks about talks," the diplomat said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/20/us-nuclear-iran-iaea-idUSTRE7BJ0SA20111220>

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United Press International (UPI)

North Korea to Suspend Nuclear Enrichment

December 17, 2011

SEOUL, Dec. 17 (UPI) -- The United States agreed to donate up to 240,000 tons of food in exchange for North Korea's pledge to suspend uranium enrichment, sources told Yonhap.

The agreement came during recent talks in Beijing, diplomatic sources in Seoul told Yonhap News Agency Saturday.

North Korea's pledge could help improve the chances of progress during nuclear negotiations set for later this month.

Yonhap reported the two sides said they had "reached the agreement based on North Korea's pledge to implement initial measures of denuclearization that include a suspension of its uranium-enrichment program."

The agreement came during two days of meetings between Robert King, U.S. special envoy on North Korean human rights, and Ri Kun, director general for North American affairs at North Korea's Foreign Ministry, Yonhap said.

King told reporters Friday the talks were "constructive."

The U.S. food aid will be delivered in shipments of 20,000 tons for the next 12 months, sources told the news agency.

North Korea, facing chronic food shortages, reportedly requested rice, but sources in Seoul said U.S. aid will be largely biscuits and vitamin supplements for infants.

U.S. officials have long suspected food aid to North Korea, especially rice, may be diverted to the country's military.

A source said North Korea had also agreed to "address the United States' monitoring concerns" regarding the North's nuclear program.

The two countries are to begin a new round of talks Thursday aimed at restarting the six-nation negotiations on ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions. The six-way talks -- also involving South Korea, Japan, China and Russia -- have stalled since late 2008.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2011/12/17/North-Korea-to-suspend-nuclear-enrichment/UPI-26601324161697/?spt=hs&or=tn

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People's Daily -- China

DPRK Top Leader Passes Away from Mental, Physical Strain

(Xinhua)

December 19, 2011

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PYONGYANG, Dec. 19 (Xinhua) -- Kim Jong Il, top leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), passed away last Saturday at the age of 69, the DPRK's official KCNA news agency reported Monday.

Kim, who was general secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), chairman of the DPRK National Defence Commission and supreme commander of the Korean People's Army (KPA), died "from a great mental and physical strain at 08:30 (2330 GMT Friday) on Dec. 17, 2011, on a train during a field guidance tour," said the report.

Citing a notice released by the WPK Central Committee and Central Military Commission, DPRK National Defence Commission, Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly and Cabinet, the KCNA said that the "Korean revolution" is led by Kim Jong Un now and that the party members, servicepersons and all other people should be faithful to his leadership.

"All the party members, servicepersons and people should remain loyal to the guidance of respected Kim Jong Un and firmly protect and further cement the single-minded unity of the party, the army and the people," said the notice.

Kim Jong Il suffered an advanced acute myocardial infarction Saturday, complicated with a serious heart shock, and every possible first-aid measure was taken immediately before his death, said the report.

The National Funeral Committee, led by Kim Jong Un, has been set up, and the body of Kim Jong Il will be placed at the Kumsusan Memorial Palace.

The DPRK will be in a period of mourning till Dec. 29 and condolence will be accepted from Tuesday to Dec. 27, said the report, adding that the farewell ceremony will be held on Dec. 28 and the National Meeting of Memorial will be held on Dec. 29.

According to a notice released by the National Funeral Committee, mourning guns will be boomed in Pyongyang and in provincial seats timed to coincide with the national memorial service in Pyongyang, and all the people will observe three minutes' silence and all locomotives and vessels will blow sirens all at once.

All institutions and enterprises across the country will hold mourning events during the mourning period, and all provinces, cities and counties will hold memorial services timed to coincide with the national memorial service in Pyongyang, it said.

Meanwhile, the institutions and enterprises will hoist flags at half-mast and musical and all other entertainments will be halted, said the notice, adding that foreign mourning delegations will not be received.

Kim Jong Il was born on Feb. 16, 1942. He started working for the Central Committee of the WPK in 1964. In 1973, he was elected secretary of the Central Committee. In February 1974, he was elected member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee.

On Oct. 8, 1997, Kim Jong Il was elected general secretary of the WPK.

He was given the honorary title of "Hero of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea" in 1975 and 1982.

In April 1992, he was given the title of Marshal of the DPRK. He had also received the Kim Il Sung Order three times and many other awards and honors.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90777/90851/7681554.html>

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Bloomberg News

Kim Jong Il's Death May Trigger Nuclear Crisis for Obama

By Indira A.R. Lakshmanan and Nicole Gaouette
December 19, 2011

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The death of North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il presents a potential crisis for President Barack Obama, complicating U.S. efforts to press the regime to abandon its nuclear arsenal and cease belligerent behavior.

The demise of a 70-year-old ruler -- who frustrated three U.S. administrations with his pursuit of nuclear weapons, threats toward American allies and economic mismanagement that resulted in mass starvation -- ushers in a period of uncertainty for the isolated communist regime and North Asia. It increases the danger of misjudgment on the Korean peninsula, where 1.7 million troops from North and South Korea and the U.S. square off. The U.S. has 75,000 troops stationed in South Korea and Japan and is bound by treaty to defend its allies

"This is potentially a game-changing event," Victor Cha, a former chief U.S. negotiator for North Korean nuclear talks under President George W. Bush, said in an interview. "If you asked experts what would be the most likely scenario for North Korea to collapse, the answer everyone would give you is 'if Kim Jong Il died today.' We're in that scenario."

The prospect of a crisis in the region -- whether a hardening of confrontational behavior or a collapse of the impoverished state triggering a humanitarian emergency -- is an additional foreign policy challenge for the the Obama administration 11 months before the U.S. presidential election and just as the U.S. completes its military withdrawal from Iraq.

Asia 'Pivot'

Uncertainty over North Korea thrusts Asia to the forefront of the administration's agenda, just weeks after Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's statement that the U.S. plans to "pivot" its attention to Asia. Stability in Asia is essential to Obama's aim to make the region the engine of U.S. economic recovery, largely through expanded trade.

The transition in North Korea adds to risks for South Korea, Asia's fourth-largest economy. The Kospi index of shares closed down 3.4 percent in Seoul, and South Korea's won sank 1.4 percent to 1,174.80 per dollar.

Kim's passing may scuttle what may have been the first U.S. diplomatic breakthrough with the hermetic regime in a few years. South Korea's Yonhap News reported two days ago that the U.S. would provide food aid to North Korea with the understanding that the regime would suspend uranium enrichment. U.S. officials declined to confirm the reports, and the death of Kim may put any deal on hold.

Cha, now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, likened the focus on North Korea's tenuous situation to efforts to peer into a fishbowl.

Worrisome Scenarios

"We're all going to try to look in from the outside, and at same time I think everyone will be very careful about not sticking their hand in the fishbowl," Cha said.

Perhaps most probable among worrisome scenarios, according to former U.S. officials, is that Kim's death may prompt his third-born son and anointed successor, Kim Jong Un, to accelerate nuclear weapons development and menace his neighbors in a show of force to consolidate his control.

"One question is: Will Kim Jong Un and others around him do something to prove him being in command?" said Michael Green, former National Security Council senior director for Asia under President George W. Bush. "In next 48 hours we won't see that, but in the next weeks and months, I suspect we may."

The Korea peninsula has technically been in a state of war since the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a cease-fire rather than a peace treaty.

Nuclear Weapons State



North Korean media has reported that the country will become “a full nuclear weapons state” in 2012; April will mark the 100th anniversary of the birth of Kim Il Sung, the founder of the regime and its cult of dynastic personality. Kim Il Sung died in 1994, after grooming his son Kim Jong Il for a decade and a half.

Kim Jong Il's third son has had far less preparation or time to consolidate his authority. Believed to be 28 or 29, he was publicly tapped for the job by his father only last year, when he was appointed to the second-highest military post within the ruling Workers' Party of Korea.

“It's the only communist monarchy in the world, and the king is dead. And when the king dies, even when he set his succession, there can still be rivalry and civil war,” said Green, now at CSIS and Georgetown University.

While the North has twice conducted underground nuclear tests in the last five years, Green said U.S. officials fear that the regime may go further by showcasing progress on triggering devices and miniaturization of a nuclear payload, or by launching more advanced ballistic missiles.

Following His Father

Bruce Klingner, a Korea specialist at the Heritage Foundation in Washington and a former deputy chief for Korea at the Central Intelligence Agency, said Kim Jong Un is unlikely to abandon his father's policies or his nuclear weapons as he seeks to consolidate his position.

Nuclear weapons, Klingner said in an interview, “provide security against the U.S. and South Korea in case of attacks” and force the world to “pay attention to Pyongyang. It gives them leverage in trying to extract economic benefits from the West.”

The Obama administration has said that it resumed direct talks in recent months after determining that engaging the regime might lessen the risk of violent provocations. Glyn Davies, the U.S. special envoy on North Korea policy, told reporters in Tokyo last week that further bilateral talks hinged on the totalitarian state's changing its “provocative” behavior.

Economic Mess

Kim leaves behind an economy crippled by mismanagement, crop failures, sanctions and a bungled currency revaluation. North Korea's economy is less than 3 percent the size of South Korea's and has relied on economic handouts since the 1990s, when an estimated 2 million people died from famine. The United Nations and the U.S. last year tightened economic sanctions that were imposed on the North for its nuclear weapons activities and two attacks in 2010 that killed 50 South Koreans.

“If there was a deal on food aid, whatever deal has been struck is pretty much off the table now,” Bryce Wakefield of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, a Washington-based research institute, said in an interview. The U.S. wouldn't be able to count on the North “to hold up its end of the deal,” and it will take time for North Korea to determine its own direction.

Scott Snyder, a senior fellow for Korea studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, agreed that “it will be more difficult to get answers or positions out of Pyongyang under current circumstances.”

Intelligence Efforts

Bruce W. Bennett, a defense analyst at the Rand Corp. in Santa Monica, California, said in an interview that a number of scenarios are possible in the coming months: North Korean elites try to install an alternate leader; assassination attempts; or a show of force by Kim Jong Un purging select officials or accelerating nuclear testing.

“We clearly should be trying to shape the event, but it's not likely that we're going to have much power,” Bennett said.



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The U.S., Bennett said, will be heightening military warning and intelligence efforts to monitor North Korea, including shifting satellites, running reconnaissance aircraft and gathering intelligence from allies and from China on actions by the North Korean military and the potential for an internal uprising.

At midnight, Obama spoke with South Korean President Lee Myung-bak and "reaffirmed the United States' strong commitment to the stability of the Korean Peninsula and the security of our close ally," according to a White House statement. The leaders agreed "to stay in close touch as the situation develops" and directed their national security teams to continue close coordination.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-12-19/death-of-north-korea-s-kim-jong-il-might-present-nuclear-crisis-for-obama.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
December 19, 2011

S. Korean Officials Kept in Dark on N. Korean Leader's Death

SEOUL, Dec. 19 (Yonhap) -- South Korean officials are under public and media fire Monday for their apparent failure to collect credible intelligence on the sudden death of North Korean leader Kim Jong-il.

South Korean intelligence apparently had no information about Kim's death two days ago until North Korea announced it. According to the North's TV broadcasts, the 69-year-old leader died of a heart attack Saturday during a train trip.

Earlier in the day, North Korea said it was going to make an important announcement at noon, keeping South Korean officials wondering what it would be.

According to Seoul government sources, there was no inside intelligence that indicated the North's announcement would be about the leader's death.

The lapse in intelligence on North Korea kept President Lee Myung-bak in the dark until the North's announcement, the sources said.

When North Korea's state television aired the news of Kim's death, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Kwan-jin was in parliament briefing lawmakers on a defense reform bill. He rushed back to his ministry after being informed of the news.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was also on a tour of a front-line unit when the news broke out.

In May, the South Korean government also came under fire for failing to collect accurate information about the North Korean leader's trip to China. At that time, officials said that Kim's heir-apparent son, Jong-un, was accompanying his father on the China trip, but he actually did not.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2011/12/19/94/0401000000AEN20111219013800315F.HTML>

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CNN

Kim's Death Stalls Deal to Freeze Uranium Enrichment, Officials Say

By Elise Labott, CNN
December 19, 2011



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Washington (CNN) -- A possible exchange of U.S. nutritional aid to North Korea for a halt to Pyongyang's uranium enrichment program has stalled with the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, U.S. and South Korean officials said Monday.

The prospective deal was expected to lead to the resumption of six-party disarmament talks, after which North Korea would have expected a larger amount of food aid, the officials told CNN. The announcement had been slated for this week, they said.

But with the news that Kim died of a heart attack over the weekend, the announcement has been delayed, the officials said. The Obama administration now believes that the ball is in the North Koreans' court, and they will need to signal whether they're still interested, according to the officials.

State Department spokesman Victoria Nuland told reporters that U.S. officials had been scheduled to discuss the proposed deal further on Monday, but those talks were put off after North Korea announced Kim's death.

"We want to be respectful of the North Korean period of mourning," Nuland said. "We will obviously need to engage at the right moment."

In addition to halting its production of enriched uranium, which can be used to build nuclear weapons, North Korea also would have let inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency return, the U.S. and South Korean officials said.

North Korea conducted nuclear weapons tests in 2006 and 2009. The six-party talks among the two Koreas, Japan, the United States, Russia and China, aimed at convincing the North to denuclearize, have been stalled since 2008.

In 2009, after the United Nations condemned a North Korean missile test, Pyongyang kicked out IAEA and U.S. inspectors who had been monitoring its Yongbyon nuclear plant.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2011/12/19/world/asia/north-korea-nuclear/index.html>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
December 20, 2011

China to Cautiously Watch Succession Process: Experts

By Kim Young-gyo

HONG KONG, Dec. 20 (Yonhap) -- China has few options but to cautiously watch North Korea's succession process following the death of the nation's former leader Kim Jong-il, experts said Tuesday.

Kim Jong-il, who ruled the communist nation with an iron fist while ceaselessly pursuing nuclear weapons programs, died of a heart attack on Saturday, the North announced Monday. He was 69.

"China's key priority at this stage is to ensure stability on the Korean peninsula, although China cannot do much to directly influence what is happening inside North Korea at the moment," said Brian Bridges, professor and head of the political science department at Hong Kong's Lingnan University.

"Like the rest of the world, the Chinese will have to watch and wait until the new leadership stabilizes. They will be respectful to the North Koreans, perhaps sending a Politburo member to the state funeral on the 28th if such foreign guests are invited."

Jong-un, Kim's youngest son in his late 20s, has been groomed to succeed his father as the country's next leader since last year, when he was named a four-star general and vice chairman of the Central Military Commission of the ruling Workers' Party.

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Whether Jong-un can propel the impoverished dynasty with nuclear ambition into a third generation of leadership has been considered to be a crucial issue to North Korea's domestic politics.

Other scholars held a similar view, saying that stability in North Korea is China's top priority.

"What matters to China is that the new leader -- whoever that might be -- can keep North Korea together and depend on China before any other country for security assurance," said Yoichiro Sato, professor at Japan's Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University.

Simon Shen, professor of international relations at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, pointed out China has three major concerns over North Korea's possible future.

"First, Kim Jong-un can't consolidate power and this leads to a refugee crisis. Second, he can't consolidate power thus has to create regional instability. Third, he sides with the U.S. -- something similar to Myanmar's diplomatic shift -- to gather public support. All are unacceptable to Beijing," Shen said.

"But China won't do anything at this moment until it receives further signals from the Pyongyang regime."

Lingnan's Bridges predicted that in the medium-term, China will hope that the new leadership will be more willing to follow Chinese encouragement to open up the North Korean economy, saying it "could reduce the burden of support for China."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2011/12/20/26/0301000000AEN20111220010200320F.HTML>

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Wall Street Journal
December 20, 2011

Pyongyang's Neighbors Worry Over Nuclear Arms

By KEITH JOHNSON

WASHINGTON—For years, the biggest questions surrounding North Korea have involved the isolated country's nuclear devices and its missiles, some of which could reach Alaska.

How the country's leadership succession will unfold in the aftermath of dictator Kim Jong Il's death—and what that means for North Korea's huge military and its nuclear arsenal—has now emerged in sharp relief.

On paper, the National Defense Commission has control of nuclear devices and missiles. The NDC is headed by Kim Jong Il's brother-in-law, Jang Song Taek. Mr. Jang is widely expected to act as an adviser to Kim Jong Eun, the youngest son of the deceased leader widely considered to be in line for the country's top post.

White House spokesman Jay Carney said Monday that the U.S. doesn't have "any additional concerns beyond the ones that we have long had with North Korea's approach to nuclear issues."

However, North Korea experts note that the country doesn't have many of the safeguards routinely used by nuclear states to prevent unauthorized or accidental deployment of the weapons.

And given the Byzantine nature of the regime, informal control of the devices could rest with other officials, or be held directly by the supreme leader, speculate some analysts, including the Center for Naval Analyses, a security think tank.

It is also unclear where the devices are kept in peacetime. Analysts believe North Korea has followed the Chinese model of keeping nuclear weapons and missiles separate to reduce chances for an accident, but that the bombs are kept near bases that house the country's medium-range "Nodong" missiles.

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One of the country's most modern missiles, the Taepodong-2, has a range of nearly 4,200 miles, which would put it within range of Australia or Alaska, says a report from the International Crisis Group, a nonprofit group aimed at preventing conflict.

North Korea has one to two dozen nuclear devices, nuclear experts say. The number varies because experts aren't sure how much plutonium Pyongyang uses for each device. But experts say there is no firm evidence that North Korea has turned its nuclear devices into operational warheads, which would require miniaturizing and toughening the nuclear devices so that they could fit into a long-range missile.

North Korean nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009 produced small blasts—estimated at a fraction of the size of the explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—and the country's recent missile tests have been plagued by misfires and operational difficulties, North Korea experts say.

"It's the kind of country that would build nuclear bombs that don't work. They're trying to do things they're not very good at," said Jeffrey Lewis, of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Washington.

But much is not known. North Korea's leadership kicked out inspectors for the International Atomic Energy Agency in the spring of 2009. The country invited some foreign scientists, including Americans, to visit a secret enrichment facility in 2010.

Since then, North Korea appears to have developed an alternative path to nuclear weapons: highly enriched uranium, rather than the plutonium-based bombs already in its arsenal. Uranium is less suitable for powerful nuclear weapons than plutonium.

But it worries experts, because low-enriched uranium is used in nuclear-power plants, thus giving Pyongyang a potential pretext for the development of a native uranium-production capability—similar to what the U.S. and other Western countries believe Iran is doing.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204058404577108741550255480.html>

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

North Korea's Military Firepower

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

20 December 2011

The next leader of North Korea will inherit an impoverished, isolated country with a large army brimming with artillery, chemical weapons and a small nuclear arsenal.

Here are the basic facts of North Korea's military, which has an estimated annual budget of four to seven billion dollars:

NUCLEAR WEAPONS:

North Korea has enough plutonium to build six or seven atomic weapons, according to international estimates. It remains unclear whether the North can manufacture nuclear warheads for its missiles but analysts believe it is likely close to that point.

MISSILES:

The North has at least 1,000 missiles of various types, including some with a range of more than 3,000 kilometers (1,860 miles), according to South Korea's defense ministry. It has also test-launched three intercontinental Taepodong missiles.

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS:



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US and allied military planners believe that the North would be overwhelmed in a conventional war with the South, but they worry how Pyongyang would use its arsenal of chemical and biological weapons.

The North has a large stockpile of 2,500-5,000 tons of chemical weapons, Seoul's defense ministry and other estimates say, enough to inflict terrible casualties on South Korea.

The chemical agents could be delivered with long-range artillery, multiple rocket launchers, ballistic missiles, aircraft and naval ships.

The North also has a biological weapons program but analysts say it is unclear if the regime has moved beyond the research and development phase.

Pyongyang is believed to possess anthrax, mustard gas, sarin, botulism and phosgene.

MANPOWER:

With conscription starting at age 17, the armed forces currently number about 1.2 million. The country also has reserves of 7.7 million.

ARMY:

The army has a vast array of heavy guns pointed at Seoul. The weaponry includes 3,500 main battle tanks, 560 light tanks, 2,500 armored personnel carriers, 3,500 pieces of towed artillery, 4,400 pieces of self-propelled artillery, 2,500 multiple rocket launchers, 7,500 mortars, an unknown number of anti-tank guided weapons, 1,700 recoilless launchers, and 11,000 air defense guns, according to US government estimates and analysts.

NAVY:

The navy has a large fleet of submarines, estimated at 92.

It also has three frigates, six corvettes, 43 missile craft, 158 large patrol craft, 103 fast torpedo craft, more than 334 patrol force craft, 10 amphibious ships, two coastal defense missile batteries, 130 hovercraft, 23 minesweepers, eight midsize ships, and four survey vessels.

AIR FORCE:

The air force, designed for quick strikes across the border in South Korea, has an estimated 80 bombers, 541 fighters and ground attack fighters, 316 transport planes, 588 transport helicopters, 24 attack helicopters and at least one unmanned drone as well as an ample supply of air-to-air missiles and surface-to-air missiles.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/world/271636/north-korea-military-firepower>

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National Journal

Who Has North Korea's Nuclear 'Football'? Few Have an Answer

By Elaine M. Grossman

December 20, 2011

On the heels of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il's death, outside experts seem more uncertain than ever about who retains control over the hermit nation's nuclear weapons or authority for their potential use.

Pyongyang is estimated as having enough fissionable material for fewer than 10 warheads, though no evidence has emerged to date that it has made any weapons operational by mating them with bombs or ballistic missiles. North Korea has said that its nuclear arms are for deterrence.

By some accounts, Kim, 69, was likely to have played a unique role over the disposition of the North's atomic arms, both day-to-day and under any imagined combat scenario.

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In the United States and Russia, the top elected leaders maintain around-the-clock access to a nuclear “football,” a briefcase-sized command-and-control console that allows them to securely order a nuclear weapons launch from outside a military command center, if ever deemed necessary.

It is not known whether there was any comparable mobile command capability for the North Korean despot. More broadly, questions remain about whose finger can now access the veritable trigger over the nation’s deliverable weapons -- if there are any.

In fact, so little is known about the secretive regime’s nuclear arsenal that even the best-informed Korea experts are reluctant to speculate what command-and-control changes might be afoot now that Kim is gone.

North Korea’s so-called “Dear Leader” had over roughly the past two years been grooming his youngest son, Kim Jong Un, to succeed him. The elder Kim had been in ill health since a debilitating 2008 stroke, but his sudden death from a heart attack on Saturday morning caught many Korea-watchers by surprise.

The news has thrust Kim Jong Un, believed to be in his late 20s, into a new leadership role without the benefit of much experience. Whether he has inherited immediate control over North Korea’s possible small handful of nuclear weapons is one among many pressing questions on the minds of Korean Peninsula experts and governments around the world.

“I don’t think anyone really knows, in part because we don’t even know where their weapons are,” Joel Wit, a visiting fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies’ U.S.-Korea Institute, said in a Monday interview. “But my impression is that their command and control of those weapons is extremely tight and centralized, which of course is something that everyone wants. And I don’t think that’ll change at all.”

By contrast, Victor Cha, a former Asian affairs director at the National Security Council, said Kim’s sudden death could yet lead to serious instability in North Korea.

There is “the potential for loose nuclear weapons [in] a country that is a nuclear weapons state that doesn’t have a leadership,” Cha, who now directs Asian studies at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service, said on the PBS *NewsHour* on Monday. “And that is a far more difficult problem than what was already a difficult problem when it came to nuclear weapons in North Korea.”

A 2009 issue paper by the International Crisis Group said Kim Jong Il wielded “extraordinary power” in leading North Korea’s governing and military institutions, including as chairman of the National Defense Commission, general secretary of the Korean Workers’ Party and, during wartime, supreme commander of the Korean People’s Army.

These roles appeared to make him a crucial actor when it came to controlling nuclear warheads and their weapon platforms, according to the ICG analysis, titled “North Korea’s Nuclear and Missile Programs.”

“He exerts tight control over nuclear assets and delivery systems and must authorize the use of any nuclear weapons,” the monograph stated. “This very personal and centralized system could create instability and uncertainty if he suddenly were unable to lead.”

Longtime nuclear command-and-control expert Bruce Blair, president of the Washington-based World Security Institute, called the ICG paper “the best and most credible analysis” he has seen on the topic.

Noting that he had no access to specific details in the aftermath of Kim Jong Il’s death, Blair said it appeared to him that Kim Jong Un -- whom North Korea is now terming the “Great Successor” -- would not have exclusive access to the atomic arsenal.

“I am confident that the son... cannot wield nuclear weapons unilaterally,” he said.

A combination of organizations -- potentially including the Korean General Staff, the National Defense Commission, the military bureau that operates nuclear-capable Nodong missiles, and a nuclear weapons custodial



organization separate from the military chain of command -- "would prevent the little guy from impulsively ordering the warheads mated to the missile, let alone ordering the launch of armed missiles," Blair told *Global Security Newswire*.

A number of North Korea experts said, though, that there were some indications that Kim could have retained singular control over the operational use of nuclear weapons, and that he did not share this authority with any other individuals or organizations in the ruling apparatus. If this assumption is correct, it might stand to reason that his son has inherited all nuclear command and control -- barring a potential internal challenge to his new leadership.

If Kim Jong Il exercised sole operational control "for the release of nuclear weapons or the use of nuclear weapons, I would think" that his son alone might now have this responsibility, said Wit, formerly a 15-year State Department official specializing in Northeast Asian security issues.

"We should be concerned about that [possibility] -- or at least interested," said Robert Carlin, a former CIA analyst who spent more than a decade as head of a State Department division on Northeast Asia. Discussing the ICG appraisal, he called it "simply idle speculation" for outside experts to state with any confidence that Kim did or did not share nuclear weapons command and control, given a near-total blackout on public information about the matter.

Even the organizations named as having possible roles in nuclear command and control are quite murky. While Kim was cited as head of the National Defense Commission, for example, it is unclear whether any such organization even existed, Carlin said. It might have been one of several lofty credentials retained by Kim to bolster his exclusive grip on the reins of power.

"I defy anyone to assert that the National Defense Commission ever met as a body. We don't know that," Carlin said in an interview. "In fact, we don't even think that it was a real organization. For many years, people were pretty convinced -- even North Koreans -- that it was a paper organization and it had no real staffing or anything like that."

Similarly, there is much about the post-Kim Jong Il leadership transition process that cannot be understood at this early date.

"We know that from September 2010, several [Kim] family members also took prominent roles in the party and various parts of the bureaucracy, I think in support of this process," said Scott Snyder, a Korea specialist at the Council on Foreign Relations who spoke with reporters during a Monday teleconference. "What we don't know is whether or not the process will go forward, as Kim Jong Il had planned, in Kim Jong Il's absence."

One expert source said that leading up to this event, there were some clear indications that Pyongyang has exercised strong security over its nuclear weapons, an approach that might offer some reassurance against the possibility of accidents or misuse following Kim's demise.

"I've had some glimpses into their command and control," said the source, who demanded anonymity in discussing a highly sensitive diplomatic and military issue.

"Their security for [nuclear] fuel rods is very strict... involving armed guards and secure storage," said this issue expert. "Based on that, I would assume their security measures for nuclear weapons would be extremely strict."

Carlin, a visiting scholar at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation, said it is plausible that North Korea has patterned its controls over nuclear weapons on what it has learned from Russia, China, and perhaps even Pakistan.

"Yes, [Kim] had his own unique governing style, but they're not crazy. And they know this is a pretty dangerous enterprise and they don't want anything to go wrong," he told *GSN*. "So maybe they look to what other people are doing, as well."



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The chill in U.S.-North Korean relations -- following the breakdown of the six-party talks three years ago -- has left Washington with few avenues for developing an understanding of Pyongyang's nuclear controls, Carlin said.

The forum -- which includes China, Japan, North and South Korea, Russia, and the United States -- was last held in December 2008. The approach has sought to reward North Korea for making progress toward shutting down its nuclear program in exchange for foreign assistance and international security guarantees.

Although Pyongyang has conducted two known underground tests of its atomic devices, the United States has refused to acknowledge North Korea as a nuclear-armed nation. That has come back to bite Washington in perhaps some unanticipated ways, Carlin said.

"For the last two or three years, since the first North Korean nuclear test, we have officially held to the line that we will not recognize North Korea as a nuclear weapons state," he said. "And as a consequence, we have not been able to engage them on any of these serious issues that go to the reality of the situation, which is [that] they do possess nuclear weapons.

"So questions of command and control -- which would be very difficult to get at in any case -- we haven't even begun to formulate the question with them," Carlin said.

<http://www.nationaljournal.com/nationalsecurity/who-has-north-korea-s-nuclear-football-few-have-an-answer-20111220>

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Times of India – India

North Korea's Military to Share Power with Kim's Heir

By Reuters

December 21, 2011

North Korea will shift to collective rule from a strongman dictatorship after last week's death of Kim Jong-il, although his untested young son will be at the head of the ruling coterie, a source with close ties to Pyongyang and Beijing said.

The source added that the military, which is trying to develop a nuclear arsenal, has pledged allegiance to the untested Kim Jong-un, who takes over the family dynasty that has ruled North Korea since it was founded after World War Two.

The source declined to be identified but has correctly predicted events in the past, telling Reuters about the North's first nuclear test in 2006 before it took place.

The comments are the first signal that North Korea is following a course that many analysts have anticipated -- it will be governed by a group of people for the first time since it was founded in 1948.

Both Kim Jong-il and his father Kim Il-sung were all-powerful, authoritarian rulers of the isolated state.

The situation in North Korea appeared stable after the military gave its backing to Kim Jong-un, the source said.

"It's very unlikely," the source said when asked about the possibility of a military coup. "The military has pledged allegiance to Kim Jong-un."

North Korea's collective leadership will include Kim Jong-un, his uncle and the military, the source said.

Jang Song-thaek, 65, brother-in-law of Kim Jong-il and the younger Kim's uncle, is seen as the power behind the throne along with his wife Kim Kyong-hui, Kim Jong-il's sister. So too is Ri Yong-ho, the rising star of the North's military and currently its most senior general.

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The younger Kim, who is in his late 20s, has his own supporters but is not strong enough to consolidate power, analysts said.

"I know that he's been able to build a group of supporters around himself who are of his generation," said Koh Yu-hwan, president of the Korean Association of North Korean Studies in Seoul.

"So it is not entirely elders in their 70s, plus some like Jang in their 60s, who are backing him. These young backers will be emerging fairly soon."

Koh said the coterie was put in place by Kim Jong-il before he died. "The relative calm seen these few days shows it's been effective. If things were not running smoothly, then we'd have seen a longer period of 'rule by mummy', with Kim Jong-il being faked as still being alive."

He said the younger Kim would accept the set-up, for now. "Considering the tradition of strongarm rule by his father and grandfather, things can't be easy for him," he said.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/North-Koreas-military-to-share-power-with-Kims-heir/articleshow/11194784.cms>

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Zee News – India

'Killer' Indian Missile Alarms China

Press Trust of India (PTI)

Sunday, December 18, 2011

Beijing: As India gears up to test its 5000 km range Agni-V missile in February next year, Chinese official media here said that the "killer" missile with potential to reach several cities in China showed New Delhi's intention to become major power in the region.

"Indian officials and scientists claimed that their Agni-V missile is the 'killer' for a certain country, which obviously shows the intention of seeking regional balance of power," an article in the state-run People Daily titled 'Risks behind India's military build-up' said on Sunday.

It added that India has strategic ambitions and hopes to play an important role in world affairs, "so it cannot tolerate these internal and external security environment constraints".

"It is the Indian goal to continue to strengthen the military and possess a military clout that matches its status as a major power," the write-up in the daily, which is the official organ of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), said.

"However, how many missiles is enough is a question for all governments in the missile era," it said.

Chinese media reported the last month's successful test flight of the 3000 km range Agni-IV missile.

DRDO Director-General V K Saraswat had announced that Agni-V will be test fired in February.

Defence analysts say that the two together has the potential to reach several top Chinese cities, though far off regions could still be out of range for Indian missiles.

Analysts say that while short range missile Agni-I and II are regarded as Pakistan-specific, Agni-III, IV and V are perceived to be China-specific.

For its part China already has a variety of long and medium range missiles which according to US media reports were deployed in Tibet and Xinjiang provinces.

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US Department of Defence Report on Chinese military said last year that China has now replaced older liquid-fuelled, nuclear capable CSS-3 IRBMs with more advanced and survivable solid-fuelled CSS-5 MRBMs.

The People's Daily also carried a similar write up last month terming India's decision to beef-up defence preparedness at borders with China with one lakh troops as a "sensitive move".

"It will result in a tense situation in the region and harm India's own interests. Increasing troops on the border area is always a sensitive move and it is especially sensitive to increase troops on a disputed border area," it said.

"In an era when precision-guided weapons are developing rapidly, everyone with common sense knows that concentrated troops could be eliminated easily," it said.

Today's write up referred to India's plan to spend USD 8.2 billion equipment from foreign countries to improve its defence capabilities in the 11th plan.

"The Sweden Stockholm International Peace Research Institute said in a recent report that India has become the world's largest arms importer, a veritable arsenal made up of imports from many different countries," it said.

http://zeenews.india.com/news/world/killer-indian-missile-alarms-china_747575.html

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The Hindu – India

Glitch Halts Test-Launch of Prithvi Missiles

HYDERABAD, December 21, 2011

By Y. Mallikarjun

Plans to launch two nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missiles in a salvo mode within a few minutes of each other were aborted at the last minute on Wednesday after a technical glitch developed in one of them.

The missiles which were to be launched by the Strategic Force Command (SFC) of the Armed Forces from the Integrated Test Range, Balasore, were held back, after the problem was detected during the countdown, a top official of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) told *The Hindu*.

The problem was being looked into and it was not yet known when the rescheduled test-firing would take place.

The 350-km range Prithvi-II is a single stage, liquid propelled strategic missile and can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads. It has already been inducted into the armed forces and was tested several times as part of regular user trials. The missile is equipped with an advanced inertial navigation system and can carry payloads ranging from 500 kg to 1,000 kg to a distance of 350 km.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2734460.ece>

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RT News – Russia

Russia to Quit START if No Change in US Stance

19 December 2011

There is no change of America's position on AMD deployment in Europe, so if this continues Russia will have to withdraw from the START treaty, warned Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister in an exclusive interview to RT.

Sergey Ryabkov heads the Russian side of the US-Russia working group that deals with issues of global security, arms control, missile defense, etc.

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Russia's envoy to NATO Dmitry Rogozin says the US seems to be surrounding Russia with military installations *"like an anaconda"*. Ryabkov confirmed that Moscow never made it a secret that it is definitely disturbed because of the instability created by the American plans to deploy anti-missile assets in Europe and other parts of the world.

In this regard, Russia simply cannot go for further cuts of strategic offensive nuclear weapons *"in the absence of a meaningful arrangement in the area of missile defense."*

"It would be very irresponsible to believe that we just move forward in cuts in numbers off strategic weapons while advantages and even predominance of the US and NATO parties as a whole in other areas just grow," Sergey Ryabkov shared. *"It will overstretch the very concept of strategic stability."*

According to Ryabkov, *"Russia is not rushing into any dramatic decisions,"* but if the situation develops in a negative way, Russia will consider withdrawing from the New START treaty.

There is still hope a deal could be reached between Moscow and Washington, but as of now, *"we are not seeing any changes in the American position,"* Ryabkov said.

Washington says it has Iran in mind when unfolding the missile defense shield in Europe. Sergey Ryabkov believes that *"Iran's missile capabilities are hugely exaggerated by the US."*

America's attitude to the Iranian issue is *"one-dimensional,"* Ryabkov said. The US pretends it would be able to engage Iran diplomatically, but what they do is only mounting new sanctions on top of others.

"I do not believe that this is the right way to go," Ryabkov insisted. *"I do not believe the Iranian party would ever offer any concessions under that much pressure."*

Russia's deputy FM pointed out that *"the sanctions policy has exhausted its meaning and simply make no sense to continue this way."*

The plan proposed by Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov is much more realistic, because it proposes compromise, Ryabkov argued.

He said Russia is doing its best to indulge the US and Israel to restrain from using force against Iran.

"Attack on Iran would be a real catastrophe," Ryabkov predicted.

<http://rt.com/news/russia-us-start-ryabkov-141/>

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ITAR-TASS News Agency – Russia
20 December 2011

Russia Has to Give Proportionate Response to US Missile Defense

MOSCOW, December 20 (Itar-Tass) – Russia will have to give a proportionate response to the U.S. missile defense, in particularly, with upgraded warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles, Russian Strategic Rocket Forces Commander Lt. Gen. Sergei Karakayev said on the occasion of the Forces' Day marked on December 17.

"We have to give a proportionate response to the developing U.S. missile defense infrastructure, as the United States refuses to acknowledge Russian concerns," he said. Hence new missile systems will be equipped with highly efficient, maneuverable and guided warheads and improved characteristics of penetration through missile defense, he said.

"Practically all the silo-based and road-mobile missiles the Russian Strategic Rocket Forces are using have warheads capable of passing through missile defense," he said. *"The development of such warheads is stipulated by the state armament program. The capacities of these warheads were presented to the U.S. in test launches of*



the Yars road-mobile missile launcher and the Bulava naval-based intercontinental ballistic missile. We also have hypersonic warheads with alternating speed and trajectory," he said.

"In addition, new warheads are beyond reach in all phases of their trajectory," he said. "New intercontinental ballistic missiles are built for maximum resistance to the enemy in the acceleration phase, before the separation of warheads. The acceleration phase is reduced to minimal. In that vulnerable phase missiles rapidly change their speed and trajectory for making impossible the interception forecasts."

"This task was not easy. Strong and light rocket shells were built and powered with high-energy propulsion units and control instruments resistant to overload. The latest test flights confirmed the achievement of the goal," he said.

"When the acceleration phase is over, warheads begin an extra-atmospheric flight. New missiles have several warheads, all of them protected with false targets and jamming. The warheads are made with the use stealth technologies," he said.

"The final phase is the atmospheric flight of warheads. Then warheads are protected with heavy false targets, which are practically indistinguishable from real warheads and copy their speed and trajectory," he said.

Asked why Russia opposed the U.S. missile defense, the general said, "Russia does not oppose missile defense of a certain country or a group of states. We just realize the solid connection between offensive and defensive strategic systems and, naturally, call for a reasonable and rational balance of such weapons," he said.

"Russia does not object to the U.S. missile defense; it objects to a missile defense system openly targeted against it and potentially reducing the capacity of the Russian nuclear deterrence forces," he said. "As long as the world has a steady nuclear deterrence mechanism, one should not undermine it or start a strategic offensive arms race. If that happens, strategic stability will be gone, and that will hardly be advantageous for anyone," he said.

<http://www.itar-tass.com/en/c154/302489.html>

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Global Security Newswire

Russia's Military to Wield 86 Yars, Topol-M Missile Firing Units Within Month

December 21, 2011

Russia's military is expected by the end of this month to possess 86 firing units for the nuclear-capable Topol-M and Yars ballistic missiles, Russian strategic missile forces Lt. Gen. Sergei Karakayev said on Saturday (see *GSN*, Dec. 16).

The strategic missile forces "will have 86 Topol-M and Yars missile launchers by the year end," ITAR-Tass quoted the officer as saying (see *GSN*, Nov. 14).

"Modern armaments" now comprise one-quarter of the weapons overseen by the strategic missile forces, a portion that has increased in recent years, the official said.

"Parameters of the [strategic missile forces] will be further updated with the newest systems capable of penetration through missile defense," he said. Moscow has pledged to take steps to counter U.S.-NATO plans for a European missile shield, which it says might be aimed at countering Russia's nuclear forces, if the sides cannot reach accord on collaborating on the system.

"The second regiment in Teikovo will fully switch to Yars missiles in 2012, and the transfer will begin in Novosibirsk and Kozelsk. The latter will have silo-based Yars missiles. Another two missile units will be using Yars missiles in the future," Karakayev said.



"The sixth regiment in Tatishchevo is being armed with Topol-M missiles. Three Topol-M launchers will be put on duty there by the end of the year. When the regiment's rearming ends in 2012, the program of the [strategic missile forces'] equipment with the Topol-M systems will be complete," he said.

Missile firing units that can be moved on roads are among the most effective tools available for reducing the nuclear deterrent's vulnerability to potential attacks, Karakayev said.

"The Yars system carrying RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles is Russia's newest road-mobile missile launcher," the general said. "The system is capable of operative departure from base and stealth dispersal on vast territories."

No more than 4 percent of firing units overseen by the strategic missile forces are unsuited for rapid action on any given day, Karakayev said. "Although over 70 percent of missiles are past their warranty period, they have due reliability and technical aptness," he said.

"About 6,000 servicemen are on combat duty daily. The [strategic missile forces] operate six types of missile systems of the fourth and fifth generations. Three of them are based in silos, and three are road-mobile," the officer said (ITAR-Tass I, Dec. 20).

Russia's ability to move its transferable missile firing units is unaffected by a strategic arms control treaty with the United States, ITAR-Tass quoted Karakayev as saying (see *GSN*, Dec. 19).

"In contrast to START 1, the New START [treaty] does not limit the areas, in which road-mobile missile systems of the [strategic missile forces] may operate," he said. "The New START sets no limits to the modernization of existent missiles and the development of new weapons. The new missiles are being developed with due account of this treaty," he said.

The New START pact, which took effect in February, requires Russia and the United States to each reduce deployment of strategic nuclear warheads to 1,550, down from a cap of 2,200 mandated by next year under an older treaty. It also limits the number of fielded strategic warhead delivery platforms to 700, with an additional 100 systems permitted in reserve. The treaty calls for the nations to regularly share quantities, siting and schematics of armament equipment and sites (ITAR-Tass II, Dec. 20).

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/russias-military-wield-86-yars-topol-m-missile-units-within-month/>

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New York Times
December 21, 2011

Seeing Terror Risk, U.S. Asks Journals to Cut Flu Study Facts

By DENISE GRADY and WILLIAM J. BROAD
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For the first time ever, a government advisory board is asking scientific journals not to publish details of certain biomedical experiments, for fear that the information could be used by terrorists to create deadly viruses and touch off epidemics.

In the experiments, conducted in the United States and the Netherlands, scientists created a highly transmissible form of a deadly flu virus that does not normally spread from person to person. It was an ominous step, because easy transmission can lead the virus to spread all over the world. The work was done in ferrets, which are considered a good model for predicting what flu viruses will do in people.

The virus, A(H5N1), causes bird flu, which rarely infects people but has an extraordinarily high death rate when it does. Since the virus was first detected in 1997, about 600 people have contracted it, and more than half have died. Nearly all have caught it from birds, and most cases have been in Asia. Scientists have watched the virus,



worrying that if it developed the ability to spread easily from person to person, it could create one of the deadliest pandemics ever.

A government advisory panel, the National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity, overseen by the National Institutes of Health, has asked two journals, *Science* and *Nature*, to keep certain details out of reports that they intend to publish on the research. The panel said conclusions should be published, but not “experimental details and mutation data that would enable replication of the experiments.”

The panel cannot force the journals to censor their articles, but the editor of *Science*, Bruce Alberts, said the journal was taking the recommendations seriously and would probably withhold some information — but only if the government creates a system to provide the missing information to legitimate scientists worldwide who need it.

The journals, the panel, researchers and government officials have been grappling with the findings for several months. The Dutch researchers presented their work at a virology conference in Malta in September.

Scientists and journal editors are generally adamant about protecting the free flow of ideas and information, and ready to fight anything that hints at censorship.

“I wouldn’t call this censorship,” Dr. Alberts said. “This is trying to avoid inappropriate censorship. It’s the scientific community trying to step out front and be responsible.”

He said there was legitimate cause for the concern about the researchers’ techniques falling into the wrong hands.

“This finding shows it’s much easier to evolve this virus to an extremely dangerous state where it can be transmitted in aerosols than anybody had recognized,” he said. Transmission by aerosols means the virus can be spread through the air via coughing or sneezing.

Ever since the tightening of security after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, scientists have worried that a scientific development would pit the need for safety against the need to share information. Now, it seems, that day has come.

“It’s a precedent-setting moment, and we need to be careful about the precedent we set,” Dr. Alberts said.

Both studies of the virus — one at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, in the Netherlands, and the other at the University of Wisconsin-Madison — were paid for by the National Institutes of Health. The idea behind the research was to try to find out what genetic changes might make the virus easier to transmit. That way, scientists would know how to identify changes in the naturally occurring virus that might be warning signals that it was developing pandemic potential. It was also hoped that the research might lead to better treatments.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said the research addressed important public health questions, but added, “I’m sure there will be some people who say these experiments never should have been done.”

Dr. Fauci said staff members at the institutes followed the results of the research and flagged it as something that the biosecurity panel should evaluate.

The lead researcher at the Erasmus center, Ron Fouchier, did not respond to requests for an interview. The center issued a statement saying that researchers there had reservations about the panel’s recommendation, but would observe it.

The Wisconsin researcher, Yoshihiro Kawaoka, was out of the country and “not responding to queries,” according to a spokesman for the university. But the school said its researchers would “respect” the panel’s recommendations.

David R. Franz, a biologist who formerly headed the Army defensive biological lab at Fort Detrick, Md., is on the board and said its decision to intervene, made in the fall, was quite reasonable.



"My concern is that we don't give amateurs — or terrorists — information that might let them do something that could really cause a lot of harm," he said in an interview.

"It's a wake-up call," Dr. Franz added. "We need to make sure that our best and most responsible scientists have the information they need to prepare us for whatever we might face."

Amy Patterson, director of the office of biotechnology activities at the National Institutes of Health, in Bethesda, Md., said the recommendations were a first.

"The board in the past has reviewed manuscripts but never before concluded that communications should be restricted in any way," she said in a telephone interview. "These two bodies of work stress the importance of public health preparedness to monitor this virus."

Ronald M. Atlas, a microbiologist at the University of Louisville and past president of the American Society for Microbiology, who has advised the federal government on issues of germ terrorism, said the hard part of the recommendations would be creating a way to move forward in the research with a restricted set of responsible scientists.

He said that if researchers had a better understanding of how the virus works, they could develop better ways to treat and prevent illness. "That's why the research is done," he said.

The government, Dr. Atlas added, "is going to struggle with how to get the information out to the right people and still have a barrier" to wide sharing and inadvertently aiding a terrorist. "That's going to be hard."

Given that some of the information has already been presented openly at scientific meetings, and that articles about it have been sent out to other researchers for review, experts acknowledged that it may not be possible to keep a lid on the potentially dangerous details.

"But I think there will be a culture of responsibility here," Dr. Fauci said. "At least I hope there will."

The establishment of the board grew out of widespread fears stemming from the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and the ensuing strikes with deadly anthrax germs that killed or sickened 22 Americans.

The Bush administration called for wide controls on biological information that could potentially help terrorists. And the scientific community firmly resisted, arguing that the best defenses came with the open flow of information.

In 2002, Dr. Atlas, then the president-elect of the American Society for Microbiology, objected publicly to "anything that smacked of censorship."

The federal board was established in 2004 as a compromise and is strictly advisory. It has 25 voting members appointed by the secretary of health and human services, and has 18 ex officio members from other federal agencies.

Federal officials said Tuesday that the board has discussed information controls on only three or four occasions. The first centered on the genetic sequencing of the H1N1 virus that caused the 1918 flu pandemic, in which up to 100 million people died, making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history.

"We chose to recommend publication without any modifications," Dr. Franz, the former head of the Army lab, recalled. "The more our good scientists know about problems, the better prepared they are to fix them."

This fall, federal officials said, the board wrestled with the content of H5N1 papers to *Science* and *Nature*, and in late November contacted the journals about its recommendation to restrict information on the methods that the scientists used to modify the deadly virus.

"The ability of this virus to cross species lines in this manner has not previously been appreciated," said Dr. Patterson of the National Institutes of Health. "Everyone involved in this matter wants to do the proper thing."



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<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/21/health/fearing-terrorism-us-asks-journals-to-censor-articles-on-virus.html?pagewanted=all>

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People's Daily – China
OPINION/Commentary

Will Obama Doctrine Lead to New Cold War?

By Wu Jianmin (People's Daily Overseas Edition)
December 18, 2011

U.S. President Barack Obama, the first U.S. leader to attend the East Asia Summit, recently announced a plan to send 2,500 U.S. troops to Australia. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton proclaimed the 21st century "America's Pacific Century." The United States has taken a series of high-profile actions to "return" to Asia, which has attracted worldwide attention.

On Nov. 25, the Wall Street Journal published an article titled "The Obama Doctrine" by Hugh White, a distinguished scholar and former deputy defense minister of Australia. White believes that Obama's Asian adventure marks the beginning of the Obama Doctrine and said that the Obama Doctrine "mirrors the geostrategic and political essence of the Truman Doctrine."

The Truman Doctrine was created to contain the Soviet Union and led to the Cold War. The Obama Doctrine is aimed at containing China, and White believes the doctrine is a "very serious mistake" as it commits the United States to a strategic confrontation that will cost it dearly.

To answer the question of whether Obama's foreign policy will lead to a new Cold War, first we must grasp the general trend in today's world. The international situation is complicated and constantly changing, with various dazzling new trends.

The key to grasping the general trend is to realize that the themes of the times are peace and development, not wars or violent revolutions. Peace, development, and cooperation have become an unstoppable general trend, despite the existence of confrontation and conflict.

Second, the U.S.-Soviet Cold War was caused by two great powers vying for world hegemony. China seeks no world hegemony and even has a national policy in place expressing its clear opposition to the practice. Furthermore, when given a choice between peace, development and cooperation on one hand, and Cold War, confrontation and conflict on the other, China firmly supports the former and opposes the latter. China will never have a new Cold War with the United States.

In addition, today's China-U.S. relations are fundamentally different from U.S.-Soviet relations. The former U.S.-Soviet relations were dominated by hegemony, and today's China-U.S. relations are dominated by cooperation. There was no economic interdependence in the former U.S.-Soviet relationship.

U.S.-Soviet trade only amounted 4 billion U.S. dollars at the best times, while today's China-U.S. trade is about 400 billion dollars. The Soviet Union did not hold U.S. Treasury bonds, and China is the largest holders of U.S. Treasury bonds at present. The former U.S.-Soviet relationship was constantly undercutting each other but in the past 30 years of China's rise, China shared the result of economic growth with the world, including the United States, to achieve a win-win situation. China does not do this for expediency. This is part of China's peaceful development strategy.

<http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/90780/7679810.html>

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Huffington Post
OPINION/Commentary

U.S. Missile Defense Fantasy is Souring U.S.-Russian 'Reset'

By Elliott Negin, Director of News & Commentary, Union of Concerned Scientists
December 19, 2011

A bilateral U.S.-Russian arms control working group met last Wednesday in Washington, D.C., reportedly to talk about reducing short-range, battlefield nuclear weapons as well as stored warheads. The meeting was one of a series of what the Obama administration is calling "strategic stability talks" to try to build on momentum from the New START nuclear arms control treaty, which reduced both countries' long-range "strategic" nuclear arsenals to fewer than 2,000 warheads apiece.

I'm not privy to exactly what went on between U.S. Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, but according to one account, it was nothing momentous. Why? Russia--which still has an estimated 2,100 deployed battlefield, or "tactical," nuclear weapons while the United States has pared down to about 200--is unlikely to budge on this--or much else--unless the United States addresses Russia's concerns about a U.S. ballistic missile defense system in Europe.

This dispute over missile defense reached a crescendo of sorts on November 23 when Russian President Dmitry Medvedev announced U.S.-Russian negotiations over missile defense were over. The United States is unwilling to provide a written guarantee that the system would not be used against Russian nuclear forces, Medvedev said, and he warned that, if the United States carries out its plans to build it without such an assurance, Russia would site missiles in its westernmost Kaliningrad region and consider walking away from the New START agreement. And just two days after the U.S.-Russian working group met, the head of Russia's strategic missile forces announced plans to build a new heavy intercontinental ballistic missile with an "enhanced capability to breach a hypothetical U.S. missile defense system."

Russia's reaction isn't a surprise. It has long argued that systems the United States is developing could threaten its missiles. The Obama administration, meanwhile, maintains that the system is meant to counter a potential threat from Iran and dismisses Russia's objections.

What is puzzling is that both sides continue to squabble over what amounts to a military fantasy.

First, I should explain that there are two main U.S. missile defense systems. One is the ground-based system currently deployed in Alaska and California. The other is the sea-based Aegis system, which is deployed on Navy ships. The Bush administration proposed to put a ground-based system in Eastern Europe, but the Obama administration scrapped that idea in September 2009 and instead decided to go with the Aegis system, placing interceptors on ships and on land.

Neither system has ever been tested under real-world conditions. While both have scored some intercepts, the tests have been highly scripted and conducted under controlled conditions.

The two systems also have an Achilles heel. A 2000 Union of Concerned Scientists-MIT report, "Countermeasures," concluded that decoys and other countermeasures could defeat the U.S. ground-based missile defense system by fooling its sensors and interceptors. Any country that has the capability of building a long-range missile, the report concluded, also would have the capability of outfitting it with effective countermeasures. U.S. intelligence analysts made the same observation in 1999, and it remains true today.

So why should Russia -- or China, for that matter -- be concerned?

In 2009, when the Obama administration made its decision to deploy the Aegis system in Europe, it also announced a plan to develop a series of increasingly more sophisticated Aegis interceptors over the next decade. And missile defense plans now call for the United States to build hundreds of sea-based interceptors and position them on ships around the world.

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So Russian analysts, making assumptions about how capable these systems eventually might be, see a potential threat. At the same time, President Medvedev and other political leaders want to reassure Russians citizens they are protecting them from what they see as an expanding U.S. military presence. (For an analysis of how Russian analysts could conclude the U.S. missile defense system poses a threat, see a September report published by the Federation of American Scientists.)

Months before committing to site an Aegis system in Europe, the Obama administration pledged it would "not divert resources from other national security priorities until we are positive the technology will protect the American public." Nearly three years later, the administration is still promoting this ineffective system--and poisoning relations with Russia.

That's a big mistake, regardless of the fact that President Medvedev's recent move to scotch missile defense talks might be calculated to play well at home. The United States needs Russia's cooperation on a number of critical issues, including following through on the New START agreement, making further cuts in its own nuclear arsenal, and preventing Iran from developing long-range missiles and nuclear weapons.

In his widely praised April 2009 Prague speech, President Obama presented a farsighted goal to strengthen U.S. and global security by reducing nuclear arsenals around the world. But since then, his administration has undermined its efforts to meet that laudable objective--as well as "reset" relations with Russia--by stubbornly pursuing a missile defense system that has never been proven to work.

Elliott Negin is the director of news and commentary at the Union of Concerned Scientists in Washington, D.C. In the 1980s, he edited Nuclear Times magazine, which the Utne Reader named one of the "10 magazines that made a difference" in that decade, praising it for presenting "bold new perspectives on global survival."

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/elliott-negin/us-missile-defense-fantas_b_1157936.html

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The Moscow Times – Russia

OPINION/Commentary

Mutually Assured Stability

19 December 2011

By Simon Saradzhyan

Fall 1991 saw U.S. and Soviet leaders display goodwill by pledging to unilaterally consolidate and reduce their nations' arsenals of tactical nuclear weapons in what became the last milestone in the history of U.S.-Soviet arms control. In January 1992, President Boris Yeltsin didn't only confirm earlier pledges but expanded them. Twenty years after, however, the two countries still have thousands of tactical nuclear weapons outside any of the existing international arms control regimes.

Given the scarcity of benefits and abundance of costs of these arsenals, Moscow should join Washington in negotiating measures to bring tactical nukes into the realm of bilateral arms control. The two powers can start with defining the weapons and exchanging information on their past reductions and current stockpiles. They could then negotiate the verifiable reduction of their stockpiles and their consolidation in one or two of the best-guarded facilities.

A number of obstacles have prevented Moscow and Washington from concluding a tactical nuclear weapons treaty, including difficulties in establishing effective accounting and verification procedures, ambiguity of dual-use delivery systems and lack of a common definition of such weapons. Asymmetry in U.S. and Russian tactical arsenals has been another major stumbling block. Russia is currently estimated to have an active stockpile of some 2,000 warheads, while the United States is believed to have about 500.

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There is a reason for such asymmetry. While the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff see no role for U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe that cannot be performed by either strategic nuclear forces or conventional forces, Russia's General Staff sees a number of utilities in maintaining a formidable number of these devices, both west and east of the Urals.

Russia's strategic documents provide for nuclear weapons to serve as a deterrent against other nuclear states and to respond to large-scale aggression "when the very existence of the state is threatened." These weapons are also expected to compensate for the weakness of the nation's conventional forces vis-a-vis NATO and China.

Given such a range of perceived roles, it should come as no surprise that the Russian military-political leadership is reluctant to negotiate a tactical weapons treaty, making it conditional on a number of other issues, including constraints on U.S. missile defense systems.

But can tactical nuclear weapons really play all the roles that Russian strategists assign to them?

Some of these roles are unrealistic, while others can be achieved solely by strategic nuclear weapons, such as deterrence and offsetting conventional force weaknesses.

The role of de-escalating a conventional conflict would look credible if we imagine that the foe is a conventional power. But it would appear disputable if Russia were to fight a nuclear power. Rather than interpret the selective use of tactical weapons by Russia as a de-escalation signal, the nuclear foe in the fog of war may mistake it for the beginning of an all-out nuclear assault and choose to retaliate with its own nuclear weapons.

Of course, it is the Russian military's duty to plan for worst-case scenarios. But Russian generals can cut their tactical nuclear arsenal to the low hundreds and still have more than enough for any combination of contingencies, especially given the size of Russia's strategic arsenal.

While lacking realistic roles, tactical nuclear weapons incur a number of real risks and costs. Because of their relatively low yield, they are more likely than strategic nuclear weapons to be used in a war, which increases the likelihood of the conflict escalating into an all-out nuclear war. Older tactical nuclear devices are more vulnerable to unauthorized use. And these weapons help keep Russia and NATO entrenched in a military standoff that makes little sense 20 years after the end of the Cold War.

It is time that Russia and United States move away from deterrence based on a 20th-century concept of mutually assured destruction. Instead, they should move toward what experts on both sides have referred to as mutually assured stability. Consolidation and reduction of tactical nuclear weapons will facilitate this transition, advancing both countries' common vital interests in preventing the use of nuclear weapons. These measures will also allow Moscow to allocate more funds to building conventional forces capable of countering more imminent threats to Russia's security, such as a low-intensity insurgency or local conflicts, without risking a nuclear Armageddon.

Simon Saradzhyan is a research fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/mutually-assured-stability/450187.html>

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/Opinion Asia
December 19, 2011

Pyongyang's Succession Drama

North Korea's long-suffering people will have to continue their "arduous march."

By HAHM CHAIBONG

When Kim Jong Il came to power in 1994, he inherited a crumbling regime. The collapse of the Soviet Union and decades of economic mismanagement had brought the North Korean economy to the brink of collapse. A year into

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Kim Jong Il's rule, North Korea entered what its historians officially call "the arduous march," a period of massive famine that claimed the lives up to three million people.

Yet Kim managed to pull the regime back from the abyss, while maintaining a total grip on his people that would have been the envy of many a fallen Arab dictator. Even as his people succumbed to starvation, he ruthlessly continued to develop nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles. He then adroitly used his WMD programs to blackmail his neighbors and the regime's sworn enemy, the U.S., into providing food and occasional economic aid for his long-suffering people.

Despite all his efforts, Kim Jong Il has left his son and heir, Kim Jong Eun, with a regime whose future is perhaps even more uncertain than the one he inherited from his father 17 years ago. Most significantly, he belatedly started to groom a successor only after a stroke in August 2008 forced him to face his own mortality. This leaves North Korea with a leader who is less than 30 years old and with less than three years of practice governing a regime facing formidable political, economic and national security challenges.

There are two factors that will determine the survivability of the regime, one domestic and one foreign. The domestic factor is whether and how quickly Kim Jong Eun will be able to take up the key positions of power in the military, party and government, in that order. His legitimacy is based on the fact that he is Kim Il Sung's grandson and Kim Jong Il's son. It is certainly a formidable pedigree, but it is also his only claim to power. It may or may not be sufficient even among those who continue to profess loyalty to his forefathers.

This is where the role of the senior members of North Korea's ruling elite, such as Jang Sung-taek, Kim Jong Il's brother-in-law, becomes crucial. Believed to have been entrusted with the role of guiding and overseeing young Kim's accession to ultimate power, Jang's choices and actions in the weeks and months to come will prove decisive in whether the succession goes smoothly.

However, Kim Jong Il also left his son with an apparatus of totalitarian rule whose intrusiveness and control over the lives of its people remain unsurpassed by any other regime of its ilk, past or present. It is a system that seamlessly blends the party, the military and his family. If the young Kim succeeds in securing his grips on the main levers of this formidable totalitarian regime, he will more than likely succeed in maintaining his family dynasty, at least for the time being.

The decisive foreign factor is China. Ever since the founding of North Korea, China has remained its staunch supporter, sacrificing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers to defend it against United Nations forces during the Korean War. According to some estimates, China provides up to 90% of North Korea's oil and 70% of its food imports. It is the only country of any consequence that continues to defend North Korea on the international stage, sometimes at a great cost to its own reputation, such as when it refused to condemn North Korean sinking of South Korean corvette, the Cheonan, or the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island last year.

It is a safe bet that China will continue to support the North Korean regime, not out of love for the Kim dynasty but because of its own obsession with maintaining stability on its borders. China is loath to see any disruption that might disrupt its continued economic rise, especially the potential influx of millions of refugees if Pyongyang collapses. Besides, China may want to maintain North Korea as a "buffer" against the U.S.-allied South Korea and Japan. At the least, North Korea is a convenient thorn on the side of the U.S. and its allies in the region, keeping them preoccupied with its WMD programs and occasional provocations by conventional means.

Despite its shattered economy and shaky succession process, North Korea will continue to trudge along. A totalitarian system engineered by a perverse mastermind will likely serve its new master well. Its giant neighbor, China, whose path of development over the past 20 years could not be more different than North Korea's, continues to lend its support to this anachronistic regime out of a logic all its own.

The world will have to continue to suffer through a regime whose durability continues to baffle. North Korea's long suffering people will have to continue their "arduous march." Northeast Asia's otherwise booming economies will



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have to endure for some time to come a regime whose threat to the peace and prosperity of the region is matched only by its unpredictability.

Mr. Hahm is the president of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies in Seoul.

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The Daily Beast
OPINION/Analysis

North Korea's Youthful New Leader Kim Jong-Un Faces Nuclear Test

Kim Jong-un will have his work cut out for him as he seeks to rule the Hermit Kingdom. One of his first decisions will be whether to test a nuclear weapon in 2012—and how to consolidate power from his rivals in the military and his own family.

By Eli Lake
December 19, 2011

Before President Obama can determine whether Kim Jong-un is a man with whom he might be able to do business, U.S. intelligence analysts will need to determine whether the new young king can wield absolute power over the military and citizenry the way his father and grandfather did.

A key test of this proposition will be whether Kim, believed to be 27 or 28, will move forward with a third nuclear test that was widely expected for 2012. The regime of the recently departed Kim Jong-il promised that 2012 would be the year North Korea would become a “full nuclear weapons state,” language that most analysts interpreted to mean Kim intended to authorize the country’s third nuclear test.

Whether North Korea will move forward on this will depend on the younger Kim’s relationship with the country’s military, which the U.S. has tried to make inroads with in recent years despite worsening overall relations between the two countries. Experts expect significant jockeying for power inside the military even if it embraces the cult of the Kim family and its latest, youthful successor.

Mike Green, who was senior director for Asia at the National Security Council under President George W. Bush, said in an interview Monday that the pace of U.S. and North Korean military contacts was increasing at the end of the Bush administration, similar to those that occurred at the end of the Clinton administration.

Such contacts often took place at what is known as the “truce village” on the demilitarized zone that divides the two Koreas. Traditionally the truce village has been a place for discussing the details of armistice agreement that ended the Korean War. But in recent years, these discreet meetings also have been a way for the U.S. military to survey officers in the Korean People’s Army on their nuclear program.

“The message from the Korean People’s Army when they have talked to us or the South Koreans has been a clear statement that they intend to have nuclear weapons,” said Green. “Whereas when Kim Jong-il talked to Madeleine Albright or other U.S. officials, he says they are open to denuclearization.”

The death of Kim Jong-il does present a problem for the Obama administration, which had been planning to unveil a new package of food aid to North Korea in a bid to revive the six-party talks on North Korea’s nuclear ambitions that had faltered this year.

On the day Kim’s death was announced, North Korea fired a short-range missile in a test and put its military on high alert. U.S. officials were watching closely for early signs on how the younger Kim might assert himself.

Mark Groombridge, a deputy editor of Lignet who participated in the six-party talks under Bush, said that “North Korea’s actions have been restrained” thus far, noting that the short-range missile tests were not a surprise and could have been more provocative.

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"The message from the Korean People's Army when they have talked to us or the South Koreans has been a clear statement that they intend to have nuclear weapons."

"To my knowledge, there is no sign of action or activity at nuclear sites for now," Groombridge added. "There does not seem to be an overt move to depose Kim Jong-un. I am not suggesting that he has the power that his father did, but even if he is the titular head of a government controlled by generals, I think the generals are fine with that arrangement for now."

A U.S. official who asked not to be named said Kim Jong-un's introduction to power may be rocky. "A lot depends on whether the power centers of the regime coalesce around Kim Jong-un or see this period of uncertainty as an opportunity to change the balance of power internally," the source said. "Those are very tricky calculations to make in an authoritarian society like North Korea."

Very little is known about the young Kim other than the fact that he spent some time in an international school in the 1990s. Former classmates say that he favors expensive American-brand sneakers, loved basketball, and worshipped Michael Jordan and Hollywood action star Jean-Claude Van Damme.

His uncle, Jang Seong-taek, is widely expected to be the equivalent of a regent in the coming years, managing the North Korean government as the new leader becomes accustomed to power.

"The regime will try to convey a sense of order during the mourning and transition period," the U.S. official said. "They will probably try to keep things calm externally while the succession maneuvering takes place."

Green, now a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a professor at Georgetown University, said: "On the surface we will not see much. The generals depend on the cult of personality of the Kim dynasty to retain power themselves. Underneath the surface there could be real jostling for position."

Green added: "For the near term, they all have a stake in making this transition work. The pressures will be coming some time next when he has to decide to test a nuclear weapon again."

Eli Lake is the senior national-security correspondent for Newsweek and the Daily Beast. He previously covered national security and intelligence for the Washington Times. Lake has also been a contributing editor at The New Republic since 2008 and covered diplomacy, intelligence, and the military for the late New York Sun.

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/12/19/north-korea-s-youthful-new-leader-kim-jong-un-faces-nuclear-test.html>

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Japan Times – Japan
OPINION/Editorial
Monday, December 19, 2011

Hiding behind a Shield

For many, the dream of a shield that would protect a country from ballistic missiles is just that — a dream or fantasy. Any state possessing more than a rudimentary arsenal would be able to defeat a missile defense program, either by overwhelming it with the sheer number of missiles or by confusing it with decoys or other countermeasures. Indeed, some skeptics claim that such a project is unworkable in its entirety and a colossal waste of money.

Governments on the other side of that shield — those looking in — have a different view. For them, the prospect of a functioning missile defense program is troubling, as it heralds the potential nullification of weapons systems they have invested billions of dollars in and which constitute an irreducible minimum level of defense. They rely on ballistic missiles to deliver the nuclear warheads that deter enemies from blackmailing or attacking them.



It is difficult to tell how seriously Russia truly fears the U.S. missile defense program. Moscow loudly objects to Washington's plans to deploy interceptors in Europe, a deployment that is intended to counter the threat posed by Iranian missiles.

U.S. attempts to respond to those concerns by redesigning and redeploying the system have not worked. Russian strategists dismiss U.S. assurances that Iran is the target, and worry that the system could be used to neutralize their own strategic rocket forces.

With Moscow's military being hollowed out, its budgets and staff increasingly strained, that deterrent is causing an increasing burden on Russia's security and defense planning.

Russian complaints have become even louder in recent weeks. Last month, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev threatened to withdraw from the latest Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty signed by the U.S. and Russia — the New START — if NATO went ahead with its missile defense plans.

In addition, he said Russia would deploy new ballistic missiles on its border with Europe to overwhelm the system.

The issue topped the agenda of the meeting of the NATO-Russia Council that was held this month in Brussels. There were fears that Moscow would tie the issue to the maintenance of supply routes to Afghanistan, but that linkage apparently never occurred. That was smart, as Russia knows well that undermining the NATO effort in Afghanistan ultimately diminishes Russia's own security.

Russian bluster did not shake NATO's resolve. Calling Russian thinking a "fundamental misunderstanding" of its strategy, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen explained that "we need missile defense for our own security."

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton insisted that NATO would proceed with its plans, that they would not affect Russia and that countermeasures are not needed. The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey insisted that the two sides would eventually find common ground.

Russia has also reportedly demanded a written guarantee that NATO will reconsider the deployment if the Iranian threat is reduced and that the system will not be aimed at Russia. NATO has declined on both counts.

It is not clear whether Russia really believes its own protests. Russia has the engineering experience to appreciate how hard it is for a missile defense system to be 100 percent effective — and it only has to fail once to fail in a significant way — or how easy it is to build counter measures.

At the same time, protesting missile defense plans is an easy way to look tough against the U.S. and NATO. In the aftermath of the embarrassment suffered by the ruling United Russia party in recent elections, taking a swing at Washington helps improve the government's image.

It is also in keeping with accusations leveled by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin that the U.S. meddled in the elections. It is hard to make the latter claim and then accept Washington's assurances that its missile defense plans are benign.

But election tensions are only the most recent in a series of setbacks to the attempt to "reset" U.S.-Russia relations. The two governments have differed over the military campaign in Libya, and still disagree over how to deal with the ongoing unrest in Syria and Iran's nuclear program. This dispute is as much a symptom as a cause of the larger problem in the bilateral relationship.

The controversy is having wider effects. The nomination of Mr. Michael McFaul as the new U.S. ambassador to Russia is being held up as U.S. senators demand assurances that he will not share missile defense-related telemetry information — which could demonstrate a benign intent — with the Russians.

Equally significant is China's reaction to this episode. Chinese strategists worry that their arsenal, even smaller than Russia's, could become vulnerable as the U.S. deploys another missile defense program in Asia. Again, U.S.



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explanations that it is targeting a small, "rogue state" (North Korea) and is not configured to defeat Chinese missiles, and that such a system could be defeated by countermeasures, have had little impact. Chinese officials are reportedly demanding the same promises that Moscow wants.

Beijing has as much chance as Moscow does in getting those pledges. In other words, zero. But like Russia, China will use missile defense as a way to ratchet up tensions in the region and paint the U.S. as the problem.

If Moscow and Beijing are so worried about such plans, then they could do more to help eliminate the reasons that the U.S. and its allies need such programs. That would oblige them to take real responsibility for regional security; they both seem to prefer to exploit such threats rather than eliminate them.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/ed20111219a1.html>

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The Atlantic
OPINION/Analysis

The Cold War Is Long Gone, but the Nuclear Threat Is Still Here

America's nuclear strategy hasn't changed much since the Soviet Union fell, but the world's nuclear dangers have

By Eric Auner

December 20, 2011

In the two decades since the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the nuclear challenges facing the United States have changed radically. American nuclear strategy has not.

American nuclear forces are largely designed to deter a superpower that no longer exists. Meanwhile, nuclear and missile technology is more widely available than ever to outlier states like Iran and North Korea, and Americans continue to worry about a nuclear weapon winding up in the hands of a terrorist.

American nuclear strategy has three main goals in the 21st century. First, ensure that nuclear weapons are not used against the United States or its allies. Nuclear deterrence still plays a key role in the modern world. Second, convince or compel other states not to acquire nuclear weapons. Third, secure nuclear weapons and dangerous nuclear materials against theft or diversion to terrorist groups.

Current strategy is heavily geared towards the first goal of deterring nuclear weapons, a legacy of the Cold War arms race. Efforts towards the second and third goals have been incomplete.

During the Cold War, the rival superpowers threatened one another with large numbers of nuclear weapons. Most were far more powerful than the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These weapons helped to maintain a shaky peace between the United States and the Soviet Union. Many of the weapons on both sides were available for almost immediate use to deter a massive surprise attack, potentially involving thousands of nuclear weapons, from the other.

This basic posture, with large numbers of weapons capable of destroying an entire city available for rapid use, continues today, even though the U.S. military no longer fears a large-scale Russian attack. No other nation in the world has sufficient nuclear forces to even attempt a disabling nuclear first strike on the United States.

The size of the American nuclear arsenal has shrunk considerably, and both Republican and Democratic presidents have recognized that the United States can effectively protect itself and deter attack with fewer nuclear weapons in a post-Cold War world. Treaties mandating parallel U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenal cuts have enabled these necessary reductions to take place.

These reductions went hand in hand with a bilateral verification regime that gave U.S. inspectors on-site access to the Russian nuclear arsenal. The New Strategic Arms Reduction (New START) treaty, ratified with bipartisan support in December 2010, continues this process and helps to maintain strategic stability.

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The large and capable nuclear arsenal that the United States retains under New START continues to play a role in protecting the United States and reassuring allies that depend on the American nuclear umbrella. The arsenal cannot, however, help the United States to accomplish the vast majority of its other national security goals, including the struggle against terrorism.

America's nuclear arsenal is only one aspect of American nuclear strategy in the 21st century. The United States has taken the lead in creating institutions and agreements, including the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, under which the vast majority of nations have agreed to forgo nuclear weapons.

Many observers fear that the global nonproliferation regime is fraying. Iran is a member of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty but the country's activities, which include a uranium enrichment program, have led to fears that the country is on the verge of a nuclear weapons capability. Institutions like the Nonproliferation Treaty clearly must be strengthened and updated.

Investments in technologies such as ballistic missile defense also have a role to play in managing nuclear threats. Ballistic missiles, a traditional delivery method for nuclear weapons, have continued to proliferate in some of the world's most unstable regions. Ballistic missile defense is increasingly being developed and deployed on a cooperative basis, including with Russia, a country that has protested American missile defense plans for decades.

The salience of efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism has greatly increased since the end of the Cold War, and especially after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Cooperative Threat Reduction programs to protect nuclear weapons and materials in former Soviet states have been a major post-Cold War American foreign policy success.

The United States has had other successes in this area, including the 2010 Nuclear Security Summit. Building relationships to secure nuclear materials with countries in unstable regions has proven difficult, however, and concerns about nuclear terrorism persist.

The United States has choices to make about its nuclear strategy. In a constrained budget environment, the United States will need to make the investments to combat today's nuclear threats, rather than the threats of past decades.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/12/the-cold-war-is-long-gone-but-the-nuclear-threat-is-still-here/249867/>

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Sydney Morning Herald
OPINION/Analysis

Nuclear Arsenal Key to N Korea's New Regime

By Luke Harding
December 21, 2011

NORTH KOREA'S small but potent nuclear arsenal is a source of serious concern if there is a power struggle between party leaders and plotting generals following Kim Jong-il's death.

Pyongyang's nuclear program is likely to be a key asset for the new regime seeking to consolidate its domestic support and assert itself internationally. But it could also play a role in any succession struggle, if Kim's third son and untested heir, Kim Jong-un, fails to assert his political authority.

It is not entirely clear whose finger is on North Korea's nuclear trigger. In 2008, when Kim Jong-il fell ill and was indisposed, a shadowy committee of military and party leaders took operational control.

The committee may have been responsible for the symbolic decision on Monday morning to test-fire a short-range missile off the east coast of North Korea.

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North Korea is believed to have enough plutonium for about eight nuclear weapons. It has also recently begun enriching uranium, giving it a second source for warhead production.

Its relatively small number of nuclear warheads is still a threat, some analysts believe. "It isn't the number they have. It's the possibility they might use one," the director of the non-proliferation and disarmament program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Mark Fitzpatrick, said.

"If there is a breakdown in authority, as is very likely now an untested son is head of the country, nuclear weapons are a key asset in any power struggle. In this situation any number of nightmarish scenarios might be possible. They include North Korea selling weapons and fissile material to any likely buyer."

North Korea has a large fleet of No Dong ballistic missiles, with a range of 1400 kilometres - sufficient to hit South Korea, Japan, and parts of Russia and China. Fitzpatrick said Pyongyang may also have a submarine capable of launching a "suicide" nuclear attack.

The regime is apparently convinced nuclear weapons are the best way of protecting itself from foreign aggression. Additionally, the program allows Pyongyang to blackmail the US and other Western nations for aid, while the technology can be spread lucratively to third countries.

"They have a paranoid fear of the outside world and believe they need nuclear weapons for deterrence. It's the only area where North Korea excels. Otherwise it's hopelessly behind the south," Fitzpatrick said.

But other analysts dismiss the possibility that any new North Korean government would initiate a nuclear attack. Despite its enveloping paranoia, the country's political elite are quite rational when it comes to their own personal survival - and know that using a nuclear weapon would invite their own immediate destruction.

Instead, Pyongyang is more likely to launch a repeat unprovoked military attack on the south, similar to the 2010 shelling of Yeonpyeong island and the torpedoing of the Cheonan, which killed 46 South Korean seaman.

"There could well be an act of international aggression to legitimise power and show that Kim Jong-un is man enough to do the job," Dr Virginie Grzelczyk, a lecturer in international relations at Nottingham Trent university and a specialist on North Korea, said.

Grzelczyk doubted North Korea actually had the capacity to use its nuclear warheads. "They don't have a delivery system that would be robust enough," she said.

"They simply don't have the technology to launch a bomb that would really reach the US or other countries."

Poornima Subramaniam, an armed forces analyst at IHS Jane's, confirmed the most probable scenario for future conflict involved conventional rather than nuclear warfare: "North Korea's million-man army is both undertrained and under equipped for modern warfare. However, a repeat of the surprise attacks of 2010 is possible.

"More likely is a period of calm as the military resolves its new internal power structures."

Guardian News & Media

<http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/politics/nuclear-arsenal-key-to-n-koreas-new-regime-20111220-1p41o.html>

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