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Nuke Proliferation in East Asia Affects International Security

The 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on April 28, 2014 can be especially propitious for standing back from the perennial present of international security issues and evaluating longer-term trends. The threat posed by the spread of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is one of the main security challenges of the 21st century. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War led to a gradual reduction both in the security framework and in the perception of security. In order to address this challenge and develop appropriate solutions, accurate risk factors analysis is required, as well as the ability to generate a multi-dimensional response: promoting the development of a comprehensive non-proliferation regime while also trying to explore how nu-clear energy can safely be harnessed for sustainable economic development. The implications of nuclear prolifera-tion for international relations are difficult to predict but profound. ➢ Pages 2-3-4

What Others Say

U.S. Demand for Deep Centrifuge Cut is a Diplomatic Ploy

With only a few weeks remaining before the Jul. 20 deadline, the Barack Obama administration issued a warning to Iran that it must accept deep cuts in the number of its centrifuges in order to demonstrate that its nuclear programme is only for peaceful purposes. U.S. officials have argued that such cuts are necessary to increase the "breakout" time – the time it would take Iran to enrich enough uranium to weapons grade level to build a single bomb – from what is said to be two to three months at present to as long as a year or even more. ➢ Pages 5-6

Enhancing Nuclear Transparency

In 1944, famous Danish physicist Niels Bohr sent a letter to US President Franklin D Roosevelt, warning him about the urgent need to control fissile materials by reaching an un-derstanding at the international level. A year later, in July 1945, the US carried out the first-ever nuclear test, ushering the world into the nuclear age. After the Soviet Union con-ducted nuclear tests in 1949, Bohr sent another letter to the United Nations, emphasising the need to bring greater nu-clear transparency as a means to build mutual trust among nuclear powers. ➢ Pages 7-8

It's Time to Ratify the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) outlaws the testing of nuclear weapons. So far, 183 countries signed the treaty, but it cannot become a binding international law until it has been ratified by all states capable of developing nu-clear weapons, of which there are 44 specified in the treaty. ➢ Pages 8-9

India-US: Nuclear Ayatollahs and the Politics of Non-proliferation

In a completely partisan and somewhat condescending editorial in early-July 2014, The New York Times wrote: "If India wants to be part of the nuclear suppliers group, it needs to sign the treaty that prohibits nuclear testing, stop producing fissile material, and begin talks with its rivals on nuclear weapons containment." ➢ Page 10

Civil Society Perspective

Doom From the Depths

Ever since the horrors of submarine warfare became a key issue during World War I, submarines have had a sinister reputation. And the building of new, immensely costly, nuclear-armed submarines by the US government and others may soon raise the level of earlier anxiety to a nuclear nightmare. ➢ Pages 11-12

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By VALENTINA GASBARRI*

ROME (IDN) - The 10th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1540 on April 28, 2014 can be especially propitious for standing back from the perennial present of international security issues and evaluating longer-term trends.

The threat posed by the spread of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is one of the main security challenges of the 21st century. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War led to a gradual reduction both in the security framework and in the perception of security.

In order to address this challenge and develop appropriate solutions, accurate risk factors analysis is required, as well as the ability to generate a multi-dimensional response: promoting the development of a comprehensive non-proliferation regime while also trying to explore how nuclear energy can safely be harnessed for sustainable economic development. The implications of nuclear proliferation for international relations are difficult to predict but profound.

First, the spread of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles has had a deep impact on the bipolar system, freezing the most dangerous regional conflicts. This is the argument developed by "the school of realists", in particular Kenneth Waltz, who believe that "more may be better" in the basic rationale of State actors.

Second, proliferation may affect the way wars may be conducted. Indeed, during the Cold War the competition between the two superpowers was merely the "continuation of politics with other means", because a real war was avoided given the high destructiveness of the new technologies. There is also a widespread fear that these weapons may fall under the control of terrorists or other no-State actors who would be immune from threats of retaliation.

Atomic ambitions

International efforts to stem the spread of nuclear weapons typically focus on the atomic ambitions of the Democratic Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran. The leaders of the two countries still remain unmoved by international condemnation and pressure. In their power perception, national security and international prestige derive from nuclear weapons and this view seems more compelling than the penalties and sanctions resulting from multilateral diplomacy (Res 1718, 1874, 2087, 2096 and 1965). Indeed, a comprehensive approach to non-proliferation seeks to dissuade leaders from pursuing nuclear weapons capabilities as a source of national prestige and security defence strategies.

The current North Korean nuclear crisis cannot be fully understood without a reference to both the historical nuclear ambitions of North Korea and its economic plight. Indeed, the DPRK remains isolated, economically under a near collapse, facing a devastating humanitarian crisis. Its decision to withdraw from the nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty in 2003 and to restart graphite moderated reactor and nuclear ballistic tests have sparked international concern over nuclear proliferation and regional concern about the imminent crisis.

These concerns are heightened by the DPRK ballistic missile programme and the potential proliferation of both nuclear and ballistic missile knowledge and components. According to the US intelligence estimates, the DPRK already has one or two nuclear devices and the ballistic missile development programme includes the NODONG and TAEPO DONG series of mis-siles.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) notes two distinct phases in the development of the DPRK's nuclear programme: a first stage started with an agreement with the then Soviet Union for the cooperation in nuclear research in 1956 and a second phase with the construction of a natural uranium reactor at the Yongbyon complex in 1986. ⇨

**Valentina Gasbarri is a Junior Expert of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). She has a strong background in East-Asia geo-strategic relations, development issues and global security studies.*

Photo: 5 MWe experimental reactor at Yongbyon Nuclear Scientific Research Center | Credit: Wikipedia

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In spite of international condemnation and the UN Security Council Resolutions, North Korea continues to launch short and long-range rockets. The last launch was on July 2, 2014, defying UN ban on the country testing such weapons. The launch came days before Chinese President Xi Jinping's scheduled state visit to South Korea.

Nuclear multilateral negotiations

The efforts to prevent North Korea's pursuit of nuclear weapons are among all the longest running and least successful ones in international security of the past quarter century. Despite the very remote prospect for solving the crisis through multilateral dialogue, the crisis has had the interesting effect of bringing together all regional countries in the Six-Party talks, in collaborative efforts towards a common regional security.

Some promising breakthroughs occurred in 2005 and in 2008, with North Korea's commitment to abandon its nuclear programme in exchange for development aid. Disagreements over the verification protocol stalled the process: North Korea was still in the US terrorism list and multilateral negotiations have not been held since 2008.

Two recent developments in particular have diminished political support for accommodation and engagement: North Korean participation in the construction of a nuclear reactor in Syria, destroyed in an Israeli attack in 2007 and the continuation of the North Korean nuclear tests.

Nuclear Security Summit held in The Hague on March 24-25, 2014, the P5 Meeting and the conclusions of the G7 highlighted that North Korea nuclear problem is a multifaceted problem with not just global implications for the non-proliferation regime and global war on terrorism, but also regional and local implications for the security of Northern East Asia and the Korean Peninsula. The need for a global zero tolerance to the development of nuclear programmes as well as the need to create a binding legislation to face the current threats, has also been stressed.

However, despite the common goal of the main actors involved, namely Japan, China, South Korea and USA, each country has different priorities in exactly how to resolve the crisis that in turn could prove divisive depending on how the crisis continues to unfold.

Japan's security challenges and opportunities

Japan's protection under the US nuclear umbrella, as the main off shore security provider in the region, has virtually eliminated any need for it to develop nuclear weapons on its own over the past half-century. Indeed, Japan's non-nuclear posture is often perceived to be rooted in strong national consensus based on emotional reactions to the 1945 bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the 1954 Daigo Fujuryu-maru incident.

In order to protect the territories and lives of respective citizens from threats of North Korean attacks, the US, Japan and South Korea have deployed ballistic missile defence. During 2009 and 2012 North Korean long-range missile tests, the US and allied forces reportedly made ready and available a number of ballistic missile defence systems, in addition to the intelligence gathering capabilities sent into the region. In response to the exacerbated tensions in April 2013, the US deployed a ballistic defence system in Guam.

Even the reliability of the US-Japan alliance, the North Korea nuclear threat, the regional background of a rapidly growing China in the process of military modernization and the global challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime created the context to reconsider Japanese security policy. An important step has been the revision of the interpretation of the post-war peaceful Constitution on July 1.

Adopted in a cabinet resolution, the government decision to approve “collective defence” under certain circumstances represents an historic move to revise the country's post-war defence policy.

Once related laws are passed at the Diet, it will widen Japanese military defence options by ending the ban on exercising "collective self-defence" under certain circumstances such as when "clear danger" exists to the lives of Japanese citizens and foreign military personnel of countries "with close ties" to Japan who are engaged in protecting Japanese citizens and even in such a case military intervention by Japan’s self-defence force should be limited to the minimum amount necessary.

Reinterpreting the constitution will give Japan a more active role in coming to the aid of an ally, in particular the US military personnel when they are defending Japanese territory and people, and also the justification for reconsidering the rationale behind the alliance as a further consequence.

Another element which can impact Japan's approach to security and to the North Korea nuclear menace is the recent decision of lifting part of the unilateral sanctions imposed along with the UN Security Council Resolutions in the wake of nuclear tests carried out by DPRK (North Korea). This renewed approach of Japan to the nuclear crisis came after the meeting between the two countries in Beijing and it contains the obligation for North Korea to faithfully reinvestigate the abducted victims of Japanese citizens by DPRK agents during the 1970s and the 1980s. ⇨

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Alignment despite antagonism

The role Beijing chooses to play in the light of Pyongyang's accelerated nuclear activities and provocative rhetoric has highlighted the emergence of China as a geopolitical conflict mediator. In fact, beyond the North Korea crisis, the future configuration of the Korean Peninsula will be a major determinant of the geo-strategic balance in East Asia.

The course of China will be determined primarily by the sustainability of its economic prosperity, the adaptability of its political system to economic and social pressures, and the management of relations with the United States. The United States and China share a common set of overarching goals with regard to the Korean Peninsula: both wish to see a stable and non-nuclear North Korea. Considering how to achieve those aims, however, and under what terms exposes divergent priorities and strategic preferences between Washington and Beijing.

China's role as host of the Six Party Talks and as North Korea's chief benefactor, confirms the critical importance of its role in the US policy towards North Korea. In addition, China's permanent seat on the Security Council ensures its influence on any UN action directed at North Korea. In addition to being North Korea's largest trading partner by far, China also provides considerable emergency and humanitarian assistance in particular in food and energy aid as essential lifeline for the regime if Pyongyang. It is clear that Beijing cannot control Pyongyang's behaviour, particularly in the cases of provocative nuclear tests and missiles launches, but even temporary cessation of economic and energy a id is significant for North Korea.

Beijing also fears the destabilizing effects of a humanitarian crisis, significant refugee flows over its borders and of a consideration on how other nations, particularly the USA, would assert themselves on the peninsula in the event of a power vacuum. ❐

[IDN-InDepthNews – July 15, 2014]

IDN-InDepthNews
Analysis That Matters

IPS JAPAN

資料：North East Asia on a Globe/Envolverde

国際安全保障に影響与える東アジアの核拡散

【ローマ IDN＝バレンティーナ・ガスパッリ】

４月２８日で国連安保理決議１５４０（大量破壊兵器の不拡散に関する決議）の採択から１０周年を迎えるのを機に、相も変らぬ国際安全保障の現状から一歩引いて、長期的なトレンドを分析してみるのもいいかもしれない。

核兵器と弾道ミサイルの拡散による脅威は、２１世紀の主要な安全保障上の問題のひとつである。ベルリンの壁崩壊と冷戦終結によって、安全保障の枠組みと安全保障に関する認識は徐々に弱まってきている。

この問題に対処し適切な解決策を生み出していくためには、正確なリスク要因分析とともに、多面的な対応を生み出せる能力が必要とされるだろう。つまり、包括的な核不拡散体制の形成を促進する一方で、いかにして持続的な経済発展のために原子力を安全に制御しえるかを探求していくという課題である。核拡散が国際関係に及ぼす影響は予測し難いが、深刻なものであることは間違いない。

資料：Envolverde

http://www.nuclearabolition.info/documents/Japanese/Japanese_Nuke_Proliferation_in_East_Asia_Affects_International_Security.pdf

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What Others Say

U.S. Demand for Deep Centrifuge Cut is a Diplomatic Ploy

By GARETH PORTER*

WASHINGTON (IPS) - With only a few weeks remaining before the Jul. 20 deadline, the Barack Obama administration issued a warning to Iran that it must accept deep cuts in the number of its centrifuges in order to demonstrate that its nuclear programme is only for peaceful purposes.

U.S. officials have argued that such cuts are necessary to increase the "breakout" time – the time it would take Iran to enrich enough uranium to weapons grade level to build a single bomb – from what is said to be two to three months at present to as long as a year or even more.

Tehran has made it clear that it will not accept such a demand. Dismantling the vast majority of the centrifuges that Iran had installed is a highly symbolic issue, and the political cost of acceptance would be extremely high.

But a closer examination of the issues under negotiation suggests that the ostensible pressure on Iran is part of a strategy aimed at extracting concessions from Iran on the issue of its longer-term enrichment capability.

The Obama administration has been aware from the beginning of the talks that the "breakout" period could be lengthened to nearly a year without requiring the removal of most of the 10,000 centrifuges that have been used over the past two and a half years.

U.S. officials were well aware that reducing the amount of low enriched uranium and oxide powder now stockpiled by Iran to close to zero and avoiding any future accumulation would have the same effect – and that Iran was willing to accept such restrictions.

David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security and Olli Heinonen, the former International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) deputy director general for Safeguards, warned in a Jun. 3 article against a deal that would allow Iran to have more than 4,000 centrifuges in return for reducing its stocks of UF6 and oxide powder (UO2).

But they acknowledged that, if the Iranian LEU stockpile were reduced from the present level of 8,475 kg to 1,000 kilogrammes, the breakout time for 10,000 IR-1 centrifuges would be six months. And if the stockpile were reduced to zero, the breakout time would increase to close to a year, according to one of the graphs accompanying the article.

Experts from the Department of Energy as well as from the intelligence community certainly briefed policy-makers on the fact that lengthening the breakout timeline to between six and 12 months could be achieved through reducing either centrifuges or the stockpile of low enriched uranium (LEU), according to Steve Fetter, who was assistant director at large for the White House Office of Science and Technology from 2009-12.

Eliminating the existing LEU stockpile and avoiding any further accumulation is the intent of an Iranian proposal formally handed over to EU Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Istanbul last month. Under that proposal, which Zarif revealed in an interview with IPS in Tehran Jun. 3, Iran would convert all UF6 to Uranium oxide powder (U02) and then convert the U02 to fuel plates for Bushehr.

Iran has expressed the desire to fabricate fuel plates for Bushehr itself, but has not yet mastered the technology. The proposal would therefore involve shipping either UF6 enriched to 3.5 percent or the U02 to Russia for conversion into fuel plates until the expiration of the contract with Russia for fuel fabrication for Bushehr expires in 2021.

In the interim agreement, Iran committed to begin converting UF6 enriched to 3.5 percent to oxide powder as soon as its line for such conversion became operational. The Enriched U02 Powder Plant began operating in May, but the time required to reduce the existing stockpile to zero will depend on the capacity of the plant, which has not been announced.

Zarif told IPS he had unveiled the basic idea underlying the Iranian proposal in his PowerPoint presentation to European officials in Geneva in mid-October. ⇨

*Gareth Porter is an independent investigative journalist and winner of the 2012 Gellhorn Prize for journalism. He is the author of the newly published Manufactured Crisis: The Untold Story of the Iran Nuclear Scare.

Picture: P5+1 foreign ministers after negotiations about Iran's nuclear capabilities concluded on Nov. 24, 2013 in Geneva. Credit: U.S. Dept of State/CC by 2.0

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When Secretary of State John Kerry declared in April that he would demand a major increase in the existing "breakout" period to somewhere between to six and 12 months, therefore, he had good reason to believe that Washington could achieve that objective without cutting Iran's centrifuges to a few thousand.

An agreement to freeze the existing level of 10,000 operating centrifuges while reducing the LEU stockpile to zero could place the 9,000 centrifuges that have never been operated in storage under IAEA seal. Those used centrifuges include 1,000 advanced IR-2 centrifuges that are estimated to be three to five times more efficient than the IR-1 model.

Iran's policy of introducing thousands of centrifuges into the Natanz and Fordow enrichment facilities that were never used was aimed at accumulating negotiating chips for eventual negotiations on its nuclear programme.

In late August 2012, a senior U.S. official told the New York Times that Iran was being "very strategic" by "creating tremendous [enrichment] capacity," but "not using it." In doing so, the official said, Iran was acquiring "leverage" – obviously referring to future negotiations.

During the round of negotiations in Vienna in June, however, the draft tabled by the P5+1 apparently called for cuts going well beyond what U.S. officials knew would be acceptable to Iran. U.S. officials told the New York Times that the objective was now to lengthen the "breakout period" to more than a year – thus going beyond what Kerry had suggested in April.

The draft may have included an even more extreme demand from the French government. French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius declared in mid-June that the West wants to cut the number of centrifuges to "several hundred".

After the June round of negotiations, Zarif denounced the draft as containing "excessive demands" which Iran would not accept.

But those demands appear to be a negotiating ploy in which the U.S. would give up the demand for deep short-term reductions centrifuges in the coming years in return for Iranian concessions on the level of enrichment capability to be allowed in the later stage of the agreement.

The November 2013 Joint Plan of Action provided that the future enrichment programme would depend on Iran's "practical needs". Iran interprets that term to include the need to be self-reliant in providing reactor fuel for Bushehr, whereas the Obama administration argues that Iran can and should rely on Russia or other foreign suppliers.

Given the past record of political interference in fuel agreements Iran had negotiated with French and German firms in the 1980s and with Russia in 2005, however, Washington knows it faces a tough sell trying to get Iran to accept the U.S. insistence on reliance on foreign suppliers.

The "practical need" criterion suggests that Iran would have to provide concrete evidence of its need and ability to provide the fuel rods for the Bushehr reactor when the current contract with Russia expires in 2021.

Postponing the negotiations over that issue until a date much closer to 2021 would offer a period of a few years to negotiate an agreement on a regional fuel consortium for the Middle East that would be acceptable to both sides, as has been proposed by a group of Princeton University scientists and scholars.

Perhaps even more important, such a postponement would allow for increasing trust through the successful implementation of the agreement covering the next few years.

Explaining the Princeton group's plan at a briefing in Washington, D.C. June end, nuclear scientist Frank N. von Hippel, who was assistant director for national security in the White House Office of Science and Technology in the Bill Clinton administration, said, "We would have five years to cool down this impasse." (IPS | July 1, 2014) ❐

Photo: U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry | Credit: U.S. Department of State

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What Others Say

Enhancing Nuclear Transparency

By RIZWAN ASGHAR

Pakistan's nuclear security managers must not feel uncomfortable while sharing official and reliable information about the exact number of nuclear weapons and fissile material stockpiles.

In 1944, famous Danish physicist Niels Bohr sent a letter to US President Franklin D Roosevelt, warning him about the urgent need to control fissile materials by reaching an understanding at the international level. A year later, in July 1945, the US carried out the first-ever nuclear test, ushering the world into the nuclear age. After the Soviet Union conducted nuclear tests in 1949, Bohr sent another letter to the United Nations, emphasising the need to bring greater nuclear transparency as a means to build mutual trust among nuclear powers.

Today, 70 years after Bohr's first warning, regulation of the use of fissile material remains a distant dream. As of December 2013, the global stockpile of fissile material is estimated to be above 2,000 metric tonnes, which is enough to make tens of thousands of new nuclear weapons. There are an estimated 17,000 nuclear weapons globally, with the US and Russia together holding more than 16,000 of these weapons.

The lack of precise information regarding the exact number of nuclear weapons, their delivery systems and quantity of fissile material remains a major issue. Due to nuclear secrecy in most nuclear weapon states, much uncertainty surrounds the estimated figures.

Over the past decade, the issue regarding the level of nuclear secrecy has become a serious subject matter in deliberations by the General Assembly's First Committee at the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conferences (RevCon) and the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) sessions. Some 'recognised nuclear-weapon states' voluntarily submit reports on their nuclear activities but there is absolutely no transparency in the non-NPT states. During the Cold War era, nuclear secrecy was considered necessary for security. However, in the emerging era of nuclear terrorism, the lack of transparency has become a danger.

After 1998, these concerns led the NPT review process to enhance the transparency of the nuclear disarmament process. In 2000, the NPT RevCon agreed upon '13 fundamental disarmament steps', calling upon all member states to increase transparency and submit regular reports on nuclear disarmament commitments. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon included nuclear transparency as the most important agenda item in his nuclear disarmament proposal in 2008. He urged all nuclear weapons states to report information about their fissile material stocks and nuclear arsenal to the UN Secretariat. However, his proposal was not heeded. In 2010, the NPT RevCon also took up the need to ensure nuclear transparency. In the 2012 and 2013 sessions of the NPT Preparatory Committee, two coalitions of states presented 'working papers' on transparency. This initiative once again caused global attention focus on the need to improve transparency regarding exact quantities of fissile materials and their production history.

The utmost secrecy surrounding Pakistan's nuclear programme has become a matter of serious concern for the international community, particularly since 2003. Nuclear experts criticise Pakistan's nuclear security establishment for lack of transparency on its nuclear policies and practices that only fuel uncertainty and more fear.

On the other hand, Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division (SPD), the secretariat of the Nuclear Command Authority, has always criticised the western media for slanted coverage of Pakistan's nuclear activities. In the Pakistani media, information is generally shared only with 'friendly' analysts and journalists. Such lack of transparency may allow terrorist organisations to exploit weak links in the security of our nuclear arsenal but many Pakistani strategic thinkers remain in a state of denial regarding this threat. More or less the same culture of secrecy prevails in India and North Korea.

Earlier, I have argued . . . that a fine balance between global responsibility in the nuclear security area and national sovereignty must be created to counter the emerging threat of nuclear terrorism. There are examples where countries have shared highly sensitive information with one another, including, under the Open Skies Treaty, the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) programme and the agreement on conventional forces in Europe.

The main goal of greater transparency is to restore public confidence by ensuring international accountability. Many Pakistani analysts, unduly opposing this goal, need to realise that transparency does not entail disclosure of sensitive information about design and engineering of warheads. ⇨

Source: http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/01-Jul-2014/enhancing-nuclear-transparency

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Pakistan's nuclear security managers must not feel uncomfortable while sharing official and reliable information about the exact number of nuclear weapons and fissile material stockpiles so that measurable progress can be made toward nuclear disarmament.

In the post-Cold War era, the search for hegemony through buildups of nuclear arsenals should have given way to the need for acquiring collective security and the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

Many international forums, including the international Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Commission, the Tokyo Forum, the International Panel on Fissile Materials and the International Commission on Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament have stressed the dangers of huge nuclear arsenals and fissile material stocks being shrouded in secrecy. Five NPT weapon states — the US, the UK, France, Russia and China — met in London (2009), Paris (2011), Washington DC (2012) and Geneva (2013) to discuss issues of increasing nuclear transparency and taking confidence-building measures in this regard. Some unilateral progress in improving nuclear transparency has been witnessed over the past few years but universal support is necessary to pressurise all nuclear countries to share information about their arsenals.

As a first step, all nuclear weapon states should officially declare the total number of weapons in their nuclear arsenals in the 2015 NPT RevCon, along with the commitment to release subsequent annual updates. Civil society activists and media in all nuclear weapon states must fearlessly pressurise their respective governments to take this first step. Ensuring nuclear transparency is a global responsibility and Pakistan must not shy away from playing its part in fulfilling that responsibility.

(Daily Times, Pakistan | July 01, 2014) ❐

It's Time to Ratify the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty

By JOHN ENGLE

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) outlaws the testing of nuclear weapons. So far, 183 countries signed the treaty, but it cannot become a binding international law until it has been ratified by all states capable of developing nuclear weapons, of which there are 44 specified in the treaty. Of these states, three (India, Pakistan, and North Korea) have not signed the treaty, and a further six (China, Egypt, Israel, Iran, and the United States) are yet to ratify it.

The United States signed the treaty in 1996, as soon as the language was agreed upon, but the Senate rejected it by a tiny margin. While the idea of the CTBT is quite simple, implementation is immensely complex. One of the greatest concerns of the treaty, and of the international community, is with monitoring countries so as to verify their compliance with the ban. To this end the treaty sets up the International Monitoring System (IMS), a network of hundreds of scientific facilities spread across the globe that monitor seismic activity, radioactive fallout, atmospheric noise and oceanic waves to pick up evidence of a nuclear explosion. If the IMS detects a suspected nuclear test then an on-site inspection can follow.

The treaty does not detail the action that would be taken against a state that has broken the treaty, but the Charter of the United Nations does empower the Security Council to take "appropriate steps". Although the treaty has not yet come into force, most of the IMS is now in place and working.

President Obama has consistently stated that he is in favor of reducing nuclear proliferation. He even received the Nobel Peace Prize for his speeches on the matter. Yet he has done little to materially change America's position on nuclear weapons. In a dangerous world, nuclear weapons are a necessary component of the American defense. However, it is also in America's interest that the world's supply of nuclear weapons be kept within controllable bounds.

It is time for Obama to pursue the CTBT. It is time for the Senate to ratify the treaty.

Fighting Proliferation

Nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons ever created and it is right that they should be limited; something that the test ban treaty will be a step towards. An internationally ratified treaty comprehensively banning the testing of nuclear weapons would serve to hamper attempts by countries currently not in possession of nuclear weapons from acquiring them. This is particularly important in the cases of Iran and North Korea. Iran is getting closer and closer to having a working weapon and North Korea already have simple nuclear weapons. These countries' possession of such weapons can only serve to diminish security in the world and the security of the United States. ⇨

What Others Say

Of course, a country could just develop a nuclear weapon without testing, but little faith can be put in a weapon that is entirely untested; all countries that currently possess nuclear weapons conducted tests. A comprehensive and internationally ratified treaty against testing would serve as an important signaling device to countries considering developing nuclear weapons. Just as a taboo has formed around the use of nuclear weapons due to international accords denouncing their use, so too would a ban on testing generate a norm against it.

Countries rely on their reputations in international relations; states will fear loss of credibility should they be seen flouting the ban, either by testing weapons themselves or by supplying materials to countries seeking to perform tests. Some politicians and commentators say that rogue nations do not care at all about how they are perceived. But all countries rely to some extent on reputation to engage in international affairs. Most states do not like being pariahs, especially when that status carries with it heavy political and economic sanctions. The United States could leverage international law in such a way as to further deter nuclear testing in potentially hostile countries.

Trust, But Verify

Scanning and detection technology has become so advanced in recent years that it is virtually impossible for a country to detonate a nuclear device without it being detected. Compliance with the treaty can be monitored through the means of seismology, hydroacoustics, infrasound, and radionuclide monitoring. The technologies are used to monitor the underground, the waters and the atmosphere for any sign of a nuclear explosion. The monitoring network consists of 337 facilities located across the world. The system is so sensitive that it was able to detect the disintegration of the space shuttle Columbia. Furthermore, the treaty's system of inspection will reveal any suspicious activity regarding testing.

Clearly, efficacy in terms of determining who might be testing weapons is not an issue. When countries are found to be violating the CTBT, heavy political and economic sanctions can be imposed that will serve to force countries back into compliance with the treaty. A ratified CTBT gives a greater power to the world's democratic powers, the United States in particular, to take action against those states that would develop nuclear weapons. Ratification would give a much greater moral justification to a decision to take economic or political action against

Securing America's Interests

Some countries have been reticent to sign the CTBT for fear it would limit their ability to either expand or to begin their nuclear arsenals. The United States stands as one of the only such non-ratifiers, in the company of such countries as Iran, China, and North Korea. The United States fears the limiting of the ability for it to defend itself with nuclear armament. However, in reality the United States will benefit politically and militarily by ratifying, and the world will be benefited by a greater chance for peace without nuclear proliferation.

American accession would benefit the United States politically by increasing its credibility as a responsible international player with a respect for international law. Often America is viewed by the rest of the world as a cowboy pursuing its own aims and only paying lip service to the international community's opinion. If the United States were to show a degree of respect to international law, particularly through signing CTBT, it will be more able to gain support from other countries for its goals.

If the Senate ratifies the treaty, it will encourage other states to sign, such as China, which has said that its signature is contingent upon that of America. American involvement in the CTBT, and the Chinese involvement expected to follow from it, will give the treaty far greater weight, and will generate greater obedience to it, as countries recognize that it is binding on all states, not just the weak.

From a military standpoint, the United States has nothing to lose from signing as it may still retain its present nuclear stockpiles, as well as to develop new delivery and guidance systems, provided they are not tested with live nuclear warheads. Also, it has much to gain, as the ratification of the treaty will prevent other states from developing nuclear weapons, keeping the club of nuclear powers small and influential. Clearly, it is in the interest of the United States to sign the treaty, in order to benefit not only itself, but also the international community.

As Barack Obama's presidency approaches its final decline, he should be considering what he can call his legacy. Fulfilling the mission for which he was prematurely given the Nobel Prize might go some way to restoring him in the eyes of history. And maybe that gold medal could be placed on his mantelpiece without shame. (blog.heartland.org | July 5, 2014) ❐

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BEYOND NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION
NEWSLETTER FOR STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF NUCLEAR ABOLITION
WITH JULY 2014 ARTICLES

What Others Say

India-US: Nuclear Ayatollahs and the Politics of Non-proliferation

By GURMEET KANWAL

In a completely partisan and somewhat condescending editorial in early-July 2014, The New York Times wrote: "If India wants to be part of the nuclear suppliers group, it needs to sign the treaty that prohibits nuclear testing, stop producing fissile material, and begin talks with its rivals on nuclear weapons containment."

The editorial is sharply critical of and vehemently opposes India's efforts to acquire membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). It bases its criticism on a report by IHS Jane's that India is in the process of enhancing its capacity to enrich uranium – ostensibly to power the nuclear reactors on the INS Arihant and future SSBNs, but much in excess of the requirement. This, the editorial says, is causing anxiety to the Pakistanis and has raised the spectre of an arms race in Southern Asia.

It is obvious that the editorial writer understands neither the background to nor the present context of India's nuclear deterrence. As stated in a letter written by then Prime Minister AB Vajpayee to US President Bill Clinton after India's nuclear tests at Pokhran in May 1998 (in an unfriendly act, the letter was leaked to the media by the White House), the primary reason for India's acquisition of nuclear weapons was the existential threat posed by two nuclear-armed states on India's borders with both of which India had fought wars over territorial disputes. The China-Pakistan nuclear and missile nexus, including the clandestine transfer of technology from China to Pakistan, has irrevocably changed the strategic balance in Southern Asia by helping Pakistan to neutralise India's superiority in conventional forces and has helped Pakistan to wage a proxy war under its nuclear umbrella.

Since then, the nuclear environment in Southern Asia has been further destabilised. China's ASAT (anti-satellite weapons) test, BMD (ballistic missile defence) programme, efforts aimed at acquiring MIRV (multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicle) capability and ambiguity in its no first use (NFU) commitment, while simultaneously rapidly modernising the PLA (People's Liberation Army) and its efforts to establish a 'string of pearls' by way of ports in the Indian Ocean, are a cause for concern for India. Similarly, Pakistan is engaged in the acquisition of 'full spectrum' nuclear capability, including a triad and tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs), which invariably lower the threshold of use. Pakistan has stockpiled a larger number of nuclear warheads (100 to 110) than India (80 to 90) and is continuing to add to its numbers as it has been given unsafeguarded nuclear reactors by China. In view of several mujahideen attacks on Pakistan's armed forces' establishments during the last few years, there is apprehension in the international community, entirely justified, that some of Pakistan's nuclear warheads could fall into jihadi hands.

Some statements made by IHS Jane's in its report are factually incorrect. The research group has assessed that the new Indian uranium enrichment facility at the Indian Rare Metals Plant near Mysore would enhance India's ability to produce 'weapons-grade' uranium to twice the amount needed for its planned nuclear-powered SSBN fleet. The report does not say how the research group arrived at this deduction. Also, the nuclear power reactors of SSBNs require uranium to be enriched only up to 30 to 40 per cent. Weapons-grade uranium must be enriched to levels over 90 per cent.

For the record, the Government of India has denied reports that it is 'covertly' expanding its nuclear arsenal. An Indian official told The Hindu (Atul Aneja, "India trashes report on covert nuclear facility," 22 June 2014) that the report was "mischievously timed" as it came just before a meeting of the NSG. He said, "It is interesting that such reports questioning India's nuclear credentials are planted at regular intervals."

The US Government also dismissed the report ("US dismisses report on India covertly increasing nukes", The Hindu, 21 June 2014) as "highly speculative." The US State Department Spokesperson said, "We remain fully committed to the terms of the 123 agreement and to enhancing our strategic relationship. Nothing we provide to India under the civ-nuke agreement may be used to enhance India's military capability or add to its military stockpile…"

The Indo-US civil nuclear cooperation agreement of 2005 gives an exemption to India's nuclear weapons facilities and stockpiles of nuclear weapons fuel from inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and India is at liberty to set up additional military facilities using unsafeguarded materials if these are considered necessary. India has agreed to bring 14 nuclear power reactors under international safeguards. Eight military facilities, including reactors, enrichment and reprocessing facilities and three heavy water reactors will remain out of the purview of IAEA safeguards.

India has been a responsible nuclear power and has a positive record on non-proliferation. India has consistently supported total nuclear disarmament and is in favour of negotiations for the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). Non-proliferation ayatollahs should channelise their efforts towards identifying and shaming the real proliferators. (IPCS | July 17, 2014) ❐

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Civil Society Perspective

Doom From the Depths

By LAWRENCE WITTNER

Ever since the horrors of submarine warfare became a key issue during World War I, submarines have had a sinister reputation. And the building of new, immensely costly, nuclear-armed submarines by the US government and others may soon raise the level of earlier anxiety to a nuclear nightmare.

This spring, the US government continued its steady escalation of research and development funding for the replacement of its current nuclear submarine fleet through one of the most expensive shipbuilding undertakings in American history — the phasing-in, starting in 2031, of 12 new SSBN(X) submarines. Each of these nuclear-powered vessels, the largest submarines the Navy has ever built, will carry up to 16 Trident ballistic missiles fitted with multiple nuclear warheads. All in all, this new submarine fleet is expected to deploy about 1,000 nuclear warheads — 70 percent of US government's strategic nuclear weapons.

From the standpoint of the US military, nuclear-armed submarines are very attractive. Capable of being placed in hidden locations around the world and remaining submerged for months at a time, they are less vulnerable to attack than are ground-launched or air-launched nuclear weapons, the other two legs of the "nuclear triad." Moreover, they can wreak massive death and destruction upon "enemy" nations quite rapidly. The Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review of 2014 explained that the US Navy's future fleet would "deliver the required presence and capabilities and address the most important warfighting scenarios."

From the standpoint of civilians, the new Trident submarine fleet is somewhat less appealing. Strategic nuclear weapons are the most destructive weapons in world history, and the use of only one of them over a large city could annihilate millions of people instantly. If the thousands of such weapons available to the US government and other governments were employed in war, they would incinerate most of the planet, reducing it to charred rubble. Thereafter, radioactivity, disease, nuclear winter, and starvation would end most remaining life on earth.

Of course, even in an accident, such weapons could do incredible damage. And, over the years, nuclear-armed submarines have been in numerous accidents. In February 2009, a British and a French submarine, both nuclear-powered and armed with nuclear missiles, collided underwater in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Although the two vessels were fitted with state-or-the-art detection equipment, neither spotted the other until it was too late to avert their collision. Fortunately, they were moving very slowly at the time, and the damage was limited (though enormously expensive to repair). But a sharper collision could have released vast quantities of radioactive fuel and flung their deadly nuclear warheads across the ocean floor.

In addition, when the dangers are so immense, it is worth keeping in mind that people, like the high-tech nuclear submarines, are not always infallible or reliable. Submarine crews — living in cramped quarters, bored, and isolated for months at a time — could well be as plagued by the poor morale, dishonesty, drug use, and incompetence found among their counterparts at land-based nuclear missile facilities.

Taxpayers, particularly, might be concerned about the unprecedented expense of this new submarine fleet. According to most estimates, building the 12 SSBN(X) submarines will cost about $100 billion. And there will be additional expenditures for the missiles, nuclear warheads, and yearly maintenance, bringing the total tab to what the Pentagon estimated, three years ago, at $347 billion. The expected cost is so astronomical, in fact, that the Navy, frightened that this expenditure will prevent it from paying for other portions of its shipbuilding program, has insisted that the money come from a special fund outside of its budget. This spring, Congress took preliminary steps along these lines. ⇨

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People might be forgiven for feeling some bewilderment at this immense US government investment in a new nuclear weapons system — one slated to last well into the 2070s. After all, back in April 2009, amid much fanfare, President Barack Obama proclaimed "America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons." This was followed by a similar commitment to a nuclear weapons-free world made by the members of the UN Security Council, including five nuclear-armed nations, among them the United States. But, as this nuclear weapons buildup indicates, such commitments seem to have been tossed down the memory hole.

In arguing for the new Trident submarine fleet, US military leaders have pointed to the fact that other nations are maintaining or building nuclear-armed submarines. And they are correct about that. France and Britain are maintaining their current fleets, although Britain is on the verge of beginning the construction of a new one with US assistance; Israel reportedly possesses one; China is apparently ready to launch one in 2014; India is set to launch its own in 2015; and Pakistan might be working to develop one. Meanwhile, Russia is modernizing its own submarine ballistic missile fleet.

Even so, the current US nuclear-armed submarine fleet is considerably larger than any developed or being developed by other nations. Also, the US government's new Trident fleet, now on the drawing boards, is slated to be 50 percent larger than the new, modernized Russian fleet and, in addition, far superior technologically. Indeed, other nations currently turning out nuclear-armed submarines – like China and Russia — are reportedly launching clunkers.

In this context, there is an obvious alternative to the current race to deploy the world's deadliest weapons in the ocean depths. The nuclear powers could halt their building of nuclear-armed submarines and eliminate their present nuclear-armed submarine fleets. This action would not only honor their professed commitment to a nuclear weapons-free world, but would save their nations from making enormous expenditures and from the possibility of experiencing a catastrophe of unparalleled magnitude.

Why not act now, before this arms race to disaster goes any further? (IPPNW | July 17, 2014) ❐

http://peaceandhealthblog.com/2014/07/07/doom-from-depths/

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