



BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



01 July – 14 July 2008

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ARMS CONTROL (GENERAL)

Russian Legislators Back U.S. WMD Disposal Aid

GSN, 03 July 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

The lower house of Russia's parliament yesterday [July 2] endorsed arrangements that would permit the United States to further finance the disposal of stockpiled Russian chemical and nuclear weapons, among others, the Associated Press reported. (271 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

Senate Will Not Fund the Reliable Replacement Warhead

PR Newswire, 10 July 2008, <http://www.googlenews.com/>

Today [July 10] the Senate administered the last rites for the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW). The Senate Appropriations Committee passed an annual spending bill that rejected all funding for the new weapon. (316 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Accord in North Korea Talks

Washington Post, 13 July 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Diplomats from six nations agreed in principle Saturday [July 12] to set up an intrusive inspection program to verify that North Korea has dismantled its plutonium-based program to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons. (518 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Chemical Weapons Transport a Hard Sell, Army Acknowledges

GSN, 03 July 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

A U.S. Army official acknowledged yesterday [July 2] that state authorities appear certain to reject any attempt to ship additional chemical weapons into their jurisdictions in order to expedite destruction of the nation's arsenal of banned warfare materials, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. (472 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

The U.S. Army's XM1063 Projectile is Designed to be 'Non-Lethal'—but Is It Peaceful or Hovering on the Brink of Illegality?

The Guardian, 10 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

XM1063 is the code name for the U.S. army's new secret weapon which will "suppress" people without harming them... But is it a violation of chemical weapons treaties, or a welcome move towards less destructive warfare using non-lethal weapons? (1021 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Cluster Munitions Policy Released

U.S. Department of Defense, 09 July 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/>

Today [July 9] the Department of Defense released a newly approved U.S. cluster munitions policy. (587 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT)

CTBTO to Conduct First Integrated On-Site Inspection Exercise

CTBTO, 1 July 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

International experts from all over the world will meet in September in Kazakhstan to test one of the key elements of a global alarm system to monitor the comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. (195 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CONVENTION ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS (CCW)

Group of Experts to CCW to Meet to Continue Negotiations on Cluster Munitions

States News Service, 03 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Third 2008 Session of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the [CCW]... will continue to "negotiate a proposal to address urgently the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, striking a balance between military and humanitarian considerations..." (330 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE TREATY (CFE)

Resolution Calls for Redefined, Improved U.S.-Russia Relations

U.S. Fed News, 9 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE) introduced a resolution encouraging leaders participating in the 2008 Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Japan to work toward a more constructive relationship with Russia. (417 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

Moscow Calls on More Countries to Join NPT

Interfax-AVN, 01 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Russia wants the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) to become universal, and it advocates a full-scale and effective application in the future. (213 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

G-8 Leaders to Call for Reducing Nuclear Arms

Tokyo Jiji Press, 03 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Leaders from the Group of Eight major countries will for the first time call for reducing the number of nuclear weapons worldwide in a statement of their meeting next week in Hokkaido, northern Japan, sources said Thursday [July 3]. (302 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

OPEN SKIES TREATY

500 Balloons to Celebrate OSCE Surveillance Flights

AFP, 14 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Members of the Open Skies Treaty, which allows aerial surveillance between OSCE states, launched 500 balloons Monday [July 14] in Vienna to celebrate the 500th observation flight due to take place later this month, the organization said in a statement. (202 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

OTTAWA CONVENTION

Tajikistan Needs Additional Funds to Clear Minefields

Dushanbe Asia-Plus, 02 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Since the beginning of this year, 200,000 square miles of land was cleared of mines in Tajikistan, and 1,667 mines and unexploded shells were detected and destroyed. (295 words)

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STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START)

Russia Hopes for New Strategic Arms Deal with U.S. by Year-End

RIA Novosti, 06 July 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/>

Russia expects to reach a new nuclear arms reduction treaty with the United States by the end of the year, an aide to the president of Russia said on Sunday [July 6]. (199 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

Medvedev to Discuss NATO, CFE, Strategic Arms at Talks with Bush

Itar-Tass, 07 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev intended at talks with U.S. President George W. Bush to openly express his concerns on a number of issues that remain unsettled despite promises of the American leadership. (460 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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GSN, 03 July 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

The lower house of Russia's parliament yesterday [July 2] endorsed arrangements that would permit the United States to further finance the disposal of stockpiled Russian chemical and nuclear weapons, among others, the Associated Press reported.

The State Duma overwhelmingly supported the addition of two new protocols to a bilateral 1992 pact addressing safe transportation, storage and destruction of weapons.

The United States has provided more than \$2 billion in disposal aid to Russia under the agreement since the early 1990s, when foreign aid was critical in helping Moscow to secure and eliminate large weapons stockpiles after the end of the Cold War.

Russia has continued to rely on international WMD disposal aid despite its improving economy. Moscow expects to receive an additional \$1 billion in U.S. aid by the end of 2013, according to Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak.

"The agreement is in the interests of the Russian Federation," Kislyak said. "It allows us to save significant budget funds."

The Russian parliament yesterday also passed an amendment to the U.N. Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, RIA Novosti reported.

The U.N. pact, signed by Russia in 1980, requires signatories to properly secure nuclear material in their territory, in international transit and on ships and aircraft within their authority.

The signatories in 2005 made revisions intended to augment the agreement. They include the legally binding requirement that member states protect nuclear sites and civilian material that is being used, stored or moved, and expanded international cooperation in tracking down stolen and smuggled nuclear materials

A high-level diplomat has said the amendment would not affect Moscow's nuclear assistance to Iran.

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PR Newswire, 10 July 2008, <http://www.googlenews.com/>

Today [July 10] the Senate administered the last rites for the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW). The Senate Appropriations Committee passed an annual spending bill that rejected all funding for the new weapon.

The Senate's decision today marks the second year in a row that congressional appropriators have denied funding for the controversial program, and arms control advocates see little opportunity to restore money for the warhead during this abbreviated election year.

"This seals RRW's fate," said Devin Helfrich, a lobbyist for the Friends Committee on National Legislation. "Congress is on record for the second consecutive year firmly rejecting RRW. We don't see the next administration trying to revive this discredited program."

The weapons program was eliminated over strong objections from the retiring senior senator from New Mexico, Pete Domenici, who had been the warhead's most powerful congressional advocate.

Today's Senate action marks the culmination of a tumultuous career for RRW. A congressionally conceived program, RRW was proposed by Rep. David Hobson (OH) in 2004. Initially, Congress was supportive of the program, but after funding RRW for three years, legislators, including Hobson, became wary of the Energy Department's intentions for the new warhead. Hobson believed that the administration had steered RRW away from its beginnings as a very limited program and a vehicle for stockpile reductions and transformed it into a plan to revamp the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal.

Legislators have also cited the lack of a comprehensive U.S. nuclear weapons strategy on which to base future stockpile decisions as a reason for ending RRW.

Proponents of RRW argue that an aging nuclear arsenal requires new warheads, which would replace most of the existing arsenal. Opponents of the program fear that new nuclear weapons development could increase pressure for the United States to resume underground nuclear testing, encourage an arms race, and damage the ability of the United States to dissuade other nations from developing nuclear weapons.

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Accord in North Korea Talks

Washington Post, 13 July 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Diplomats from six nations agreed in principle Saturday [July 12] to set up an intrusive inspection program to verify that North Korea has dismantled its plutonium-based program to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons.

After three days of talks in Beijing, however, the negotiators were unable to complete a detailed inspection schedule and decided to refer specific issues back to their capitals in hopes of working out an itemized inspection regime in September, according to the chief U.S. negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill.

"All this kind of stuff requires a lot of scrutiny," Hill said.

The limited progress—agreement in principle but still bogged down in details—was typical of the tortuous path followed during the past five years of Chinese-sponsored six-party negotiations designed to eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons program. It left in suspension such key questions as when North Korea will, as it has pledged several times, reveal whether it has any completed nuclear weapons and where they are stored.

The slow pace increased the probability that the Bush administration will come to an end before resolution of one of its main foreign policy goals, ridding North Asia of the threat of nuclear weapons under the command of Kim Jong Il, the unpredictable North Korean leader.

In addition, North Korea has yet to respond in detail to U.S. questions about whether it was seeking to produce material for nuclear weapons through a separate program based on highly enriched uranium and whether it cooperated with Syria in a nuclear development project that Israeli warplanes destroyed in September.

For the moment, China announced in a statement, North Korea has agreed to finish by October dismantling its Yongbyon nuclear reactor, the facility near Pyongyang where the plutonium-based program was carried out. Wu Dawei, a vice foreign minister who headed China's delegation to the talks, said the North Korean government also agreed that inspections to verify the dismantlement will include visits by experts, perusal of official documents and interviews with key scientists.

The other parties to the negotiations—which include Japan and Russia in addition to China, the United States and the two Koreas—agreed to make sure that promised fuel deliveries,

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amounting to the equivalent of 1 million tons, arrive in North Korean ports before the same deadline, he said.

The United States and Russia agreed to shoulder the main financial burden of providing the heavy fuel oil required by North Korea, the Chinese statement said. China and South Korea said they would combine for other kinds of economic aid, including equipment for the country's rickety electricity grid and transportation system, it added.

Despite its wealth, Japan has refused to provide aid until it receives an acceptable accounting of Japanese citizens kidnapped by North Korean intelligence in the 1970s and 1980s to train North Korean spies.

North Korea has said it refuses to move forward on revealing the full extent of its nuclear program, as promised in February 2007, until the fuel and other economic aid it was promised has been delivered. So far, only about 40 percent has been provided, the North Korean government said.

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Chemical Weapon Transport a Hard Sell, Army Acknowledges

GSN, 03 July 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

A U.S. Army official acknowledged yesterday [July 2] that state authorities appear certain to reject any attempt to ship additional chemical weapons into their jurisdictions in order to expedite destruction of the nation's arsenal of banned warfare materials, the Salt Lake Tribune reported.

The Pentagon issued a report last month outlining three options for meeting the congressional demand that it eliminate all U.S. chemical weapons by the end of 2017. The options are: making no changes to the existing plan, increasing funding at sites in Colorado and Kentucky that have yet to begin disposal operations, or shipping weapons from those storage depots to facilities in other states where weapons destruction is already under way.

That last idea "is next to impossible in the current political climate," said Greg Mahall, spokesman for the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency.

Officials in Utah, one of the states that would receive additional weapons under the relocation option, rushed to confirm the validity of Mahall's statement.

"Under no circumstances would I ever allow this to take place in our state," said Governor Jon Huntsman Jr. (R).

"Federal law says that transporting chemical weapons across state lines is prohibited," said Representative Jim Matheson (D). "The aging weapons have been known to leak, and transporting them poses a safety risk to communities along the route as well as to the workers who would handle them at either end."

The Pentagon might have anticipated that reaction and hoped that it would spur lawmakers to approve additional funding to increase the pace of weapons disposal at the Blue Grass Army Depot in Kentucky and the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado, the Tribune suggested. Construction of disposal facilities at both locations remains in the early stages and their collective operations could stretch as far as 2023, military officials have said.

"The only option being pursued is Option 3," which is the funding increase, said Kevin Flamm, program manager for the Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, which manages disposal efforts at Blue Grass and Pueblo.

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Option 3 would enable the program to hire additional personnel for construction and operations, which theoretically could continue 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Pentagon report indicates that continuous operations would enable Pueblo to meet the 2017 deadline but that Blue Grass would still probably not finish by the end date.

The relocation option “was not there to be inflammatory,” Flamm said. If the Pentagon pursued that strategy, some munitions from Kentucky would be shipped to incineration sites in Alabama and Arkansas, while installations in Oregon and Utah would receive some weapons from Colorado.

It would be “conjecture” to say that such shipments were sure to be safe, said Pentagon spokesman Chris Isleib. “But the thing to bear in mind is that we’ve been doing this destruction since 1990, and we’ve been doing it safely.”

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The U.S. Army's XM1063 Projectile is designed to be 'Non-Lethal'—but Is It Peaceful or Hovering on the Brink of Illegality?

The Guardian, 10 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Is the XM1063 a stink bomb, a banana skin, or a bad trip? It's hard to know.

XM1063 is the code name for the U.S. army's new secret weapon which will "suppress" people without harming them, as well as stopping vehicles in an area 100m square. But is it a violation of chemical weapons treaties, or a welcome move towards less destructive warfare using non-lethal weapons?

Exactly how it works is classified, but we have established some details. The first part of the weapon is an artillery round—or as the army puts it, "a non-lethal personal suppression projectile"—fired from a 155mm howitzer, with a range of 28km. It scatters 152 small non-explosive submunitions over a 1-hectare area; as each parachutes down, it sprays a chemical agent. Development was overseen by the U.S. Army's Armament Research, Development and Engineering Centre (ARDEC).

A presentation by the makers, General Dynamics, says the XM1063 will "suppress, disperse or engage personnel" and "deny personnel access to, use of, or movement through a particular area, point or facility."

Experts suggest three possible payloads: an existing riot-control agent, malodorants or a new chemical agent. Existing agents include CS gas and a form of pepper spray. But these seem unlikely choices, because their effects only last minutes, and could wear off before friendly forces arrive. They could also face a legal challenge: the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention prohibits the use of riot control agents in warfare.

"The matter is further complicated if pepper gas was used as the irritant since this is a plant toxin," says Steve Wright of Leeds Metropolitan University. "Such toxins are explicitly banned."

The possibilities seem to boil down to anti-traction agents (which make the whole area impossibly slippery), a malodorant or some novel chemical agents. Anti-traction agents are possible, but seem unlikely because research in this area (such as DARPA's Black Ice program: tinyurl.com/576yon) still seems to be at an early stage. It would be unusual for an agency to still be doing basic research when another is about to field a finished product.

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A malodorant is a super stink bomb with a truly intolerable smell. The Pentagon has been working on such chemicals for years, and a recent U.S. army briefing on future artillery concepts specifically mentions artillery-delivered malodorants.

This might sidestep the Chemical Weapons Convention with the argument that malodorants are not chemical weapons. However, Ralf Trapp, an independent disarmament consultant formerly with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, challenges this interpretation.

"That argument rests on the assumption that there are no other toxic effects of these chemicals, and that one can control the dose so that one never crosses into the dose range for toxic effects," says Trapp. "It also is based a concept of toxicity that is centuries out of date—malodorants do have a physiological effect and toxicity is not limited to lethality."

Finally, there is the possibility that the U.S. has decided to ignore the CWC and use new non-lethal chemical agents. This approach has supporters in high places. Before the Iraq war in 2003, Donald Rumsfeld pushed for rules of engagement that would allow U.S. forces to use non-lethal chemicals. Until the 1980s, the U.S. maintained stockpiles of a chemical incapacitant known as BZ or Agent Buzz. BZ is a psychoactive chemical causing stupor, confusion and hallucinations lasting for more than 24 hours. It has an evil reputation, but this is based largely on rumor as few facts are available. Most people have only heard of BZ in connection with the film *Jacob's Ladder*. This depicted soldiers exposed to a secret chemical weapon in Vietnam with terrible results, including permanent psychosis.

"We are reaping the whirlwind today because of government secrecy in the past," says Jim Ketchum, who ran the BZ testing program in the 1960s. "It has allowed critics to make unsupportable claims about agents such as BZ without rejoinder from the government research community." Although the U.S. is known to have been active in this area since 2000, no comments are available from researchers on non-lethal chemical agents—now termed "calmatives", whatever their chemical action.

Ketchum has written a book, *Chemical Warfare Secrets Almost Forgotten*, about his experiences of testing BZ on hundreds of volunteers. The effects are very different to those portrayed by Hollywood. None suffered physical harm, mental breakdown or any lasting after-effects. Rather than driving subjects berserk, it has a sedative action. But unlike the fentanyl used in 2002 by Russian police when they stormed a Moscow theatre where Chechen rebels were holding hostages, BZ does not rely on sedation for its effects and does not carry the same risk.

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Ketchum is now retired, and his successors have had decades to develop more effective and safer agents. But strict secrecy is still in place and there is no information about current research. Ketchum argues that the use of incapacitants would save lives, especially in situations where insurgents are mixed with the civilian population. Others believe that such agents are not just illegal but a step towards unlimited chemical weapons.

"It shouldn't be forgotten that the horrors of gas warfare in the first world war began with teargas, followed up with lethal firepower," says Wright. As a sideline, the XM1063 projectile also has a "vehicle area denial" component composed of nanoparticles. The U.S. Army has researched chemicals to interfere with engine combustion in the past, including work with ferrocene (normally used as an anti-knock additive) which prevent engines from working, with the idea is that this would stop any vehicle within the affected area. However, the potential health risks are unknown, especially when nanoparticles are involved.

Testing of the XM1063 was completed successfully last year and it is due for low-rate production from 2009. ARDEC says that the production decision is on hold awaiting further direction from the program manager. It seems the decision on whether to enter a new age of chemical warfare now rests with the military rather than civilians. Unless put under pressure, the U.S. Army seems unlikely to give any details of what's in the surprise package until it is used. And maybe not even then.

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Cluster Munitions Policy Released

U.S. Department of Defense, 09 July 2008, <http://www.defenselink.mil/>

Today [July 9] the Department of Defense released a newly approved U.S. cluster munitions policy. The United States believes that the new policy will provide better protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure following a conflict, while allowing for the retention of a legitimate and useful weapon.

Recognizing the need to minimize the unintended harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure associated with unexploded ordnance from cluster munitions, the Secretary of Defense has approved a new policy on cluster munitions intended to reduce the collateral effects resulting from the use of cluster munitions in pursuit of legitimate military objectives. The new policy is the result of a year-long Department of Defense review of cluster munitions.

Cluster munitions are legitimate weapons with clear military utility in combat. They provide distinct advantages against a range of targets, where their use reduces risks to U.S. forces and can save U.S. lives. These weapons can also reduce unintended harm to civilians during combat, by producing less collateral damage to civilians and civilian infrastructure than unitary weapons. Because future adversaries will likely use civilian shields for military targets—for example by locating a military target on the roof of an occupied building—use of unitary weapons could result in more civilian casualties and damage than cluster munitions. Blanket elimination of cluster munitions is therefore unacceptable due not only to negative military consequences but also due to potential negative consequences for civilians.

Post-combat, the impact of cluster munitions is limited in scope, scale and duration compared to other explosive remnants of war (ERW). According to the Feb. 15, 2008, State Department white paper (“Putting the Impact of Cluster Munitions in Context with the Effects of All Explosive Remnants of War”), in 2006 fewer than 400 casualties were attributable to cluster munitions out of a global total of 5,759 reported for all ERW.

A key facet of the DoD policy establishes a new U.S. technical norm for cluster munitions, requiring that by the end of 2018, DoD will no longer use cluster munitions which, after arming, result in more than one percent unexploded ordnance across the range of intended operational environments. Additionally, cluster munitions sold or transferred by DoD after 2018 must meet this standard. Any munitions in the current inventory that do not meet this standard will be unavailable for use after 2018. As soon as possible, military departments will initiate removal from active inventory cluster munitions that exceed operational planning requirements or for which there are no operational planning requirements. These excess munitions will be demilitarized as soon as practicable within available funding and industrial capacity. Effective

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immediately through 2018, any U.S. use of cluster munitions that do not meet the one percent unexploded ordnance standard must be approved by the applicable combatant commander. Previous DoD policy required military departments to design and procure “future” (after 2005) submunitions to a 99 percent reliability rate, but did not address use and removal of current munitions.

The new policy is viewed as a viable alternative to a complete ban proposal generated by the Oslo Process in Dublin, Ireland, last month. The new policy serves as the basis for the U.S. position in negotiations toward an international agreement at the U.N. Convention of Conventional Weapons (CCW) that began on July 7. The United States has called for the completion of a new cluster munitions protocol by the end of the year. The CCW, unlike the Oslo process, includes all of the nations that produce and use cluster munitions, making any agreement reached there much more practically effective.

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CTBTO to Conduct First Integrated On-Site Inspection Exercise

CTBTO, 1 July 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

International experts from all over the world will meet in September in Kazakhstan to test one of the key elements of a global alarm system to monitor the comprehensive ban on nuclear testing.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) will conduct its first large scale integrated on-site inspection exercise from 1-25 September 2008 at the former Soviet nuclear test site Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan. The on-site inspection phase will be preceded by a week of testing-related launch activities at the CTBTO Headquarters in Vienna, Austria, which will include the assembly of the Inspection Team.

The Integrated Field Exercise 2008 or IFE08 will be the largest and most ambitious exercise ever conducted by the CTBTO and will reinforce the CTBT's role as a key instrument of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The scope of the exercise is unprecedented. It will involve a team of 40 inspectors and the shipment of over 40 tons of equipment to the inspection area within a few days. The logistical efforts and organizational challenges make the exercise resemble a humanitarian aid operation rather than an inspection under a non-proliferation treaty.

[Media contact information and press conferences schedule omitted.]

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Group of Experts to CCW to Meet to Continue Negotiations on Cluster Munitions

States News Service, 03 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The following information was released by the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG):

The Third 2008 Session of the Group of Governmental Experts of the High Contracting Parties to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW) will convene from 7 to 25 July at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The Group will continue to "negotiate a proposal to address urgently the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions, striking a balance between military and humanitarian considerations," a decision by the 2007 Meeting of States Parties. The Group was also requested to negotiate "as rapidly as possible and report on the progress made to the next Meeting of the High Contracting Parties in November 2008."

For the purposes of the advancing the work, the Chairman has prepared a substantive paper titled "Cluster Munitions." The Chair's paper attempts to build on the views and inputs expressed by the participants at its first and second sessions to be used as a basis for discussion. The Group will address, in particular, such issues as General provision and scope of application; Definitions; Protection of civilians and civilian objects; General prohibitions and restrictions; Storage and Destruction; Transfers; Clearance and destruction; Recording, retaining and transmission of information; Protection of humanitarian missions and organizations from the effects of cluster munitions; Victim assistance; Co-operation and assistance; Consultations; and Compliance. A provisional program of work for the session has also been circulated.

The session aims at producing a draft proposal (Protocol) the text of which would be further refined in subsequent 2008 sessions to be held in September, and November.

The Convention was opened for signature at New York on April 10, 1981 and entered into force on December 2, 1983. It currently has 105 States Parties, and six countries have signed but not yet ratified the Convention. The Secretary-General of the United Nations is the depositary of the Convention.

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Resolution Calls for Redefined, Improved U.S.-Russia Relations

U.S. Fed News, 9 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Joseph R. Biden Jr., D-Del., issued the following news release:

Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE) introduced a resolution encouraging leaders participating in the 2008 Group of Eight (G-8) Summit in Japan to work toward a more constructive relationship with Russia. Sen. Biden's resolution specifically calls on the Russian government to uphold the Group's mission of protecting global security, economic stability and democracy, as well as outlines key areas in the U.S.-Russia relationship that could use improvement in the future.

"Today's global challenges require global cooperation," said Sen. Biden. "This week's Group of Eight Summit is an opportunity to restore some shared confidence in the world economy and help us find common solutions to global challenges, including energy and food."

Russian leaders have expressed a desire to see their country play a leading role in international affairs, but their domestic and foreign policy has frequently put the country at odds with the United States and other members of the G-8. Last December, the Russian Federation suspended implementation of the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, a cornerstone of regional stability. The Russian government has also undermined the independence of neighboring countries, including the Republic of Georgia and Ukraine, through the use of military threats, economic boycotts, and energy shutoffs.

"Russia should be an important partner in dealing with the issues facing the international community. The country has incredibly talented people, vast resources, and a big role in ensuring global security. But meaningful U.S. cooperation is contingent on Russia's willingness to respect its neighbors and live up to the ideals of democracy and accountability that President Medvedev has committed to supporting," added Sen. Biden.

The resolution outlines key areas in which the U.S. - Russia relationship could use improvement, including:

Negotiations for a legally-binding successor agreement to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty;

Increased utilization of the NATO-Russia Council to foster greater cooperation between NATO States and Russia;

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Renewed Russian pressure on Iran to abandon its uranium enrichment program;

Cooperation on Nunn-Lugar non-proliferation programs; and

Full Russian compliance with the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty, including their commitment to pull weapons and troops out of Georgia and Moldova.

Along with the United States and Russia, the G-8 is comprised of these major industrialized democracies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. They meet annually to renew its mission and to tackle new and ongoing challenges like climate change and nuclear proliferation.

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Moscow Calls on More Countries to Join NPT

Interfax-AVN, 01 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Russia wants the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) to become universal, and it advocates a full-scale and effective application in the future.

"All countries—large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear—need this treaty. We are sure that the new challenges to the nuclear nonproliferation regime must be removed primarily on the basis of the NPT treaty. The treaty's full-scale and effective application must be guaranteed in the future," says a statement on the occasion of the 40th anniversary since the NPT was opened for signing posted on the Russian Foreign Ministry's website on Tuesday.

"We want the NPT to be universal and urge all countries to join it if they have not done so," the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

"In this context we think it very important to prepare and hold in 2010 a regular review conference on the NPT. The main purpose of this process is to come to a common understanding of the problems hampering the treaty's effective application, to forge a consensus on mechanisms for strengthening it, and to negotiate recommendations on ways to ensure its further application and the unconditional fulfillment of the commitment assumed under the treaty," it said.

July 1 marks 40 years since the NPT was opened for signing. The Treaty has been signed by 190 countries.

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G-8 Leaders to Call for Reducing Nuclear Arms

Tokyo Jiji Press, 03 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Leaders from the Group of Eight major countries will for the first time call for reducing the number of nuclear weapons worldwide in a statement of their meeting next week in Hokkaido, northern Japan, sources said Thursday [July 3].

The paper to be adopted at their three-day meeting starting Monday will be major nations' first summit document that refers to reductions of nuclear weapons. The leaders will express their resolve to reinforce the framework of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

In the statement, the leaders will welcome nuclear disarmament efforts by nuclear nations within the G-8 and call on all nuclear nations around the world to undertake reductions of nuclear weapon stockpiles in a clear and transparent manner, the sources said.

As the only nation in the world that has been attacked with atomic weapons, Japan, urged its G-8 partners to address the issue in the statement.

The statement will also demand North Korea abandon all nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programs and ballistic missile programs.

It will stress the importance of verifying the declaration of nuclear programs submitted by the reclusive country late last month. It will also urge Pyongyang to take prompt action for the early resolution of the abduction issue.

Meanwhile, the leaders will express serious concern over Iran's expansion of its uranium enrichment program and urge the country to suspend all enrichment-related activities.

On the peace-building issue, which Japan aims to point to, the leaders will agree on the need to boost such capacities of the military, police and civilians worldwide.

The G-8 leaders plan to issue a special statement to demonstrate their resolve to fight terrorism, in which they will confirm their support for developing countries that wish to strengthen their counterterrorism activities.

They will discuss political issues on Tuesday and issue a statement summarizing their talks on Wednesday.

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500 Balloons to Celebrate OSCE Surveillance Flights

AFP, 14 July 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Members of the Open Skies Treaty, which allows aerial surveillance between OSCE states, launched 500 balloons Monday in Vienna to celebrate the 500th observation flight due to take place later this month, the organization said in a statement.

Military officials from the treaty's members, which include Russia, the United States and most European states, took part in the ceremony on Heroes' Square, outside the Imperial Palace.

In total, 34 of the 56 members of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) are party to the Open Skies Treaty, which came into force in January 2002.

"No satellite imagery can compete with an Open Skies flight when it comes to the element of openness and co-operation," Marton Krasznai, a former Hungarian Ambassador to the OSCE, said in the statement, adding it was "a useful and efficient confidence-building tool."

"There is no doubt that the treaty has made a significant contribution toward security and stability in the European area and beyond," noted U.S. Chief Arms Control Delegate Hugh Neighbour, who chairs the Vienna-based Open Skies Consultative Commission overseeing the implementation of the treaty.

The treaty allows signatory states to conduct observation flights into other member countries to obtain military and other information.

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Tajikistan Needs Additional Funds to Clear Minefields

Dushanbe Asia-Plus, 02 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Since the beginning of this year, 200,000 square miles of land was cleared of mines in Tajikistan, and 1,667 mines and unexploded shells were detected and destroyed.

The head of the Mine Action Centre of Tajikistan, Jonmahmad Rajabov, said in an interview with Asia-Plus that in total the area of over 1.5m sq.m. had been cleared of mines in the country so far. Another 20m sq.m. of the dangerous area should be cleared of mines.

Tajikistan signed an agreement on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines (The Ottawa Convention) in 2000. According to the document all the countries which signed it must guarantee the destruction of anti-personnel mines and unexploded ammunition on their areas not later than in 10 years after signing this convention and when it came into force. In Tajikistan's case, it means that the country must be cleared from mines and other unexploded ammunition by 2010.

However Jonmahmad Rajabov believes that "current level of efforts is insufficient to clear Tajikistan from anti-personnel mines in line with a schedule."

"The fact is that additional funds are necessary for successful progress in mine clearing in Tajikistan. Currently only 70 sappers are involved in mine clearing. We need more, but insufficient financing does not allow us to increase their number," he said.

He said that Tajikistan had asked from donors 5.5m dollars to fight mines last year, but had received only 2m [dollars] so far.

"With such financing we cannot complete detection and destruction of anti-personnel mines in Tajikistan by the set deadline," he stressed.

Anti-personnel mines were laid in Tajikistan during the civil confrontation of the early 1990s in the country. According to statistics, over 600 civilians of the country have been victims of mines since that time.

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Russia Hopes for New Strategic Arms Deal with U.S. by Year-End

RIA Novosti, 06 July 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/>

Russia expects to reach a new nuclear arms reduction treaty with the United States by the end of the year, an aide to the president of Russia said on Sunday [July 6].

The effective Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-1) was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union on July 31, 1991, five months before the U.S.S.R. collapsed. The treaty is set to expire on December 5, 2009.

Speaking before journalists on the eve of a meeting between the Russian and U.S. presidents to be held as part of a summit of the G-8 group of industrialized nations in Japan set to open on Monday, Sergei Prikhodko said that there had been no progress of late in reaching an understanding between Russia and the United States on strategic arms.

Prikhodko said that the United States was expressing its readiness to reach an understanding on a new nuclear arms pact only in words.

"We hope that George Bush will be able during the remaining period of his stay in the White House to reverse the situation to reach mutually acceptable accords already by the end of the year. The entire international community is expecting this from us," Prikhodko said.

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Medvedev to Discuss NATO, CFE, Strategic Arms at Talks with Bush

Itar-Tass, 07 July 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev intended at talks with U.S. President George W. Bush to openly express his concerns on a number of issues that remain unsettled despite promises of the American leadership. Presidential aide Sergei Prikhodko said that the points at issue remain the U.S. missile defense system, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), NATO expansion and a number of other problems.

"The general balance in the Russian-American strategic dialogue remains positive, which certainly does not mean that there are no incongruities and serious disagreements in it," Prikhodko noted. "These are first of all the interrelated issues of missile defense and strategic offensive weapons. The Russian side openly voices its concern over the state of affairs in this sphere," the diplomat stressed.

Prikhodko reiterated the position of the Kremlin on the missile defense issue. "We are against unilateral plans of bringing the strategic military infrastructure closer to our borders; we have a reasonable alternative of joint and equal reacting to hypothetical missile threats, it remains in force," he said.

The presidential aide noted that at the Sochi meeting in April Bush "heard our concerns and promised to take measures to remove them."

"It appears, unfortunately, that at the executive level his signal has withered," Prikhodko said. "We hope that the meeting in Toyako will give an additional stimulus to the American negotiators for the intensification of work on the real, not propagandist taking into account of our concern," he added.

In the words of Prikhodko, the same situation is developing around the START. "There is no progress in actual fact: Russia is still being offered a 'phantom' — represented by measures of transparency excluding control over strategic carriers and a number of other components of strategic offensive arms," he explained. "We still hope that over the time ahead of the presidential election Bush in the White House will manage to change the situation in order to reach mutual understanding before the end of the year," the diplomat noted. "The whole international community expects this from us," according to the Russian Presidential aide.

Prikhodko noted that the sides "still have disagreements on Kosovo, on the future control over conventional weapons in the context of the CFE Treaty, and on the plans of involvement of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO."

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"For us it is still the 'red line' for the development of relations with the North Atlantic Alliance and the United States, in particular," he explained. "I think the Russian president will confirm this in the conversation with Bush," said Prikhodko.

"He will for certain tell in more detail also about the alternative on building of new dividing lines in Europe proposed by him in Berlin recently—the idea on working out of a new European security treaty," believes the Russian presidential aide.

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