



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) Outreach Journal

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Feature Item: *“No First-Use Advocacy: Contradictions and Guesswork.”* Authored by Franklin C. Miller and Keith B. Payne; Published by the National Institute for Public Policy (NIPP), Washington, D.C.; Information Series, Issue #411; September 7, 2016.

<http://www.nipp.org/2016/09/07/miller-franklin-c-and-keith-b-payne-no-first-use-advocacy-contradictions-and-guesswork/>

On June 6, 2016, Deputy National Security Advisor Ben Rhodes announced that President Obama was considering additional steps before the end of his term to advance his “Prague Agenda”—the ultimate goal of which is global nuclear zero. One of the steps in this direction the White House reportedly is considering is a nuclear “no-first-use” policy. This would be a declaration to the world that the United States would never be the first to use nuclear weapons. Instead, the United States would reserve the option of nuclear employment only in response to an opponent’s first nuclear use.

The possibility that the White House would declare a US no-first-use policy (NFU) has sparked a lively debate about the wisdom of such a US policy. Numerous articles for and against NFU have established the basic parameters of this debate. NFU advocacy typically claims first that NFU would help stabilize deterrence, and secondly, defends NFU against critics’ charges that it could, instead, degrade deterrence.

The case against NFU centers on concern that US nuclear deterrence may be important to the prevention of non-nuclear attacks, including possible massive conventional, chemical and biological (CBW) attacks against the United States and allies. A US NFU policy would tell opponents that they could launch such attacks without fear of the US nuclear deterrent because the United States would never respond with nuclear weapons to an opponent’s conventional, chemical or biological attack. NFU critics fear that so encouraging opponents to discount the US nuclear deterrence in their possible planning of highly-lethal, but non-nuclear, attacks logically would degrade the US capacity to deter them.

NFU advocates respond to this critique of NFU with a variety of counterarguments. An assessment of NFU advocacy reveals that much of it is internally contradictory, ignorant or disdainful of available evidence, and misleadingly presents self-serving speculation as if it is known truth. These characteristics of NFU advocacy are apparent in a recent lengthy article entitled “Rethink Oldthink On No First Use” by Daryl Kimball and Kingston Reif.[The case presented by Kimball and Reif is fairly standard fare at this point, and provides a useful opportunity to critique this type of advocacy.

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Scout Warrior.com – U.S.

Will The Air Force B-21 Bring New, Next-Generation Stealth Technology?

The new bomber is being engineered with improved stealthy technology able to evade the most advanced air defenses in the world

By KRIS OSBORN

Saturday, September 3, 2016

The Air Force's stealthy long-range bomber will have the endurance and next-generation stealth capability to elude the most advanced existing air defenses and attack anywhere in the world, if needed, senior service officials said.

When the Air Force revealed its first artist rendering of what its new Long Range Strike – Bomber looks like, service Secretary Deborah James made reference to plans to engineer a bomber able to elude detection from even the best, most cutting-edge enemy air defenses.

"Our 5th generation global precision attack platform will give our country a networked sensor shooter capability enabling us to hold targets at risk anywhere in the world in a way that our adversaries have never seen," James said when revealing the image.

However, while Air Force developers say the emerging B-21 will introduce new stealth technologies better suited to elude cutting-edge air defenses, Russian media reports have recently claimed that stealth technology is useless against their air defenses. Russian built S-300 and S-400 air defenses are believed to be among the best in the world; in addition, The National Interest has reported that Russia is now working on an S-500 system able to destroy even stealthy targets at distances up to 125 miles.

Nevertheless, James added that the new bomber will be able to "play against the real threats."

The new bomber, called the B-21, will soon be named through a formal naming competition involving members of the Air Force, their families and other participants.

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The Air Force has awarded a production contract to Northrop Grumman to engineer its new bomber. The LRS-B will be a next-generation stealth aircraft designed to introduce new stealth technology and fly alongside - and ultimately replace - the service's existing B-2 bomber.

"With LRS-B, I can take off from the continental United States and fly for a very long way. I don't have to worry about getting permission to land at another base and worry about having somebody try to target the aircraft. It will provide a long-reach capability," Lt. Gen. Bunch, Air Force Military Deputy for Acquisition, told Scout Warrior in an interview last year.

The service plans to field the new bomber by the mid-2020s. The Air Force plans to acquire as many as 80 to 100 new bombers for a price of roughly \$550 million per plane in 2010 dollars, Air Force leaders have said.

Although there is not much publically available information when it comes to stealth technology, industry sources have explained that the LRS-B is being designed to elude the world's most advanced radar systems.

For instance, lower-frequency surveillance radar allows enemy air defenses to know that an aircraft is in the vicinity, and higher-frequency engagement radar allows integrated air defenses to target a fast-moving aircraft. The concept with the new bomber is to engineer a next-generation stealth configuration able to evade both surveillance and engagement radar technologies.

The idea is to design a bomber able to fly, operate and strike anywhere in the world without an enemy even knowing an aircraft is there. This was the intention of the original B-2 bomber, which functioned in that capacity for many years, until technological advances in air defense made it harder for it to avoid detection completely.

The new aircraft is being engineered to evade increasingly sophisticated air defenses, which now use faster processors, digital networking and sensors to track even stealthy aircraft on a wider range of frequencies at longer ranges. These frequencies include UHF, VHF and X-band, among others.

Stealth Technology

Stealth technology works by engineering an aircraft with external contours and heat signatures designed to elude detection from enemy radar systems.

At the same time, advanced in air defense technologies are also leading developers to look at stealth configurations as merely one arrow in the quiver of techniques which can be employed to elude enemy defenses, particularly in the case of future fighter aircraft. New stealthy aircraft will also likely use speed, long-range sensors and maneuverability as additional tactics intended to evade enemy air defenses - in addition to stealth because stealth configurations alone will increasingly be more challenged as technology continues to advance.

However, stealth technology is itself advancing - and it is being applied to the B-21, according to senior Air Force leaders who naturally did not wish to elaborate on the subject.

"As the threat evolves we will be able to evolve the airplane and we will still be able to hold any target at risk" Bunch said.

Although the new image of LRS-B does look somewhat like the existing B-2, Air Force officials maintain the new bomber's stealth technology will far exceed the capabilities of the B-2.

At the same time, the B-2 is being upgraded with a new technology called Defensive Management System, a system which better enables the B-2 to know the location of enemy air defenses.



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Prior to awarding the contract to Northrop, the Air Force worked closely with a number of defense companies as part of a classified research and technology phase. So far, the service has made a \$1 billion technology investment in the bomber.

“We've set the requirements, and we've locked them down. We set those requirements (for the LRS-B) so that we could meet them to execute the mission with mature technologies,” Bunch said.

The Long Range Strike-Bomber will be built upon what the Air Force calls an “open systems architecture,” an engineering technique which designs the platform in a way that allows it to quickly integrate new technologies as they emerge.

“We're building this with an open mission systems architecture. As technology advances and the threat changes, we can build upon the structure. I can take one component out and put another component in that addresses the threat. I have the ability to grow the platform,” Bunch explained.

Air Force leaders have said the aircraft will likely be engineered to fly unmanned missions as well as manned missions.

The new aircraft will be designed to have global reach, in part by incorporating a large arsenal of long-range weapons. The LRS-B is being engineered to carry existing weapons as well as nuclear bombs and emerging and future weapons, Air Force officials explained.

“We're going to have a system that will be able to evolve for the future. It will give national decision authorities a resource that they will be able to use if needed to hold any target that we need to prosecute at risk,” Bunch said.

<http://www.scout.com/military/warrior/story/1669852-air-force-preps-b-21-for-russian-air-defenses>

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Bloomberg News – New York, NY

America's New Nuclear-Armed Missile Could Cost \$85 Billion

Pentagon estimate rises from preliminary Air Force projection

Acquisition chief warns of 'significant uncertainty' on cost

By Anthony Capaccio

September 6, 2016

The U.S. Air Force's program to develop and field a new intercontinental ballistic missile to replace the aging Minuteman III in the nuclear arsenal is now projected to cost at least \$85 billion, about 36 percent more than a preliminary estimate by the service.

Even the \$85 billion calculated by the Pentagon's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation office is a placeholder number that's at the low end of potential costs, according to an Aug. 23 memo from Pentagon weapons buyer Frank Kendall to Air Force Secretary Deborah James. It includes \$22.6 billion for research and development, \$61.5 billion for procurement and \$718 million for related military construction.

Lockheed Martin Corp., Boeing Co. and Northrop Grumman Corp. are all competing to build the new ICBMs. But the latest estimate may add to debate about the cost and need for the planned

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modernization of all three legs of the U.S. nuclear triad of land, air and sea weapons. The nuclear modernization plan contributes to what defense analysts call a gathering “bow wave” of spending in the coming decade on major weapons that the next presidents will face.

At this stage of the ICBM program “there is significant uncertainty about program costs” because “the historical data is limited and there has been a long gap since the last” such development program, Kendall wrote.

The \$85 billion estimate must be revised no later than March 2018 once missile designs are more advanced, technical risks are reduced and the service has a better understanding of overall costs, Kendall said in the memo.

Nonetheless, Kendall approved proceeding with early development and efforts to reduce technology risks of the new ICBM. He directed the service to move toward buying 642 missiles at an average cost of \$66.4 million each to support a deployed force of 400 weapons and to budget at least \$1.25 billion annually from 2036 to 2040 for operations and support costs.

The Pentagon’s ability to estimate the cost of the new Ground Based Strategic Deterrent was limited by the “incompleteness and significant age of” the “data for comparable ICBM and submarine launched ballistic missiles dating back to the 1960s through the early 1990s,” Kendall wrote.

‘Greater Risk’

The Pentagon and Air Force are “accepting greater risk by going with” the \$85 billion estimate that’s at the lower end of its calculations, Kingston Reif, an analyst with the Arms Control Association in Washington who follows the program, said in an e-mail. “From a good-government perspective” it is “better to build in contingency and plan for and prioritize around a bigger bill now, lest a sudden big cost increase threaten to wreck the budget and the program five to 10 years from now.”

Kendall wrote that inflation assumptions and the defense industry’s capability to produce the missiles are major sources of cost uncertainty. Still, he said the \$85 billion placeholder is “the most reasonable estimate of program cost at this point.”

In addition to the new nuclear systems, the bow wave of coming costs includes nine Air Force conventional systems and plans for increased construction of naval vessels such as a second Ford-class aircraft carrier.

For the air component of the nuclear triad, Northrop defeated a Lockheed-Boeing team in October for the right to build a new dual-use bomber that can carry both nuclear and conventional weapons, a project valued at as much as \$80 billion.

At sea, the Navy is planning to replace its Ohio-class nuclear-armed submarines through a production program now estimated at \$122 billion, which doesn’t include development.

That estimate will be updated by year’s end as the Pentagon reviews moving the program into full development.

Official Beginning

Kendall’s decision to let the ICBM program move forward marks the official beginning of the technology development stage, with spending increasing from about \$75 million this year to \$1.6 billion in 2021 and \$2.6 billion in 2022, according to the Pentagon estimate.

The “program plans to buy enough missiles to maintain a 400-missile deployed force through 2075,” Air Force spokeswoman Leah Bryant said in an e-mail. “The overall number of missiles acquired in the inventory may vary depending on testing, evaluation, maintenance,” she said.



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The Air Force made its early estimate last year that the new ICBM program would cost \$62.3 billion for research, development and production as well as command and control systems and infrastructure. That number, as well as the new \$85 billion estimate, is calculated in so-called “then-year,” or current-year, dollars.

Bryant said “it is important to keep in mind that at this stage,” as “in any acquisition program, there can still be some uncertainty about projected” ICBM costs because “the historical data used for estimates, whether ours or another organization’s estimate, are limited and very dated.” The last ICBM development occurred in the 1980s, she said.

Kendall’s memo was provided to the staff of the Senate and House defense committees last week.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/politics/articles/2016-09-06/new-nuclear-armed-missile-seen-costing-u-s-85-billion-up-36>

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National Defense Magazine – Arlington, VA

Air Force Challenges Pentagon Cost Estimate of Next-Generation Nuclear Missiles

By Jon Harper

September 7, 2016

More work needs to be done before the Defense Department can accurately estimate the cost of modernizing the nation’s arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles, Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James said Sept. 7.

The Pentagon’s Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation Office recently projected that the ground-based strategic deterrent program, known as GBSD, would cost at least \$85 billion in the coming decades, according to Bloomberg News. That number is \$23 billion higher than the latest estimate put forth by the Air Force.

The large discrepancy was partly the result of differing methodology and assumptions about various facets of the program, James told reporters during a media roundtable at the Pentagon.

“The CAPE used one program and extrapolated forward. We used a variety of components of programs and extrapolated forward to build up our estimates,” she said. “We had certain assumptions about efficiencies in manufacturing, CAPE had different assumptions about efficiencies in manufacturing. And there was probably 15 other different assumptions as well.”

The latest estimates may not be reliable because they are based on antiquated data, she said.

“The difference in the cost estimates basically, fundamentally comes down to: We have not collectively done a cost estimate of this type for probably more than 40 years,” she said. “The data that everybody is using to try to build up these cost estimates is somewhat dated simply because we haven’t done it in so long.”

James expects the projections to change as more information is gathered.

“As we go forward, as we get the proposals back from industry, this will inform what I believe will be refinements in that cost estimate over time as we learn more,” she said. “The point is, if you haven’t done it in 40 years you need to refine it as you go along.”

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Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Northrop Grumman are all vying to build the next-generation of ICBMs. James voiced optimism about the program, despite concerns about the price tag.

"It's an important program," she said. "We're going to work through this. There's just no question in my mind."

The project has already reached an important milestone, with the request for proposals from industry having been released in July, she noted.

"We're moving ahead and we will work through these different cost estimates. And then whatever the cost estimate will be, we will put it into our five-year defense plan" at the end of this year, she said.

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=2291>

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Xinhua News - Beijing, China

Xi Tells Park China Opposes THAAD Deployment in ROK

Source: Xinhua

September 5, 2016

HANGZHOU, Sept. 5 (Xinhua) -- China opposes the United States' deployment of the THAAD anti-missile system in the Republic of Korea (ROK), President Xi Jinping told ROK President Park Geun-hye on Monday.

"Mishandling the issue is not conducive to strategic stability in the region, and could intensify conflicts," Xi said in Hangzhou.

Park said the ROK is willing to keep close communication with the Chinese side on the issue.

Xi reaffirmed China's commitment to achieving denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, safeguarding peace and stability of the peninsula, and solving relevant issues through dialogue and consultation.

He urged adherence to the six-party talks platform, addressing the concerns of various parties in a comprehensive and balanced way, treating both symptoms and root causes, and realizing long-term peace and stability in the peninsula.

Calling China and the ROK "close neighbors with broad common interests," Xi said both sides share long-term interests in common development and regional peace.

He noted that in the 1930s a Korean interim government had stayed in Hangzhou for three years in the fight against Japanese aggression.

Xi welcomed Park's attendance to the G20 summit "in such a place with historic significance in bilateral relations."

The Chinese president praised the "leapfrog development" of bilateral ties and the great benefits for people on both sides since the two countries established diplomatic relations 24 years ago.

China and the ROK should cherish their political mutual trust, safeguard their cooperative foundations, and overcome difficulties and challenges to put bilateral ties on the right track toward stable and healthy development, Xi said.

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"China is willing to work with the ROK to better protect and advance their hard-won ties," he said, while expressing hopes that the two countries will strive to "expand cooperative and positive elements and put a lid on negative ones."

He said both countries should respect each other's core interests to ensure stable ties.

They should also seek common ground while putting aside differences to cultivate a favorable environment for common development, and strengthen cooperation on regional and global issues to bolster common interests, Xi said.

China is ready to deepen cooperation with the ROK under multilateral frameworks and step up coordination on hot spot issues, he said.

Park said bilateral relations have followed the route designed by the leaders of the two countries and brought about regional prosperity. To develop ROK-China friendship is the general trend of the times.

The ROK attaches high importance to the ties with China and is committed to deepening mutual trust, she said. China and the ROK should seize the opportunity of the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations next year to deepen their strategic cooperative partnership.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-09/05/c_135663469.htm

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

US Open for Talks with Russia on Missile Defense — US Assistant Secretary

Whenever Russia is ready to come to the negotiations table and have a discussion with the United States on strategic stability - the US is willing to talk

September 06, 2016

OSLO, September 6. /TASS/. Washington is open for talks with Russia on issues of missile defense and the entire range of strategic stability, US Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Frank Rose, who is currently paying a working visit to Oslo, told TASS on Tuesday.

"The United States is open to talking with Russian on a full spectrum of strategic stability whether that's nuclear, missile defense, conventional strike - that full set of issues. Whenever Russia is ready to come to the table and have a discussion with the United States on strategic stability we would be open to that," he said.

"I think there will definitely be some issues we will disagree on, but I think it is important to continue the discussions."

"Despite the challenges in the relationship between the U.S. and Russia, I think it is important to get on record, that implementation of the New START Treaty continues to go well," he said. "On-site inspections in both the US and Russia continue, we continue to exchange notifications on movement of our strategic forces. Furthermore, the Bilateral Consultative Commission which was created by the Treaty to work through the implementation issues continues to meet and continues to work through very very difficult implementation."

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"It is in our mutual interest to maintain strategic stability and prevent misperceptions and miscalculations," he underscored.

<http://tass.com/world/898267>

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The Korea Times – Seoul, South Korea

Park, Obama Reaffirm THAAD Deployment

By Kang Seung-woo

September 7, 2016

VIENTIANE, Laos — President Park Geun-hye and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed Tuesday that the allies will maintain a strong deterrence against North Korea's growing threats.

For this, they agreed to utilize all means, including an advanced U.S. missile defense system, to respond to the North's hostilities.

The agreement was reached during a summit in the Laotian capital of Vientiane, where they arrived to attend ASEAN-related meetings that will begin today. Laos is the last leg of Park's three-nation trip that included Russia and China.

The bilateral talks took place one day after the Kim Jong-un regime conducted a test of three ballistic missiles Monday — the latest show of force as President Park and Chinese President Xi Jinping reaffirmed their commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula at the G20 summit in Hangzhou, China.

"Since the beginning of the year, North Korea has carried out a nuclear test and launched a series of ballistic missiles, fundamentally threatening the security of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia," Park said in a press statement following the summit.

"So, I would like to make it clear that South Korea and the United States will respond resolutely to any provocations by North Korea by utilizing all means."

Park also warned that the North's repeated and reckless provocations such as the missile tests will lead to its self-destruction.

Obama also said, "I want to reaffirm that our commitment to the defense and security of South Korea, including extended deterrence is unwavering."

"North Korea needs to know that provocations will only invite more pressure and further deepen its isolation"

Washington plans to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery in South Korea by next year to counter North Korea's missile threats.

However, the decision has drawn criticism from China and Russia, which claim that the system's radar may be used to spy on them.

"THAAD is a purely defensive system to defend against North Korean threats," Obama said.

China's objections are also sparking speculation that Beijing may loosen its support of international sanctions imposed on the North over its nuclear weapons program.



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Regarding this, Park and Obama stressed China's role in enforcing sanctions against the North and resolving the reclusive state's nuclear ambitions. In March, the United Nations (U.N.) imposed the latest set of sanctions on the North Korean regime for its nuclear test in January and long-range rocket test the following month.

"We are going to work diligently together with the most recent U.N. sanctions," Obama said, adding that efforts will be followed to close loopholes in existing sanctions and make them more effective.

Park also said, "In order to fully implement the sanctions and address the North Korean nuclear issue, China's role is important. So, South Korea and the United States have agreed to continue discussing the issue with Beijing through various channels."

In the press statement, Park also touched on the North's dismal human rights record, saying improving the rights of North Koreans will be a "crucial stepping stone" towards national unification.

"Unification will provide opportunities for North Koreans to be treated equally," she said.

Park to meet Abe today

Today, President Park is scheduled to sit down with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for their third summit to discuss ways to deal with the North's increasing missile tests.

Park met Abe, Monday, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit and they agreed to cooperate on the issue.

Along with the North Korean threat, they are also expected to discuss follow-up measures to the "comfort women" deal, reached Dec. 28 last year to end their dispute over imperial Japan's sexual enslavement of Korean women before and during World War II.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/09/120_213610.html

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TASS Russian News Agency – Moscow, Russia

Moscow Says Possibilities for Creating New Arms Control Regime in Europe Are in Place

The Russian Foreign Ministry is studying those "possibilities" very thoroughly

September 05, 2016

MOSCOW, September 5. /TASS/. Possibilities to establish a new conventional arms control regime in Europe do exist but Russia is not going to initiate any dialogue on that matter, neither does it plan to put forth any demands concerning that, the Russian foreign ministry said on Monday, commenting on an article by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on this subject.

"We paid attention to the article by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier 'Reviving Arms Control in Europe,'" the ministry said.

"We are studying it thoroughly."



"We believe that possibilities for the establishment of a new conventional arms control regime in Europe do exist," the ministry said. "However, contrary to what is said in the article, the Russian side is not going to either initiate any dialogue on that matter or to put forth any demands concerning that."

<http://tass.com/politics/898068>

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The Korea Herald – Seoul, South Korea

Nuclear First Strike Option Serves as Deterrent to War, Use of Chemical, Biological Weapons: CRS

September 5, 2016

The US maintenance of a nuclear first strike option is because the threat of nuclear escalation helps deter large-scale conventional war or the use of chemical and biological weapons, a congressional report said.

The Congressional Research Service report came as the administration of President Barack Obama is reportedly considering renouncing the pre-emptive nuclear strike option to bolster his legacy as champion of a world without nuclear weapons.

The so-called "no first use" policy has unnerved allies relying on US nuclear weapons for their security.

"US officials have occasionally considered adopting a 'no first use' pledge, but the policy has remained largely unchanged since the end of the Cold War," the CRS report said.

"The absence of a 'no first use' pledge is less about the perceived need to employ these weapons first in a conflict than it is about the view that the threat of nuclear escalation continues to serve as a deterrent to large-scale conventional war or the use of chemical and biological weapons," it said.

Supporters of the current policy fear that removing the threat of nuclear escalation could "embolden countries like North Korea, China or Russia, who might believe that they could overwhelm US allies in their regions and take advantage of local or regional conventional advantages before the United States or its allies could respond," the report said.

The no first use policy could also undermine allies' confidence in the US commitment to their defense and possibly "spur them to acquire their own nuclear weapons," which in turn would undermine US nuclear nonproliferation goals, it said.

But the report also noted that advocates of a "no first use" policy assert a lack of evidence that the threat of nuclear escalation can deter conventional war, while arguing that US nuclear first use might spark a nuclear response and an all-out nuclear exchange.

"As a result, they conclude that the possible first use of nuclear weapons is not only unnecessary but also might turn conventional war into a nuclear catastrophe. Moreover, they argue that 'no first use' would support US nonproliferation goals by demonstrating that the United States accepted a limited role for its nuclear force," the report said.

Both military and civilian officials in the Obama Administration oppose a "no first use" pledge, the report said, adding that Adm. Cecil Haney, commander of the Strategic Command; Secretary of State John Kerry; Secretary of Defense Ash Carter; and Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz have raised concerns.



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Congress remains divided, with some, like Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), arguing that the only moral use for US nuclear weapons is as a deterrent to their use. Others, such as Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-Texas), argue that changes in US nuclear policy could lead to a more dangerous world by undermining nuclear deterrence, according to the report. (Yonhap)

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160905000321>

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The Asahi Shimbun – Tokyo, Japan

Obama Unlikely to Drop Option of First Strike

By DAVID E. SANGER and WILLIAM J. BROAD, New York Times

September 7, 2016

President Barack Obama, who has weighed ruling out a first use of a nuclear weapon in a conflict, appears likely to abandon the proposal after top national security advisers argued that it could undermine allies and embolden Russia and China, according to several senior administration officials.

Obama considers a reduction in the role of nuclear weapons as critical to his legacy. But he has been chagrined to hear critics, including some former senior aides, argue that the administration's second-term nuclear modernization plans, costing up to \$1 trillion in coming decades, undermine commitments he made in 2009.

For months, arms control advocates have argued for a series of steps to advance the pledge he made to pursue "a world without nuclear weapons." An unequivocal no-first-use pledge would have been the boldest of those measures. They contend that as a practical matter no U.S. president would use a nuclear weapon when so many other options are available.

Former Defense Secretary William J. Perry said in a recent interview, "It's the right time," noting that the pledge would formalize what has been the United States' unspoken policy for decades.

But in the end, Obama seems to have sided with his current advisers, who warned in meetings culminating this summer that a no-first-use declaration would rattle allies like Japan and South Korea. Those nations are concerned about discussion of a U.S. pullback from Asia prompted by comments made by the Republican presidential nominee, Donald Trump.

Defense Secretary Ash Carter and Secretary of State John Kerry also expressed concern that new moves by Russia and China, from the Baltic to the South China Sea, made it the wrong time to issue the declaration, according to senior aides in the Department of Defense and the State Department. Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz, whose department oversees the nuclear arsenal, joined in the objections, administration officials confirmed.

The New York Times interviewed more than a half-dozen administration officials involved in or briefed on the nuclear debate. All insisted on anonymity to describe internal administration deliberations on nuclear strategy.

The United States dropped nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan at the end of World War II in 1945--the only example in history of a first use, or any use, of nuclear weapons in warfare.

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Almost every president since Harry S. Truman has made it clear that nuclear weapons would be used only as a last resort, so the pledge would have largely ratified unwritten policy.

Administration officials confirmed that the question of changing the policy on first use had come up repeatedly this summer as a way for Obama to show that his commitment to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. strategy--and thus the risk of nuclear exchanges--was more than rhetorical.

But the arguments in front of the president himself were relatively brief, officials said, apparently because so many senior aides objected. Carter argued that President Vladimir Putin of Russia and Kim Jong Un, the North Korean leader, could interpret a promise of no first use as a sign of U.S. weakness, even though that was not the intent.

The defense secretary's position was supported by Kerry and Moniz, two architects of the Iran nuclear deal, who cautioned that such a declaration could unnerve U.S. allies already fearful that America's nuclear umbrella cannot be relied upon. Trump talked explicitly in interviews about withdrawing military forces from Asia unless Tokyo and Seoul paid more for their presence, and said in March that he was willing to see them build their own nuclear arsenals rather than depend on Washington.

According to one senior administration official, Kerry told Obama that a no-first-use pledge would also weaken the nuclear deterrent while Russia is running practice bombing runs over Europe and China is expanding its reach in the South China Sea.

Obama and his national security team have rejected a second option: "de-alerting" nuclear missiles ready to fire on short notice. The fear is that in a crisis, "re-alerting" the weapons could escalate a conflict.

Earlier, Obama and his aides also decided against eliminating one element of the "triad" of land-, air- and submarine-launched weapons. The idea was to remove the missiles based in silos across the American West, which are considered outdated and vulnerable to a first strike. But the Pentagon argued strongly that the ground-based missiles were the part of the system with which they had the most assured communications, and that it was too risky to get rid of them.

In the past year, arms control advocates, including some of Obama's former aides, have argued that Obama still has time to repair his reputation as an atomic visionary.

"Let Obama be Obama," Andrew Weber, an assistant secretary of defense for atomic programs from 2009-14, said in an interview.

Weber strongly opposes the White House's recent approval of a nuclear cruise missile. "The defense complex is doing a full-court press, so things are going to be very hard to change," he said.

Obama's favorite nuclear strategist in his first term, the retired vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. James E. Cartwright, wrote in a New York Times Op-Ed article last month with Bruce G. Blair of Princeton University, a former Minuteman launch officer, that "nuclear weapons today no longer serve any purpose beyond deterring the first use of such weapons by our adversaries."

"Our non-nuclear strength, including economic and diplomatic power, our alliances, our conventional and cyber weaponry and our technological advantages, constitute a global military juggernaut unmatched in history," they concluded.

Obama made the eventual elimination of nuclear arms a centerpiece of his 2008 presidential campaign. In contrast, Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, has said little this year about her nuclear plans, and Trump has argued for a major military buildup.



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Once Obama took office, his ambitions were frustrated. While he achieved a major arms control treaty, New Start, in 2010--driven through the Senate by Kerry--it came at a price: He won Republican votes by agreeing to a sweeping plan to modernize the U.S. nuclear arsenal and build a new generation of weapon carriers, including bombers, missiles and submarines.

In 2013, some of Obama's former national security officials criticized the plan, saying his original vision was in danger of being turned on its head. The doubters included Philip E. Coyle III and Steve Fetter, who had recently left White House posts.

One study estimated the modernization cost at \$1 trillion over three decades.

The Federation of American Scientists, a private group in Washington, released an analysis showing that Obama had dismantled fewer nuclear warheads than any other post-Cold War president.

Inside the White House, Obama asked for new ideas to advance his agenda before leaving office. In May, he went to Hiroshima--the first U.S. president to do so--and reaffirmed his vision of a non-nuclear world.

"We must have the courage to escape the logic of fear," he said at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial. "We may not realize this goal in my lifetime. But persistent effort can roll back the possibility of catastrophe."

Ten days later, Ben Rhodes, a deputy national security adviser, outlined possible efforts in a speech to the Arms Control Association, a private group in Washington. His list included putting more nuclear material under tight security, reaffirming a global ban on nuclear testing and revisiting the administration's plans to modernize the nuclear arsenal. It was an agenda sure to please his audience, but one that would largely fall to the next administration to execute.

The president, Rhodes said, "will continue to review these plans as he considers how to hand the baton off to his successor." That review included the no-first-use pledge.

Behind the scenes, Carter argued that a ban on first use would be unwise. If North Korea used biological weapons against the South, he and other Pentagon officials said, the United States might need the option of threatening a nuclear response. Kerry argued that Japan would be unnerved by any diminution of the U.S. nuclear umbrella, and perhaps be tempted to obtain its own weapons. The same argument, he said, applied to South Korea.

Kerry and Carter have not taken public positions in large part because they do not want to appear to influence Obama as he makes a decision.

Had Obama issued the no-first-use declaration, officials conceded, the next president could have rejected it. In an interview this year, Trump bristled at the idea, saying he would never want to weaken America's leverage. Clinton has not spoken on the issue during her campaign.

But a no-first-use policy would have been hard for either to undo. Military experts say the next president would hesitate to reverse such a decision since the quick reversal would confuse allies and possibly fray important coalitions.

<http://www.asahi.com/ajw/articles/SDI201609076623.html>

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Sputnik International – Russian Information Agency

Sarmat ICBM: 8 Megatons at Hypersonic Speeds, Arriving 2 Years Ahead of Schedule

7 September 2016

On Monday, a defense industry official told Russian media that the mass production of the RS-28 Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile, a new multi-warhead, super-heavy missile designed to defeat anti-missile systems, would begin in 2018, two years ahead of schedule. Defense analyst Vladimir Tuchkov explains what made this possible.

The Sarmat, being developed by the Makeyev Rocket Design Bureau in the city of Miass, just east of the Ural Mountains, will replace the RS-36, a family of ICBMs and space launch vehicles that entered service in the 1970s and 1980s. Featuring a large payload capacity, the heavy missile is expected to carry up to 10 heavy warheads, or 16 lighter ones, or a combination of warheads and countermeasures meant at overwhelming enemy missile defenses.

Most concerning to foreign defense observers is the prospect of the Sarmat being armed with Project 4202, a hypersonic glider which, after separating from its ICBM launch vehicle, will be able to accelerate to speeds between Mach 7 and Mach 12, acting like a hypersonic cruise missile, and capable of maneuvering to overcome any existing or prospective missile defense to reach its target.

The Sarmat missile, whose development began in 2009, has been touted as Russia's response to US projects including the Prompt Global Strike initiative, and as well the effort to deploy missile defense near Russia's borders. If nothing else, Moscow hopes that the new missile and its payload will deter US efforts to gain strategic superiority over Moscow, or, in the worst case scenario, to launch a surprise attack on Russia.

Russia's Strategic Missile Forces initially expected the arrival of the first parties of the new missile by 2020, in accordance with the state's defense program to the year 2020. But on Monday, a source within the Russian military industrial complex told Russian media that "the first Sarmats will be introduced to the Strategic Missile Forces no later than 2019, and most likely – in 2018."

Commenting on the news, Vladimir Tuchkov, military analyst and contributor to the independent online newspaper Svobodnaya Pressa, emphasized that the quickened pace of development was made possible by the modernization of the industrial base at the Krasnoyarsk Machine-Building Plant, where the production of the Sarmat missile is set to take place.

Thankfully, Tuchkov added, the modernization of the enterprise's production capabilities came at a very timely moment, in view of the deterioration of relations between Russia and the NATO bloc, led by the United States. "The new missile will be a powerful deterrent, significantly outperforming all existing carriers of nuclear weapons," the analyst noted.

At the same time, the analyst pointed out that at the moment, Russia's silo-based, liquid fueled R-36M2, Voyevoda (NATO codename SS-18 Satan), an upgraded variant of the R-36, is still the most powerful weapon in its class. "Among the land, sea and air-based weapons on both sides of the Atlantic, there is nothing even close to reaching its combat capabilities. It's no coincidence that NATO assigned it such an appropriate name – the 'Satan'."

The R-36M2, developed after Ronald Reagan announced his 'Star Wars' missile defense initiative in 1983, was adopted in 1988, designed to serve as a deterrent capable of breaking through any missile defenses the United States might be able to muster.

Even today, Tuchkov noted, the R-36M2 is an effective weapon against any existing missile defense systems. However, he also added that "after a quarter century, the prospective enemy's missile defense systems are beginning to catch up with [it]. More precisely, Russia has developed the technical

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capability to create a new ICBM with even better characteristics, to convincingly demonstrate the untenability of the potential opponent's missile defenses, both existing and future ones."

And Russia has another important reason for developing a new ICBM, the analyst wrote. This has to do with the fact that the R-36 series of missiles were originally developed in Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine at the Yuzhnoe Design Bureau. "Now, when ties with Ukraine have been completely severed, it's necessary to get rid of any leftover dependency on Ukraine's military-industrial complex for the supply of spare parts and servicing."

As for the Makeyev Rocket Design Bureau, charged with the development of the Sarmat, Tuchkov recalled that their engineers are already known for the creation of topnotch missiles for Russia's fleet of strategic submarines. "In this area their achievements have been impressive." The R-29RMU Sineva, NATO-code name SS-N-23A Skiff, "is a record-holder in its power-to-weight ratio – that is...the ratio of the rocket's power in relation to its mass."

"There is nothing paradoxical about the Sarmat being made specifically [by engineers at Makeyev]," the analyst noted. "Firstly, they have accumulated a vast amount of experience in the creation of liquid-propelled rockets, which have better power characteristics than solid-fueled systems. And the Sarmat, in order to surpass the combat characteristics of the Voyevoda, was developed as a liquid-fueled missile."

"Secondly, the design bureau has experience with ground-based missile systems, too. Among them, for example, is the R-17 missile, NATO classification Scud."

Ultimately, Tuchkov noted, "the constructors at the Makeyev Rocket Design Bureau went their own way. In other words, they did not decide to simply create an upgrade of the Voyevoda (even though such opportunities existed) but created an entirely new missile...The result was a missile which is superior to the Voyevoda in all respects."

That includes a better power-to-weight ratio. "The Voyevoda weighs over 210 tons – the Sarmat – 20% lighter. And the new missile is capable of going into suborbital trajectory, going in on its target from space." This means the possibility of attack from any direction, including the North or South Poles. "And the trajectory is laid in such a way as to avoid regions with the massive buildup of missile defense systems."

"This is achieved through the use of a more efficient propulsion system, both at the first and second stages [of the missile's flight]. An increase in power is also expected via the use of an upper-stage booster in the final stage." That, Tuchkov explained, makes it possible to use the missile for civilian purposes – as a rocket carrying satellites into orbit.

In their military role, the Sarmats will be protected in the same types of underground bunkers that presently house the Voyevodas. These bunkers, the analyst recalled, "can withstand nuclear explosions nearby, using special damping containers," to withstand immense seismic activity.

"The defense of the bunkers will be intensified by the Mozyr active protection system, developed especially for the Sarmat. This features 100 artillery pieces, aimed to fire at any cruise missile or missile warheads, forming a cloud of projectiles up to 6 km. This system is serviced by radar featuring long-distance detection and enhanced accuracy capabilities."



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In addition, it is assumed that areas where Sarmats are based will be defended by the S-500," Russia's next generation surface-to-air missile system, entering the final stages of development.

<https://sputniknews.com/military/20160907/1045062797/sarmat-ahead-of-schedule-analysis.html>

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United Press International (UPI) – Washington, D.C.

U.S. Air Force Test-Fires Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Across Pacific

By Elizabeth Shim

September 8, 2016

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 8 (UPI) -- The United States Air Force test-launched an intercontinental ballistic missile on Monday, the same day North Korea fired three midrange missiles into the Sea of Japan.

The test of the unarmed Minuteman III ICBM at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., comes at a time when President Obama has called for extended deterrence measures and reaffirmed U.S. commitment to the defense of regional Asian allies.

The missile's re-entry vehicle contained a telemetry package for operational testing and traveled about 4,200 miles to the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands, according to the U.S. Air Force.

Col. Craig Ramsey, the 576th Flight Test Squadron commander, said the launch followed an "enormous reconfiguration of range assets that took six months to complete."

The launch was the first of its kind since late February, NBC affiliate KSBY-TV reported.

There were five launches in January and February before scheduled downtime, which was for the purpose of relocating launch equipment, according to the television network.

The Minuteman launch also came a few hours after the firing of North Korea missiles – a possible indication the U.S. test was conducted as a warning to Pyongyang's continued provocations, according to Yonhap news agency.

The United States has consistently warned of more defense measures against Pyongyang if the country continued to pursue weapons tests.

"North Korea needs to know that provocations will only invite more pressure and further deepen its isolation," U.S. President Barack Obama said Tuesday.

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2016/09/08/US-Air-Force-test-fires-intercontinental-ballistic-missile-across-Pacific/7491473340904/

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The Chosun Ilbo – Seoul, South Korea

N.Korean Sub-Launched Missile 'Identical with China's'

By Lee Yong-soo

September 05, 2016

The ballistic missile North Korea successfully recently fired from a submarine is identical with China's JL-1 submarine missile, a U.S. military expert said.

That suggests China clandestinely handed the technology to the North to preserve a balance of power in the region.

"The missile that the North Koreans launched looks like it's a two-stage missile just like the JL-1. It looks like it's a solid-fuel missile just like the JL-1," said Bruce Bechtol of Angelo State University in Texas, a former U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency officer.

"Just looking at the JL-1 and the North Korean SLBM, they're looking exactly the same," he told a radio interviewer.

He pointed out that over the past years China has supplied the North with a lot of military equipment, including transporter erector launchers.

Buoyed by the success of the missile launch, the North is expected to accelerate development of a 3,000-ton submarine capable of carrying three to four missiles.

In a briefing on Aug. 31, a defector group called North Korea Intellectuals Solidarity claimed the North's General Bureau of Reconnaissance is developing a nuclear-powered submarine based on a Russian nuclear-submarine blueprint that it has stolen by hacking.

The North invited five Russian nuclear-submarine experts in 2013 and has since sped up its own submarine development, the group added.

A government official here was skeptical. "The allegation about the hacking of a Russian computer network and theft of a submarine blueprint sounds like a cloak-and-dagger story, but nobody can completely rule it out," he said.

http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2016/09/05/2016090500881.html

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The Korea Times – Seoul, South Korea

North Fires 3 Ballistic Missiles

By Jun Ji-hye

September 5, 2016

North Korea test-fired three ballistic missiles, believed to be medium-range Rodong missiles, into waters off its east coast, Monday, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

The missiles flew about 1,000 kilometers before landing in waters under Japan's Air Defense Identification Zone (JADIZ) in the East Sea.

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The launch took place soon after President Park Geun-hye and her Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping wrapped up their bilateral talks on the sidelines of the G20 summit in China's Hangzhou.

The missile launch also came a few days ahead of the anniversary of the establishment of the North's government on Sept. 9. The South Korean military has been keenly monitoring possible military provocations from the North ahead of the anniversary.

The JCS said the latest launch was seen as the isolated state's apparent armed protest aimed at showing off its missile capabilities and keeping up military tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

"North Korea fired three ballistic missiles believed to be Rodong missiles from Hwangju County in North Hwanghae Province at around 12:14 p.m.," the JCS said. "The North launched the missiles without declaring a navigational warning."

The JCS noted that the total flight distance of the missiles was estimated at 1,000 kilometers, and they flew more than 400 kilometers into the JADIZ.

"South Korea and the United States are currently conducting a detailed analysis to glean more information," the JCS said.

The latest launch came after Pyongyang successfully test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) in waters off its east coast on Aug. 24. The SLBM flew about 500 kilometers before landing in JADIZ waters, showing a significant improvement compared with past launches. At the time, the missile penetrated about 80 kilometers into the JADIZ.

On Aug. 3, the North launched two Rodong missiles, with one landing in waters within Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) after flying 1,000 kilometers.

The Rodong has a maximum range of 1,300 kilometers and can hit targets on the Japanese mainland and Okinawa.

The latest launch is also seen by some observers as the North's protest against Seoul's new North Korea human rights law that went into effect Sunday.

Propaganda organs of the repressive state claim that Seoul was "acting blindly," referring to the law.

A JCS official noted that the North's provocation is a clear violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions that ban the North from any activity using ballistic missile technology.

"We are maintaining a full readiness posture in preparation for additional provocations," the official said.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/09/116_213489.html

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Yonhap News Agency – Seoul, South Korea

Nuclear Submarine Only Solution to N.K. SLBM Threats

By Choi Kyong-ae

September 6, 2016

SEOUL, Sept. 6 (Yonhap) -- A submarine expert on Tuesday called for South Korea to build a nuclear-powered submarine, saying it is the only solution to counter the threats posed by North Korea's submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs).



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"With the conventional diesel-electric submarines, it's impossible to track and strike nuclear-powered submarines that could carry SLBMs. We are running out of time to build our own nuclear submarines as the North moves to deploy its SLBM-armed submarine in a couple of years," Moon Keun-sik, an analyst at the Korea Defense and Security Forum, said in an interview with Yonhap News Agency.

A nuclear submarine, powered by a nuclear reactor, doesn't need to surface to be refueled. This greatly reduces its chance of being detected by the enemy. In contrast, diesel-electric submarines have to surface or use a snorkel to charge their batteries, making them more vulnerable to detection.

Calls for a nuclear submarine have gained urgency in South Korea in recent months as North Korea has demonstrated technological progress in SLBM development.

That SLBM, fired on Aug. 24 from off the northeastern port of Sinpo, flew some 500 kilometers toward Japan, far exceeding the range of the North's previous sub-launched missiles. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un hailed the test as "the greatest success" with experts saying that it could have flown at least twice as far if the missile was launched at a regular angle.

"Given the missile was fired at a high angle and used solid fuel, (which is more stable than liquid fuel), it is just a matter of time before North Korea starts to deploy an SLBM-mounted submarine. It will pose a formidable threat to the security of South Korea," said Moon who served as a submariner for 22 years out of his 32-year-long career in the Navy. He retired as a colonel from the military in 2012.

To counter the threat, the submarine expert called on the government to build a nuclear-powered submarine in the shortest possible time.

"All that is needed is the government's willingness to kick-start the nuclear submarine project. South Korea has the technology to develop a 4,000-ton nuclear-powered submarine," Moon claimed.

For South Korea, a 4,000-ton nuclear submarine, bigger than France's compact Rubis-class submarines but far smaller than the U.S.' Virginia-class attack boats, will be enough of a deterrent against the North's growing missile threats, he said.

"If Seoul makes it clear that it is building a nuclear-powered submarine for the sole purpose of self-defense, the international community will find no reasons to object."

In the past four decades, South Korea has purchased low-enriched uranium from global markets, such as France and Russia, to operate its nuclear reactors. It ratified the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1975 and has remained formally committed to it since then.

On top of the government's strong will, there should be understanding and cooperation from the United States to push forward the nuclear submarine project. That's because it takes eight to 10 years from now before Seoul could develop a nuclear submarine, the expert said.

"Seoul needs to further strengthen its alliance with the U.S. during the time to have the U.S. nuclear submarines deal with any provocative moves from Pyongyang," he said.

Meanwhile, he dismissed any possibility of South Korea going nuclear.

It only requires low-enriched uranium with a lower than 20 percent concentration of uranium to power a submarine and the low-purity uranium cannot be used to make a nuclear weapon. To



produce a nuclear arsenal, enriched uranium with a concentration of more than 95 percent is needed, Moon explained.

"To transform low-enriched uranium into weapons-grade uranium, there should be facilities for reprocessing and enrichment," he said. "But we don't have such facilities."

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/news/2016/09/06/0200000000AEN20160906006700315.html>

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The Korea Herald – Seoul, South Korea

NK Claims to Have Tested Upgraded Rodong Missiles

By Shin Hyon-hee

September 6, 2016

North Korea claimed Tuesday to have used an upgraded model of its mid-range Rodong projectiles during their test fire one day earlier in a fresh display of its unbridled ambition to shore up its nuclear and missile programs.

State media said North Korean leader Kim Jong-un observed the liftoff in which three ballistic missiles flew some 1,000 kilometers above the East Sea toward Japan, expressing "great satisfaction" and calling for sustained efforts to develop the country's nuclear capabilities.

The latest launch was designed to "reassess the flight safety and guidance of the ballistic rockets, which have been deployed after performance improvement, while judging and evaluating the actual fight competency of the artillery units," the official Korean Central News Agency said, adding the results were "perfect."

"We need to continue to expand miraculous achievements in strengthening the nuclear force which have been taking place in this historic year opening with a hydrogen bomb," Kim was quoted as saying during the event, referring to the country's Jan. 6 underground blast.

"Through the ballistic rocket firing exercise, the military might of the artillery units, which have strengthened and developed into a powerful class capable of staging a pre-emptive strike at any time and any place, was presented to the whole world," the dispatch added.

Given their flight trajectory, the tested weapons are presumed to be the Rodong intermediate-range missiles with an upgrade in the warhead part, Yonhap News reported, citing an unnamed government source who analyzed images published earlier in the day by The Rodong Sinmun, a Workers' Party mouthpiece.

The missiles in the photos were seemingly different from those unveiled following the Rodong's July 21 test. They appear to be akin to the Scud missile in the cone-shaped warhead section but had a slightly hollow surface in the propellant and other parts.

"We knew that North Korea has been improving the Rodong," the source was quoted as saying. "The North made it public today through the paper and indeed presented the upgraded edition."

But Seoul's Defense Ministry remained cautious, saying that together with the US, it has determined the missiles were simply the Rodong.

Asked about the possibility of the projectiles being Scuds, spokesperson Moon Sang-gyun dismissed it, citing "various circumstances and data including debris and flight trajectory."



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“What we announced yesterday was based on our judgment and it’s accurate ... and the results are shared by the US,” he said at a news briefing Tuesday, without elaborating due to intelligence matters.

The US Strategic Command issued a statement saying two of the three missiles were presumably intermediate-range ballistic missiles but it is still assessing the other one, without specifying their names.

Following the firing, Seoul, Washington and Tokyo requested an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council in New York later in the day to discuss its response to yet another breach by Pyongyang of multiple resolutions.

The three countries are also seeking to deliver a solid message against the communist state’s ceaseless provocations during the ongoing ASEAN and forthcoming East Asia summits in Laos.

Beijing, for its part, has expressed its displeasure over the launch, which came shortly after a summit between President Park Geun-hye and her Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the Group of 20 conference in Hangzhou.

On the bilateral front, the top negotiators of South Korea and the US held a phone conversation late Monday and agreed to meet in Seoul next week to explore joint countermeasures.

Kim Hong-kyun, special representative for the Korean Peninsula’s peace and security affairs at the Foreign Ministry here, will host the US Special Representative for North Korea Policy Sung Kim on Sept. 13, the ministry said.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160906000818>

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Korea JoongAng Daily – Seoul, South Korea

Thaad Has North’s Subs in a Pinch

By KIM MIN-SEOK and KANG JIN-KYU

September 7, 2016

North Korea’s test-fire of a submarine launched ballistic missile (SLBM) on Aug. 24 from the port city of Sinpo put Seoul and its allies on edge, as it was perceived to have been a success.

In apparent celebration, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un issued an order for the construction of a submarine able to carry two to three SLBMs.

Because SLBMs are much harder to detect, since they are launched underwater and hence outside radar zone, some defense experts caution that the North’s development of submarine fleets with SLBM capability could be a game changer.

But as South Korea and the United States are going to set up the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (Thaad) system in Seongju County, North Gyeongsang, such a submarine fleet’s threat will be limited to the southeastern part of the East Sea.

It is estimated that it would take at least 36 hours for North Korean submarines to reach a point in the East Sea free of the Thaad’s X-Band radar.

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During the voyage, North Korean submarines would have to surface to recharge their batteries by running a diesel engine two to three times, raising the likelihood of detection by the South Korean Navy.

If the North were to target a U.S. military base in Guam or Hawaii with an SLBM, its submarine would have to sail beyond the East Sea and reach the Pacific, since the maximum SLBM range is 2,000 kilometers (1,242 miles), while the distance between the East Sea and Guam is between 3,500 and 4,000 kilometers. The distance between the East Sea and Hawaii is 8,000 kilometers.

There are two sea routes a North Korean submarine could take to reach the Pacific.

One would be to the southern sea passage through the Korea Strait, which goes between Korea and Japan with a width of 200 kilometers and a depth of 90 to 100 meters.

But experts say a passage through the strait without detection by South Korean or Japanese navies would be virtually impossible given the concentration of naval bases and fleets in the area.

The South Korean Navy runs its operation command in Busan, and Japanese naval self-defense forces and the U.S. Navy run their destroyers in Sasebo naval bases in Japan near the Korea Strait.

The other available route is the northern sea passage between Russia's easternmost island of Sakhalin and Japan's Hokkaido.

But this, too, would be certain to fail as the maritime area is laden with underwater sonars that were deployed during the height of the Cold War.

One of the most effective ways to deter the North from attacking the South with an SLBM would be a pre-emptive strike on a submarine facility before a submarine with SLBMs departs for operation.

According to a report by the Defense Ministry to the parliamentary defense committee on Aug. 29, the Korean military already has just such a pre-emptive strike plan should the North show signs that it intends to make an SLBM strike.

The intelligence community in South Korea believes that Pyongyang is planning to put weapons of mass destruction such as chemical and nuclear warheads on SLBMs, an assessment that has led Korea and the United States to consider pre-emptive strikes if and when the North moves forward with a clandestine submarine operation for SLBM attacks.

But experts say making such a call would first require certainty that North Korea is on the path to a full-fledged war with the South.

<http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com/news/article/Article.aspx?aid=3023527>

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The Korea Times – Seoul, South Korea

Obama Pledges 'Extended Deterrence' for South Korea

By Kang Seung-woo

September 7, 2016

VIENTIANE, Laos — U.S. President Barack Obama has reaffirmed the country's commitment to "extended deterrence" for South Korea against North Korea's evolving nuclear threats.

The pledge was included in a press statement following Obama's summit with President Park Geun-hye in Laos, Tuesday.



USAF Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies (CUWS) Outreach Journal

This is the first time that a U.S. president has pledged to provide a nuclear umbrella for South Korea, according to Cheong Wa Dae officials.

Analysts say this means there will be no change in Washington's security support for South Korea against North Korea's threats despite Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's inward-looking rhetoric.

In addition, he intended to calm budding opinions in South Korea about arming itself with nuclear weapons and building a nuclear-powered attack submarine to counter Pyongyang's evolving nuclear program, they said.

"I want to reaffirm that our commitment to the defense and security of South Korea, including extended deterrence is unwavering," Obama said in the press statement.

Extended deterrence refers to the U.S.'s stated commitment to defend its ally by mobilizing all military capabilities, nuclear and conventional, to cope with North Korea's aggression and provocations.

Although the United States regularly provides reassurances of the U.S. defense commitment to South Korea, including extended nuclear deterrence, this was the first time for a U.S. president to give a public declaration of the guarantee.

"While Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's rhetoric has unnerved U.S. allies, including South Korea and Japan, President Obama's reference was intended to guarantee that the United States will not change its foreign policy toward its partners in the region," said Park Won-gon, an international relations professor at Handong Global University.

Trump has indicated a willingness to withdraw U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula if Seoul does not pay its "fair share" for its defense.

Before the two nations arranged the summit in August, the White House predicted Obama would express his strong support for South Korea's security to Park.

"If there's an opportunity, I'm confident that the President will use it to express the U.S.'s strong support for the safety and security of our allies in the Republic of Korea," White House press secretary Josh Earnest said at the time.

Obama's first declaration also took a shot at the Kim Jong-un regime, according to Cheong Wa Dae.

"Amid growing tensions on the peninsula, his reference reflected the seriousness of the current situation," said an official.

Pyongyang has staged multiple provocations since the beginning of the year with a nuclear test and a series of ballistic missile launches, threatening the security of the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. The North launched three ballistic missiles, Monday.

Amid the escalating inter-Korean tensions, there are calls for South Korea to possess its own nuclear weapons. In addition, the North's significant progress in the development of a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) is drawing calls for the development of a nuclear-powered attack submarine.

Park Won-gon said that Obama may have considered the situation in the statement.

"For the United States, the two issues are not acceptable although it understands South Korea's concerns over the North's threats," he said.



"So, President Obama signaled that as the United States will provide extended deterrence guarantee, South Korea does not need to consider such things."

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/09/116_213690.html

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IHS Jane's Defense Weekly – London, U.K.

New Chinese Shipbuilding Facility May Be Used for Nuclear Submarine Production, Say Reports

By Richard D Fisher Jr, Washington DC, IHS Jane's Defence Weekly

07 September 2016

Bohai Shipbuilding Heavy Industry Co. Ltd's (BSHIC's) announcement of a new shipbuilding facility has prompted speculation the Chinese company may use the site to increase China's production of nuclear-powered submarines.

Chinese reports indicated the new facility may cover 40,260 m², with a length of about 288 m and a width of about 135 m: enough room to build at least three submarines concurrently, according to unnamed sources.

By comparison, Russia's nuclear submarine building hall No 42 in Severodvinsk is reportedly 436 m long and 130 m wide and can build four submarines simultaneously.

<http://www.janes.com/article/63499/new-chinese-shipbuilding-facility-may-be-used-for-nuclear-submarine-production-say-reports>

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The Diplomat – Tokyo, Japan

North Korea Showed Off a Previously Unseen Missile During the G20

Pyongyang's been sitting on the Scud-ER for years. It finally showed it off during the Hangzhou G20 meeting.

By Ankit Panda

September 08, 2016

On Monday, as world leaders of the Group of 20 met in Hangzhou, China, North Korea made a typically dramatic show of force by launching three ballistic missiles from Hwangju county in the country's southwest into the Sea of Japan. The missiles flew for around 1,000 kilometers and entered Japan's air defense identification zone, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff. The test continues Pyongyang's ongoing spate of missile testing this year, which has seemingly carried on unabated since the spring.

When Pyongyang released footage and images of this week's launch, however, it became quickly clear to North Korea watchers that the missiles here were something new, even though the launchers appeared similar to those Pyongyang uses for its Scuds. Pyongyang has spent most of the year testing its Hwasong-10 (Musudan) intermediate-range ballistic missiles and Hwasong-7 medium-range ballistic missiles. Both platforms have been tested this summer, in addition to the KN-11 submarine-launched ballistic missile, which drew headlines in August.



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After analyzing the images released by the North Koreans, experts at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey believe that North Korea showed off its extended range (ER) Scud missile. Because North Korea hasn't flown or shown off the Scud-ER, the system has received fairly limited attention. The 2016 U.S. Department of Defense report on North Korea's military notes the existence of the system alongside the regularly tested Scud-B (Hwasong-5), Scud-C (Hwasong-6), and the shorter-range Toksa.

The ER is a variation on the Scud-C with an elongated fuselage to store additional fuel. According to CNS' Jeffrey Lewis, the pictures released by North Korea suggest that the launchers use a slightly larger cradle, but appear to otherwise be the same kind that Pyongyang uses for other missile launches. The Scud-ER is thought to be capable of delivering a 500 kg payload to roughly 1,000 km, Lewis adds. The payload is considerably reduced from the Scud-C—a trade-off that allows for a longer-range delivery.

This week's decision to show off the Scud-ER during the G20 has important value for North Korea politically. Melissa Hanham, also of CNS, notes that Pyongyang may have decided to advertise the Scud-ER now "because they can produce a lot more of them than longer range [missiles]." Given the decision earlier this summer by the United States and South Korea to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, Pyongyang is likely eager to emphasize its capability to saturate any allied missile defense capability with its existing missiles.

For instance, Monday's test showed off North Korea's ability to launch three ballistic missiles within a minute, a show of force intended to hint at the possibility of saturating the capabilities of South Korea's planned THAAD battery. Though the precise limitations of THAAD are classified, an analysis published earlier this year estimates that a North Korean launch of "more than 20 missiles simultaneously" would overwhelm THAAD's fire-control radar. The U.S. Department of Defense estimates that North Korea has "fewer than 100" launchers for its Scud variants.

Essentially, this week appears to have been the coming out party for North Korea's Scud-ER. In the broader strategic context of the Korean peninsula, Pyongyang has gone to lengths this year to show Washington and Seoul that it's making steady progress on previously untested and unproven platforms like the Hwasong-10, the KN-11, and now the Scud-ER. Pyongyang wants the world to know that even with missile defense plans inching ahead on the other side of the 38th parallel, it's got a broad enough toolkit to keep the heat high.

<http://thediplomat.com/2016/09/north-korea-showed-off-a-previously-unseen-missile-during-the-g20/>

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The Hankyoreh – Seoul, South Korea

N. Korea Believed to Have Conducted 5th Nuclear Test

Detonation likely timed to coincide with founding anniversary of N. Korea; emergency meeting convened

By Park Byung-soo and Lee Geun-young, senior staff writers, and Jeong In-hwan staff reporter

September 9, 2016



An artificial earthquake was detected near Punggye Village in North Korea. It is presumed that North Korea carried out a fifth nuclear test.

“At about 9:30 am, artificial seismic waves with a magnitude of 5.0 were detected in the vicinity of Punggye Village in North Korea. We are currently analyzing whether this was a nuclear test,” South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff stated.

North Korea appears to have carried out the nuclear test to mark the anniversary of the regime’s establishment on Sept. 9.

Around 10 am, the Korea Meteorological Administration in South Korea reported, “An earthquake with a magnitude of 5.0 occurred around 9:30 am near Kilju County in North Hamgyong Province, North Korea. This is presumed to have been an artificial earthquake.”

According to a document that appeared on the website of the European-Mediterranean Seismological Centre, seismic waves with a magnitude of 5.3 on the Richter scale were detected at 41.19 north and 129.05 east in North Korea. The institute also stated that the epicenter was estimated to have been 15 km below the surface and that the seismic waves were detected at exactly 9 am local time.

North Korea operates a nuclear testing site at Punggye Village in Kilju County, North Hamgyong Province. The site at Punggye Village is located at 41.16 north and 129.5 east, which is consistent with the location of the seismic waves detected by the institute.

North Korea is currently celebrating a holiday called Sept. 9 Day, which marks the 68th anniversary of the establishment of the North Korean government on Sept. 9, 1948. If it is confirmed that Pyongyang carried out a fifth nuclear test, this would appear to mean that Pyongyang deliberately timed the test to occur at 9 am on Sept. 9.

As of 10 am on Sept. 9, Korean Central Television in North Korea was playing a documentary praising North Korean founder Kim Il-sung and his son and successor Kim Jong-il.

South Korean Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn convened an emergency meeting of the National Security Council at 11 am on Sept. 9 in order to discuss response measures.

http://english.hani.co.kr/arti/english_edition/e_northkorea/760760.html

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The Korea Times – Seoul, South Korea

North Korea Claims Test of Miniaturized Nuclear Warhead

Pyongyang conducts fifth and most powerful experiment

By Jun Ji-hye

September 9, 2016

North Korea conducted its fifth nuclear test, Friday, claiming to have detonated a warhead successfully.

The explosion was estimated at 10 kilotons, which is equivalent to 10,000 tons of TNT – the most powerful yet in the North’s five tests.

The latest one, which followed a series of ballistic missile launches, came only eight months after the fourth test in January, and it is the first time for the North to conduct two in a year.



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Analysts here said the North is now apparently in the final stages of making a nuclear warhead small enough to put on a missile.

If the Pyongyang's claims are true, it means the country will be able to do this soon.

The North's Korean Central TV delivered a statement issued by the Nuclear Weapons Institute that scientists and technicians successfully carried out "a nuclear explosion test for the judgment of the power of a nuclear warhead newly studied and manufactured at the northern nuclear test ground."

The television said the test was successful, noting that it "examined and confirmed the structure and specific features of movement of nuclear warhead that has been standardized to be able to be mounted on ballistic missiles."

Earlier in the day, Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said a magnitude-5 earthquake was detected near the North's a nuclear test site at Punggye-ri, North Hamgyong Province, at around 9:30 a.m.

"We estimate the North has carried out its biggest-ever nuclear test given the yield that reached 10 kilotons," an official from the Ministry of National Defense said on condition of anonymity.

The explosive power of the fourth test was estimated at 6 kilotons, the ministry said, adding that the military is currently analyzing details including whether the test was successfully as claimed by the reclusive state.

The latest test was conducted on the 68th anniversary of the establishment of North Korea.

The Kim Jong-un regime pushed ahead with the test even after the U.N. Security Council (UNSC) slapped its toughest sanctions on Pyongyang in March for the fourth test in January and long-range rocket launch the following month.

In response, the North had threatened to conduct a fifth nuclear test, claiming it had the full capacity to carry out pre-emptive nuclear strikes. Kim ordered officials to conduct a nuclear warhead test and more ballistic missiles launches as soon as possible, also in March.

The latest test is expected to bring about further sanctions from the international community.

In the wake of the test, President Park Geun-hye held an emergency meeting with her aides in Vientiane, Laos, where she attended bilateral and multilateral summits involving the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Park also held a 15 minute telephone conversation with U.S. President Barack Obama, during which the two agreed to mobilize "all means available," including stronger UNSC sanctions, to apply stronger pressure on the North.

She canceled her remaining schedule in Laos after the test was reported and returned home.

In South Korea, Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn held an emergency National Security Council (NSC) meeting at the request of Park. The government issued a statement afterwards, saying that the test was "grave provocation" and that it strongly condemned the move.

"Pyongyang has been making dangerous provocations, and has focused on developing nuclear weapons and missiles," National Security Adviser Cho Tae-yong said. "They must realize they will get nothing from such efforts. North Korea will face further international sanctions, as well as isolation."



Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and his Japanese counterpart, Fumio Kishida, held talks via phone and discussed countermeasures. They agreed to push for "additional" sanctions against North Korea, the foreign ministry said.

The North's state media said the Central Committee of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea sent warm congratulations to nuclear scientists and technicians for the successful nuclear test.

"The standardization of the nuclear warhead will enable the DPRK to produce at will and as many as it wants a variety of smaller, lighter and diversified nuclear warheads of higher strike power with a firm hold on the technology for producing and using various fissile materials," it said. "This has definitely put on a higher level the DPRK's technology of mounting nuclear warheads on ballistic rockets"

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2016/09/116_213843.html

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The Korea Herald – Seoul, South Korea

Former Saenuri Whip Renews Calls for Nuclear Armament

By Yeo Jun-suk

September 9, 2016

The ruling Saenuri Party's former floor leader Rep. Won Yoo-chul on Friday renewed his call for nuclear armament in South Korea, in response to North Korea's fifth and strongest nuclear test earlier in the day.

The fifth-term lawmaker said the government should promptly begin the process of developing nuclear weapons. Other preventive measures, such as sanctions by the United States and the United Nations, have failed to discourage the communist regime's nuclear ambitions, he added.

"Obtaining nukes is the most effective way to deter a nuclear threat," the former chairman of the parliamentary National Defense Committee said in a statement issued after the test which is believed to have produced a more powerful explosive than previous tests.

Won, a leading advocate of nuclear armament, said in a recent interview with The Korea Herald that Seoul's nuclear power status is crucial to maintaining the balance of power with Pyongyang and that the South should use the North's nuclear test as a "trigger" to obtain nukes.

The lawmaker, who also heads a parliamentary group for nuclear armament, suggested that the concept of nuclear armament includes measures ranging from the development of nukes to the redeployment of US tactical nuclear weapons here.

Won's proposal was once dismissed as "individual opinion" by the party leadership, however, the assertive stance against the North appeared to gain traction this time in the conservative party. The Saenuri Party's spokesman Rep. Yeom Dong-yeol said the party is paying attention to the "rising call for stronger self-defense measures."

The Saenuri Party's floor leader Rep. Chung Jin-suk also took up the issue, urging the military to seek measures to deter the North's nuclear threats such as by introducing a nuclear submarine against the North's submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

The three leading political parties, meanwhile, agreed to adopt a joint resolution condemning the North's nuclear test. The resolution, which was approved unanimously by the members of the



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Assembly's foreign affairs, trade and unification committee later in the day, is expected to clear the National Assembly on Sep. 20.

In the draft resolution, lawmakers from the Saenuri Party, The Minjoo Party and the People's Party urged the government to impose tougher sanctions on the nuclear provocations while continuing efforts to resolve cross-border tension peacefully.

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20160909000788>

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Daily Express – London, U.K.

WORLD WAR 3? Vladimir Putin Builds Nuclear Bunkers as Chance of All-Out War Soars

VLADIMIR Putin could be preparing for all-out nuclear war with the West after investing heavily in top-secret nuclear bunkers, security experts have warned.

By CHARLIE BAYLISS

Monday, September 5, 2016

The new facilities, built in strategic locations around Moscow, have raised concerns that the Russian leader could be prepping for a devastating radioactive battle with the West.

Putin has allegedly also ordered a 400-square mile facility to be carved into a secluded region of the Ural mountains, from which he could direct the conflict.

New satellite images have emerged of the new centres near Mount Yamantau.

It comes as the former Soviet nation is in the midst of building the world's most powerful nuclear weapon – given the terrifying name Satan-2.

It is thought the lethal weapon has the capability to destroy an areas the size of France.

Now experts warn nuclear war could be imminent.

Dr Loren Thompson, a top defence expert from the US think-tank Lexington Institute, told The National Interest: "The possibility of nuclear war between America and Russia not only still exists, but is probably growing.

"And the place where it is most likely to begin is in a future military confrontation over three small Baltic states – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

History may one day record that the greatest strategic blunder in history was the failure of U.S. leaders to take the possibility of nuclear war between America and Russia seriously once the Cold War ended."

The Kremlin already possesses the world's biggest nuclear arsenal, with around 7,300 warheads.

Some of the deadly weapons have been placed just 50 miles off the coast of US territory in Alaska.

Relations between the West and Russia have soured in recent months after Russia annexed Crimea.

Putin has also been enraged by large-scale Nato military drills being conducted on its Baltic borders.



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Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Also, Russia's support for Syrian president Bashar al-Assad directly conflicts with the West's policy of trying to topple the genocidal dictator.

The sabre-rattling Russian strongman has frequently sanctioned his nation's fighter jets entering British airspace in recent months.

The Doomsday Clock, a scientific gage which measures the likelihood of war, puts the current time of war at 23.57 – the time of all-out war is 00.00.

The current position of the Doomsday Clock is the closest it has been since 1984.

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/707195/Vladimir-Putin-russia-top-secret-nuclear-bunkers-moscow-world-war-three-Mount-Yamantau>

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Evening Standard – London, U.K.

Trident 'Could Be Replaced by Virtual Nuclear Capability'

By Nicholas Cecil

Thursday, 8 September 2016

Britain's Trident nuclear weapons could be replaced by a “virtual capability” under proposals outlined by Liberal Democrats.

The party's official position at last year's general election was to retain the nuclear deterrent but to step it down from a continuously-at-sea network of four submarines.

But a policy consultation paper to be discussed at the Lib-Dem conference floats other options, although they are not official party proposals.

One is for Britain to follow Germany, Japan, South Korea and Sweden, which have no “active nuclear weapons” but could produce an air-dropped one “within a fixed notice period” given their engineering expertise and access to fissile material. The consultation paper admits there could be a lack of warning needed to develop a weapon in time to respond to a threat. It adds that this “virtual capability” would not provide a deterrent against the use of nuclear weapons, but would give some “limited assurance” against widespread proliferation in the future.

The cost is estimated at £1 billion — a fraction of the cost of the Government's plans to replace the four-submarine system. An alternative policy in the paper is for an airborne deterrent, using F-35C Lightning II fighter aircraft armed with UK-produced B61-12 50-kiloton thermonuclear bombs.

This would require a reshaping of Britain's armed forces and would maintain “minimum deterrence” with “less destructive” capability.

Three other options outlined in the document are: backing the Government's work to replace Trident, maintaining the Lib-Dem general election policy, and unilateral nuclear disarmament.

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/trident-could-be-replaced-by-virtual-nuclear-capability-a3339856.html>

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Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) – Tehran, Iran

5 September 2016

Special Board of JCPOA Will Make Decision on US Violations

Tehran, Sept 5, IRNA - Deputy foreign minister for Euro-American affairs Majid Takht-e Ravanchi said on Monday that special board of sound implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action is to make decision on the US violations.

'We are now preparing a list of US violations and infringements on sound implementation of the JCPOA which will be reported to the government,' he said.

Takht-e Ravanchi told reporters that from the early stages of implementing the nuclear accord with G5+1, the Iranian Board of JCPOA has precisely monitored to what extent the parties to JCPOA honored their commitments.

Iran has fully observed its commitments to JCPOA, he said adding that other parties are expected to follow suit.

There is no doubt that the special board of JCPOA commission will make the final decision on how to deal with the US for infringements on sound implementation of the JCPOA, he said.

In response to a question posed on Iran's commitment to Financial Action Task Force (FATF), known in French language Groupe d'action financière (GAFI), he said that FATF is independent of JCPOA and it deals with money laundering in line with the international campaign against terrorism.

Takht-e Ravanchi brushed aside the sensitivity about FATF expressed by the Iranian radical camp, saying that the Government never makes compromise about independence of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Takht-e Ravanchi made it clear that Iran has carried out a series of negotiations to harmonize its financial system with the international monetary system including FATF and all decisions have been made by the Supreme National Security Council as well as top officials.

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82218680/>

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Deutsche Welle (DW) – Bonn, Germany

Syrian Regime Blamed for New Toxic Gas Attack

Government-controlled helicopters have dropped barrel bombs with chlorine gas cylinders on Aleppo, injuring dozens, activists and rescue workers said. The Damascus regime repeatedly denied similar claims in the past.

6 September 2016

The alleged gas attack targeted the crowded al-Sukari neighborhood, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Tuesday.

"Medical sources said 70 people suffered from suffocation and breathing problems after a regime helicopter raided the area," said Observatory's head Rami Abdel Rahman.

Issue No.1232, 9 September 2016

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A spokesman for the White Helmets, a volunteer first responders team in Syria, confirmed the incident but provided a higher number of injured in the rebel-held area. At least 80 people were hospitalized for breathing problems, including 50 women and children, Ibrahim Alhaj told the dpa news agency.

The White Helmets also posted a video of rescue workers searching for survivors in the rubble. Paramedics are seen washing victims.

"He smells like chlorine all over," one medic says while washing a child with water.

An UN report last month confirmed that warring parties in Syria used poisonous gases as weapons, despite the 2013 agreement to remove and destroy the chemical weapon stockpile.

The Syrian regime was behind at least two such attacks, with the "Islamic State" group responsible for at least one of them, UN investigators said.

Damascus denied the accusations, citing the lack of "physical evidence."

The White Helmets have since accused the regime of another chlorine attack in August.

Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa), Associated Press (AP), Reuters

<http://www.dw.com/en/syrian-regime-blamed-for-new-toxic-gas-attack/a-19530221>

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Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) – Tehran, Iran

8 September 2016

Commander: Iran to Strengthen Missile, Drone Capabilities

Kashan, Sept 8, IRNA -- Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh underlined the country's determination to become stronger in the field of missile technology.

'We will become more integrated in the defense, military and missile fields as well as drone (unmanned aerial vehicle), and by strengthening and developing these sectors we will not allow insecurity to prevail in the country,' Brigadier General Hajizadeh said on Wednesday night, addressing a ceremony here.

He said that Iran's military equipment are indigenized from the idea to product itself.

'We produce the most advanced military and defense weaponry, including different kinds of surface-to-surface, surface-to-air and surface-to-sea missiles,' Brigadier General Hajizadeh said.

<http://www.irna.ir/en/News/82223373/>

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Mehr News Agency – Tehran, Iran

Bushehr Nuclear Plant, Unit 1, Ready

Thursday, 8 September 2016

TEHRAN, Sep. 08 (MNA) – The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced that the first unit of Bushehr nuclear plant will be turned on in a ceremony on Saturday.

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In a ceremony featuring Iran's First Vice-President, Es'hagh Jahangiri, the Head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), Ali Akbar Salehi, and a host of other officials the final turnover of the first unit of Bushehr nuclear power plant to the Iranian customer will be done by the Russian side, according to the announcement issued on Thursday by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).

At the same ceremony, the construction of the second unit of the Bushehr nuclear power plant will be launched.

Sergey Kiriyyenko, the CEO of Russia's State Atomic Energy Corporation, Rosatom, heads the Russian delegation attending the ceremony. Valery Limarenko, the Director of NIAEP, the management company of Atomstroyexport (the Russian Federation's nuclear power equipment and service export company), is also accompanying the Russian delegation.

Ali Akbar Salehi had already, on August 28, told the national broadcasting of Iran, IRIB, that Russia's construction of two more nuclear power units in Bushehr will start on September 10, 2016.

<http://en.mehrnews.com/news/119587/Bushehr-nuclear-plant-unit-1-ready>

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Tasnim News Agency – Tehran, Iran

Iran among World's Top Military Powers: IRGC Commander

September 08, 2016

TEHRAN (Tasnim) – Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Aerospace Force Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said the Islamic Republic of Iran is among the top military powers in the world.

Iran is now among the world's top military powers under the guidelines of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution (Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei), Brigadier General Hajizadeh said at a ceremony on Thursday.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he stressed that the US has failed to achieve its goals against Iran through different ploys including warmongering policies, imposing anti-Iran sanctions and destabilizing efforts in the region.

Hajizadeh, however, warned that Washington is seeking new tactics in order to infiltrate into the country and undermine the Islamic Republic.

Imam Khamenei has on various occasions warned against the enemies' moves to find a way into Iran via complicated plots.

"The adversaries resort to a range of ploys, including deliberate provocation in the country, political propaganda, spending money, and moral traps, to infiltrate into Iran," the Leader said in a speech back in January.

<http://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2016/09/08/1181980/iran-among-world-s-top-military-powers-irgc-commander>

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Daily Pakistan – Lahore, Pakistan

Sharif Family Will Sell Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons if Remains in Power: Tahirul Qadri

By Khurram Shahzad

September 4, 2016

RAWALPINDI (Web Desk) – Pakistan Awami Tehreek chief Dr Tahirul Qadri has said Sharif family will sell Pakistan's nuclear weapons if remains in power.

Addressing to Tehreek-e-Qasas rally, Qadri said that Nawaz family was not loyal to the country but working for India. He said India had been trying to save PM Nawaz's government from last six months, adding that more than three hundred Indians were working in Sharif family's sugar mills.

PAT's rally was started from Rawalpindi's Liaquat Bagh and conclude at Murree Road.

The law enforcement agencies made extraordinary arrangements for the security of the participants of the rally. Extra contingents of police and Rangers were deployed on the route of the rally.

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/pakistan/sharif-family-will-sell-pakistans-nuclear-weapons-if-remains-in-power-tahirul-qadri/>

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Zee News.com – New Delhi, India

Pakistan Selling Nuclear Materials to North Korea – CIA's Explosive Revelation; US Informs India

Zee Media Bureau

Tuesday, September 6, 2016

New Delhi: America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has apprised India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) that Pakistan is supplying nuclear material to North Korea.

According to reports, Pakistan has been sending nuclear materials to North Korea through sea route.

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) supplied Monel and Enconel (nuclear substances) to Pyongyang in clear violation of United Nations sanctions.

Notably, Islamabad was supplied such materials by Chinese company named Beijing Suntech Technology Company Limited. The supplies of the Chinese company to Pakistan were being diverted to North Korea by the Pakistani authorities through cargo ship, it claimed.

Despite being involved in illegal sale of nuclear substances, Pakistan is urging the international community to accept its membership to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), according to highly placed US sources who are involved with the tracking of nuclear commerce.

In another alarming revelation, informed sources claimed that Pakistan has been giving North Korea equipment which has a direct bearing on producing nuclear weapons.

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Sources said the Beijing Suntech Technology Company Limited manufactures Vacuum Induction Melting (VIM) furnaces which find application in refining hard metals such as uranium and plutonium, which are used in making nuclear warhead cores. Pakistan is known to have procured these items from China and has passed them along to North Korea.

http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/pakistan-selling-nuclear-materials-to-north-korea-cias-explosive-revelation-us-informs-india_1926237.html

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The Indian Express – Mumbai, India

Pakistan Not Keen on Arms Race but Will Ensure Power Balance: Nawaz Sharif

"We have attained self-reliance in production of advanced weapons and our nuclear capability is the hallmark of our strong defence," Nawaz Sharif said.

Press Trust of India (PTI)

September 6, 2016

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif today said Pakistan was not keen on joining an arms race but will take steps to maintain regional balance of power. "Pakistan does not want to join the arms race in the region, however, will continue to ensure balance in the region," Sharif said in a message issued on 'Defence Day' marked every year to commemorate the 1965 war with India.

"We have attained self-reliance in production of advanced weapons and our nuclear capability is the hallmark of our

strong defence," he said. Harping on the Kashmir issue, Sharif said it should be resolved according to UN resolutions.

"We have a clear stance on Kashmir and believe that the solution of this issue only lies in implementation of the

resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and in accordance with the aspirations of Kashmiri people," he said. President, in a separate message, said Pakistan's armed forces are fully prepared to defend the homeland.

"The 6th September is a milestone in our history when 51 years ago Pakistan Army and the entire nation outrageously defended the homeland against the enemy aggression," the President said.

<http://indianexpress.com/article/world/world-news/pakistan-not-keen-on-arms-race-but-will-ensure-power-balance-nawaz-sharif-3017021/>

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FARS News Agency – Tehran, Iran

Wednesday, September 7, 2016

Former Libyan Officer: Qaddafi's Chemical Weapons in ISIL Hands

TEHRAN (FNA) - The chemical weapons developed by former Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi are possibly now in possession of the ISIL terrorists, a former army officer warned on Wednesday.

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"The terrorists are now likely to have access to mustard gas-charged mortars, artillery rounds and missiles (of Qaddafi era) since there was a large amount of mustard gas in Khashum al-Khail base, South of Sirte, which was controlled by the ISIL for a long time and therefore, the ISIL can be a major threat to Libya by launching a surprise attack on the country," Mohammad Majzoub, now a military expert, told FNA today.

"There is a possibility that the ISIL terrorists in Libya send the chemical weapons to Boko Haram in Africa" or other terrorist groups in the region, he added.

Majsoub's remarks raise fears that the chemical weapons in the hands of the ISIL in Libya may have found their way to the terrorists in Syria.

The forensics office of Aleppo said in August that examination of the wounded and dead bodies has revealed that the terrorists have most likely used mustard gas against the Syrian army.

The terrorists of Nour al-Din Zanki blew up a tunnel containing chemical materials and gases in al-Aqaba district near al-Awamid square in Aleppo after being discovered by the army last month. The explosion killed 6 people and injured 14 others.

Zahir al-Hajw, the coroner of Aleppo's forensics, told al-Mayadeen that there were some symptoms in the bodies of the dead and wounded forces, disclosing that the terrorists have most likely used mustard gas and not chlorine or sarin.

"The nose bleeding shows that their lungs have been damaged, hyperemia is seen in the inner membranes of their eyelids and they have wounds on their skin," he added.

Hajw added that the injured people also shown symptoms of shortness of breath and severe consciousness symptoms and disorders in a way that one of the wounded persons was so nervous after the CPR that he wanted to attack his friends and bite them.

<http://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13950617001169>

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Foreign Policy – Washington, D.C.

OPINION/Article

This Is How North Korea Will Get Its Nukes Past American Missile Defense Systems

By ELIAS GROLL

September 6, 2016

When North Korea launched three ballistic missiles this week, it wasn't just a show of force toward the world leaders gathered in China for a meeting of the G-20. It was also a test of what may be new technology to thwart missile defense systems and provide Pyongyang with an edge in an eventual conflict with the United States.

Monday's missiles were medium-range weapons that appeared to be outfitted with a detachable warhead, said Jeffrey Lewis, the director of the East Asia Nonproliferation Program at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. If confirmed, such a warhead would provide North Korean forces with a greater capability to thwart American missile defense systems set to be deployed to South Korea.

Moreover, of the three missiles launched Monday, two were fired nearly simultaneously. The simultaneous firing makes it more difficult for a missile defense system to intercept the projectiles.



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And when a warhead detaches from the rocket that carries it, it becomes a smaller target and sometimes travels at a greater speed, making it much more difficult to hit.

Amid a flurry of missile tests, North Korea has significantly improved its arsenal of long-distance weapons, and with each such test, Pyongyang appears to be bolstering its force with a clear motive in mind. “I think they are serious about putting together a force capable of delivering nuclear weapons in a conflict with the U.S.,” Lewis said.

The U.N. Security Council on Tuesday condemned the missile launch and warned that the world body would impose “further significant measures” if North Korea continues to violate prohibitions on nuclear and ballistic missile tests. The council significantly expanded sanctions against North Korea in March, following its nuclear test in January, the country’s fourth.

Analysts are currently poring over images and a fairly spectacular propaganda video released by North Korean state media showing the launch of what appear to be modified Nodong or Rodong missiles (the names are interchangeable and describe the same weapon).

A smiling Kim Jong Un, the North Korean leader, welcomed the news on the front page of *Rodong Sinmun*.

As North Korea is tweaking the design of its Nodong/Rodong missile, it has also expanded its capability to deliver weapons at long range.

Last month, North Korea launched a solid fuel submarine-launched ballistic missile. That weapon has a possible range of up to 600 miles, and once a submarine sails out sea with such a weapon, it could easily strike an anti-missile battery from behind its radar’s field of vision. The so-called THAAD system — short for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense — that is planned to deploy to South Korea would be a sitting duck with little or no ability to defend itself.

The development of reliable solid fuel rockets represents another important step forward for Pyongyang. Unlike liquid-fueled rockets, their solid-fueled counterparts can be ready to fire at much shorter notice.

Earlier this summer, North Korea carried out its first successful test of an innovative intermediate-range missile known as the Musudan. That missile made use of a Soviet rocket engine design and more efficient propellant to deliver a range that may soon be long enough to hit U.S. forces in Guam with a nuclear bomb. Back in February, North Korea launched a satellite into space that likely served as a test for long-range missile technology. In short, the North Korean missile program continues its steady march forward, and Washington may be powerless to prevent it.

Elias Groll is a staff writer at Foreign Policy, covering cybersecurity, privacy, and intelligence.

<http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/09/06/this-is-how-north-korea-will-get-its-nukes-past-american-missile-defense-systems/>

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Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Defense News – Springfield, VA

OPINION/Commentary

Further Dismantling Deterrence: Next Stops on a Dangerous Road

By Ben Lerner, Center for Security Policy

September 8, 2016

In the waning months of his presidency, after having taken several steps to weaken our own nuclear deterrent over the past eight years, US President Barack Obama is signaling interest in continuing the misguided, effectively unilateral nuclear disarmament agenda he first articulated in Prague in 2009, as he considers declaring a “no-first-use” policy for the United States on nuclear weapons, and by possibly circumventing the Senate by seeking some form of United Nations Security Council action to give legal effect to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty’s (CTBT) ban on nuclear testing. These maneuvers would have serious implications for international security, and in the case of the CTBT, for American rule of law as well.

The Iran nuclear deal has put Iran on a more solid path than ever before toward achieving a nuclear weapon capability. Middle Eastern nations like Saudi Arabia and Egypt have signed deals to develop civilian nuclear energy, and there is good reason to believe that such nations will use these programs as stepping stones to develop a weapon to offset an eventually nuclear Iran. North Korea conducted its fourth announced nuclear test this past January. Meanwhile, already-nuclear capable Russia, with its record of contemplating nuclear strikes on its neighbors and harassing US military assets in international waters and airspace, has accelerated a program of nuclear modernization that U.S. Strategic Command has described as a “crescendo of activity over the last decade and a half.”

This is the environment in which Obama is now considering exacerbating the decline of our nuclear deterrent, and by extension the global nuclear proliferation outlook, should he follow through with his latest contemplated policy shifts.

For decades, the United States has retained the option to use nuclear weapons in response to a devastating non-nuclear attack and in response to devastating chemical or biological weapons attacks, in what has been the actualization of the concept of “deterrence.” While it has not stopped all wars, our nuclear deterrent has been instrumental in preventing another outbreak of large-scale global conflict since World War II. The bad guys have thus far calculated that it’s better not to launch non-nuclear weapons-of-mass-destruction attacks or debilitating cyberattacks on us or our allies, since we are willing to answer them with the most devastating weapon on earth.

Declaration of a “no-first-use” policy, whereby the United States commits to using nuclear weapons only if attacked first with nuclear weapons, would stand this calculus on its head, to the detriment of international stability. If our adversaries believe that we will not retaliate with nuclear weapons for catastrophic chemical or biological attacks on us or our allies, then the risk that goes with carrying out such attacks goes down, and the risk that our allies will develop their own nuclear weapons, rather than rely on our extended deterrence, goes up. In fact, the idea of announcing a “no-first-use” policy is so misbegotten that not only are several US allies expressing concern, but even members of Obama’s own *Cabinet* are strongly advising against it.

As damaging as a “no-first-use” declaration would be, as a statement of White House policy, it is at least something that could be reversed, relatively painlessly, by a new administration. The same cannot be said for going through the UN Security Council to try to commit the United States to something that the Senate, exercising its constitutional authority, has already turned down.

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The United States signed the CTBT in 1996, but has yet to ratify it. In 1999, proponents of the CTBT failed to get even a simple majority in the Senate to vote in favor of ratification (let alone the two-thirds majority that the constitution requires for ratification of treaties). The substantial flaws surrounding the treaty that doomed it before the Senate in 1999 — its failure to define a nuclear test, and its lack of verifiability, among others — are still present.

Given these defects and recent history, Obama can see as well as anyone that the outlook for Senate ratification of the CTBT is dim. That reality, and the fact that the window is closing for Obama to further his “Prague agenda” as president, has prompted him to go around the Senate and seek the assistance of the UN Security Council to bind the United States, in some form, to a moratorium on nuclear testing.

An Aug. 12 letter to the president from Tennessee Republican Sen. Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, seems to shed light on the administration’s specific intentions in this regard, and appropriately raises concerns. Corker’s letter states in part:

“A recent State Department letter explains that the administration will support ratification of the CTBT through a resolution in the U.N. Security Council and a ‘political statement expressing the view that a nuclear test would defeat the object and purpose of the CTBT’ that will be referenced in the U.N. resolution. A political statement invoking the ‘object and purpose’ language could trigger a limitation on the ability of future administrations to conduct nuclear weapons tests. ‘Object and purpose’ obligations for countries that have signed and not ratified a treaty are specifically articulated in Article 18 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which the United States also has not ratified; but they have been recognized by successive U.S. administrations as customary international law that present a binding restriction on the United States.”

Corker is correct in his assessment, which is what would make this course of action so damaging. Even in the conduct of foreign policy, for which the Constitution generally tips the balance in favor of the presidency, Obama remains obligated to respect the constitutional prerogatives of the coequal branches of the United States government. In the case of the CTBT, the Senate exercised such a prerogative when it voted against ratification in 1999. Ignoring that outcome in order to bind the United States to the obligations of an international treaty by other means would represent a serious affront to the Senate’s constitutional role in undertaking international legal obligations, and create a worrisome precedent.

We are entering a period in which the world is getting more dangerous, not less. Dismantling our nuclear deterrent in the face of that reality — whether directly through our own actions or by enabling others to do it for us, at the expense of our own democratic process — would be a major strategic error.

Ben Lerner is a vice president with the Center for Security Policy. This article is adapted from a forthcoming white paper that will soon be available at the think tank’s website.

<http://www.defensenews.com/articles/further-dismantling-deterrence-next-steps-on-a-dangerous-road>

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Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Global Times – Beijing, China

OPINION/Editorial

N.Korean Nuclear Test Short of Strategic Deterrent

Source: Global Times

September 9, 2016

North Korea's official media announced today the country had successfully conducted a nuclear test, confirming international media reports that Pyongyang had carried out its fifth nuclear test. A 5.0-magnitude earthquake in North Korea was detected by overseas monitoring services. South Korea claims the explosion was equivalent to about 10,000 tons of TNT, the most powerful one North Korea has far tested thus far.

Today's test happened only eight months after the claimed hydrogen bomb test of January, the shortest time span between any two previous tests. Two weeks ago, North Korea conducted a submarine-launched ballistic missile test, and a few days ago it launched three missiles.

Pyongyang seems to be set to intimidate the US and South Korea, who are exerting more military pressure. It is also trying to force the international community to abandon their efforts to seek a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula. But the efforts only drew a backlash. It has created anger and embarrassment, but unlikely to scare the outside world. The other five countries of the Six-Party Talks, which are now in a deadlock, are unlikely to make concessions.

North Korea should bear in mind that nuclear weapons are only a strategic deterrent tool and cannot be resorted to. North Korea has scarce resources and its economy is limited, therefore, even if it has the ability to make nuclear bombs, the number of its nuclear arsenal would be small, so it could not reach the minimum threshold of a global nuclear power. Its nuclear capability would pale in comparison with the nuclear prowess of the US. The US believes if North Korea uses nuclear weapons first, it would lead to its destruction. North Korea is not capable of ensuring an effective strike-back after being hit by a nuclear weapon. Several factors combined, North Korea cannot build a nuclear deterrent in the traditional sense.

Look at how much Pyongyang has sacrificed to develop nuclear weapons. It has become the world's most isolated country. It is suffering from extreme economic difficulties and sees no hope of getting out of trouble any time soon. No North Korean leader has visited China in the past few years. Its top leader diplomacy is almost zero. Owning nuclear weapons appears to have added a strategic tool for North Korea. But the severance of diplomatic channels means the "growth in national strength" cannot transform to influence.

Northeast Asia is in a mess. The THAAD issue has led to a stalemate between China and the US-South Korea alliance. North Korea is taking advantage of this, hastening its nuclear tests. Seoul believes the new North Korean tests make it more necessary for the US to deploy the THAAD missile system.

They are all wrong. What they are doing will only drag Northeast Asia into deeper chaos. The Korean Peninsula will become an even more dangerous powder keg.

Owning nuclear weapons won't ensure North Korea's political security. On the contrary, it is poison that is slowly suffocating the country. It is turning into a country possibly with one or two nuclear bombs but nothing else - no prosperity, no opening up, no confidence in national security. Pyongyang will have to always be on alert.

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North Korea has not become any stronger because of its fifth nuclear test. The Korean Peninsula nuclear issue knot has merely tightened.

It's North Korea's national day on Friday. We understand how eager the country wants to boost morale and enhance national cohesion. But the nuclear weapon that's more like a firework for the North Korean people may well become one that signals a new crisis. We sincerely hope North Korea is aware of the situation and open to advice.

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1005623.shtml>

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ABOUT THE USAF CUWS

The USAF Counterproliferation Center was established in 1998 at the direction of the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. Located at Maxwell AFB, this Center capitalizes on the resident expertise of Air University, while extending its reach far beyond - and influences a wide audience of leaders and policy makers. A memorandum of agreement between the Air Staff Director for Nuclear and Counterproliferation (then AF/XON), now AF/A5XP) and Air War College Commandant established the initial manpower and responsibilities of the Center. This included integrating counterproliferation awareness into the curriculum and ongoing research at the Air University; establishing an information repository to promote research on counterproliferation and nonproliferation issues; and directing research on the various topics associated with counterproliferation and nonproliferation.

The Secretary of Defense's Task Force on Nuclear Weapons Management released a report in 2008 that recommended "Air Force personnel connected to the nuclear mission be required to take a professional military education (PME) course on national, defense, and Air Force concepts for deterrence and defense." As a result, the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, in coordination with the AF/A10 and Air Force Global Strike Command, established a series of courses at Kirtland AFB to provide continuing education through the careers of those Air Force personnel working in or supporting the nuclear enterprise. This mission was transferred to the Counterproliferation Center in 2012, broadening its mandate to providing education and research to not just countering WMD but also nuclear deterrence.

In February 2014, the Center's name was changed to the Center for Unconventional Weapons Studies to reflect its broad coverage of unconventional weapons issues, both offensive and defensive, across the six joint operating concepts (deterrence operations, cooperative security, major combat operations, irregular warfare, stability operations, and homeland security). The term "unconventional weapons," currently defined as nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons, also includes the improvised use of chemical, biological, and radiological hazards.

The CUWS's military insignia displays the symbols of nuclear, biological, and chemical hazards. The arrows above the hazards represent the four aspects of counterproliferation - counterforce, active defense, passive defense, and consequence management.

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