

Asian Nuclear, Missile & Space Digest

Volume 2, Number 5

A Weekly Newsletter from the Indian Pugwash Society

February 16, 2010

Convenor

&

Editor

Dr. Arvind Gupta

Associate Editors

P.K.Sundaram

Salvin Paul

Contents

Non-Proliferation

Nuclear Proliferation Is This Year's Inconvenient Truth

New START Delayed Again

Carnesale joins high-level commission exploring storage of nuclear waste
Pentagon Might Shift Command Responsibility for Combating WMD Spread

New Mexico Nuke Unit Decertified by Air Force

Naval Station Mayport Prepares For Arrival of Nuclear Aircraft Carrier

Disarmament

India Backs "Transparent" Global Nuclear Disarmament

U.N. Demands Action on Disarmament Agenda

Iran

China feels US-Iran fallout

'Nuclear' Iran Crushes Opposition Protests

Iranian Atomic Energy Organization Head Ali-Akbar Salehi: Attacking
Iran's Nuclear Facilities Will Spell the End of Israel

New twist in Iran's nuclear brinkmanship

Iran will 'quicken nuclear work if US threats continue'

Iran: We are now among world's top 15 nuclear states

As Iran's nuclear aims expand, Obama should urge sanctions

Thinking outside the box on Iran

Clinton Prepares for Gulf Trip and Talks on Iran, Mideast Peace Efforts

North Korea

North Korea Not Eager to Return to Six - Party Talks

North Korea edges toward new nuclear talks

Pakistan

Pakistan is Top Security Concern, Biden Says

India

Nuclear Iran and the Gulf: Can India make a difference?

Nuclear Energy

Venezuela to Develop Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes

Lithuania rejects Russian nuclear plant proposal



Indian Pugwash Society

No.1, Development Enclave,
Rao Tula Ram Marg, Near USI
Delhi-110010

Tel. No (91-11) 2671-7983

Fax No. (91-11)2615-4192

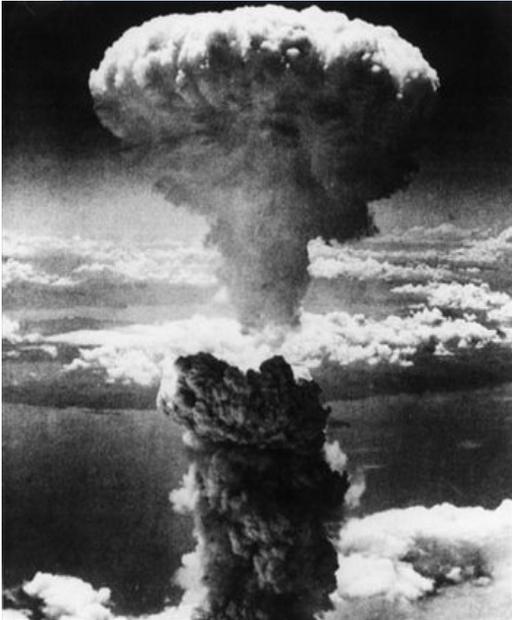
Extn 7014 & 7012

Email: indianpugwash@yahoo.com

All the articles are available from the mentioned sources in original format.

Non-Proliferation

Nuclear Proliferation Is This Year's Inconvenient Truth: *Kim Zetter*



In 2006, Oleg Khinsagov was caught trying to smuggle 100 grams of refined uranium into Georgia with the aim of selling it to a Muslim man whom he believed was connected to “a serious organization.” Khinsagov, a whippet-thin, 50-year-old Russian trader who generally transported fish and sausages, was carrying the uranium in two small bags in his jacket pockets when he was caught in a sting operation. The amount was small, but enriched enough to make a bomb, and Khinsagov said he had another 2 to 3 kilograms stored in his apartment that he was willing to sell.

That should be the opening scene of a new documentary on nuclear proliferation, but instead it's tucked into the middle of ***Countdown to Zero***, which aims to do for anti-nuclear proliferation what ***An Inconvenient Truth*** did for the environmental movement. The film takes a while to work up to its most important point — that anyone with a relatively small amount of money has the ability to obtain enough nuclear weapons material to incinerate everything in a five-mile radius of a large city. And they wouldn't have to missile it into the U.S., they could simply detonate it in a container ship at a port.

The film was shown Thursday evening to attendees of the Technology, Entertainment and Design conference by producer Lawrence Bender, who debuted his previous documentary *An Inconvenient Truth* at TED in 2006 and also produced ***Inglourious Basterds*** and other Quentin Tarantino films. The TED screening is only the second showing of the film in the U.S., which had its world premier last month at the Sundance Film Festival. The film has just found a distributor, which is in the process of choosing a release date.

Countdown to Zero picks up where Jonathan Schell's brilliant 1982 three-part *New Yorker* series “The Fate of the Earth” left off. That series shocked the public into understanding the full reality of what a nuclear winter would entail should a full-scale nuclear exchange occur between countries. But the landscape in 2010 is drastically changed from 1982 when Russia and the United States were the only players likely to launch such a catastrophe.

Today there are an estimated 23,000 nuclear weapons in the world, spread among nine nations:

Russia (13,000)

United States (9,400)

France (300)

China (240)

the United Kingdom (185)

Israel (80)

Pakistan (60)

India (60)

North Korea (10)

On top of these, there are numerous terrorist groups seeking to join this fraternity of nuclear possessors. The story of Khinsagov highlights just how easy it could be for any of them to obtain materials for a nuclear bomb.

Earlier in the day, former CIA covert operative Valerie Plame Wilson, who is featured in the film and was at the screening, told the TED audience that during her time in the CIA her main focus was on preventing terrorist groups from obtaining nuclear materials and weapons. But now she believes the greatest threat comes from Pakistan, which is politically precarious and believed to be the current home of Osama bin Laden.

The film's main message, as the title suggests, is that zero nuclear weapons in the world is the only acceptable number, because even if nations were committed to not using their weapons, they can't be trusted to care for them. In the last two decades, there have been 25 known cases of nuclear weapons material being lost or stolen and several situations in which all-out nuclear war was narrowly averted between nations due to miscommunication or faulty equipment.

A near-miss occurred in 1997 when the U.S. launched a scientific rocket from off the coast of Norway to research the Northern Lights phenomenon. U.S. authorities had alerted Russian officials in advance of the launch, but the message failed to move up the correct chain of command, and the Russian military concluded the missile was a U.S. nuclear attack. Then Russian President Boris Yeltsin had 10 minutes to decide if he should launch Russian missiles. It took him 8 minutes to make the decision not to do so.

In 1979, during President Jimmy Carter's term, an exercise tape used for simulating nuclear attack was mistakenly loaded into the wrong computer at the North American Aerospace Defense command (NORAD), sending the Air Force scrambling into full alert. It took eight minutes to conclude that it was a false alarm. A year later, a fault in a 46 cent computer chip caused the military to once again believe it was under attack from Russian nuclear missiles.

If the U.S. military detected what it believed was an incoming nuclear missile attack, the president would have between 10 seconds and 12 minutes to decide whether to launch the United State's own nuclear missiles. The documentary, which includes interviews with former leaders Jimmy Carter, Mikhail Gorbachev, Tony Blair, F.W. de Klerk and Pervez Musharraf, as well as Robert McNamara, Valerie Plame and numerous others, makes a strong case for zero weapons.

But the TED audience was skeptical that it could be achieved. Following the film, an audience member asked Bender and Plame what it would matter if the U.S. and European nations reduced their nuclear weapons to zero when hostile

governments in Pakistan, North Korea and China likely wouldn't do the same. Plame said that western countries had to initiate the move, which would lead to tremendous pressure on other nations to follow.

Another audience member asked Bender if he thought the time was right for such a documentary. *An Inconvenient Truth* was released when the public mindset was already primed to receive the message of climate change and spread it. Was there a similar movement ready to carry this film? Bender replied that when *An Inconvenient Truth* came out in 2006, "We had a president who didn't give a shit [about climate change.]"

Now we have a president who is leading the way in anti-nuclear proliferation, he said. Last year President Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev committed to reducing nuclear arsenals in the U.S. and Russia and are believed to be finalizing an agreement to that effect, with the ultimate goal being to eliminate all nuclear weapons. This week, as military and political leaders met in Paris for the Global Zero conference to discuss nuclear proliferation, Obama and Medvedev issued separate statements supporting work toward complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

Source: <http://www.wired.com/epicenter/2010/02/countdown-to-zero/>

New START Delayed Again

Further delays in the signing of a new START between Russia and the United States cast doubt upon nuclear arms reduction once again. The two nuclear powers proved unable to reach agreement in December of last year and again in January in spite of claims that 95% of the treaty had been prepared. On February 1, Russian and US negotiators convened in Geneva, Switzerland to work out their differences but so far, little progress appears to have been made.

The Russians are objecting to revised American plans to construct a missile defense system in Eastern Europe. Last year, US President Barack Obama agreed to withdraw his intent to build the system largely in the Czech Republic to appease Russian fears about further NATO entrenchment upon its former sphere of influence. With Iran's nuclear enrichment program advancing however, current American planning is to operate the missile shield from Poland and Romania. White House spokesman Robert Gibbs reiterated the American position last Tuesday: that the missile shield is not aimed at Russia but necessary to protect the region against Middle Eastern aggression.

Moscow sees things differently. In the words of General Nikolai Makarov, Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces and First Deputy Minister of Defence, "The development of the US anti-missile defense system in Europe is also targeted against Russia," and should be taken into account in any new START agreement.

The United States maintains that nuclear disarmament and the missile shield are two separate matters. President Dmitry Medvedev didn't even raise the program when he last discussed the treaty with President Obama, notes the White House. "I think the notion that somehow this is in any way an impediment to what's going on with START is [...] simply not true," said Gibbs. "It certainly wasn't what President Medvedev told President Obama." The delay, he explains, is due to fights over words. The US ambassador to Russia John Beyrle takes a

more nuanced view and stated that the two countries have agreed that the treaty will recognize a link between offensive nuclear arms and defenses against them.

Source: <http://atlanticsentinel.com/2010/02/new-start-delayed-again/>

Carnesale joins high-level commission exploring storage of nuclear waste



Chancellor Emeritus Albert Carnesale has been selected to serve on a high-level national commission that will study and **make recommendations for developing a safe, long-term solution to the serious problem of managing the nation's nuclear waste.**

President Obama directed the U.S. Department of Energy to form the 15-member Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future to conduct a comprehensive review of policies for managing the country's current and future stockpile of nuclear waste after the administration decided not to proceed with the Yucca Mountain (Nevada) nuclear waste repository. "The decision to pursue the Yucca Mountain plan was made 20 years ago,"

Carnesale said. "From a scientific and technological perspective, much has been learned since then about radioactive waste and how spent nuclear fuel can be treated. And much has also been learned about the Yucca Mountain site itself." The residents of Nevada also vehemently opposed the plan for a number of reasons.

The question of what to do with the country's nuclear waste has grown in urgency because of climate change and the nation's search for a cleaner source of fuel. Currently, spent nuclear fuel is being stored at more than 100 nuclear power plants throughout the United States. These plants provide about 20 percent of the nation's electricity. "I don't think there are many people who think that is a very good long-term solution to the waste problem," Carnesale said.

"The commission is not being asked to identify an alternative site to replace Yucca Mountain," Carnesale said. "There are many other avenues of inquiry to pursue. For example, are there new designs for nuclear reactors that might mitigate the problem? Should the spent fuel be processed differently? How might the spent fuel or processed waste be stored to minimize the risk to current and future generations?" The solution won't be found in science and technology alone, Carnesale said.

"If you look at the commission, these are not simply experts on nuclear power or nuclear waste," he said. "They are primarily strategic thinkers, people who understand issues that have substantial technological dimensions, but cross many high-priority areas for the country, everything from climate change to reducing American dependence on foreign sources of fuel. It's clear that the commission has been asked to take a strategic look at this problem."

The commission is co-chaired by former Indiana Congressman Lee Hamilton and Brent Scowcroft. Hamilton is a member of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board and the President's Homeland Security Advisory Council, and he previously served as vice chairman of the 9/11 Commission (National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States). Scowcroft, a retired lieutenant general in the U.S. Air Force, served as National Security Advisor to both Presidents Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush.

Carnesale, who has a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering, holds professorial appointments in UCLA's School of Public Affairs and Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science. Earlier in his career, he represented the United States in high-level negotiations on defense and energy issues, including the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, SALT I. He has been increasingly called upon by the government for his expertise on public policy issues that have scientific and technological dimensions.

Since leaving Murphy Hall as chancellor, he has led committees formed by the National Academies, the nation's science advisors, to analyze, make recommendations and brief policymakers and Congress on vital issues. In 2008, he chaired a committee that looked at whether the nation needs a non-nuclear weapon with the ability to strike a target anywhere in the world within one hour after the president gives the order.

Recently, he has been holding classified briefings with representatives from the departments of Energy, Defense and Homeland Security as well as others on Capitol Hill on the findings of a committee he chairs on nuclear forensics. Carnesale is also chair of the Committee on America's Climate Choices, a nationwide project launched by the National Academies at Congress' request for policy-relevant advice, based on scientific evidence, to help guide the nation's response to climate change. That project, which involves some of the country's leading researchers on climate change, is scheduled to release its report in September.

Source:<http://www.today.ucla.edu/portal/ut/carnesale-joins-high-level-commission-153762.aspx>

Pentagon Might Shift Command Responsibility for Combating WMD Spread: *Elaine M. Grossman*



Personnel from seven nations participate in a 2008 WMD interdiction drill organized under the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative. The Pentagon has begun assessing how the U.S. military could more effectively coordinate efforts to counter the spread of weapons of mass destruction. (Getty Images).

The U.S. Defense Department has just launched a high-level assessment of how its military forces might more effectively help combat the global proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, according to officials.

The assessment — led by U.S. Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Va. — could result in a significant change in oversight or modifications in the way the military approaches missions to counter the spread of WMD materials and technologies. The move follows a Pentagon initiative — described in the Quadrennial Defense Review, released last week — to ramp up military efforts in this mission area.

“The proliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological capabilities among state and nonstate actors can threaten our ability to defend U.S. and allied interests, promote peace and security, ensure regional stability and protect our citizens,” states the QDR report, which outlines the Pentagon’s policy priorities for the next four years. “Further, the use of a nuclear weapon or a biological attack would have global ramifications. Preventing the proliferation and use of such weapons is therefore a top national priority.” The quadrennial review said that Defense Secretary Robert Gates had decided to establish a “Joint Task Force Elimination Headquarters” that would “plan, train and execute” missions to eradicate nuclear, biological and other unconventional weapons or their components.

However, Gates told reporters at a press conference last week that the statement in the review was merely a “recommendation,” pending further study. That additional study, led by Joint Forces Command, might augur even farther-reaching changes that consolidate or shift command responsibility for the mission. The Joint Chiefs of Staff quietly launched an initial assessment of Pentagon counter-WMD responsibilities in 2008 after the head of U.S. Strategic Command opted to reduce headquarters emphasis on the mission, but the potential for change reportedly has gained steam over the past year since President Barack Obama took office.

The new president has drawn attention to rising concerns that terrorists or rogue nations could acquire or build WMD devices and pose a serious threat to the United States or its allies abroad. “The piece we need to ... figure out with all of these wannabes out there [is] how do we prevent them from getting the critical components and technologies?” said one senior military official in a late-January interview. “This stuff is becoming so commonplace with the Internet and other ways, that’s really going to be a tough row to hoe. But [we’ve] got to go try to do it.”

Along with several others interviewed for this article, the senior official declined to be identified, citing political and military sensitivities associated with the issue. One day after the Pentagon unveiled its quadrennial review results, Joint Forces Command was assigned to study potential options for how the military should approach the mission of countering WMD proliferation, according to an organization official. Led by a Marine Corps general who has commanded troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, James Mattis, Joint Forces Command takes a primary role in training forces, planning military operations and providing personnel and equipment to combatant commanders around the globe.

The Defense Department last week tasked an existing command project dubbed “Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction-Nuclear” with reviewing military “authorities, responsibilities, intelligence requirements and operational concepts to detect, interdict, seize and destroy or defeat global WMD threats,” according to Navy Capt. Tim Spratto, who serves in a directorate on concept development and experimentation. Spratto said the project, which includes participants from across the Defense Department, was expected to report its recommendations by the end of the year. However, other officials said they anticipate that a potential reorganization initiative could coalesce sooner, perhaps as early as this spring.

Troubling Threat

As president, Obama elevated the importance of stemming nuclear-weapon proliferation during a speech in Prague last April in which he said the United States would take concrete steps toward ridding the global of atomic arms. Measures would include a verifiable treaty to end the production of weapon-usable fissile material, as well as “a new and more rigorous approach to address this threat,” he said. The president described the risk as multiplying rapidly in the absence of tough new steps to stem proliferation.

“Black market trade in nuclear secrets and nuclear materials abound. The technology to build a bomb has spread,” Obama said. “Terrorists are determined to buy, build or steal one. Our efforts to contain these dangers are centered on a global nonproliferation regime, but as more people and nations break the rules, we could reach the point where the center cannot hold.”

During last month’s State of the Union address, the president also signaled new momentum in countering bioterror threats. The senior military official last month noted that Washington has significantly bolstered the U.S. ability to withstand a WMD attack, which should decrease incentives for a terrorist to acquire a nuclear or biological device.

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks against New York and Washington, dozens of new physical barriers have been placed around federal buildings and congressional offices, medical countermeasures have been stockpiled and escape plans rehearsed.

To a terrorist, “the message is, ‘You won’t be successful, so why [bother]?’” the senior official said. At the same time, though, “we need to do more in the area of prevention,” the official told *GSN*. Though WMD proliferation risks have been worrisome for years, nations have typically been reluctant to share intelligence about black-market activity, and stopping illicit materials in transit has often proven impossible, according to experts. “Actual interdiction [is] very difficult, especially at sea,” said one retired senior officer with combatant command experience. “Legal, policy and tactical challenges” have often stood in the way, even when intelligence was available, this source said.

The Quadrennial Defense Review — which listed preventing WMD proliferation as one of six “key mission areas” for the U.S. military — suggested that troops will play a more active future role in using intelligence to identify, track and intercept WMD materials or the technologies necessary for building such arms. “As the ability to create and employ weapons of mass destruction spreads globally, so must our combined efforts to detect, interdict and contain the effects of these weapons,” according to the congressionally mandated four-year review.

The prospect of al-Qaeda or other terrorist network acquiring a WMD device could seriously heighten global risk, but perhaps “most troubling” is the possibility that a nuclear-armed nation might become instable or even collapse, the report states. The document does not name Pakistan or North Korea, but issue experts are particularly worried about such scenarios playing out there.

“This could lead to rapid proliferation of WMD material, weapons and technology, and could quickly become a global crisis posing a direct physical threat to the United States and all other nations.” according to the quadrennial review report.

The document suggests that the U.S. military might take a role in securing nuclear weapons during a crisis in which Islamabad, Pyongyang or other unnamed foreign governments might lose control over their arsenal. U.S. forces must be capable of “locating, securing or neutralizing weapons of mass destruction, key materials and related facilities in the context of a loss of control of such weapons or materials, and thwarting the potential for a nonstate adversary to acquire them,” according to the report.

A number of issue experts strongly discourage planning such a potential role for Washington as it could make these regimes even more reticent to discuss their arsenals in peacetime.

A Growing Mission

With such daunting tasks at hand, the Pentagon is grappling with how best to coordinate and oversee the specific efforts that might be required. In a reorganization conducted after the 2001 terrorist attacks, then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld named U.S. Strategic Command in Omaha, Neb., the lead combatant organization for overseeing military plans to counter nuclear and other WMD proliferation.

Under Strategic Command, a Strategic Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction — housed at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency at Fort Belvoir in Virginia — coordinates the plans for countering weapons proliferation developed by each of six geographic combatant commands around the globe. Those include, for example, U.S. Pacific Command for the Asia-Pacific region and U.S. Central Command for Afghanistan and the Middle East.

Little detail about such missions is publicly available, as the activities are typically shrouded in secrecy. The strategic center at Fort Belvoir also distributes intelligence and assists with crisis-response planning, according to a Strategic Command spokeswoman.

In addition, under the Proliferation Security Initiative launched in May 2003 by then-President George W. Bush, Washington has enlisted more than 90 nations to voluntarily assist in interdicting suspected weapons of mass destruction materials in transit. A recent success was the discovery of a transport aircraft loaded with weapons from North Korea that had made a refueling stop in Thailand, triggering suspicions of WMD-related cargo potentially bound for Iran.

Along with the Energy and State departments, the Pentagon also helps secure so-called “loose nukes” and other WMD materials and delivery platforms through the Cooperative Threat Reduction program. Under the initiative, the United States has helped to eliminate or relocate WMD materials and related weaponry in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere to prevent them from being acquired by terrorists or rogue nations.

Two years ago, though, coordination of the broad military mission for countering such weapons edged somewhat out of the spotlight without much fanfare.

Second Tier

In February 2008, shortly after taking the helm at Strategic Command, Air Force Gen. Kevin Chilton announced that he would prioritize his organization's responsibilities for space, network warfare and global strike above the command's several other assigned missions. "These are areas that I would say that are major lines of operations for Strategic Command, and these are areas in which we operate across national or regional boundaries," he told an Air Force Association audience in Orlando. The decision left the mission to combat the spread of weapons of mass destruction among several other Strategic Command assignments that would receive relatively less headquarters focus.

Still, the Strategic Command center at Fort Belvoir would continue to "synchronize the combating of weapons of mass destruction plans that every regional combatant commander must develop for the Unified Command Plan ... so that the plan in one area of responsibility isn't interfering with the plan in another area," Chilton said.

The Unified Command Plan is the military's overarching blueprint for the missions and geographic responsibilities of U.S. combatant commanders. The Joint Chiefs of Staff formally reviews the plan every two years, but changes could be made at any time. Whether Strategic Command is the best military organization to oversee counter-WMD planning is not immediately clear, since its role in leading U.S. nuclear combat operations is somewhat unrelated to interdicting WMD materials around the world, according to one issue expert.

"I would imagine that Joint Forces Command or Special Operations Command would do equally well, given the type of operations we are imagining," said Jeffrey Lewis, who directs the New America Foundation's Nuclear Strategy and Nonproliferation Initiative. "At the end of the day, what you really need is a set of tailored regional counterproliferation initiatives for the relevant combatant commands."

Given the different security dynamics facing various regions of the world, "I bet Pacific Command has a very different set of worries than Central Command" in the Middle East, said Lewis, suggesting that the most crucial work is performed at each regional command. Though it remains uncertain what, if any, changes the Joint Forces Command-led assessment will recommend, the quadrennial review suggests the time has come to strengthen the Pentagon's defense-wide approach.

"Deterrence of such threats and defense against them can be enhanced through measures aimed at better understanding potential threats, securing and reducing dangerous materials wherever possible, positioning forces to monitor and track lethal agents and materials and their means of delivery, and, where relevant, defeating the agents themselves," reads the QDR report.

Still, some experts question whether the U.S. military role in countering WMD proliferation should grow at all, when much trafficking in dangerous materials takes place in commercial shipping and is policed by civilian agencies. "Getting the military more involved in blocking the bomb's further spread sounds great until you realize that most of the blocking we are talking about does not require or entail the use of military force," said Henry Sokolski, executive director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center. "Instead, the key things needed are clear rules, sound intelligence, greater international cooperation, and generally quiet, effective civilian enforcement." Lewis agreed.

“The military can take the lead for certain missions — interdicting ships or emergency response, with the Energy Department — but the vast majority of illicit trade by volume is probably going to fall in the customs or export-control universe,” he said. Some Pentagon-watchers are wary of the prospect that the military might use the mission as a justification for organizational empire-building or top-down micromanagement. Both Sokolski and Lewis urged that clear objectives be laid out before any decision is made. “It is unclear if we are not working a solution here before we have bothered to clearly identify what the problem is we are solving,” Sokolski told. Said Lewis: The Defense Department should “resist the urge to reorganize, yet again, unless for some specific benefit.”

Source: http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100212_7722.php

New Mexico Nuke Unit Decertified by Air Force

A U.S. Air Force unit assigned to oversee approximately 2,000 nuclear warheads in New Mexico for the time being will not be permitted to carry out its normal operations. The 898th Munitions Squadron at Kirtland Air Force Base will have another inspection and could have its decertification reversed by June, Air Force Material Command spokesman Ron Fry said. Until that happens, other certified Air Force units will oversee the weapons stored in an underground facility at Kirtland. The situation poses “no risk to security, safety or health,” Fry said.

Fry said that squadrons responsible for nuclear arms are assessed using a strict protocol. “This is a business where, as part of the mission, you can’t get a score of 99 out of 100 and pass. It’s got to be 100 percent,” he said. “The decision to decertify was not made lightly,” Fry said. “In this case, it was the right action to take to give the unit time to identify and implement necessary changes”.

The 898th squadron, its parent air wing and another air wing all failed a November nuclear confidence assessment at Kirtland. While it was first decided not to decertify the squadron, Brig. Gen. Everett Thomas, head of the Air Force Nuclear Weapons Center, advised that the action be taken in order to give the unit time to fix whatever issues led to the failure. Fry attributed the decertification to administrative issues like the managing of paperwork and records. Five high-level noncommissioned officers have been assigned to other duties in accordance with efforts to rectify unit failings.

Federation of American Scientists nuclear expert Hans Kristensen said the transfer of the officers probably means that the unit’s troubles go further than a single inspection failure. A reinspection has been set for June. The Air Force has a recent history of issues with nuclear-weapon oversight that include unknowingly flying nuclear-armed cruise missiles across the continental United States in 2007 and the accidental shipping of ICBM fuses to Taiwan in 2008. Efforts to address the problems led to the establishment of the service’s new Global Strike Command. Kirtland and the Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada are the Air Force’s two largest nuclear warhead storage sites.

Source: http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100212_8389.php

Naval Station Mayport Prepares For Arrival of Nuclear Aircraft Carrier

As part of his ongoing focus on growing Florida's economy through job retention and creation, workforce training and economic development, Governor Charlie Crist today joined Captain Aaron Bowman, Commander of Naval Station (NS) Mayport, for a briefing on the improvements necessary to accommodate the scheduled arrival of a nuclear aircraft carrier to NS Mayport.

The estimated economic impact of the nuclear aircraft carrier, once fully-staffed, is expected to be between \$300 and \$500 million annually for the region. "Florida is ready and proud to be the future home of thousands of Navy families and an aircraft carrier crucial to our national security," said Governor Crist. "I am grateful for the work of Florida's Congressional delegation to bring a carrier to Northeast Florida, and the economic opportunities it will mean for Florida families." The United States Navy is expected to spend \$565 million to accommodate a nuclear aircraft carrier at NS Mayport.

Already, Congress has appropriated \$76 million to dredge a canal for the yet-to-be-named carrier. Approximately 3,600 sailors will be assigned to the nuclear aircraft carrier, with an arrival date estimated to be between 2014 and 2015. The carrier's name is anticipated to be announced one year prior to its arrival. The decision to transfer an aircraft carrier to NS Mayport was officially announced by the U.S. Navy earlier this month. Norfolk, Virginia, has remained the only home of East Coast-based carriers since 2007, when the USS John F. Kennedy, the last diesel-powered aircraft carrier, was retired at NS Mayport.

Florida's defense economy remains a growing economic sector with an annual economic impact of more than \$60 billion, supporting more than 723,000 jobs and generating \$1 billion in local and state tax revenue. To preserve this vital Florida industry and continue Florida's commitment to servicemembers, Governor Crist recommended \$10.5 million in his 2010-11 budget for Defense Infrastructure Grants to address the infrastructure needs of communities surrounding Florida's military installations. This investment is vital to keeping Florida's bases open and preventing missions from moving out of state.

Source:http://thegovmonitor.com/world_news/united_states/naval-station-mayport-prepares-for-arrival-of-nuclear-aircraft-carrier-23808.html

Disarmament

India Backs "Transparent" Global Nuclear Disarmament

India last week said that a universal, transparent and verifiable regime of nuclear disarmament was the only way to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons, the Press Trust of India reported Saturday. "India is deeply worried about the potential nexus between clandestine proliferation and terrorism and the ever-present danger of such

weapons or vulnerable nuclear materials falling into the hands of jihadi and nonstate actors,” envoy Shyam Saran said at the Global Zero summit in Paris.

“However, over the long term, it is also our view that it is only through the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and by putting in place universally applicable, nondiscriminatory and fully transparent verification procedures, that we can fully prevent and deny nuclear materials from falling into dangerous hands,” he added (Press Trust of India, Feb. 6).

India, like neighboring rival Pakistan, possesses a nuclear arsenal and has refused to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Saran, though, reaffirmed his nation’s intention to maintain a suspension of nuclear testing and its interest in discussing a treaty that would prohibit member nations from producing fissile material for weapons purposes, the Indo-Asian News Service reported Saturday.

“Despite our well-known reservations on the Comprehensive [Nuclear] Test Ban Treaty, India is committed to its voluntary unilateral moratorium on nuclear explosive testing,” he said at the summit. “We are prepared to negotiate a verifiable FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We are not a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and cannot respond to calls for universal adherence to that treaty as a non-nuclear weapons state” he said.

Saran also raised the matter of the proliferation network once operated by former top Pakistani nuclear scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan. “India’s security has been adversely impacted by the clandestine proliferation of nuclear weapons in its neighborhood, often ignored and on occasion, encouraged by certain important countries,” he said. “The activities of the so-called A.Q.Khan network is an ominous reminder of the threats India continues to face in this respect”

Source:http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100209_4297.php

U.N. Demands Action on Disarmament Agenda

Discussions at the international Conference on Disarmament have “regressed” and could become “irrelevant” if the body fails to take up key arms control issues, the top U.N. official in Geneva, Switzerland, said yesterday. The 65-nation conference in 2009 broke a deadlock that had lasted for more than 10 years, agreeing to a work plan that addressed four issues: nuclear disarmament, a fissile material cutoff pact, the prohibition of space-based weapons, and an agreement by nuclear-armed states not to use their strategic weapons against nations that do not possess such armaments. Pakistan, though, last year objected to the plan, preventing the conference from reaching the necessary consensus to move ahead.

Pakistan also initially opposed the conference agenda for 2010, but later allowed the program to be approved while warning it would still not consider a potential global ban on production of nuclear-weapon material. Islamabad could also force the body to address additional concerns, including local military issues as well as the use of missiles to deliver weapons, Pakistani envoy Zamir Akram said. Pakistan has feared that a fissile material treaty could hinder its ability to counter its regional rival India, which already possesses a larger stockpile of nuclear-weapon material.

“What we see is not zero, but it is minus,” said Sergei Ordzhonikidze, head of the U.N. Office at Geneva. “We have done nothing.” “I don’t know what to tell the secretary general (Ban Ki-moon) when he asks what is going on in the CD except to say, ‘I am sorry Mr. Secretary General, nothing is going on.’” Speaking for the U.N. chief, Ordzhonikidze urged conference participants to be “a little more flexible” and reach consensus on their agenda for the year. “It is not the finalization of the elaboration of any treaty, it is just the program of work,” the official said.

Source: http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100212_2073.php

Iran

China feels US-Iran fallout: Peter Lee

The question of the day in Washington is will the People’s Republic of China veto further United Nations Security Council sanctions against Iran over Tehran’s nuclear program? Informed opinion says “no”. China has exercised its veto only six times in 30 years on the council. In matters core to national priorities, like punishing countries such as Guatemala and Macedonia for their ties to the Republic of China (Taiwan) and protecting the interests of Pakistan, it has acted alone.

However, on broader geopolitical issues, in recent years it has vetoed resolutions only when joined by at least one other Security Council member. France and the United Kingdom are lined up solidly behind the United States on Iran’s nuclear program, which some say is geared towards making a nuclear bomb, a charge Tehran consistently dismisses.

Russia this year is interested in improving ties with the US and Europe and has moved toward support of sanctions. No Russian veto, no Chinese veto, says the conventional wisdom. On the other hand, chances of China voting for sanctions are slim.

A press report covering Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi’s visit to Paris at the beginning of February says it all: “China Says Iran Sanctions Hinder Diplomacy.”

Abstention is, therefore, China’s most likely course. Beijing’s reaction might be expected to be a dismissive and a resigned shrug: a symbolic vote, another toothless round of sanctions, more political *kabuki*, and eventually business as usual. However, China’s expected non-vote will be accompanied by new feelings of unease and anger, reflecting Beijing’s growing suspicion that an important motivation for the Iran sanctions, and the escalation of Iran tensions in general, is Washington’s desire to employ the issue as a wedge against China.

In past years, China could regard US sanctions against authoritarian regimes with a certain amount of complacency. The George W Bush administration’s heavy-handed approach dismayed and divided natural allies of the US and drove its targets deeper into China’s embrace. However, the Obama administration has decided to supplement brute power with smart power. It apparently promotes divisive international initiatives only when the splits in international opinion and alliances are expected to go America’s way.

China first got a taste of the smart-power approach in December at the Copenhagen climate summit. The US linked the release of billions of dollars of climate adaptation aid to vulnerable developing countries with China's acceptance of a satisfactory transparency regime. Its delegation passed the message to smaller nations that China's intransigence was standing between them and billions of dollars of much-needed assistance.

Despite the treaty debacle, the geopolitical results for the Obama administration were encouraging. The European Union sided with the US. According to an internal Chinese report, a good number of Group of 77 nations were, for the large part, influenced by the American position but did not openly confront China. China cobbled together an alliance with the emerging economies of Brazil and India and, despite a concerted "blame China" effort by the US and the UK, was able to limit the political damage.

However, it was a sobering experience for Chinese diplomats. The report concluded "A conspiracy by developed nations to divide the camp of developing nations was a success." Now, the Obama administration is picking on the regionally and globally unpopular government of Iran, thereby exposing China as the regime's lone international supporter of note.

The US has worked to bring the EU and Russia to its side. The EU, at least, is now an enthusiastic ally. Relieved to be dealing with a judicious and consultative American president, it no longer sees the need to accommodate a greater role for China on the world stage. Russia has joined the American team (with *sub voce* reservations), reportedly in response to the Obama administration's concessions on shelving plans for a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe.

The State Department has also worked with the Gulf states to gain their support for a policy of putting Iran in its place. As far as the China issue is concerned, America's direct solicitation of China's Security Council vote involved Obama passing the word to President Hu Jintao that China's interests would suffer if diplomatic pressure failed, Israel attacked Iran's nuclear facilities, and the price of oil went up.

It is unlikely that the Israel attack card was persuasive to the Chinese leadership, and did little more than convince them that Washington was using it as an excuse to justify an extension of US influence in the Middle East. A pre-emptive attack by Israel to nip Iran's nuclear ambitions in the bud is unlikely.

Despite Tel Aviv's brave talk of its ability and determination to launch a raid independent of US approval, even a resounding success would probably only slow down the program a few years while earning the undying enmity of the Iranian people and the Muslim world toward Israel ... and the United States, which would have to provide Israel with flight privileges over Iraq to stage the attack.

American assertions that the Iranian nuclear program will spark a ruinous arms race in the Gulf no doubt elicited similar skepticism from China, with the unspoken observation that, since most of those arms would be supplied by the US and EU, the onus for (and profits of) an arms race would probably fall to the West.

American efforts to wedge the Arab states away from China are more likely to attract Beijing's attention and concern. James Phillips of the Heritage Foundation spun US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's current trip to the Middle East: Clinton will be looking to the Arabs to "act as a counterweight to Iran on China and help unlock its Security

Council vote. The US is hoping to use these discussions with the Arabs as a way to encourage China to look at its long-term economic interests,” Phillips added. “The Arabs could let the Chinese know that it will hurt them economically with the Arab countries in the long run if China clings to this pro-Iran position.

United States protestations that all this diplomatic maneuvering directed at China is justified by the need to exhibit international unity on Iran ring hollow. Invocation of the Israeli attack and the Gulf states arms race bogeymen notwithstanding, the primary justification for the current spasm of concern over Iran’s nascent nuclear activities is the dreaded Western “impatience”, which appears very similar to the manufactured impatience that sent the coalition of the willing charging into Iraq in 2003.

The stated remedy for this impatience, the UN sanctions, is unlikely to work. Russia cares enough about its relationship with Tehran to make sure anything that gets through the Security Council will not be particularly catastrophic. On February 11, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Ryabkov made this memorable statement: “We do not think sanctions will work, but we understand that it is impossible to get by without them in certain circumstances.”

With early reports that a massive government presence marginalized Green Movement demonstrators on the February 11 anniversary of the Iranian revolution of 1979, regime change in Iran is probably off the table, too. Even if a new regime came to power, Iran’s national commitment to nuclear power - and the perceived nuclear weapons threat to the region - would probably remain unchanged. By conventional geopolitical logic, China would seem to have the right idea: more jaw-jaw and engagement or, as it called for in a recent editorial, “patience, patience and more patience.”

But US policy seems to be moving in the opposite direction, stoking the crisis instead of lowering the heat. So what’s China’s takeaway from the Iran crisis? Absent an immediate, credible threat of an Israeli attack on Iran, the US is rushing the international community toward “crushing sanctions” on Tehran that, if carried out, would result in disruption of Iran’s energy exports.

If this were to actually occur, the big loser in the Iran crisis would be China. As a Chinese analyst told Reuters: “Fully going with Western expansion of sanctions on Iran so they restrict Iran’s energy exports would amount to disguised sanctions against China, and China certainly won’t agree,” Wang Feng, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences told the Global Times, a Chinese newspaper published on Thursday.

Reportedly, the US had advised China it would dispatch Hillary Clinton to visit Iran’s enemies in the Persian Gulf and ensure that, if sanctions disrupted the supply of Iranian oil, Saudi Arabia and its associates would ensure that China’s petroleum needs would continue to be met. It is unlikely that China’s vision of its energy security involves relying on the US’s good offices to deal with the consequences of a US-imposed policy that it rejects and had no voice in formulating.

In any case, the prospects for an oil-price Armageddon are unlikely. Given free-market realities and the greed of oil producers inside and outside the Gulf, the world would suffer as much as China if Iranian crude disappeared from the

market. For Beijing, the biggest concern is its perception that Europe, Russia and the Gulf states are signing on to an anti-Iran initiative that could impact China's interests in such a major way without accommodating China's priorities.

From Beijing's point of view, China is the main superpower stakeholder in the Iran crisis. So it is asking why isn't it being consulted? Indeed, why aren't its critical interests given priority, instead of subjecting it to moonshine about an Israeli attack, an arms race in the Gulf and lectures about its geopolitical interests?

China is not a threat to the international order, but it is its most independent and uncontrollable element. There are growing signs of a shared consensus in the West that reliance on China as a stabilizing financial, economic and geopolitical factor must be reduced. The past few years have been good to China's competitors - especially India - and bad for China's allies - Pakistan and Iran. By accident or design, the Obama administration's decision to heat up the Iran controversy has driven another wedge between China and the US, the EU, the Gulf states and even Russia.

The issue for China is whether the purpose of America's Iran campaign is to isolate Iran ... or to isolate China? This is a consequence of China's participation in the security initiatives that the US chooses to organize to protect and promote its own and loyal allies' interests. China responded to the escalation of the Iran nuclear crisis with a remarkable lead editorial in the *Global Times*, the international affairs organ of *People's Daily*, the government mouthpiece.

The editorial, with the eye-catching title "Iran and the West: Neither Should Think of Taking China Hostage", painted China as the victim of the standoff. In an effort to be even-handed, both Iran and the West are criticized for their intransigence. Nevertheless, both the West and Iran are unheeding at this time. They both believe that only if they are unyielding, then the other side will back off. This unenlightened attitude even extends to their attitude toward China. Both sides believe that all that's needed is to put pressure on China, then China will, without considering its own interests ... lower its head to them ... This thinking is unrealistic.

The use of the loaded term, "lower its head", conjuring images of the humiliating kowtow, instead of a more neutral term such as "support one or the other" is an indication that red lines are being drawn. The fact that China's main worry is the West, and not Iran, is unambiguously conveyed in the editorial's conclusion. Recently in Western public opinion has been a call to use the Iran issue to isolate China. This is extremely superficial ... China is a big country and its interests must be respected. China's dilemma must be sympathized with. China's proposal opposing sanctions must be understood. The big powers must cooperate and negotiate on the Iran issue ...

China is a great country. If anyone seeks to compel her, to injure her, they will certainly pay the price. Pretty strong stuff. The editorial is a clear indication that China considers itself the target - or at least intended collateral damage - in America's anti-Iran campaign. It makes the case that, if the Obama administration sincerely cared about its relationship with China, Washington would back off from the sanctions campaign and allow negotiations to continue.

But that doesn't look like it's going to happen. Sanctions will probably go ahead, with China either abstaining or throwing in a tactical "yes" vote to postpone an overt breach, and Washington will obtain another point of leverage against China in the Persian Gulf. If that happens, China will have to think about adjusting to a new world situation in which the West seems less interested in bargaining for its support or respecting its interests.

Source: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LB13Ak03.html

'Nuclear' Iran Crushes Opposition Protests:

Stephen Jones



Iranian security forces stand guard as tens of thousands of pro-government supporters attend a mass rally in central Tehran on Feb. 11 to mark the 31st anniversary of the revolution. Leaders of the opposition movement faced resistance from police when they attempted to make their way to the main square and opposition protests were prevented.

Iran is now a "nuclear state," the country's president has announced, on a day which saw hundreds of thousands of pro-government supporters flock to central Tehran, and an attack on the leaders of the opposition movement. In a event choreographed to drown out any planned opposition protest, supporters of the regime swamped Azadi Square carrying national flags and placards that read "Down with America," as part of celebrations to mark the 31st anniversary of the Iranian Revolution.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad claimed that the country had already enriched its uranium to 20 percent, and had the capacity to produce an even higher grade material which could be used in a nuclear weapon. "The Iranian nation is brave enough that if one day we wanted to build nuclear bombs we would announce it publicly without being afraid of you," Ahmadinejad said in a speech to the crowd.

The presence of thousands of police and Basij militiamen ensured that planned opposition protests were quickly crushed. Web sites affiliated to the 'Green Movement' said that a young woman named Leila Zareii, was killed and a number of others were wounded or arrested. The three opposition leaders—Mehdi Karroubi, Mohammed Khatami, and Mir Hossein Mousavi—faced resistance from police when they attempted to make their way to the main square.

Cars carrying Karroubi, and Khatami—a former president—were surrounded by plainclothes security forces. The windows of the vehicle carrying Karroubi were smashed and his son Ali, was dragged out of the door and detained. A bodyguard in the vehicle was also injured in the scuffle. Meanwhile Khatami's brother Reza, and his wife Zahra Eshraghi were also detained temporarily. Eshraghi is a granddaughter of the founder of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, but is also a sympathizer of the Green Movement.

However protests did take place in some parts of the capital. Opposition activists have posted on YouTube videos of protests carrying placards and chanting "Death to the Dictator." Opposition

Web sites claimed that in Sadeghieh Square, a mile away from the main demonstrations, security forces used live ammunition, knives, teargas, and paintballs that would enable them to identify protesters for arrest.

The apparent ease with which opposition protests were dispersed has disheartened activists. “They won and we lost,” an anonymous protester was quoted as saying by several newspapers. “They defeated us. They were able to gather so many people. But this doesn’t mean we have been defeated for good. It’s a defeat for now, today. We need time to regroup.”

In the buildup to Thursday, overseas media had been anticipating a public crackdown on the same scale as Tiananmen Square. However, analysts have claimed that Tehran has been studying techniques employed by its diplomatic ally, China, to disperse protests early. Indeed, activists noted that Chinese-supplied armored vehicles with water cannons had been used in suppressing protests.

So far, sanctions against Iran have been thwarted by the possibility that China may use its U.N. Security Council veto. However, U.S. politicians have argued that there may still be time to arrive at a diplomatic solution to the growing crisis. According to a report on Thursday in the Washington Post, there has been a drop in production at Iran’s main uranium enrichment plant near the city of Natanz. The assessment, based on three years of internal data from U.N. nuclear inspections, suggest that Iran’s mechanical woes are deeper than previously known, the Post reported.

Source: <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/29521/>

Iranian Atomic Energy Organization Head Ali-Akbar Salehi: Attacking Iran’s Nuclear Facilities Will Spell the End of Israel



The following are excerpts from an interview with Ali-Akbar Salehi, head of Iran’s Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, which aired on Al-Alam TV on February 8, 2010.

“God Willing, We Will Start Enriching Uranium to 20% on Tuesday”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “As we have stated in the past, Iran is capable of enriching uranium for nuclear fuel to any degree. Nonetheless, we told the other countries, through the IAEA, that we prefer buying fuel for the Tehran nuclear plant from abroad. Unfortunately, it turns out that they are not prepared to deal with us. [...]”

“We have waited for more than seven months. Therefore, Dr. Ahmadinejad gave instructions today to start producing the fuel we need, and God willing, we will start enriching uranium to 20% on Tuesday.”

Exchange Proposal “Still on the Table”

Interviewer: “Iran will officially begin enriching uranium to a degree of 20% on Tuesday. Does this mean that nuclear fuel swap between Iran and the Western countries, and the one- or two-month moratorium, have become a thing of the past, and that Iran will begin...”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “No, the proposal is still on the table. We are willing to receive the fuel from abroad. When we receive it, we will stop the enrichment. [...]”

“If the West does not give us the fuel, we will be forced to produce it ourselves. We are capable of producing this fuel. Nonetheless, we prefer to buy the fuel from abroad.”

Interviewer: “Technically, Iran is capable of enriching uranium to a level of 20% without any difficulty?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “Of course... The inspectors will...”

Interviewer: “At which plant?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “At Natanz.”



“The West... Imposes Meaningless Conditions”

Interviewer: “How long will it take Iran to produce the fuel it needs for the Tehran reactor?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “The production of the fuel will be continuous. We are not going to produce just the amount of fuel we need, and then cease production. No, fuel production will be continuous. Each month, we will produce the amount of fuel needed

for the following month. [...]”

“The problem with the West is that it imposes meaningless conditions. Suppose that Iran did not have the ability to enrich uranium. We need fuel for the Tehran nuclear reactor. If any country other than Iran needs 20% enriched fuel – is it supposed to begin enriching uranium to 3.5%, in order to swap it with 20% enriched fuel from abroad? These conditions are irrational and wrong.

“Anyway, we accepted the proposal of swapping our 3.5% enriched uranium for 20% enriched uranium. Nevertheless, they imposed additional conditions, and they did not give us any guarantees... OK, if we were to send our 3.5% enriched uranium abroad, but did not receive the fuel – who would be responsible? Therefore, we demanded a special guarantee, but they were not prepared to give us any sufficient guarantee. They said that we should take their word for it, but our experience with the West – with France, Germany, and the U.S. – has been bad. We cannot rely on their word alone.

“We are prepared to swap uranium for fuel, if this exchange takes place in Iran, but they insisted that we send the uranium abroad. Why abroad? If you accept the custody of the IAEA, let the 3.5% uranium be under the supervision of the IAEA in Iran – on Kish Island or anywhere else in Iran. After we receive the 20% uranium, they can have the 3.5% uranium. They insisted that the 3.5% uranium be transferred outside Iran, although we promised them that if they leave this 3.5% uranium under the supervision of the IAEA, and if we receive the 20% uranium, we will not break the seal on the 3.5% uranium.”

“Why is IAEA Supervision Acceptable in Turkey, Brazil, and Anywhere Else, But Not in Iran?... The West is Arrogant”

Interviewer: “The seals?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “Yes, the seals. It will remain sealed until we receive the 20% uranium. Why is IAEA supervision acceptable in Turkey, Brazil, and anywhere else, but not in Iran? This is illogical.”

Interviewer: “So the problem lies in the venue of the swap, as well as the quantity?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “The quantity is not that important. But generally speaking – yes. [...]”

“The West is arrogant, I am sad to say. It always seeks to impose its will on other countries. Iran is an independent country, and it will not accept these dictates. We hope that matters do not become so complicated, but if they do, we will take the appropriate measures.” [...]

“The Nuclear Field is Vast; Iran’s Nuclear Activities are Numerous, and Include All Aspects”

“The nuclear field is vast. Iran’s nuclear activities are numerous, and include all aspects – enrichment, building nuclear plants... For example, we are currently building a nuclear plant in Arak – or rather, a nuclear reactor for research, and for the production of nuclear [isotopes] for medicine. Allah willing, in the near future, we will make stronger centrifuges than those we use today.”

Interviewer: “P2 centrifuges?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “P3, P4, Allah willing. We will announce this in two months’ time.”

Interviewer: “Iran is currently enriching uranium using P1 centrifuges, but it announced that it began experimenting with P2. Has Iran actually begun enriching uranium using the P2 centrifuges?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “Not yet. But Allah willing, in two months, we will experiment with P3 and P4, and after that, we will announce the steps we will take.”

Interviewer: “In yet another achievement, Iranian President Ahmadinejad gave instructions to build additional reactors – ten additional nuclear reactors, I think. Has Iran determined the sites, as President Ahmadinejad instructed?”

“Threats Have Been Made... By the Zionists, But We Take All the Necessary Precautions... Everybody Wants to Meet Allah as a Martyr”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “Not reactors, but uranium enrichment plants. Not nuclear reactors. Ten more uranium enrichment plants, like the one in Natanz. We determined the sites and informed Dr. Ahmadinejad, and Allah willing, next year, which begins in Iran in two months, we will start working on several plants. [...]”

“We hope that the Bushehr plant will begin production in the next few months, Allah willing. Before the plant begins its operation, it must undergo several experiments. We have completed all the experiments, except one. Next month, we will complete the last experiment, Allah willing. We will transfer the fuel to the designated place in the Bushehr plant, and we will start operating the plant within a few months, Allah willing. [...]”

“Threats have been made, especially by the Zionists, but we take all the necessary precautions, and the rest is in the hands of Allah. Martyrdom... Everybody wants to meet Allah as a martyr. We have no fear. Our scientists are not afraid. Naturally,

we take precautions, the government invests all its efforts in protect the scientists of Iran, but if what happened to the martyr Ali-Mohammadi happens again – so be it.” [...]

“The Zionist Enemy Will Not Dare Take This Cowardly Step; This Could Spell the End of Israel”

Interviewer: “The Israelis, and sometimes the American, threaten to attack the Iranian nuclear plants. Can you tell us how these nuclear plants are protected from foreign attacks? Are they sufficiently fortified to deter such attacks?”

Ali-Akbar Salehi: “Naturally, we took all necessary measures to fortify the plants, but this does not mean that there is 100% protection. That’s one thing. Secondly, we think that the enemy – especially the Zionist enemy – will not dare take this cowardly step. This could spell the end of Israel. Attacking Iran is not a simple thing, and they know this.”

Source: <http://www.memri.org/report/en/0/0/0/0/0/0/3969.htm>

New twist in Iran’s nuclear brinkmanship: *Kaveh L*

Afrasiabi

It is possible that by giving the go-ahead for the production of 20% enriched uranium, Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad has sufficiently jolted the other side to rethink its approach on the nuclear fuel-swap deal.

On the surface, Iran’s decision has raised alarm bells in the West and has provoked a strong response from United States President Barack Obama, who has warned that his administration is “developing a significant regime of sanctions” to impose on Iran.

Even Moscow has expressed its displeasure, in the form of a statement by a Foreign Ministry official, which said, “We are disappointed with the Iranian step, which did not allow diplomats to agree on mutually acceptable ways for the fulfillment of the IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] proposal of higher-enriched uranium fuel production for the Tehran research reactor outside Iran.”

Under a proposal put forward by the IAEA last year, Iran would hand over its low-enriched uranium (LEU) to be further processed in another country before being returned for use at the Tehran reactor. On February 2, after much flip-flopping, Iran said it was now ready to send its LEU abroad. Then, on February 7, Iran announced it would itself begin enriching uranium to 20%, while saying it was still open to discussing the original proposal.

This has heightened concerns that Iran aims to build nuclear weapons, something it has consistently denied. However, not all hope is lost for the IAEA-proposed deal, and there are emerging signs of growing activity on both sides to come to some sort of mutually satisfactory agreement.

On Iran’s part, various officials from the Atomic Energy Organization (AEO) to the Foreign Ministry have repeatedly stated that Iran is still open to the swap deal. Ali Akbar Salehi, the head of the AEO, told the Tehran daily Iran that the government was willing to suspend production of 20% uranium if there were an exchange “without preconditions” of Iran’s 3.5% LEU in return for nuclear fuel rods.

According to Salehi, Iran's LEU could be "sealed and put under the custody" of the IAEA until it received the fuel it needed for the medical research reactor.

The news from Washington on the other hand indicates that the US is now working on a new proposal aimed at salvaging the nuclear deal that was unveiled last October in Geneva. This focuses on procuring medical isotopes for Iran from the international market. An administration official told the Washington Post, "Rather than operate a reactor, this would be a more cost-effective and efficient approach." Not everyone agrees with that assessment, however, and some US nuclear experts have openly admitted that Iran's home production of key ingredients (eg technetium 99) would be less costly and more efficient.

That aside, the problem with the US's new approach is that it apparently seeks to make the reactor redundant by the promise of delivering the reactor's net products. That will not wash with the Iranians, who have had an earful of unfulfilled promises over the past 30 years.

Instead, what may work to everyone's advantage is a "mixed approach", whereby the fuel swap under set timelines and delivery of medical isotopes to Iran would be the central elements of an agreement according to which Iran would refrain from engaging in enrichment activities deemed "highly dangerous" by the West. "It's Iran's version of nuclear brinksmanship," said a Tehran foreign policy expert. "The message from Tehran is clear: take our counter-proposal seriously or face the consequence of Iran taking a giant step closer to the 'nuclear-capable' threshold ... There is cause for a pause on the part of Washington and London in their unreasonable rejection of Iran's proposal."

If a deal is worked out and a modified version of the IAEA proposal accepted, it would represent a unique victory for Iran's nuclear diplomacy, combining "soft" and "hard" power to elicit a favorable response from the "Iran Six" nations, ie the US, France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany. These countries have engaged in nuclear negotiations with Iran over the past several years. Also, if there were a breakthrough, it would frustrate some of the hardline voices in Iran that argue in favor of Iran "deepening its nuclear capability". To silence such voices and to agree to limit Iran's enrichment activities to low levels (below 5%), Iran's top decision-makers would have to show that they had struck the right bargain without selling themselves short.

As Iran celebrates the anniversary of the 1979 Islamic Revolution on Thursday, with people expected to take to the streets in their thousands across the country - although some will be protesting against the current government - there are rays of hope that the dark clouds of a more intensified nuclear crisis may be disappearing.

Source: http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Middle_East/LB12Ak03.html

Iran will ‘quicken nuclear work if US threats continue’



Iranian Parliament (Majlis) Speaker Ali Larijani

Iran’s parliament speaker says his country will ‘speed up’ its nuclear work if the Obama administration continues to threaten the country with a new round of sanctions. “Even if US President Barack Obama dares to repeat threats of tougher sanction against us as much as ten times, we will still be determined to pursue our enrichment program, but with a much faster pace,” said Ali Larijani on Thursday.

Only hours after Iran announced a decision to domestically produce higher-enriched uranium under the supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog, Obama warned that the US is preparing a “significant regime of sanctions” against the Tehran government. The US president, who was speaking to reporters on Tuesday, went on to accuse Iran of spurning his offer of engagement in order to continue what he called Iran’s nuclear weapons program.

Larijani responded to the US allegations, warning that if continued, the threats will have heavy consequences in both Iran and the US. “Whenever we make a significant breakthrough, whether it is launching a satellite into space or any other technological or scientific achievement, they quickly demonize it and claim that it is aimed at military or spying purposes,” said Larijani. “But their problem really lies with the fact that our status in the international scene is changing for the better,” added the Iranian Parliament Speaker. “They can not bear to see our progress, which is why they want to keep us as an underdeveloped country.”

Larijani noted that Western superpowers have ceaselessly sought to sow discord among Iranians in order to “fish in troubled waters.” The Iranian official made the comments in a large crowd marking the 31st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution.

Source: <http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=118461§ionid=351020104>

Iran: We are now among world’s top 15 nuclear states

We are ahead of Pakistan - even though it already has the bomb, says atomic energy chief. Iran is among the top states in terms of its nuclear technology, the country’s atomic chief was quoted as saying Friday by the Fars news agency.

“Within the 150 IAEA International Atomic Energy Agency member states, we are among the top 15,” Ali-Akbar Salehi claimed. “We are of course not yet at the same level as Japan but within the Islamic world, we are the number one,” he claimed. “Even though Pakistan has the atomic bomb but that does not mean that also it possesses all nuclear technologies,” he added. According to the IAEA, 436 power reactors are in operation in 30 different countries, although only a

handful of them enrich their own uranium. Iran only plans to begin operations at the Russian-built Bushehr nuclear power plant this year.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said Thursday that Iran has succeeded in producing its first batch of uranium enriched to 20 per cent. He also claimed his country's nuclear technicians had the capacity to enrich up to the 80 per cent needed for weapons grade material, and was therefore to be counted among the nuclear powers.

The IAEA monitors had not been able to verify the claims of enrichment capacity to 20 per cent. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said Friday that neither France nor the Americans believe Iran's declaration that it has the capacity to enrich uranium to near weapons-grade levels. "The Americans don't believe, not any more than us, that Iran is currently capable of enriching uranium to 80 percent," Kouchner told Europe 1. Meanwhile, Iran's supreme leader on Thursday warned the West to stop putting obstacles in his country's path, amid international efforts to halt the contentious nuclear program.

State Press TV reported on Friday that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei thanked the tens of millions who gathered to mark the 31st anniversary of the Islamic revolution, saying it reflected the nation's strength. "It's time for foreign enemies to wake up and abandon futile efforts to subjugate Iran," he said. Earlier Thursday, the State Department said that Ahmadinejad's announcement that the country has succeeded at creating higher levels of uranium enrichment shows its nuclear intentions are "anything but peaceful."

Iran's nuclear ambitions continue to draw concerns from the United States and European allies. Iran has rebuffed diplomatic overtures to resolve the issue and is in defiance of UN Security Council demands that it suspend uranium enrichment.

'Iran hacking into broadcasts of at least 3 major news outlets'

At least three major international media outlets have meanwhile accused Tehran of interfering with their broadcasting, while cracking down on foreign programs aired in the Islamic Republic. The BBC, Deutsche Welle and Voice of America reported jamming that began as Iran marked the anniversary of its revolution.

"We condemn any jamming of these channels. It contravenes international agreements and is interfering with the free and open flow of international transmissions that are protected by international treaties," the broadcasters said in a joint statement. "The Iranian authorities are using the same satellite services to broadcast freely around the world including broadcasts in English and Arabic; at the same time they are denying their own people programs coming from the same satellites from the rest of the world," they added.

The United States on Thursday accused Iran of imposing a "near-total information blockade" over the course of the day. The State Department cited evidence that telephone networks had been silenced, SMS messages blocked and that the Internet had been "throttled." The Gmail email system had also been blocked, said sources.

Source: <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1149400.html>

As Iran's nuclear aims expand, Obama should urge sanctions

IRAN'S LEADERS have been playing a game of nuclear chicken, and they may have finally passed a point of no return by starting to enrich uranium from 3.5 percent to just under 20 percent. This step could bring Iran much closer to breakout capability - possession of the high-enriched uranium (90 percent) needed for a nuclear warhead.

President Obama needs to respond with a mix of shrewdness and firmness. He must make it clear to the Iranian people that the United States is holding open its offer of direct negotiations. But he must also start to push for international sanctions that target the leaders of the Revolutionary Guard, the elite military unit that controls Iran's national-security apparatus. In recent years, Guard leaders have gained control of Iranian energy companies, as well as ports, telecommunications, cement factories, and other lucrative enterprises.

The US Treasury Department yesterday added one Guard commander and four subsidiaries of a Guard-owned firm to its existing list of people and companies that cannot do business with Americans. But broader international sanctions, enforced by the United Nations, would sever the Guard commanders and their companies from the international financial system.

Such a move would be welcomed by the brave Iranians who have been protesting against the military-religious dictatorship. And those protesters would also welcome the indictments of some Iranian leaders for crimes against humanity for violently repressing protests over the past year. In practice, the indictments would force certain Iranian elites to curb their foreign travel for fear of arrest — a potentially powerful lever for negotiations.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is simply lying when he says his country needs to enrich an unspecified amount of uranium to 20 percent to supply a small research reactor producing isotopes for medical use. Iran does not have the technology to produce fuel rods for such a reactor.

Before pressing the UN Security Council for sanctions against Iran - which would require persuading China to change its stance against sanctions - Obama must help the world understand the implications of Iran's refusal to accept a plan to have Russia and France enrich its uranium for peaceful purposes. After initially accepting the deal last year, Ahmadinejad demanded it be revised so that Iran could retain a bomb's worth of low-enriched uranium.

The two-fold purpose of the agreement was always clear: to show Iran that the outside world is willing to help it acquire nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and to give negotiators the time to work out a broader agreement that would prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. In the wake of Iran's refusal to accept the agreement, tougher action is necessary. Sanctions against the Revolutionary Guard alone may not suffice to deflect Iran's rulers from their pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. But sanctions combined with the continued protests of the Iranian people might eventually turn the tide. That is what Obama should aim for.

Source: http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/editorials/articles/2010/02/11/as_irans_nuclear_aims_expand_obama_should_urge_sanctions/

Thinking outside the box on Iran: *Rick Moran*

Even though the UN seems poised to strengthen sanctions against Iran, and unilateral sanctions by the US may be followed by some in the EU, the fact is that these options will not stop Iran from enriching uranium. Bombing will delay, not destroy the Iranian's ability to make a bomb. Hence, as Michael Rubin points out in his AOL column, we need to "think outside the box" in order to find a solution:

Here, Iran's trade union movement provides an answer. The Bush administration missed a "Gdansk moment" in 2005 when Tehran bus driver Mansour Osanlou, the Iranian equivalent of Poland's Lech Walesa, organized the Islamic Republic's first independent trade union. Sugar processors in southwestern Iran soon followed suit.

If bus drivers and factory workers can beat the regime at a local level, imagine the pressures Tehran would face from a dozen more trade unions? If unions can force the regime to pay eight months' worth of back salaries or invest in pension schemes, then the government might not have the funds to build centrifuges and missiles. Here, Obama, his union allies and Europe's Social Democrats have an opportunity to lead by sponsoring strike funds and assisting organizers.

Time may be short, and there's no guarantee this would work to stop Iran from becoming a nuclear power. But it would be irresponsible not to try. Using unions to foment regime change is nothing new as was proved in Eastern Europe. But that was a process that took decades to bear fruit with the AFL-CIO being recruited as early as the Kennedy administration to make contact with potential labor leaders behind the Iron Curtain and facilitate the formation of unions independent of the communist governments.

And there is no guarantee that regime change will stop Iran's drive to build nuclear weapons. Ahmadinejad has made the nuclear issue one of state sovereignty - Iran has an absolute right to control the enrichment cycle. We have heard little from the opposition to dispute that. It's good to think out side of the box. But when there are limited options - all of them bad - there isn't much inside or outside the box that presents itself as a solution.

Source: http://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2010/02/thinking_outside_the_box_on_ir.html

Clinton Prepares for Gulf Trip and Talks on Iran, Mideast Peace Efforts: *David Gollust*

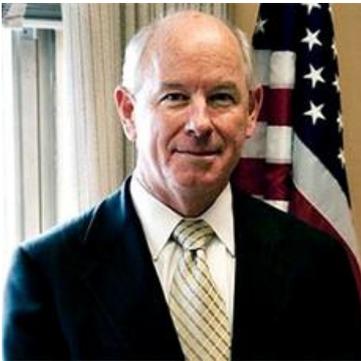


**Secretary of State
Hillary Rodham Clinton**

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton leaves Washington Saturday on a trip to Qatar and Saudi Arabia and talks with U.S. allies on Iran and efforts to restart Israeli-Palestinian peace talks. The Obama administration has been helping Gulf states upgrade defenses in the face of Iranian nuclear efforts. Clinton delayed the start of her Gulf trip by one day to fly to New York to be with her husband, the former President Bill Clinton who was briefly hospitalized for a heart procedure.

But aides to the Secretary say the fact she is going through with her trip underscores the importance she attaches to her consultations with Gulf allies. The Obama administration has in recent weeks been quietly helping several Gulf states, apprehensive about Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs, build up their defenses with, among other things, U.S. Patriot anti-missile batteries.

The Iranian government has fueled concerns about its nuclear intentions by spurning big-power offers to help it meet civilian nuclear power needs. This week - in connection with the 31st anniversary of the country's Islamic revolution - Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad boasted of being able to enrich uranium to 20 per cent or even 80 per cent, a level nearly high enough to produce a nuclear weapon. Briefing reporters on the eve of Clinton's departure, State Department Spokesman P.J. Crowley said Iran could ease regional anxiety by returning to serious talks on its nuclear program.



*State Department
Spokesman P.J. Crowley*

"These ongoing statements and ongoing actions are counterproductive, and they really call into question whether Iranian claims that their intentions are peaceful are in fact true," said P.J. Crowley. In Doha, first stop on the trip, Clinton will deliver an address at a forum on U.S.-Islamic relations and meet with Qatari leaders and other officials attending the conference including Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

In Saudi Arabia early next week, she meets with King Abdullah, principal sponsor of the 2003 Arab League peace initiative offering Israel full relations with Arab states if it made peace with the Palestinians and left occupied land.

Crowley said Clinton will try to generate more active Arab support for ongoing efforts by U.S. Middle East envoy George Mitchell to get Israeli-Palestinian peace talks going again.

"Part of our discussion will be how we push, prod cajole the parties into that negotiation through which we think we can ultimately arrive at a satisfactory peace agreement," he said. The spokesman said U.S. Undersecretary of State for political affairs William Burns will meet Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on regional peace efforts on a trip next week that will also take him to Lebanon, Turkey and Azerbaijan.

The Obama administration is preparing to send an ambassador to Syria for the first time since 2005, when it withdrew its envoy after the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, in which U.N. investigators implicated Syrian operatives.

Source: <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/usa/Clinton-Prepares-for-Gulf-Trip-and-Talks-on-Iran-Mideast-Peace-Efforts—84258347.html>

North Korea

North Korea Not Eager to Return to Six - Party Talks

North Korea is not eager to return to six-party talks but has not rejected the idea, the U.N.'s top political official said on Friday following a trip to the reclusive country. "Their attitude right now, certainly they're not happy with sanctions. They're certainly not eager, not ruling out, but not eager to return to six-party talks," Lynn Pascoe, under-secretary-general for political affairs, told reporters in Beijing.

Pascoe said the country was only getting about a quarter of the aid it needed, and cited donor fatigue as one of the reasons for the shortfall. North Korea's chief nuclear envoy will make a rare visit to the United States next month, a news report said earlier on Friday, raising expectations that long-stalled talks on ending Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions could be back on track.

Source: http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2010/02/12/world/international-uk-korea-north-un.html?_r=1

North Korea edges toward new nuclear talks:

Donald Kirk

UN undersecretary-general Lynn Pascoe said today that North Korea is 'not eager to return to six-party talks,' but others say Kim Jong-il appears ready for renewed dialogue.

UN political chief B. Lynn Pascoe (left) poses for a photo with Kim Yong Nam, president of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, North Korea's parliament, before talks in Pyongyang, North Korea on Thursday.



North Korea's leader Kim Jong-il appeared anxious to show China and the US that he's open to dialogue as the reclusive North edged closer Friday to six-party talks on its nuclear weapons.



UN political chief B. Lynn Pascoe, at a press conference Friday in Beijing, said he met with North Korea's president and foreign minister and 'argued strongly that the six-party talks should be resumed without preconditions or further delay.' North Korea's nuclear envoy, Kim Kye-gwan, returned from Beijing on Friday just as a top UN political official concluded a four-day visit to Pyongyang. Both missions look to analysts as unmistakable moves to resume six-party talks not held since December 2008.

"It looks like North Korea is paving the way to return to talks," says Han Sung-joo, who has served as South Korea's foreign minister and ambassador to Washington. "They want to do a favor to China, and

they want to placate both the US and South Korea.” The most obvious sign of that willingness were reports here that envoy Kim Kye-gwan is scheduled to fly next month to Washington, where he is expected to meet the US envoy on Korea, Stephen Bosworth, and other top officials.

South Korea’s Yonhap news agency quoted one source as saying the date for Mr. Kim’s trip “has already been set” though there was no confirmation from Washington. Kim in Beijing conferred at length with China’s newly appointed envoy on Korea, Wu Dawei, a former vice foreign minister whose position seems analogous to that of Mr. Bosworth. At the same time, Lynn Pascoe, UN undersecretary-general for political affairs, met North Korea’s titular leader, Kim Yong-nam, passing on what Pyongyang’s Korean Central News Agency called “a verbal personal message and a gift from the UN secretary-general,” Ban Ki-moon.

Neither the nature of the gift nor the contents of the message were disclosed, but Mr. Pascoe’s mission appears as part of a drive to get North Korea to return to talks. The most critical sticking point is North Korea’s demand for lifting stringent economic sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council after the North test-fired a long-range missile last April and then detonated an underground nuclear device in May. After the meeting, Pascoe said the North had not rejected a return to the negotiating table, but Pyongyang is reluctant and holding out for the removal of the sanctions.

“They’re certainly not eager, not ruling out, but not eager to return to six-party talks,” he told reporters in Beijing. As pressure builds up for talks on the North’s nukes, the foreign ministers of Japan and South Korea held lengthy meetings this week at which they showed unusual rapport on dealing with North Korea and agreed on the need to maintain sanctions. South Korea’s foreign minister, Yu Myung-hwan, and Japan’s foreign minister Katsuya Okada, promised to put teeth into their words by sharing intelligence – an unusual step considering the history of animosity between Korea and Japan – after Mr. Okada apologized profusely for Japan’s annexation of Korea 100 years ago this year. Okada was quoted by a spokesman for South Korea’s President Lee Myung-bak as having remarked, “This year is a sensitive year” in view of the anniversary but that Japan’s Prime Minister Hatoyama wants “future-oriented” relations.

“There is fairly good coordination between the two countries on the nuclear issue,” says Mr. Han, South Korea’s former foreign minister. “It’s to the credit of both the Japanese and Korean governments and the leaders of both countries.” Lim Jung Taek, foreign press director at South Korea’s foreign ministry, denies that close ties between South Korea and Japan are aimed against China, on which North Korea relies for military and economic survival. “You can say we were aligning against North Korea,” he says, “but not against China” – which he credits with playing a major role in trying.

Source: <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-Pacific/2010/0212/North-Korea-edges-toward-new-nuclear-talks>

Pakistan

Pakistan is Top Security Concern, Biden Says

U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden said Wednesday that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and troubles with extremists make the South Asian nation his top security concern. "It's a big country. It has nuclear weapons that are able to be deployed. It has a real significant minority of radicalized population," Biden told. "It is not a completely functional democracy in the sense we think about it, and so that's my greatest concern," he said.

While the Pakistani government has combated the Taliban in its border region, U.S. officials remain concerned about Islamabad's willingness to counter the extremist threat. Washington has encouraged the Pakistani government to widen its fight to North Waziristan, the region used for shelter by al-Qaeda and Haqqani organization operatives linked to attacks on U.S. and NATO military personnel in Afghanistan. Pakistan's failure to combat certain groups has some observers convinced the government maintains links to militants in order to keep some clout in Afghanistan.

Source: http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100212_9632.php

India

Nuclear Iran and the Gulf: Can India make a difference?: C. Raja Mohan

Focused as it is on the impending talks with Pakistan, Delhi should not lose sight of the unfolding power play in the Gulf. As Washington figures out that it has no real leverage with Tehran on getting Iran to show flexibility on the nuclear question, the US attention is turning towards two different but complementary options.

One is to accelerate the efforts at the United Nations Security Council to get a new sanctions resolution against Iran. Even if Washington persuades Russia likely and China less likely to support the new measures against Iran, Tehran will not bend. For all the noise that emanates from New York, Iran knows that the UNSC is the emperor without clothes. Absent the political will from the great powers to use force, there is no reason for Tehran to blink.

The Iranian leadership is betting, rightly, that after Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington has no stomach for another military adventure. What about Israel? Is it not itching to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities? Here again Iran might assess that Washington will keep a tight leash on Tel Aviv; because it the US that will have to face popular anger in the Middle East if Israel acts against Iran as well as a broader conflict in the region with major international repercussions.

As the talk-shop in New York gets all the international attention, the real strategic action is in the Gulf, where Washington is moving swiftly to strengthen its security assurances to the nervous Arabs. While Iranian nuclear weapons might be some distance away, the Arab governments in the region are beginning to focus on the development of their own nuclear programmes.

Washington is announcing additional weapons sales to the Gulf States and beefing up its naval presence in the region. More immediately, the US needs to closely coordinate its Iran strategy with the Arab neighbours of Iran in the Gulf. That seems to be the purpose of the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's planned visit to the Gulf this week. Clinton hopes to persuade the Gulf States to lobby Beijing to support sanctions against Iran. That in turn is likely to raise China's weight in the Gulf, and increase its leverage with both Iran and the Arab states in the Gulf, including Saudi Arabia.

Amidst this new power play, India needs to go beyond its traditional posturing to the domestic audiences by banal calls for a peaceful resolution of the nuclear dispute between Iran and the international community. The real issue in the Gulf is about preserving the balance of power between Iran and its Arab neighbours. For India, the question then is whether it can contribute effectively to regional stability in its extended neighbourhood. This is a theme that should be at the top of the agenda when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visits Saudi Arabia next month.

Source: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/nuclear-iran-and-the-gulf-can-india-make-a-difference/579037/>

Nuclear Energy

Venezuela to Develop Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes

President Hugo Chavez said the decision to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes is considered a sovereign right of countries. He said Venezuela was already working on it and there is a committee appointed to study the matter.

Chavez said during the government of Marcos Perez (1952-1958) in Altos de Pipe was installed the first nuclear reactor in South America. "When we begin to develop our nuclear power as we will do, they will put their eyes on us and will say Chavez is building an atomic bomb", he said at the Municipal Theater of Caracas, where the First Congress of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela was held. He assured Venezuela does not need weapons of mass destruction as "we already have a nuclear bomb -the Socialist Party and the people united". "Venezuela clearly understands the struggle of Iran, because it is the same struggle for sovereignty.

We must continue rejecting the claim of yankee imperialism from the U.S to prevent the economic and energy development in Iran, he said. Chavez congratulated the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, on the 31st anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution. — NNN-PRENSA LATINA

Source: <http://news.brunei.fm/2010/02/12/venezuela-to-develop-nuclear-energy-for-peaceful-purposes/>

Lithuania rejects Russian nuclear plant proposal



Lithuania is desperate to begin producing its own energy again since the close of the Ignalina nuclear power plant at the beginning of the year.

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite has rejected an offer from Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to cooperatively construct a new nuclear power plant to deal with the energy needs of the region. Lithuania

has had to drastically increase its energy imports after the forced closure of its Soviet-era nuclear power plant at Ignalina, which the EU demanded shut its doors over safety concerns.

The country has long-standing plans to build a new nuclear facility to meet its energy needs, but the pan-Baltic project has faced numerous delays following economic difficulties and bickering over power-distribution. Russia hopes to build its own plant in Kaliningrad, and was looking for Lithuanian support on the project. The multi-billion euro plant would be located just a few kilometers from the Lithuanian border.

“President Grybauskaite told the Russians bluntly that Lithuania is not interested in joining in building a nuclear power plant in Kaliningrad, because we are going to build our own plant,” presidential foreign affairs advisor Darius Semaska told Reuters. Lithuania has narrowed the list of potential commercial partners for its own nuclear power plant project down to five companies, but is not expected to make a final decision until this summer.

Source: <http://www.baltictimes.com/news/articles/24358/>

Contribute Articles

Indian Pugwash Society welcomes research articles from students, researchers and faculties on Space, Missile, nuclear technology, WMD proliferation, arms control, disarmament, export controls and other related issues. Articles should be crisply written and should address contemporary debates in the policy arena.

Manuscripts submitted for the consideration of the Indian Pugwash Society should be original contributions and should not have been submitted for consideration anywhere else. Please confirm to the guidelines prescribed in the website before submitting the manuscript for consideration.

Details are available at: http://www.pugwashindia.org/contribute_articles.asp

The Indian Pugwash Society aims to promote the study, discussion, and knowledge of and to stimulate general interest in, and to diffuse knowledge in regards to problems relating on WMD proliferation, arms control, disarmament, space security, export controls, nuclear technology and other related issues.

This newsletter is part of the project "Emerging Nuclear Order in Asia: Implications for India" sanctioned to us by Department of Atomic Energy-Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (DAE-BRNS).

Disclaimer:

Data included in this newsletter is only for educational purpose and wider dissemination. All liabilities and rights belong to respective writers & authors.

**Convenor & Director,
Programme of Studies,
India Pugwash Society:**

Dr. Arvind Gupta

Consultant:

Prof K. D. Kapoor

SRFs:

P.K.Sundaram & Salvin Paul

Indian Pugwash Society

No.1, Development Enclave,
Rao Tula Ram Marg, Near USI, Delhi-110010
Tel. No (91-11) 2671-7983
Extn 7014 & 7012
Fax No. (91-11)2615-4192
Email: indianpugwash@yahoo.com