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OPINION – Kanwal Sibal

A US-Pak Nuclear Deal would be a Threat to India's Security

If a report in a US newspaper is to be believed, a US-Pakistan nuclear deal might be on the cards. The report says that such a deal is being considered around PM Sharif's visit to Washington this October. The report would not have appeared credible but for the evasive comment of the State Department on the subject and the official reaction of the spokesperson of our MEA cautioning the US authorities against any such decision.

Ever since the India-US nuclear deal was signed, the Pakistanis, obsessed with the idea of parity with India, have been seeking a similar deal. Besides calling the India-US nuclear deal discriminatory, Pakistan has condemned it as threat to its security and warned that it would take all necessary steps to safeguard its interests. Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Adviser Aziz aggressively reiterated this on the occasion of President Obama's visit to India in January 2015. By remaining silent, the US has only encouraged this absurd posturing by Pakistan.

US Soft on Pakistan: Some western non-proliferation specialists have been advocating for

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some time a nuclear deal with Pakistan in order to remove its sense of grievance. They feel it would give Pakistan an incentive to limit the expansion of its nuclear arsenal and stabilise the nuclear situation in the sub-continent. Such advocacy is largely prompted by negative attitudes towards India which, with its historical opposition to the NPT, is seen as the one responsible for nuclearising South Asia. In their eyes, this is one way of denying India any one-sided advantage in nuclear status. Until now, the US Administration has been differentiating India's case from that of Pakistan and disclaiming any

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move to offer the latter a similar deal, thought the tenor of its statements has not been sufficiently convincing.

In fact, both the US and China, to different degrees, have aided Pakistan in achieving its nuclear and missile ambitions. A US-Pak nuclear deal will erode the strategic importance of the Indo-US nuclear deal. In the past, knowing the China-Pakistan nuclear and missile nexus, the US has waived the application of its laws for larger geopolitical reasons linked to the combat against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The Afghanistan factor has, unfortunately, continued to condition US thinking on Pakistan's nuclear and other errant behaviour. The US was remarkably soft with Pakistan on the AQ Khan case. It has tolerated Pakistan's tactics to obstruct discussions on the FMCT at Geneva at a time when fissile material control was still on the US agenda.

It has overlooked supplies of additional Chinese nuclear reactors to Pakistan in violation of China's NSG commitments. One could speculate that having settled the nuclear question with India, this was one way for the US to allow Pakistan to be a beneficiary of external cooperation in its nuclear sector, as part of the traditional policy of "hyphenation". US agencies and think tanks have been propagating information about the frenetic pace at which Pakistan has been expanding its nuclear arsenal, without any visible reaction from the US government. At one time, worried about the rise of radicalism in the country, the US was expressing concern about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. But such fears are no longer being expressed.

US conduct over the years suggests that it has favoured the idea of a Pakistani nuclear capability to balance India's. Remarkably, its complaisance towards the Pakistani nuclear programme has continued long after the end of the Cold War. Adding to all this, US treatment of Iran's nuclear

ambitions contrasts strikingly with its handling of Pakistan's nuclear transgressions. While draconian sanctions have been applied on Iran, in Pakistan's case the US has argued that sanctions might hasten its slide towards failure as a state and increase the risk of its nuclear assets falling into the hands of religious extremists.

This is specious logic as the US has not taken any precautionary step to curb the development of Pakistan's nuclear assets, including its decision to introduce tactical nuclear weapons in the subcontinent. An expanded Pakistani nuclear arsenal is even more likely to fall into the wrong hands. US reaction to Pakistan's loose talk about using nuclear weapons against India has been, moreover, notably mild. It could and should have been much stronger. The hesitation to impose sanctions on Pakistan contrasts also with the willingness to impose sanctions even on a powerful country like Russia, including its most senior leaders and functionaries. What inhibits the US to strong arm Pakistan despite its provocations remains unclear.

The argument that for dealing with the situation in Afghanistan the US needs Pakistan's assistance is not

convincing. The US needs Russia even more for dealing with yet more complex and fraught problems as Iran and West Asia in general, including the rise of the Islamic State, not to

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mention the fall-out of mounting tensions in Russia-West relations.

China-Pakistan Axis: It is mystifying why the US should want to politically legitimise Pakistan's nuclear conduct through an India-like nuclear deal. In India's case, the US wanted to make a geopolitical shift with the rise of China in mind. It saw India as a counterweight to China in Asia, but for this the non-proliferation issue which inhibited India's international role had to be resolved. Pakistan is in fact China's closest ally. The geopolitical purpose of a nuclear deal with Pakistan will only legitimise the China-Pakistan nuclear and security relationships and undermine India's strategic interests vis-a-vis both these adversaries. The US has wanted to build a strategic relationship with India largely around shared interests in the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions in view of mounting signs of Chinese political and military assertiveness and its ambitious naval expansion programme. Through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the development of Gwadar, Pakistan is facilitating an increased Chinese strategic presence in the Indian Ocean, which contradicts this US strategy.

Shocking Rationale: According to reports, the underlying reasoning offered by the US, if correctly reported, is almost shocking. In return for an NSG waiver, Pakistan will be asked to restrict its nuclear programme to weapons and delivery systems that are appropriate to its actual defence needs against India's nuclear threat, and not to deploy missiles beyond a certain range. This implies that the US accepts that India's nuclear programme is Pakistan-centric and that it poses a threat to Pakistan.

The geopolitical purpose of a nuclear deal with Pakistan will only legitimise the China-Pakistan nuclear and security relationships and undermine India's strategic interests vis-a-vis both these adversaries. The US has wanted to build a strategic relationship with India largely around shared interests in the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions in view of mounting signs of Chinese political and military assertiveness and its ambitious naval expansion programme.

A nuclear deal will be a reward for the Pakistan military and not the civilian power, as Pakistan's nuclear programme is under military control. Does the US want to reward the Pakistan military for its operations in North Waziristan against the Pakistani Taliban and is this considered meritorious contribution to the fight against Al Qaeda and terrorism.

The Chinese threat to India is being overlooked and the fact that India faces a double Pakistan-China nuclear threat – in view of the close nuclear collaboration between the two countries – is being ignored. The US, it appears, would be comfortable if only India would be exposed to the Pakistani nuclear threat, not others. US has been consistently soft on Pakistan's errant behaviour in matters like nuclear

weapons. But then, Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, according to its own leaders, is India-centric. Pakistan is not threatening China, Iran or Saudi Arabia with its nuclear weapons. Which are the countries that the US wants to protect against the use of nuclear weapons by Pakistan? Pakistan is developing delivery systems to reach any point in India. The US would apparently be comfortable with that, but not if it developed missiles of longer range. But whose security is US worried about if Pakistan did that? US itself, Japan, Australia, Singapore, China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel?

China, we know, opposes India's NSG entry without Pakistan. It would seem the US would be willing to accommodate both China and Pakistan if the latter limited its nuclear threat to India. By implication then, the US has no stakes in India's security from an unstable and adventurous Pakistan, despite our so-called strategic partnership.

A Reward for Pakistan's Military: The timing of a nuclear deal would be odd too. It is now universally recognised that it is General Sharif and not Sharif who really hold the reins of power in the country. A nuclear deal will be a reward for the Pakistan military and not the civilian power, as Pakistan's nuclear programme is under military control. Does

the US want to reward the Pakistan military for its operations in North Waziristan against the Pakistani Taliban and is this considered meritorious contribution to the fight against Al Qaeda and terrorism?

One would have thought far more important for the US and the West is the rise of the Islamic State and its ideology. Compared to which North Waziristan is a side-show. In any case, the Pakistani military is not fighting the Haqqani group. Worse, while Pakistani is being accepted as an honest mediator in the Afghan reconciliation process, the Taliban showed its mounting force by occupying Kunduz. One hopes that the US report does not accurately reflect President Obama's thinking. If it does, it will show how hollow is the strategic relationship between India and the US, and why it would not be wise to trust the US.

The India-US nuclear deal will be eroded of much of its strategic importance bilaterally, as result. The US would have, in addition, administered a big political blow to PM Modi who has gone out of his way to improve strategic understanding with the US. But then, news reports are news reports, and they could merely be political kite-flying. In which case, the India-US relationship will not receive a big jolt for all the reasons mentioned in this article.

Source: <http://www.catchnews.com>, 10 October 2015.

OPINION – Raza Habibi Raja

Why Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal has Proven to be Counterproductive

One of the most drummed up things in the national media about Pakistan is its nuclear arsenal. A state which by all accounts has failed to deliver even the basic necessities is being widely projected as one of the most important states by the right-wing intelligentsia. However it goes

beyond this. The nuclear arsenal has become our sole "credible" claim to glory and consequently the justification for all the conspiracy theories according to which the entire world is wary of us. This conspiracy theory culture which is outwardly looking, shifts the blame to foreign powers, who are allegedly jealous of Pakistan's nuclear might, and are always trying to purge the country of its "crowning" jewel. Several right wing TV anchors have constructed entire careers on perpetuating this culture of suspicion which is fueled by mythology built around glorification of Islamic fortress, Pakistan.

One of the biggest ironies of the nuclear arsenal...is that it is protecting Pakistan from a US or Indian takes over and yet the actual evidence suggests that we are protecting the arsenal. The fact that we have ended up protecting a device which was supposed to protect us is such an irony and yet completely

incomprehensible to many Pakistanis who continue to gloat over it. But why have we come to this stage? Why are we seeking a strange delusional solace in a device which is supposed to kill millions? Why is our entire intellectual thrust on perpetuating a strange culture of suspicion where every barbaric act, even if conducted and fully claimed, by our home grown Frankenstein monster, is construed to be planned by the foreign powers solely to take hold of nuclear arsenal.

The answer lies in the thoroughly bruised identity, particularly the way it has evolved after the debacle of East Pakistan in 1971 and defeat from India. East Pakistan debacle among many other things shattered the myth of superiority of Pakistani army's quality. Before 1971, even within army circles, a martial race myth had gradually been constructed. According to this myth a Muslim soldier is far superior in quality due to extraordinary valour originating out of faith. The glorification of army was not merely restricted to army as a fighting unit but stretched to include

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the state of Pakistan as Ayub era was a military rule. Military rule practically defined state. Ayub's rule was a far cry from the earlier "chaos" and it also saw active nation building done and supervised by the military. While in power and at the helm of the affairs, the army's image also became the national image.

The debacle of East Pakistan shattered the army's reputation as an invincible fighting force and had lasting impact on the collective psyche of Pakistani nation. West Pakistani populace, particularly the middle class felt humiliated and could not believe that their cherished army had been routed. It was a moment of national humiliation. Moreover since at that time no one came to "rescue" Pakistan.... For majority of the middle class, it was not that East Pakistan has been given unfair treatment, but rather an Indian and global conspiracy to break up Pakistan. To this date, majority of Pakistanis see the problems of Pakistan particularly relating to security through this conspiracy paradigm.

Pakistan's first democratically elected PM, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) after taking power immediately started taking steps to curtail army's political role. Among these steps was forcible removal of the existing army chief, promotion of apparently "weak" officers like general Zia and creation of Federal Security Force (FSF), which was a parallel security force.

However, the 1974 nuclear test by India once again reopened the wounds of the 1971 humiliation and warranted some kind of response to settle 'scores' with India. It was under these circumstances that ZAB decided to embark upon the nuclear program. Being extremely

intelligent ZAB understood that renewed threat from India would once again restore the army's position and importance. Hence the best bet was to actually match India and become a nuclear power. In this way, the army in its conventional role would not be required to that extent and consequently in the long run its political power would diminish as well. Thus the reason for becoming the nuclear power was in some ways an extension of the desire to curtail army's political ambitions. Plus the nuclear arsenal would soothe the bruised identity.

However, the reality unfortunately has not conformed to the wishes of the initiator of the nuclear program. Although the nuclear arsenal has proven to be apparently successful in soothing the bruised identity of Pakistani middle class, but the cost has been tremendous. Nuclear arsenal has successfully soothed the bruised identity as it has apparently "settled" scores with India and given some importance to Pakistan in the international arena which it desperately needed.

With the passage of time, as the failed state label becomes more justified the nuclear arsenal keeps on getting elevated in terms of our "success". Unfortunately the more Pakistan lags behind in economic and social indicators, more obsessive we become about nuclear arsenal and try to seek compensatory comfort in it.

Whether we admit it or not, Pakistan ranks low in important social indicators pertaining to transparency, literacy, economy and healthcare even when compared to developing economies of similar characteristics. In Human Development

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Index, Pakistan stands at 146th and below even countries will lesser per capita income such as Bhutan, Nepal and Namibia. According to Gender Gap report, Pakistan ranks 141 out of 142 "beating" only Yemen. In Freedom of Press Index, Pakistan ranks 158 out of 180, in Religious Restriction Index Pakistan is ranked as the worst and in Fragile State Index Pakistan ranks 13th in the category of "High Alert" countries which includes Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria.

Nuclear arsenal thus becomes the only "achievement" and therefore talked to death in our right wing circles. At times it becomes actually embarrassing that we are not able to provide basic things like education and electricity and yet assume ourselves to be the center of the world due to our nuclear status. Even when given the chance to have more aid and reduction of foreign debt in exchange for not conducting the tests in 1998, we unanimously opted for going nuclear. The irony was that within one month's time, we as a nation proved how hollow we were, when instead of showing mettle and inner strength to face sanctions, we were busy betting on the devaluation of rupee!

In addition this "achievement" has made us deeply paranoid about the rest of the world and with terrifying consequences. As Pakistan falls deeply into insecurity and terrorism, instead of correctly identifying the causes, the nuclear obsession leads us to believe that everything is a grand conspiracy to take hold of the nuclear arsenal. Moreover, the nuclear status has not provided protection to Pakistan and rather it has exposed it to needless international scrutiny. Pakistan's security problems are no longer emanating from India but are rather

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In addition, contrary to ZAB's original aim of weakening the army, the nuclear arsenal has

actually strengthened it. Once army took over, the nuclear program actually became its shield to undertake covert activities in the neighboring countries. In fact, army and nuclear "image" have intertwined and army has successfully positioned itself as the guardian of the nuclear program. Right now the ultranationalist section of the population has to redirect its concerns and energies to real issues rather than on this nuclear paranoia. Frankly the nuclear arsenal has proven to be one of our greatest drawbacks and has ended up creating more problems for us.

Source: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>, 01October 2015.

STATEMENT – Daryl G. Kimball

Redouble Efforts for the CTBT: Civil Society Statement to the 9th CTBT Article XIV Conference

Nearly all of the world's nations recognize that nuclear explosive testing is no longer acceptable, yet the CTBT will not have entered into force by September 24, 2016—20 years after the opening for signature of the Treaty—due to inaction of eight Annex II states. The CTBT is an effective, verifiable, non-discriminatory, additional barrier to restrain the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, and to stop the further spread of nuclear weapons, and it contributes to the establishment of the legal basis for a world free

of nuclear weapons. Bringing the CTBT into full legal force will require more energetic, more creative, more pragmatic and more focused efforts on the part of “Friends of the CTBT” states, eminent persons, responsible lawmakers, the scientific and technical community, and other members of civil society supportive of the CTBT.

We welcome the statements of support for the CTBT from two important hold-out states, China and the US, but it is very disappointing that neither state has taken sufficient action to ratify the treaty. The time available for President Obama to pursue the “immediate and aggressive” action to win Senate advice and consent for ratification that he promised in 2009 is shrinking rapidly. More energetic White House leadership, however, would still improve the chances of success after his term expires. We urge bipartisan support for the US ratification of the CTBT, which is clearly and demonstrably in the US national security interest. China’s leaders maintain that their ratification does not depend on the actions of other states and that they have no intention of resuming testing.

We call on President Xi Jinping to show international leadership and pursue China’s ratification without further delay. We welcome the support of the CTBT from the Russian Federation, which has already ratified the Treaty, and call upon President Putin to actively encourage key Annex II states to move forward on the treaty and engage with his US and Chinese counterparts on promoting the early entry-into-force of the CTBT. Other states must do their part too. Ratification by Egypt, Iran, and Israel—three other key CTBT holdouts—would also reduce nuclear weapons-related security

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concerns in the 2 Middle East and help create the conditions necessary for the realization of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction—or at the very least, a nuclear weapons test free zone.

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At the first Article XIV conference in 1999, Mr. Zarif, then Iran’s Deputy FM, spoke in support of the treaty and endorsed the final conference report. The conference report urged its members to sustain the momentum for entry into force of the CTBT at the highest level and to hold informal consultations and promote cooperation aimed at bringing the Treaty into effect.

Neither India nor Pakistan say they want to resume testing, yet their governments have failed to take a serious look at joining the CTBT, which is a non-discriminatory measure that would help reduce global and regional nuclear tensions. In 1998, the leadership of both states said that they would not stand in the way of CTBT entry into force—nearly two decades later, now is the time for PM Modi and Sharif to reconsider that position, reinforce their support for their non-testing policies, and become leaders, not followers on the test ban.

North Korea continues its nuclear pursuits in violation of its earlier denuclearization pledges and the NPT and may conduct yet another nuclear weapon test explosion, which would allow it to proof-test more advanced nuclear weapons

capabilities. We call on North Korea to cease further nuclear testing and for the resumption of the Six Party Talks that should include support for the CTBT.

Given these realities, states at this conference have a responsibility to take practical steps to support the CTBT, to reinforce the global nuclear testing moratorium and prohibition, and to encourage nuclear-armed states to refrain from nuclear weapons modernization activities that lead to new types of warheads and new military capabilities. In the interest of global security and out of respect for the victims and survivors of nuclear testing, we call on all states in the coming year to redouble diplomatic efforts to bring the CTBT into force. To do so, states parties should consider and undertake one or more of the following initiatives:

1. Use this Article XIV Conference as a launching point for a powerful, high-level, ongoing multilateral diplomatic campaign, led by states such as Japan and Kazakhstan—two states that have experienced firsthand the devastating effects of nuclear weapon explosions—to increase diplomatic efforts to create the conditions for ratification by one or more key Annex II states in the next year.
2. Utilize the time leading up to the 20th anniversary of the opening for signature of the CTBT in September 2016 to launch a public campaign to raise governmental and public awareness about the dangers of nuclear testing, the possible resumption of nuclear testing, and the value of the CTBT as a critical element in a comprehensive global strategy to halt the vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, halt the further spread of nuclear weapons, and contribute to the realization of a world without nuclear weapons.
3. CTBT States parties, the seven states observing nuclear testing moratoria, and the UNSC should explore new approaches to reinforce the global

taboo against nuclear testing and clarify that nuclear test explosions by any nation are a threat to international peace and security. For example, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, Russia, and the US could jointly issue a formal joint statement committing not to be the first of the seven to conduct a nuclear test explosion. In addition, pending the permanent closure of nuclear test sites, voluntary transparency measures would further strengthen confidence in the CTBT monitoring and verification regime. None of these options is easy or simple, but without fresh thinking and renewed action, the door to further nuclear testing remains open and the full potential of the CTBT, including the option for on-site inspections to investigate possible noncompliance, will remain unrealized.

Source: <http://www.armscontrol.org>, 29 September 2015.

OPINION – Victor David Hanson

Why the Iran Deal Ensures War

The Iran agreement will remake the Middle East – for the worse. There are several scenarios the Obama administration may be entertaining as it

pursues its diplomacy in the Middle East. It may believe that the new agreement with Iran will lead to “engagement” with reform-minded theocrats. The idea is that this will insidiously liberalize the regime, empower a younger generation of pro-Western reformers, and put the theocracy on “an arc of history” back into the “family of nations.” Or perhaps an Obama-inspired second green

revolution will overthrow the regime, and we will see a Euro-socialist Iranian republic renounce nuclear weapons – or at least, having inherited custodianship of the existing arsenal, oversee it in the fashion of democratic Israel or France.

Alternatively, the administration may imagine that a Shiite Axis – Iran, Syria, Iraq, Hezbollah, Hamas – empowered by Putin’s Russia, will balance the

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region, either, strategically, convincing the Sunni monarchies to accept the new balance of power, or, morally, ensuring that formerly outlaw anti-American radical regimes find parity with the pro-American conservative and right-wing regimes in Egypt, Jordan, and the Gulf monarchies. Or, less concretely, the US may simply wish to abdicate the Middle East and let the players there all fight it out, re-entering when the players are worn out and defeated. All these scenarios are probably fantasies. In truth, the deal will make the world a much more dangerous place. Here are five reasons why?

I. **How to Negotiate a Bomb:** The US has now established an official blueprint on how to get nuclear weapons without being relegated to pariah status. Iran, unlike Pakistan and North Korea, is not renegading its way to nuclear weapons, but is negotiating its pathway with the approval of the West. Yet Iran's government is just as unhinged as those of the last two nuclear newcomers, is more centrally positioned in the Middle East, and has far more financial resources, given its singular reserves of natural gas and oil. Other would-be nuclear nations will make the necessary adjustments, asking for similar sorts of American-backed supposed non-proliferation protocols, as they shadow Iran step by step into nuclear readiness. The combination of Iran's transition to nuclear status under the aegis of the US, and the Obama administration's simultaneous renunciation of America's prior Middle East role, amounts to a one-two punch to the Sunni world, which will assume that neither conventional arsenals nor American guardianship will deter Iran. Again, the Sunni nations will eventually make the necessary nuclear adjustments in the manner that worked for Iran. A nuclear Middle East will be the bastard child of this treaty.

The combination of Iran's transition to nuclear status under the aegis of the US, and the Obama administration's simultaneous renunciation of America's prior Middle East role, amounts to a one-two punch to the Sunni world, which will assume that neither conventional arsenals nor American guardianship will deter Iran.

II. **The logic of Israel conventional wisdom** assures us that the Iranian nuclear facilities cannot be

completely destroyed militarily. Any attempt to do so supposedly would fail to eliminate all the hidden and fortified enrichment plants and would only elicit both an Iranian conventional response and an asymmetrical terrorist response. Thus, Israel, for example, would not be so foolish as to try. Perhaps. But conventional wisdom does not always work in the Middle East in general, and in particular not for Israel, which has no margin for error, given its size and location. Instead, the impossible may in truth become the most likely. Israelis remember what the world's assurances and civilized veneer got their ancestors the last time a head of state talked about eliminating Jews.

Israel's leadership will not assume that even a 90 percent likelihood that Iran either won't get nuclear weapons or won't use them against Israel is good enough to ensure the impossibility of another Holocaust. Are Jews for the next 20 years supposed to listen to an Iranian general du jour wink and nod about nuclear weapons as he blusters about the end of the Jewish state, only to hear the next day that the supposed threat was due to a mistranslation of the Farsi or that it was an unauthorized outburst from a minor official – with the cycle of staged nuclear bombast starting again that, as the world advises Israelis to watch their manners and observe proportionality? I doubt that the descendants of those who went through the Holocaust are going to sit still permanently under an Iranian nuclear sword of Damocles and be serially teased about how frayed is the string holding it above them. Regional Götterdämmerung may seem preferable to certain eventual strangulation. And the pious assurances of John Kerry sound too much like those of an earlier generation of State Department blue-blood grandees like John McCloy and Breckinridge Long in the run-up to World War II – and are just as empty and in the end would prove just as cruel.

III. **A Pitiful, Helpless Giant:** The appearance of US capitulation is already rippling throughout the

world. President Obama has issued at least five deadlines about nuclear proliferation and then looked the other way as the Iranians have flouted them. For all the Western braggadocio about the Iran deal, most observers worldwide will glean from the agreement that a tired West caved on sanctions, was eager to trade with the Iranians and make money, is afraid to stand up to the theocracy and its supporters, and sees the deal as part of a grand recession from past American prominence. It matters not whether this is a factual description of US efforts to negotiate with Iran; it matters only that it is becoming the general global consensus. Evidence of that supposition includes the abrupt renunciation of the Oslo agreements by the Palestinians, and Putin's brazen entry into and bombing in the Middle East and his sponsorship of a new Iranian, Iraqi, Syrian, and Hezbollah arc that will eventually threaten the Sunni oil producers.

Three American lapses account for the current Middle East mess: 1) the failed reset with Putin, coupled with John Kerry's invitation to Russia to enter the Syrian red-line fiasco; 2) the dropping of effective sanctions against Iran and the appearance of caving in to Iranian demands; and 3) the abrupt withdrawal of US troops from Iraq in late 2011 and the ensuing vacuum that fueled ISIS. The ripples of American impotence reach well beyond the Middle East, as we see with Putin's inroads into the former subject nations of the SU, the sudden rearming of the Japanese, China's indifference to warnings about cyber attacks and its new artificial atolls in the Pacific, and the increasing bluster of the Latin American socialist dictatorships. The world has been reviewing US behavior via-à-vis Iran and has concluded that the only mystery is whether America's enemies are now allowed to do as they please, or whether, in fact, they are no longer enemies but friends. The result is growing chaos. The medicine that will eventually be needed to

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treat this disease will make the post-Obama years the most dangerous era in American foreign policy since the Cuban Missile Crisis.

IV. *The Collapse of Iranian Dissent*: There is no evidence, either from history or from the contemporary world, that engagement with an appeasing West infects dictatorial systems, as their enslaved masses get hooked on freedom and Western consumer junk, and eventually revolt. More likely the opposite is true. It was a minority of Germans that voted Hitler into power. Many of the Junkers on the German General Staff had, by 1938, rightly sized Hitler up as a dangerous nut whose insane geostrategic gambling was going to get an utterly unprepared Germany into a global war that it could not win. They were right, but entirely discredited after Munich. A Western sell out destroyed German clandestine opposition to Hitler, who boasted of his bullying as the German people basked in his reflected glory. What sent Hitler permanently into his Führerbunker and dissipated the once-adoring crowds were not the Munich Agreement, but Stalingrad, El Alamein, and Hamburg aflame.

Carterism did not bring down the Berlin Wall, the implosion of the Soviet system did – because of the post-Carter pressures of the Reagan administration's deterrent rhetoric and military renaissance. I-Phones and thousands of Chinese students at Berkeley and Yale have not created a liberated Tiananmen Square-like China or stopped Chinese cyber warfare.

The nuclear deal with Tehran will undermine Iranian dissidents. The Iranian economy, flush with cash and new oil revenues, will uplift the Iranian people, and the theocracy will rightly take the credit, adding the relish that its policies have both led to better economic times and rubbed the Great Satan's snout in the muck. It may be true that Iranian youth love America, but that admiration was based on our own opposition to Iran's eroding

and incompetent seventh-century theocracy – not on our later appeasement and empowerment of the mullahs. The theocracy will gain public support from its new global status, likely acquisition of nuclear capability, and rebooted economy; its opponents will lose face, and the world will be the worse off.

V. *Deterrence?* Some believe a nuclear Iran can be deterred like any other such power. The makeup of the region, however, may argue against that theory. The modern Middle East has given us Pan-Arabism, the Baath Party, Khomeini, al-Qaeda, Hezbollah, Hamas, and ISIS. In terms of methodology, it has given the world the electronic fatwa, the modern foot-soldier version of the kamikaze suicide bomber, and the apparent right to murder novelists, cartoonists, and satirists anywhere on the planet. Airline hijackings and the use of jumbo jets as cruise missiles are also Middle East specialties. What other region can boast of a rogues' gallery with the likes of Yasser Arafat, Osama bin Laden, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, Ayatollah Khomeini, the Assads, Saddam Hussein, and Moammar Qaddafi?

Where else in the modern world are Christians crucified, beheaded, incinerated, and drowned – as if the very elements are not enough for the sick homicidal imaginations of ISIS murderers? What Middle East country has not fought another Middle East country? Egypt, the best of the bunch, in the post-war era has gassed the Yemenis, invaded Libya, and attacked Israel. Iraq has invaded Kuwait, attacked Iran, sent missiles into Israel and Saudi Arabia, and gone to war with much of the world. Lebanon has

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been a battleground for every warring sect and state in the region. Gaza is a wasteland. Syria is fighting ISIS and itself, while threatening its neighbors. Only in the Middle East does removing a monster from power often lead to something worse.

This litany is not meant to denigrate the Middle East, merely to suggest that it is the most violent and unpredictable region of the

world, where three religions intersect amid postmodern petroleum-fed decadence and premodern elemental poverty – all not far from fat and weak Europe. The idea that logic and restraint will operate in a nuclear Middle East beyond Israel is lunacy. In sum, the region is North Korea cubed, an Islamic shoot-'em-up Tombstone or Dodge City where punks with nuclear six-guns, not sober classical deterrence, will make the rules.

Source: <http://www.nationalreview.com>, 06 October 2015.

OPINION – I Free Press

Iran Deal to Boost Economic Growth

The nuclear deal, reached in July after two years of concerted negotiations, tasks Iran with dismantling much of its nuclear infrastructure in return for the removal of numerous worldwide sanctions placed on it over the past five years. Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) spokesman Kamalvandi's statement that Iran collected samples at the Parchin Military Complex in the absence of inspectors from the worldwide IAEA cast doubt on the integrity of inspections at the suspect site. The public difference of opinion would show the West that the nuclear agreement was not a done deal on the

The public difference of opinion would show the West that the nuclear agreement was not a done deal on the Iranian side, either, suggesting that if the radicals won; Iran would resume enrichment, inspiring the West to make more concessions. Remarkably, these two countries have managed to resolve this divisive issue through official diplomatic channels that may lay the ground for future cooperation.

Iranian side, either, suggesting that if the radicals won; Iran would resume enrichment, inspiring the West to make more concessions. Remarkably, these two countries have managed to resolve this divisive issue through official diplomatic channels that may lay the ground for future cooperation. "The French government is determined to develop the cooperation with Iran".

For Islamic State, it is to carve out and consolidate the caliphate it declared in large swathes of Syria and Iraq a year ago. While Iran and the US recently engaged ISIS from the air and ground, their attacks were not "officially" coordinated. While the US must begin making the necessary arrangements and preparations to implement sanctions relief on this date, nothing will become effective until Implementation Day (i.e., the date that the IAEA verifies that Iran has complied with the nuclear-related measures outlined in the JCPOA).

The Iranian Parliament called Majlis is a unicameral legislative body. Many see the chance of the leadership eventually rejecting the deal as small, since Tehran needs the removal of sanctions to revive its economy. Bahrain's Sunni government is especially vulnerable due to its Shia majority population. Russian Federation and Iran have both dramatically expanded their role in Syria in recent days and as an outcome of this Hezbollah has reportedly been outfitted with new weapons systems in its presumably permanent posts inside Syria, where numerous weapons are trained on Israel. However, the vocal opposition of many US Senators may have inspired political debate far beyond the US. Permitting USA oil exports not only would benefit the US economy and balance of trade, but also would marginally lower world oil prices and Iranian oil export revenues, thereby reducing the regime's ability

to finance terrorism, subversion, and military expansion.

Iranian leaders note this US indifference to authoritarianism in the region and believe the overriding USA strategic goal in the region has primarily been about controlling natural resources, in particular oil and natural gas. Additionally, Turkey is a favorite destination for Iranian tourists. The next Administration must help put Iran's nuclear genie back in the bottle by taking a much tougher and more realistic approach to deterring and preventing an Iranian nuclear breakout. Relying on delusions about Iranian policies and aims, as well as about American ones, is not only ineffective, but wholly counterproductive.

The Obama Administration's short-sighted deal with Iran is likely to spur a cascade of nuclear proliferation among threatened states such as Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates. This further supports the idea that rapprochement is largely one-sided and that the USA has been willing to look the other way on unchanged Iranian behavior. All the required mantras about the need to oppose the "nefarious" things that Iran supposedly is doing in its region are being recited as automatically as they were before. It is possible for Iran's rivals to engage in more aggressive policies to offset Iran's influence, and this could potentially destabilize the region.

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In fact, little has been said about the nuclear deal's impact on Bangladesh. The invasions and military interventions in Iraq and Libya respectively bolstered this view, as has the ever increasing militarization of the Persian Gulf, both by the US as well as its allies who it has buttressed with tens of billions of dollars in military aid.

Source: <http://www.ifreepress.com>, 07 October 2015.

NUCLEAR STRATEGY

CHINA

WW3: China Unveils 'Scattergun' Nuke Capable of Defeating US Missile Shield

China has unveiled a rocket capable of defeating the US missile shield by firing a scattergun of 20 nuclear warheads. The Communist regime which is North Korea's closest ally has successfully launched the Long March 6 rocket which can carry 20 small satellites into space. But China can easily combine the "multiple payload" technology until now only held by the US and Russia with its existing missiles to deliver a HELISH RAIN of nukes over America. The shock launch has sparked fears of a new nuclear arms race just as Russia is challenging the US for global supremacy again. China which has by far the world's biggest army boasted about the Long March 6 debut from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre on state TV.

But a second launch of a computerised missile that matches the US military system known as C4ISR was hushed up. Defence analysts have suggested China could use the Long March 6 technology with its JL-3 nuclear submarine-launched ballistic missile or the DF-41 which the Pentagon describes as the country's most powerful weapon. The People's Liberation Army is yet to acknowledge the existence of the DF-41 which has a range of 7,500 miles but the Pentagon says Beijing has launched at least four full tests of the missile since 2012. China is just 7,200 miles from the US. The deadly combination could carry 20 nuclear warheads – and hit as many different targets.

Defence policy specialist Qisong of the Shanghai University of Political Science and Law – told the SCMP: "The launch will send a message to

the US that the PLA now is capable of breaking its BMD in Asia because the multi-payload technology can also be used on the DF-41." Hong Kong-based military expert Liang Guoliang told the SCMP: "The successful launch of the Long March 6 plus the advanced C4ISR operations will enhance China's strategic threats to its enemies. "This means command systems from the PLA's

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powerful Central Military Commission to soldiers at the firing point have all been computerised to support the missile battalion to make all-weather, rapid and accurate shots."

Russia and the US needed crisis talks to avert World War 3 after Putin bombed CIA-trained fighters in Syria. North Korea which has almost as big an army as America boasted it had bolstered its nuclear stockpile and was not afraid to use them at any time in September. Sworn enemies Iran and Saudi Arabia are engaged in a proxy war across the Middle East backing militants on rival sides of conflicts from Syria to Yemen. New Labour leader Corbyn says he would refuse to deploy Britain's Trident nuclear weapons.

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Source: <http://www.dailystar.co.uk>, 06 October 2015.

BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENCE

USA

Signed, Sealed, Delivered: Lockheed Martin Delivers First Upgraded Pac-3 Missile Interceptors

The US Army significantly upgraded its missile defense capabilities October 06, 2015, as it accepted the first PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) interceptors built by Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT). With improved

mobility and range, the new interceptors will defend against evolving threats around the globe. "We are proud to deliver these interceptors to the US Army and are confident the men and women of the armed forces can count on the PAC-3 MSE when it matters most," said Arnold, vice president of PAC-3 programs at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control. "As enemy threats grow in number and complexity, these interceptors will be critical to protecting soldiers, citizens and infrastructure around the globe.

The PAC-3 MSE missile is a high velocity interceptor that defends against tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and aircraft. Building off the battle-proven PAC-3 missile, the PAC-3 MSE brings a larger, dual-pulse solid rocket motor, larger control fins, and upgraded support systems. With the enhancements, Lockheed Martin nearly doubled the missile's reach and dramatically improved manoeuvrability against faster and more sophisticated ballistic and cruise missiles threats. Lockheed Martin received the first PAC-3 MSE production contract in April 2014 and earned a follow-on order in July 2015.

Source: <http://www.yourdefencenews.com>, 06 October 2015.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

EUROPE

Europe Needs 100+ Nuclear Reactors by 2050 Says Trade Group

Europe will need to commission over 100 nuclear reactors by 2050 in order to achieve its energy objectives, nuclear trade association Foratom has said. In a position paper submitted

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to the European Commission (EC), Foratom said this target would maintain Europe's current nuclear power capacity and provide 122 GW between 2025 and 2045.

The group said it expects at least 14 member states to be operating nuclear power plants in 2050. However, it also said that "major investments" will be needed in nuclear new build, lifetime extension and safety upgrades, fuel cycle operations, decommissioning and waste management. The group said nuclear power contributes to Europe's three energy policy goals: security of supply, electricity sector de-carbonization and competitive power prices. And it noted that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said nuclear is "an effective greenhouse gas mitigation option".

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In the paper, Foratom called on the Commission to "apply a technology-neutral approach" in its Guidelines on State Aid for Environmental Protection and Energy, in order to "facilitate investment in all low-carbon technologies including nuclear, and provide a stable regulatory and

investment framework". "Given that new nuclear projects are capital intensive and take a long time to begin generating income," Foratom said, "developers should be given assurances that the EC and the relevant Member State governments are supportive of projects for the long term, i.e. long enough to enable investments to be recuperated."

Source: <http://www.pennenergy.com>, 07 October 2015.

UK

NuScale Sets its Sights on the UK

NuScale aims to deploy its Small Modular Reactor (SMR) technology in the UK with the first of its 50

MWe units in operation by the mid-2020s. The company is looking for partners to make this happen. US-based NuScale is developing its technology with a cost-sharing award from the US DOE worth \$217 million over five years. Next year the company wants to apply for design certification and it hopes to have its first unit in operation in late 2023, generating power in Idaho for prospective customer the Utah Association of Municipal Power Systems.

On October 05, 2015, NuScale chairman and CEO Hopkins said, "We want to replicate this timetable in the UK. NuScale is going to pursue a UK venture; I can be clear about that. We're scoping out possible sites, and our smaller footprint means we can look beyond the usual suspects." Other nuclear new-build projects in Britain are based on building reactor units in excess of 1000 MWe capacity at established nuclear sites to replace units which are soon to retire. NuScale units by contrast product only 50 MWe each, which are factory-made and can be combined in groups of up to 12. "Our technology is smaller, scalable, easier to finance, quicker to build and easier to mix with renewables," said Hopkins.

"SMRs will happen in the UK and much sooner than people think," said Hopkins. Before any UK deployment NuScale would have to go through the Office for Nuclear Regulation's process for Generic Design Assessment, which requires an identified site and support from a credible reactor purchaser, and takes three to four years. Any construction project would also require planning permission determined at the national strategic level and, of course, local support.

Partners: Launching a prospectus and hoping to attract more commercial interest in its offering,

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NuScale listed its current UK partners. NuScale is majority-owned by Fluor, which has a significant base at Farnborough; it has worked on fuel design development with the UK's National Nuclear Laboratory; it collaborated with Rolls-Royce on skills issues during its bid for US DOE funding; it sponsors an internship program with the University of Sheffield and Oregon State University; it is discussing technology development with the Nuclear Advanced Manufacturing Research Centre; and this year NuScale opened an office in London.

Source: <http://www.world-nuclear-news.org>, 05 October 2015.

USA

Byron Nuclear Power Station Completes Refuelling Outage

Operators returned Byron Generating Station Unit 1 to full power on October 05, 2015, marking the end of the unit's scheduled refueling outage that began September 14. Approximately 2,000 Exelon employees and supplemental workers performed more than 10,000 carefully choreographed activities during the outage. The activities included safety inspections, equipment tests and plant refurbishments. By replacing and updating equipment on an ongoing basis, it ensures the plant uses the most up-to-date technology. Operators also replaced about one-third of the of the reactor's fuel. The work performed during the refueling outage is designed to ensure the facility's ability to provide clean, safe and reliable electricity through the unit's next 18-month operating cycle.

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"Home owners and businesses rely on power from Byron Station to keep their places of work running and make their homes a place of comfort," said Site Vice President Kearney, the station's senior executive. "The work completed during this refueling outage will ensure we are able to provide this service." Byron Station Unit 2 continued to operate at full power during the Unit 1 outage. Byron Station is located in Ogle County, Ill., about 25 miles southwest of Rockford. At full power, the facility's two generating units produce more than 2,300 megawatts of carbon-free electricity, enough to power more than two million typical American homes.

Source: <http://www.pennenergy.com>, 06 October 2015.

Areas of cooperation include construction and operation of nuclear power plants, decommissioning of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station operated by TEPCo, Inc. and potential decommissioning of other existing nuclear power plants in the future, and reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel.

established an equally owned joint venture with AREVA NP: The ATMEA Company. AREVA NP is a group company of AREVA, a comprehensive nuclear power manufacturer in France; it performs engineering and manufacturing of nuclear power plants. The ATMEA1, the latest jointly developed 1,100 MWe (megawatt electric) class pressurized light-water reactor, has already achieved results by selection of four ATMEA1 units for a nuclear power plant in Turkey. In the latest high-level talks, the significance of this achievement enabled by the Japanese and French partnership was reaffirmed, and the two countries agreed to continue their collaboration in promoting the ATMEA1 reactor's wide adoption in other countries.

NUCLEAR COOPERATION

JAPAN-FRANCE

Concerning the Japan-France High-Level Talks on Collaboration in the Nuclear Energy Field

On October 06, 2015, the governments of Japan and France announced the results of high-level talks between the two countries concerning their collaboration in the nuclear energy field. In their talks, the two countries confirmed their intent to pursue further collaboration between their governments and between their nuclear power industries in a collective effort to drive forward technologies in the nuclear power generation field. Areas of cooperation include construction and operation of nuclear power plants, decommissioning of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station operated by TEPCo, Inc. and potential decommissioning of other existing nuclear power plants in the future, and reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel.

Japan and France have collaborated in the nuclear power generation field for some decades. In 2007 Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ltd. (MHI)

In line with the results of the talks between Japan and France, MHI will continue to proactively and dutifully carry out its role as a member of the nuclear power industry, contributing to the further development and strengthening of the cooperative ties between the two countries, the further enhancement of the safety and reliability of nuclear power plants, and the further development of technologies relating to the fuel cycle, decommissioning of existing plants, etc.

Source: www.mhi-global.com, 06 October 2015.

USA-PAKISTAN

US Working on Nuclear Accord with Pakistan: Report

The US is exploring an accord that could place new limits and controls on Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and pave the way for a version of the civil nuclear deal that was concluded with India in 2005, according to a media report. The accord is part of fresh efforts by the White House to reduce tensions and violence in Afghanistan and Pakistan.... Ignatius described the proposed nuclear accord with Pakistan as a "diplomatic blockbuster". It would place "possible new limits

and controls on Pakistan's nuclear weapons and delivery systems" and "might eventually open a path toward a Pakistani version of the civil nuclear deal that was launched with India in 2005", he wrote.

A source familiar with the talks said Pakistan "had been asked to consider what are described as 'brackets'. Pakistan would agree to restrict its nuclear program to weapons and delivery systems that are appropriate to its actual defence needs against India's nuclear threat," the article said. "Pakistan might agree not to deploy missiles capable of reaching beyond a certain range, for example," it said. In return for such an agreement, the source said, the US "might support an eventual waiver for Pakistan by the 48-nation NSG". At the urging of the US, the NSG agreed to exempt India from rules that banned nuclear trade with countries that not signed the NPT. The civil nuclear deal allowed India into the club of nuclear powers in exchange for applying IAEA safeguards to its civilian program.

Ignatius wrote: "Pakistan prizes its nuclear program, so negotiations would be slow and difficult, and it's not clear that Islamabad would be willing to accept the limitations that would be required. But the issue is being discussed quietly in the run-up to PM Sharif's visit to Washington October 22." Any progress would break a stalemate that has existed since the US detected Pakistan's nuclear program in the mid-1980s, and especially after Pakistan exploded its first weapon in 1998. Pakistan has repeatedly sought a civil nuclear deal on the lines of the one given to India, describing the approach taken by the US as discriminatory. In the past, the

US has been reluctant to publicly commit to such a deal with Pakistan because of the clandestine nuclear proliferation ring operated by scientist AQ Khan.

Source: <http://www.hindustantimes.com>, 07 October 2015.

NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

EAST ASIA

Nuclear Warfare: US Experts Warn Plutonium Stocks Could Soar in East Asia

The US is renewing civil nuclear agreements with China and South Korea on less restrictive terms. For the first time, China has prior consent to extract plutonium from the spent fuel generated in US-designed reactors. The plutonium could potentially be used for nuclear weapons, though the agreement bars the use of American technology for military purposes.

Experts warn that Northeast Asia could see a dangerous growth in stocks of weapons-usable plutonium – and US lawmakers say Obama administration policies could be making matters worse. Japan plans to open as early as next spring a plant that could reprocess enough spent reactor fuel to make as many as 1,000 nuclear bombs a year. The plutonium that is produced is supposed to be for generating electricity, but Japan already has tons on hand and no use for it, with its reactors at a virtual halt following the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi disaster.

Japan has already accumulated a massive stockpile of plutonium it sent overseas for reprocessing. There are 11 metric tons in Japan and another 36 metric tons reprocessed in Britain and France waiting to be returned to Japan – in all enough for nearly 6,000 atomic bombs. Few question Japan's opposition to nuclear weapons.

Local politicians are aggressively backing the plant, eager for investment in a remote northern region. Meanwhile, the US is renewing civil nuclear agreements with China and South Korea on less restrictive terms. For the first

time, China has prior consent to extract plutonium from the spent fuel generated in US-designed reactors. The plutonium could potentially be used for nuclear weapons, though the agreement bars the use of American technology for military purposes. South Korea could also get permission

to reprocess within six years. Some lawmakers say that sends the wrong message.

From the inception of its nuclear energy program, Japan decided to pursue reprocessing to provide a self-sustaining nuclear fuel source. But technical hurdles and the growing availability of uranium on the international market has diminished the economic rationale. Japan has already accumulated a massive stockpile of plutonium it sent overseas for reprocessing. There are 11 metric tons in Japan and another 36 metric tons reprocessed in Britain and France waiting to be returned to Japan – in all enough for nearly 6,000 atomic bombs. Few question Japan's opposition to nuclear weapons. ...

Like South Korea, Japan relies on US nuclear deterrence in the face of the growing threat from North Korea. But experts say that if Japan opens the Rokkasho Reprocessing Plant when it's unclear how it would use the plutonium, alarm bells would ring in Beijing and Seoul, which are already suspicious of the current government's tougher national security posture. Some fear a regional fissile production race could ensue. "It sets a bad example, precisely because Japan is such a well-respected country in terms of non-proliferation. If in future a different country starts to stockpile – could be enriched uranium, it could be plutonium – that country could cite Japan as a precedent," said Acton, author of a new report on Japan's reprocessing policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think tank.

President Obama, who has made international nuclear security a policy priority, has highlighted the dangers of stockpiling fissile material. "The very process that gives us nuclear energy can also put nations and terrorists within the reach of

nuclear weapons. We simply can't go on accumulating huge amounts of the very material, like separated plutonium, that we're trying to keep away from terrorists," Obama told a nuclear summit in Seoul in 2012.

But Gallucci, a former chief US negotiator with North Korea, has criticized the administration for failing to address the threat posed by what he calls a "tsunami of rising plutonium stocks."

China, which has its own military stockpile of 1.8 metric tons of plutonium, has yet to decide to reprocess spent nuclear fuel on a commercial scale for its fast-growing atomic energy industry. But its new 30-year agreement with the US,

negotiated by the Obama administration, allows for that eventuality. The proposed 20-year US agreement with South Korea, currently under congressional review, provides a pathway toward reprocessing as early as 2021 pending the results of a joint study into the viability of a method of recycling nuclear waste called pyro-processing...

Countryman, US assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of International Security and Non-proliferation, said it was a "reasonable compromise" with Seoul to postpone the decision on the right to reprocess. He denied that regional competitiveness entered into the negotiations. "The message for partners in East Asia or anywhere else is that decisions about enrichment and reprocessing technologies must be

transparent, must be economically logical and must be defensible on the basis of the physical security and the safeguarding of such fissile material," he told the hearing.

Whether the Rokkasho plant meets those standards is doubtful. The operator, Japan Nuclear Fuel Ltd., or JNFL, says government and UN surveillance would make illegal removal of

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plutonium “impossible.” But the economic fundamentals of the delay-plagued plant are lousy. Now scheduled to be completed in March 2016, it has cost USD 22 billion so far – four times the planned cost in 1989. Further delays are likely because of stricter safety screening by the nuclear regulators required after the Fukushima disaster. The plant depends on nine regional utilities for funding, based on their reactor operations, the prospects for which are uncertain. Most experts contend it would make more sense to bury the nuclear waste in concrete casks rather than try to recycle it. But local pressure to proceed with the plant is intense. The local prefecture wants the jobs and has threatened to demand the removal of the more than 3,000 tons of spent fuel if the project falls through.

Source: <http://macaudailytimes.com.mo>, 08 October 2015.

NORTH KOREA

IAEA Finds Increased Activity at North Korean Nuclear Reactor while Kim Jong Un Calls for More Nuclear Arsenal

The IAEA said on October 06, 2015, it has noticed an increased amount of activity at North Korea’s main nuclear site. The warning comes at a time when North Korean leader Jong Un has called on the country to increase its nuclear capabilities even as Pyongyang faces sanctions, including those from the US, over its nuclear program. “We have observed the discharge of water, transportation of equipment to the facility, and some indications of operations of the 5-megawatt reactor,” IAEA Director-General Amano said, during a meeting with top South Korean officials, including FM Byung-se and nuclear envoy Joon-kook....

Amano cited the satellite images of the Yongbyon nuclear complex, North Korea’s main nuclear

facility, and asked Pyongyang to abide by its international obligations under the U.N. resolutions and agreements. He added that his organization’s job was to only verify the implementation of a nuclear deal but “not to be politically involved.” Meanwhile, Kim asked the country to boost its nuclear arsenal and war preparations.... The essay stated, according to Yonhap, that North Korea “should produce more powerful cutting-edge arms of our kind and tirelessly strengthen self-defense nuclear deterrence while rigorously making war-fighting preparations involving the entire population.” It also called for the “thorough consolidation of the monolithic leadership,” for more internal unity and socialism in the country.

North Korea has, on several occasions, threatened to launch nuclear attacks against the US and other countries for “their reckless hostile policy” toward Pyongyang, with its latest statement being issued just September. South Korea quickly responded to the allegations, saying: “A possible missile launch or nuclear test by North Korea are serious provocations and military threats.” “Seoul will sternly respond to them by collaborating with the international community. We are closely working together with the US on the matter.”

...

Source: <http://www.ibtimes.com>, 06 October 2015.

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NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION

UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan Rid of Highly Enriched Uranium

Uzbekistan no longer has any HEU lying around. On September 28, the IAEA announced that on September 24 the last of Uzbekistan’s HEU – 5 kilograms (about 11 pounds) from a research

reactor at the Radiation and Technological Complex in Tashkent – had been safely transported out of the country and transferred to the Mayak reprocessing facility in Russia. The US, Russia, and IAEA have been working since 2002 to return Russian-origin HEU located around the world to Russia. The Russian Research Reactor Fuel Return (RRFR) program is just one of a successive number of initiatives and ad hoc projects between the US and Russia regarding nuclear materials.

The US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA), which manages US involvement in the RRFR program, noted in a press release that this is the eighth (and final) shipment of HEU out of Uzbekistan since 2004. DOE/NNSA Deputy Administrator Anne Harrington said in a press release that "[t]his shipment and our ongoing partnership with Russia and the IAEA advance global efforts to secure, consolidate, and minimize the use of highly enriched uranium so it does not fall into the hands of terrorists."

This particular shipment, the IAEA says, represents a milestone for the program as it was the "first removal operation of irradiated liquid HEU fuel." DOE/NNSA called the removal "logistically challenging," owing to the fact that it was the first transport of spent liquid HEU fuel by air. The RRFR program, according to the IAEA's numbers, has "facilitated the transfer of nearly 2,160 kilograms of former USSR-supplied HEU from 14 countries to Russia in 61 shipments." Uzbekistan joins 10 other states in now being free of HEU fuel. ... Last year, HEU from Kazakhstan's Alatau reactor was repatriated to Russia under the same program and, as will happen in Uzbekistan, the IAEA is working with Kazakhstan to switch the reactor to using LEU. ...

Source: <http://thediplomat.com>, 02 October 2015.

NUCLEAR TERRORISM

GENERAL

Nuclear Power Plants at Huge Risk of Cyber Attack, Study Says

Breaking into a nuclear power plant's computer system may actually be easier than physically breaking into the power plant itself. While nuclear power plants have established physical safety and security measures, many of them still lack the same level of security against cyber attacks, especially when employees still use default passwords like "1234" for computer systems that control a power plant's processes.

Based on findings from an 18-month study by UK think tank Chatham House, the researchers concluded that nuclear facilities will have to ante up against potential cyber attacks as these infrastructures "become increasingly reliant on digital systems and make increasing

use of commercial 'off-the-shelf' software, which offers considerable cost savings but increases vulnerability to hacking attacks." The report's conclusion and recommendations come from at least 30 interviews from senior officials at nuclear power plants and governments from Japan, Ukraine, France, United Kingdom, Germany and the US.

One key finding debunks the myth that all nuclear facilities are "air gapped," which suggests their systems are blocked from the Internet that the rest of us use. Rather, because of the commercial benefits of wider connectivity, some nuclear facilities use virtual private networks that are sometimes undocumented or even forgotten by contractors and third-party operators. It's these multiple layers of technical, cultural and industry-wide practices that allow a possible cyber attack. In fact, the Chatham report reveals that there may have already been 50 incidents of cyber

Breaking into a nuclear power plant's computer system may actually be easier than physically breaking into the power plant itself. While nuclear power plants have established physical safety and security measures, many of them still lack the same level of security against cyber attacks, especially when employees still use default passwords like "1234" for computer systems that control a power plant's processes.

infiltrations in the nuclear power plant industry while only two or three have actually been made public.

A main source of vulnerability at power plants comes from the people working in these high-security high-tech facilities. The problem isn't only with technology as insiders share that engineers are the "worst offenders" and that "operations people dislike IT." On the other hand, power plant managers themselves wouldn't know what to do if a cyber attack did happen. According to the report's author Baylon, in a worst-case scenario, such hacking attacks could cause the release of ionizing radiation with potentially disastrous impacts on local populations. She further comments that, while the chances of causing a meltdown at a power plant are low, "the consequence of a cyber incident at a nuclear plant is extremely high."

Source: <http://www.techtimes.com>, 07 October 2015.

Nuclear Power Plants in 'Culture of Denial' Over Hacking Risk

Nuclear power plants around the world are harbouring a "culture of denial" about the risks of cyber hacking, with many failing to protect themselves against digital attacks, a review of the industry has warned. A focus on safety and high physical security means that many nuclear facilities are blind to the risks of cyber attacks, according to the report by think-tank Chatham House, citing 50 incidents globally of which only a handful have been made public.... "Cyber security is still new to many in the nuclear industry," said Baylon, the report's author. "They are really good at safety and, after 9/11, they've got really good at physical security. But they have barely grappled with cyber."

The report cites officials who describe the industry as being "far behind" other industrial sectors

when it comes to insulating themselves against digital attacks. Ms Baylon said there was a "culture of denial" at many nuclear plants, with a standard response from engineers and officials being that because their systems were not connected to the internet, it would be very hard to compromise them. "Many people said it was simply not possible to cause a major incident like

Nuclear power plants around the world are harbouring a "culture of denial" about the risks of cyber hacking, with many failing to protect themselves against digital attacks, a review of the industry has warned. A focus on safety and high physical security means that many nuclear facilities are blind to the risks of cyber attacks.

a release of ionising radiation with a cyber attack but that's not necessarily true." Ms Baylon described how systems and back-ups powering reactor cooling systems could be compromised, for example, to trigger an incident similar to that seen at Fukushima Daichi in Japan in 2011, the worst

nuclear failure since Chernobyl.

Dozens of nuclear power stations have control systems accessible through the internet even though many plant operators believe a persistent "myth" that their facilities are "air gapped" with physically separated computer networks, the report says. It points to a 2003 incident at the Davis-Besse plant in Ohio, when an engineer accessed the plant from his home laptop through an encrypted VPN connection. His home computer had become infected with the nuisance self-replicating "slammer" worm. The trojan infected the nuclear plant's computer system, causing a key safety control system to be overwhelmed with traffic from the worm and trip out. A more serious 2006 incident occurred at Browns Ferry in Alabama when a key safety system was similarly overwhelmed with network traffic and nearly led to a meltdown.

The report points to a 2008 incident at the Hatch plant in Georgia to illustrate how vulnerable plants could be to deliberate digital disruption: though not an attack, when a contractor issued a routine patch to a business network system, it triggered a shutdown. Most facilities still do not take cyber security seriously enough in spite of such instances, Ms Baylon said.... Companies that own

plants are also increasing the number of digital “backdoors” into facilities by putting in more monitoring systems to gather data and try to become more efficient businesses. Engineers and contractors at facilities around the globe also routinely bring their own computers into nuclear plants to perform their jobs, officials told Chatham House. One described the control room at his nuclear plant as routinely having external laptops plugged in to its systems – sometimes left there overnight....

Source: <http://www.ft.com>, 05 October 2015.

Nuclear Smugglers Tried Selling Radioactive Materials to ISIS

“In the age of the Islamic State, it’s especially terrifying to have real smugglers of nuclear bomb material apparently making connections with real buyers.” In the backwaters of Eastern Europe, authorities working with the FBI have interrupted four attempts in the past five years by gangs with suspected Russian connections that sought to sell radioactive material to Middle Eastern extremists, The Associated Press has learned. The latest known case came in February 2015, when a smuggler offered a huge cache of deadly cesium enough to contaminate several city blocks and specifically sought a buyer from the Islamic State group.

Authorities working with the FBI have interrupted four attempts in the past five years by gangs with suspected Russian connections that sought to sell radioactive material to Middle Eastern extremists, The Associated Press has learned. The latest known case came in February 2015, when a smuggler offered a huge cache of deadly cesium enough to contaminate several city blocks and specifically sought a buyer from the Islamic State group.

Criminal organizations, some with ties to the Russian KGB’s successor agency, are driving a thriving black market in nuclear materials in the tiny and impoverished country of Moldova, investigators say. The successful busts, however, were undercut by striking shortcomings: Kingpins got away, and those arrested evaded long prison sentences, sometimes quickly returning to nuclear smuggling, AP found. Moldovan police and judicial authorities shared investigative case files with AP in an effort to spotlight how dangerous the nuclear black market has become. They say the

breakdown in cooperation between Russia and the West means that it has become much harder to know whether smugglers are finding ways to move parts of Russia’s vast store of radioactive materials – an unknown quantity of which has leached into the black market.

In wiretaps, videotaped arrests, photographs of bomb-grade material, documents and interviews, AP found a troubling vulnerability in the anti-smuggling strategy. From the first known Moldovan case in 2010 to the most recent one in February, a pattern has emerged: Authorities pounce on suspects in the early stages of a deal, giving the ringleaders a chance to escape with their nuclear contraband – an indication that the threat from the nuclear black market in the Balkans

is far from under control. Moldovan investigators can’t be sure that the suspects who fled didn’t hold on to the bulk of the nuclear materials. Nor do they know whether the groups, which are pursuing buyers who are enemies of the West, may have succeeded in selling deadly nuclear material to terrorists at a time when the Islamic State has made clear its ambition to use weapons of mass destruction.

...The Moldovan operations were built on a partnership between the FBI and a small team of Moldovan investigators – including Malic, who over five years went from near total ignorance of the frightening black market in his backyard to wrapping up four sting operations. “In the age of the Islamic State, it’s especially terrifying to have real smugglers of nuclear bomb material apparently making connections with real buyers,” says Bunn, a Harvard professor who led a secret study for the Clinton administration on the security of Russia’s nuclear arsenal. The Moldovan investigators were well aware of the lethal consequences of just one slip-up....

In the case of the cesium, investigators said the

one vial they ultimately recovered was a less radioactive form of cesium than the smugglers originally advertised, and not suitable for making a dirty bomb. The most serious case began in the spring of 2011, with the investigation of a group led by a shadowy Russian named Alexandr Agheenco, "the colonel" to his cohorts, whom Moldovan authorities believe to be an officer with the Russian FSB, previously known as the KGB. A middle man working for the colonel was recorded arranging the sale of bomb-grade uranium, U-235, and blueprints for a dirty bomb to a man from Sudan, according to several officials. The blueprints were discovered in a raid of the middleman's home, according to police and court documents.

Wiretapped conversations repeatedly exposed plots that targeted the US, the Moldovan officials said. At one point the middleman told an informant posing as a buyer that it was essential that the smuggled uranium go to Arabs. "He said to the informant on a wire: 'I really want an Islamic buyer because they will bomb the Americans,'" said Malic, the investigator. As in the other cases, investigators arrested mostly mid-level players after an early exchange of cash and radioactive goods. The ringleader, the colonel, got away. Police cannot determine whether he had more nuclear material. His partner, who wanted to "annihilate America," is out of prison.

Source: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>, 06 October 2015.

NUCLEAR SAFETY

CHINA

Campaigners Stage Floating Protest against Chinese Nuclear Power Plans

Campaigners took over the River Blackwater for a peaceful beach protest and flotilla against Chinese plans to build a new nuclear power station at Bradwell-on-sea. Over 300 protesters travelled to a beach on the river in West Mersea

from all over Essex to voice their disapproval of plans by French firm EDF to sell rights to build a new nuclear power station to Chinese state-owned companies. Galvanised under the Facebook group, FAB (Fight Against Bradwell) the action group feels the plans could damage the area, designated a Marine Conservation Zone, forever. West Mersea

Town Councillor Weaver, a bookkeeper from the island, helped to organise the protest.

..."There was lots of families also there wanting to express their views - and commit to fighting these plans - which could ruin our beautiful estuary forever."

This October Chinese President Jinping will arrive in the UK for talks with Cameron while Chancellor Osborne has visited China to woo potential investors. A neighbouring site to Bradwell is owned by French energy firm EDF, who have rights to build a new nuclear power station. These rights are set to be sold a state-owned Chinese company in return for investment into two new plants at Hinkley Point in Somerset and Sizewell in Suffolk.

But campaigners from both sides of the river are worried that the building of a new power station on the river could endanger the health of those nearby, the environment of hundreds of species of plants and animals and will use "unproven" Chinese technology. Mrs Weaver added: "There are a lot of reasons why this is such a bad idea. We know that nuclear power can damage the health of people and animals living nearby. "We have rising sea levels which may breach the sea wall and penetrate the power station in the future. We do not want another Fukushima on the Blackwater. "This Environment Agency should protect this MCZ for future generations. "They have already begun to release Fuel Element Debris (FED), which has been in contact with nuclear material, into the river. We have an oyster industry which could be decimated if they continue to allow this process to take place."

Source: <http://www.essexchronicle.co.uk>, 06 October 2015.

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JAPAN

Roof Removed from Fukushima Daiichi Unit 1 Cover

The final roof panel of the temporary cover over the damaged reactor building of unit 1 at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has been removed. The walls of the structure remain around the reactor building. In late July, Tepco announced that it had removed the first of six roof panels from the cover using a remotely-controlled crane. Each panel is some 7 meters wide and 42 meters long.

Tepco said, "No significant fluctuations in radioactive concentrations [were] found by the dust monitors or from monitoring posts installed at the borders of the site." It added, "After conducting investigations on the condition of rubble and dispersing anti-scattering agents, steel beams will be removed as they obstruct the installation of a water-spraying facility." The roof of the cover – installed in October 2011 to prevent the dispersal of radioactive materials – has been dismantled to enable rubble to be taken down from the top of the building in preparation for the removal of fuel from the unit's used fuel pool.

Tepco began preparations for its removal last October, which included drilling holes into the cover and spraying an agent to suppress dust scattering. The company temporarily removed one of the roof panels to check the efficiency of the dust suppressant. The operation to remove the cover had originally been scheduled to start in July 2014. However, it was postponed owing to a problem with a device that controls the circulation of air within the building, as well as a problem with the crane.

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The removal of the walls of the cover is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2016. Tepco will then install equipment for handling the used fuel before strengthening the surrounding area for heavy machinery and rebuilding a new version of the cover. The entire process is planned to continue for about four years before the removal of used fuel actually begins.

Source: <http://www.world-nuclear-news.org>, 05 October 2015.

SOUTH KOREA

Power Plant Shut-Down Technology gets Boost

The government plans to spend a total of 616.3 billion won (\$530.6 million) to foster the nuclear power plant dismantling industry for the next 15 years. The project follows the government's decision in June to permanently close the nation's first nuclear reactor, Gori 1, for safety concerns. The PMO, the Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy confirmed on October 05, 2015, afternoon their joint investment plan to foster related technologies. The government said the project will be an opportunity to explore the global nuclear reactor dismantling market, which is estimated to be about 440 trillion won, as the lifespan of nuclear reactors built in the 1960s through the 1980s across the world is coming to an end within two decades.

The life expectancy of more than 400 of 588 nuclear power reactors across the world is expected to expire by 2020. Nearly 74 percent of the old nuclear reactors are located in Europe, North America and Japan. The technologies involved in research will include the design of the dismantling process, salt processing to decontaminate, physical dismantlement, care of nuclear waste and the facility, and soil recovery of the site after it is dismantled.

According to Deloitte and the Korea Atomic Energy Research Institute in August, the life expectancy of more than 400 of 588 nuclear power reactors across the world is expected to expire by 2020. Nearly 74 percent of the old nuclear reactors are located in Europe, North America and Japan. The technologies involved in research will include the

design of the dismantling process, salt processing to decontaminate, physical dismantlement, care of nuclear waste and the facility, and soil recovery of the site after it is dismantled. Korea has no dismantling experience with its commercial nuclear reactors but is known to have 70 percent of the technology compared to other advanced nuclear countries.

The government hopes to foster the dismantling technologies and carry out dismantlement of the Gori 1 reactor with locally-developed technologies through the R&D project. The detailed technology road map will be developed by the end of 2015. If Gori 1 permanently stops operation in 2016, the reactor goes into cooling of the spent nuclear fuel for the next six years. The government aims to complete developing basic technologies by 2021.

The state-run project will develop 34 technologies by 2021, with funding worth 220 billion won from the Science Ministry and Energy Ministry. The technologies will be transferred mostly to local, small and midsize companies in the nuclear industry, so that those companies can be trained and carry out dismantling processes in the 2030s. Another 50 billion won will go towards developing facilities and robots that decontaminate the radiation-contaminated reactor and its parts, and 150 billion won will be spent on technology testing and building test centers. The government and the Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power Corporation will jointly work with the US-based Argonne National Lab and the French Atomic Energy Commission.

Source: <http://koreajoongangdaily.joins.com>, 06 October 2015.

TAJIKISTAN

NNSA Provides Tajikistan Specialized Vehicles to Transport Radiological Materials

The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (DOE/NNSA), the US Embassy of Tajikistan, and the Government of the

Tajikistan on October 07, 2015 announced the commissioning of two secure vehicles that will be used to transport radiological materials as part of a broader cooperative effort to help combat nuclear and radiological terrorism in Tajikistan and around the world. "Radiological materials are most vulnerable when in transit. These new security transport vehicles will help strengthen radiological security in Tajikistan. This is an

important milestone in the cooperation between our two countries to mitigate the threat of radiological terrorism," said NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Non-proliferation Harrington.

A ceremony was held on October 2, 2015 at the WMD Non-proliferation Training Center, part of Tajikistan's Nuclear and Radiation Safety Agency (NRSA) in Dushanbe. NRSA director Dr.

Mirsaidov and State Institution Radioactive Waste Disposal Site (SI-RWDS) director Dr. Shonazarov highlighted the deployment of these new vehicles as an example of the continued cooperation between the US and Tajikistan to prevent nuclear and radiological terrorism.

NNSA is also providing transport security training to support sustainability of the vehicles. Other examples of the productive partnership between the US and Tajikistan, who share a long history of cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation issues, include:

- Improvement of physical security of radiological materials;
- Provision of mobile and man-portable radiation detection equipment;
- Regional cooperation on safeguards implementation; and
- Provision of training for Tajikistani officials on export controls.

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Source: <http://www.yournuclearnews.com>, 07 October 2015.

USA

Fire Crews Extinguish Small Fire at Three Mile Island Nuclear Power Plant

A small fire at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant has been extinguished and officials say there's no danger to the public. The fire happened shortly before 10 pm on October 05, 2015. Exelon Nuclear, which operates the facility in Middletown Borough in central Pennsylvania, tweeted that it was extinguished quickly and that the plant was operating fully within minutes. Middletown Borough posted information from the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency on its Facebook page. The agency says an electrical fire occurred in a secondary area of the plant. An emergency management spokesman says at no time was there any danger of radiation being released.

Source: <http://www.pennenergy.com>, 06 October 2015.

NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT

USA

Commission Expands Nuclear Waste Storage at San Onofre

The California Coastal Commission voted unanimously on October 06, 2015 to grant Southern California Edison a 20-year permit for an expanded nuclear waste storage facility at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station in northern San Diego County. Officials at Rosemead-based Edison, which operates and is the majority owner of the idled nuclear plant, said the current 14-year-old storage area is nearing capacity. SCE estimated that it will need up to 80 more steel canisters encased in concrete, a technology

known as dry storage. About two-thirds of San Onofre's used fuel is currently stored on site in steel-lined, concrete storage pools known as wet storage. Environmental groups argued that it makes no sense to store the spent fuel right next to the shoreline in an earthquake-prone area.

Edison, however, contended that a partially below-ground concrete monolith that will house the dry storage canisters exceeds state earthquake requirements, and will also be designed to protect against fire, tsunamis and – with its lower profile – against possible terrorist action. Commission staff recommended that the permit be approved, in part because the federal NRC said it meets safety standards. Staff also said the federal government hasn't been able to provide a location for spent nuclear fuel to be stored.

A proposed site at Yucca Mountain in Nevada has been held up for years because of political opposition. "That's the crux of the problem – the federal government has failed to designate a permanent repository for the spent nuclear fuel," said Coastal Commissioner and San Diego County Supervisor Cox. "It's something they've been working on for 20 or more years, and it's something that's not unique to (San Onofre) – it's something a number of other closed nuclear power plants across the country are having to deal with."

Inspection Protocol: Commission staff set special conditions on the permit. One required Edison to return in 20 years for an amendment to retain, relocate or remove the facility. Commissioner Shallenberger of Clements California asked why the commission would have to wait 20 years to get an inspection report on the storage site. Lombard, Director of Spent Fuel Management at the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, admitted that there is currently no way to inspect the stainless steel storage casks for cracking. He said

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robots are being developed to do the job. Palmisano, Decommissioning Chief Nuclear Officer for Southern California Edison, said Edison has a goal of developing an inspection protocol by 2022, to inspect existing casks.

After the vote Cox requested that the Coastal Commission follow the example of San Diego County Supervisors and write a letter to the US Secretary of Energy asking that the spent fuel be removed from the San Onofre plant as soon as possible. On September 15, San Diego County supervisors approved a resolution that makes a similar request. The San Onofre Nuclear Generating State has not operated since January 2012, when a small, non-injury leak occurred. In June of 2013 SCE decided to retire the two reactors rather than attempt to develop a costly start-up procedure.

Source: <http://www.kpbs.org>, 06 October 2015.

LANL Running Out of Room to Store its Nuclear Waste

While operations at the nation's nuclear waste storage facility near Carlsbad remains shut down, Los Alamos National Laboratory is facing a narrowing time frame before it runs out of room to store its waste materials that are supposed to be sent to the closed facility. The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board says in a recent report that the Los Alamos lab will reach its maximum capacity for storing radioactive transuranic (TRU) waste sometime in the federal fiscal year that starts in October 2016. The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant was shut down in 2014 after a drum of TRU waste from Los Alamos breached at the storage facility, contaminating the underground storage site. TRU waste can include items like protective boots and gloves, machinery and sludge, as well as other materials from nuclear weapons work.

Federal officials initially said WIPP would reopen

in March 2016, after cleanup work expected to cost a half-billion dollars. But the US Department of Energy over the summer said the reopening was being indefinitely delayed due to safety concerns and equipment setbacks and that the cost would increase. Now, US Department of Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz is saying WIPP "is on track to reopen by the end of next year," according to a report in the Weapons Complex Monitor....

The Los Alamos lab will reach its maximum capacity for storing radioactive transuranic (TRU) waste sometime in the federal fiscal year that starts in October 2016. The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant was shut down in 2014 after a drum of TRU waste from Los Alamos breached at the storage facility, contaminating the underground storage site.

"This has been a terribly costly situation to all of us, across the complex, because of the ripple effects of WIPP's closure," Moniz was quoted as saying. "We will not lose focus on the safety. In terms of our recovery, we've had some glitches, but we are on track for a 2016 startup of operations." The Los Alamos lab is building a new

Transuranic Waste Facility, expected to be complete in February, at cost of \$99.2 million. It will add to existing waste storage capacity at the lab's Area G and Technical Area 55. But the new facility won't solve the storage capacity issue for long, according to the report by the DNFSB, a federal government executive branch oversight agency.

LANL analysts "currently forecast the potential for transuranic waste accumulation to reach the site's total storage capacity, including Area G, TA-55 and the yet to be completed Transuranic Waste Facility, in approximately fiscal year 2017," says the DNFSB's Los Alamos staff. Fiscal 2017, for the federal government, runs from October 2016 through September 2017. ...The Los Alamos waste drum that popped open at WIPP contained an improperly packed mix of combustible materials, including nitrate salts and wheat-based cat litter. LANL was fined \$36.6 million over the accident by the state Environment Department, and DOE cut its fee to the lab's contract operator by 90 percent, or \$57 million, for the "performance failure." The August 14 DNFSB report said there had been a recent workshop on TRU management issues at Los Alamos amid "an extremely complex

situation," including treating nitrate salts, WIPP's inability to accept waste, resolving safety issues and cleanup contract matters.

The "key drivers" of the forecasted deadlines for running out of storage space are "WIPP availability" and safety rules at Area G, the report states. In a related development, the DOE announced recently that it had awarded a maximum two-year contract for environmental cleanup at Los Alamos to the same private consortium that runs the lab and failed to meet previous cleanup goals. The DOE had said late 2014 it would give the "bridge" contract to Los Alamos National Security LLC, which includes the Bechtel Corp., the University of California and two

other companies, and has had the contract to run LANL since 2006.

Earlier in 2014, Energy Secretary Moniz had announced that he would pull cleanup operations from Los Alamos National Security, after the barrel of waste packed at Los Alamos leaked at WIPP. But officials later said they would give LANS a short-term contract to avoid any disruption while cleanup responsibilities are shifted from the NNSA to DOE's Office of Environmental Management. The new contract has a maximum value of \$309.8 million with a one-year base period and two six-month options.

Source: <http://www.abqjournal.com>, 03 October 2015.



Centre for Air Power Studies

The Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS) is an independent, non-profit think tank that undertakes and promotes policy-related research, study and discussion on defence and military issues, trends and developments in air power and space for civil and military purposes, as also related issues of national security. The Centre is headed by Air Marshal Vinod Patney, SYSM PVSM AVSM VrC (Retd).

Centre for Air Power Studies

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