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WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW

23 – 29 June 2006

DTRA

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION

Allegations of Pinochet Biological Weapons Program Underscore Challenges of BW Control

WMD Insights, June 2006, www.wmdinsights.com

Evidence presented in May 2006 in a Chilean judicial proceeding alleges that the government of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet developed a secret biological weapons (BW) program. *(987 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Weapon Destruction Remains Top Priority

Richmond Register, 27 June 2006, www.richmondregister.com

An amendment to the Defense Authorization bill passed the full Senate Monday, which will keep the disposal of chemical weapons, such as those stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot, on the priority list of the Department of Defense. *(318 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

U.S. Senate Demands New North Korea Envoy

Nuclear Threat Initiative, 23 June 2006, www.nti.org

The U.S. Senate yesterday voiced disapproval over the Bush administration's North Korea policy by asking that the top U.S. envoy to nuclear talks be replaced, Reuters reported (see GSN, June 19). *(266 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

IAEA Issues Assessment on Iran's Nuclear Activities

Nuclear Threat Initiative, 26 June 2006, www.nti.org

U.S. officials, after viewing an International Atomic Energy Agency technical assessment on Iran's nuclear work, remain convinced that Tehran should be barred from conducting any uranium enrichment efforts, Agence France-Presse reported yesterday (see GSN, June 23). *(611 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

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NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) (CONT.)

EU - Iran Nuclear Meeting Postponed Until after G8

The New York Times, 28 June 2006, www.nytimes.com

A meeting between European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's top nuclear negotiator has been postponed until after Group of Eight foreign ministers meet on Thursday, an EU diplomat said on Wednesday. *(336 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

OTTAWA CONVENTION

ICBL Diplomatic Advisor Visits Lebanon to Urge Early Accession to the Mine Ban Treaty

International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 23 June 2006, www.icbl.org

Can Lebanon become a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty before the 8th Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty, which is likely to take place in the Middle East - one of the regions with the lowest rates of adherence in the world - in 2007? *(542 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

PLUTONIUM PRODUCTION REACTOR AGREEMENT

NZ Cash to Shut Russian Reactor

The New Zealand Herald, 26 June 2006, www.nzherald.co.nz

New Zealand is contributing $500,000 to a United States-led project to shut down one of Russia's last Soviet-era nuclear reactors. *(292 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

PROLIFERATION SECURITY INITIATIVE (PSI)

Bush Urges All Nations to Halt Illicit WMD Proliferation Trade

U.S. Department of State, 23 June 2006, http://usinfo.state.gov

President Bush welcomed new supporters of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), including those in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, as 60 PSI partners gathered in Warsaw for a high-level political meeting hosted by Poland. *(200 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

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STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START)

Treaty to Replace START Sought

The Moscow Times, 28 June 2006, accessed via lexis-nexis

President Vladimir Putin called on Russia and the United States on Tuesday to negotiate a new nuclear-arms treaty and urged the Russian diplomatic corps to bolster the nation's global prominence while avoiding confrontation. *(578 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

TREATY ON OPEN SKIES

Bulgarian Inspectors Monitor Russia under Open Skies Treaty

ITAR-TASS, 27 June 2006, accessed via lexis-nexis

Bulgarian inspectors are monitoring Russian strategic military facilities under the Open Skies Treaty, a Defense Ministry source told ITAR-TASS on Tuesday.
(103 words) ***Click here for full text.***

Russian Experts Start Open Skies Treaty Inspections in Britain

ITAR-TASS, 28 June 2006, accessed via lexis-nexis

Russian experts started their Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty verification mission in Britain on Wednesday. *(148 words)* ***Click here for full text.***

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Allegations of Pinochet Biological Weapons Program Underscore Challenges of BW Control

WMD Insights, June 2006, www.wmdinsights.com

Evidence presented in May 2006 in a Chilean judicial proceeding alleges that the government of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet developed a secret biological weapons (BW) program. The evidence also alleges that a Chilean secret police operative used an unspecified lethal bacterial agent produced in that program to assassinate former Chilean president Eduardo Frei in January 1982 while he was in the hospital recovering from a hernia operation. Allegedly, the head of the Chilean BW program was later murdered to ensure that the assassination of Frei would remain secret.

This story was reported in the Guardian of London May 18, 2006. [1] The article states that evidence on the matter was presented by a number of retired "army generals and aides," who stated that the biological weapons program was run by General Pinochet's secret police. The former military figures had requested the opportunity to present testimony regarding the "disappearance" of Eugenio Berrios, the designer of the secret BW weapons program. The program, the article continued, produced anthrax and botulinum toxin, and also had a chemical weapon component that produced the nerve gas sarin. Berrios is also suspected of developing the bacterial agent that killed Frei.

A lawyer for the Frei family is reported as calling the evidence "'precise, clear and concrete' in proving that General Pinochet announced the order to have Berrios kidnapped and killed." Berrios was found on a beach in Montevideo in 1995, having been shot twice in the head. On May 5, 2006, Uruguay extradited three former Uruguayan army officers to Chile, where they are accused of conspiring in Berrios's murder… [2]

…These allegations raise a range of questions concerning international efforts to control the spread of biological weapons.

First, and most importantly, the allegations, if substantiated, challenge the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention, whose core objective is to prohibit the development, production, stockpiling, and transfer of biological weapons. General Pinochet led Chile from 1973 to 1990. Chile signed the Biological Weapons Convention on April 10, 1972, and ratified the pact on April 22, 1980, roughly in the middle of Pinochet's tenure. The allegations presented in the Chilean court suggest that when Chile ratified the treaty and pledged to renounce biological arms, it was, in fact, pursuing an active BW program. This would indicate that, in this case, the treaty was ineffective as a nonproliferation measure…

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…The allegations in the Chilean court proceedings are the first time that the existence of the Chilean BW program has been identified; Chile, for example, has never been listed as a state pursuing such capabilities, even at the level of research and development. The current status of the alleged Chilean BW program is unclear, although it was presumably dismantled at the end of the Pinochet era.

A recognized weakness of the Biological Weapons Convention is that it has no verification provisions, and it has been feared that state parties might be able to pursue clandestine BW programs without detection. If its existence is confirmed, the Chilean program would be a case in point, demonstrating the severe limitations of the Convention in this regard…

…Multilateral negotiations to develop a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention began in early 1995 and collapsed in 2001, when the United States withdrew from the talks. It is not clear whether proposals under consideration at the time, had they been adopted, would have been able to detect BW programs like that allegedly pursued by Chile, which appears to have been conducted on a small scale.

As noted, it is not yet known how extensive the Chilean BW program may have been. Possibly, it was pursued solely to be used against individuals, rather than as a military capability against large concentrations of troops or against population centers -- although the development of potent BW agents for assassination purposes could have provided the basis for acquiring a larger scale BW capability for military use.

The key prohibition of the Biological Weapons Convention is contained in Article I which states:

Each State Party to this Convention undertakes never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain:

(1) Microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes…

The Chilean case thus raises an additional question concerning the Biological Weapons Convention: whether the treaty's core proscription prohibits the development of BW agents in small quantities suitable for assassination. Arguably, the development and possession of small quantities of lethal BW agents is allowable for "protective" purposes – i.e., for the study of agents that might be used against a state by foreign powers and for the development of counter-measures – but agents in these laboratory-scale quantities could also be used for

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small-scale offensive attacks against domestic dissidents or adversary leadership targets. Because microbial pathogens have useful applications in biomedical research and therapeutics, they cannot simply be banned by the Biological Weapons Convention, but their use is restricted to peaceful or defensive purposes. The fact that the prohibitions of the treaty are based largely on intent complicates efforts to verify compliance, particularly when small quantities of agent are involved…

…Pinochet left office in 1990. The process of reconciliation in Chile has since begun to reveal many of the excesses of his regime. Nonetheless, it appears that any Chilean BW program remained concealed and that but for the alleged murder of the program's leader, its existence might never have come to light. Many questions remain to be answered regarding the BW program, including what happened to it after Pinochet left office. Was it dismantled or did it continue within the Chilean military or internal security agencies, which remained largely beyond civilian control for several years? The disposition of any stocks of lethal pathogens and of any research on BW that the program compiled is also unknown, as is the status of the scientists who contributed to this work…

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Weapon Destruction Remains Top Priority

Richmond Register, 27 June 2006, www.richmondregister.com

An amendment to the Defense Authorization bill passed the full Senate Monday, which will keep the disposal of chemical weapons, such as those stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot, on the priority list of the Department of Defense.

The amendment, authored by Senator Ken Salazar (D-CO), was co-sponsored by Senators from Colorado, Oregon, Indiana and Kentucky, including Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY). It emphasizes the need to pursue compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention deadlines, now at April 2012, or "as soon thereafter as possible."

The amendment also directs the Secretary of Defense to submit a comprehensive schedule to Congress annually and to "make every effort to ensure adequate funding to complete the elimination of the United States Stockpile."

"The people of Madison County can rest assured that my goal remains the same and that is to have the chemical agents at the Blue Grass Army Depot disposed of as safely and efficiently as possible," McConnell said.

The Berea-based Chemical Weapons Working Group (CWWG) serves as an advocate for safe weapons disposal and a watchdog on chemical demilitarization funding and schedule issues.

Recently, the CWWG revealed more Pentagon information showing that the program continues to lag in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and is not being adequately funded.

"This amendment is a welcome sign from the Senate," said Craig Williams, CWWG Director. "It reflects the increased attention to this program and will hopefully put a stop to the annual cutting of funds within the President's budget request or committees of jurisdiction in Congress, as appeared in the House Defense Appropriations Bill this year."

The information from the Pentagon also is failing to depict accurate deadlines for incineration, Williams said.

"What is just as disconcerting is that the Army's continues to misrepresent the completion dates to local communities," said Williams. "Hopefully, with the direction to provide annual schedules, contained in the amendment, this kind of misinformation will cease."

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U.S. Senate Demands New North Korea Envoy

Nuclear Threat Initiative, 23 June 2006, www.nti.org

The U.S. Senate yesterday voiced disapproval over the Bush administration's North Korea policy by asking that the top U.S. envoy to nuclear talks be replaced, Reuters reported (see GSN, June 19).

A defense authorization bill amendment sponsored by Senate minority leader Harry Reid (Nev.), and Carl Levin (Mich.) and Joseph Biden (Del.), senior Democrats on the Armed Services and Foreign Relations committees, carried the request for the appointment of a new senior envoy within 60 days after the bill becomes law.

The amendment is pending approval by the House of Representatives.

"It says we are not confident in the direction of U.S. policy," a Democratic Senate staff member told Reuters.

"It reflects the frustration of five years of Bush's neglect of the North Korea problem, during which the North expanded its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs," said the staff member (Reuters, June 22).

Meanwhile, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick called on China and South Korea to make a greater effort to persuade North Korea to end its nuclear weapons effort, Agence France-Presse reported today.

Without a "very strong effort" by Beijing and Seoul, the suspended multilateral negotiations on the issue are likely to fail, Zoellick told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"To make it work, you've got to get some very strong effort by China and South Korea," he said.

"The South Koreans can't just see their role as offering concessions every time the North Koreans engage in bad behavior," he said.

"China is going to have to also recognize the risks of maintaining the current status quo," he added (Agence France-Presse/DefenseNews.com, June 23).

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IAEA Issues Assessment on Iran's Nuclear Activities

Nuclear Threat Initiative, 26 June 2006, www.nti.org

U.S. officials, after viewing an International Atomic Energy Agency technical assessment on Iran's nuclear work, remain convinced that Tehran should be barred from conducting any uranium enrichment efforts, Agence France-Presse reported yesterday (see GSN, June 23).

A confidential document prepared by agency Director General Mohamed ElBaradei says that even small-scale enrichment would move Iran toward "successful long-term sustained centrifuge operation."

Washington asked ElBaradei to clarify what Tehran would learn if it operated centrifuges without introducing uranium hexafluoride; what research and development, beyond enrichment, could be linked to the fuel cycle; and what kind of inspection regime is needed to ensure complete verification.

A Western diplomat said Iran could learn a great deal from activities short of enrichment. This "helped the United States, Britain and France argue persuasively in favor of full suspension as a precondition," the diplomat said.

The agency said centrifuge experiments, even without the introduction of uranium hexafluoride, could help Tehran learn about "life expectancy ... of key mechanical components" and data "needed for the development of more advanced centrifuge systems."

However, "the question that was posed to ElBaradei in Washington was merely a technical question and in no way indicated any change in position or any intention to change position" by the United States, said a second Western diplomat.

One diplomat close to agency said small-scale enrichment by Iran should not be used as an excuse to undermine negotiations.

"The United States will push very hard until the last minute in the hope of getting the Iranians to give in but at the end of the day they will accept some form of enrichment activity" to open the door to negotiations, said the diplomat (Michael Adler, Agence France-Presse I/Yahoo!News, June 25).

Germany said Saturday that it would resume nuclear negotiations with Iran only if Tehran stops enriching uranium, Reuters reported.

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"I can only reiterate and urge Iran to implement very quickly a suspension of enrichment to enable negotiations to begin again," German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said after meeting with his Iranian counterpart, Manouchehr Mottaki.

Mottaki complained of some ambiguities in the incentives offer.

"The packaged offer by the six countries is being very seriously examined by Iran. We see very positive points in this offer. There are also naturally unclear points and we will have questions," he said (Louis Charbonneau, Reuters, June 24).

Iranian officials yesterday urged patience as Tehran formulates its response to the offer, but also warned it could use its oil reserves to disrupt world markets, the Associated Press reported.

"If the country's interests are attacked, we will use oil as a weapon," state television quoted Oil Minister Kazem Vaziri Hamaneh as saying.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said key state agencies were studying the world powers' nuclear offer.

"The package contains legal, political and economic dimensions. All its dimensions have to be studied," Asefi said. "We recommend to Europeans that accuracy should not be sacrificed for the sake of speed."

"The reason that there can't be a speedy response is that we have to hold serious discussions on the contents," he said. "We are taking it seriously" (Ali Akbar Dareini, Associated Press/Washington Post, June 25).

A Japanese Foreign Ministry official said today that foreign ministers from the Group of Eight industrialized nations, scheduled to meet Thursday in Russia to prepare for next month's summit, would urge Iran to accept the offer for nuclear talks, AFP reported.

"If we do not receive some positive response from the Iranian side by the date of the foreign ministers' meeting, I guess the G-8 will strongly urge the Iranian government to respond quickly and positively to the offer," the official said (Agence France-Presse II/Yahoo!News, June 26).

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EU - Iran Nuclear Meeting Postponed Until after G8

The New York Times, 28 June 2006, www.nytimes.com

A meeting between European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's top nuclear negotiator has been postponed until after Group of Eight foreign ministers meet on Thursday, an EU diplomat said on Wednesday.

Solana will meet Ali Larijani somewhere in Europe next week to clarify a U.S.-backed package of incentives for Tehran to stop sensitive nuclear research that the West fears is aimed at producing a bomb, the diplomat said. No reason was given for the delay. Both Solana and Larijani had said publicly they would meet this week and diplomats said Western governments were concerned Tehran was trying to string out its response to divide the major powers.

The European Union, the United States, Russia and China have warned Iran that the UN Security Council will act against it if it does not suspend uranium enrichment, but they have set no firm deadline and Moscow and Beijing oppose sanctions.

The Western powers have called for a clear Iranian reply in "weeks, not months" and indicated informally it should come before a G8 summit in Russia on July 15-16. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said last week Iran would reply before August 22, causing exasperation in Washington and London. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday Iran had nothing to gain from talks with the United States.

Diplomats said the G8 countries were debating the wording of a statement on Iran for Thursday's foreign ministers' session in Moscow, which might give some indication of a desired timetable.

British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett warned on Tuesday of the risk of being sucked into talks about talks.

“What I think there would be some concern about ... if we appeared that we were entering into a period of negotiation about negotiations," she told parliament.

The White House reacted calmly to Khamenei's comments, saying what counted was Larijani's official response to Solana on the European package of political, economic and technological incentives.

Washington has offered to join the EU's talks with Iran if Tehran verifiably suspends all enrichment-related activity.

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ICBL Diplomatic Advisor Visits Lebanon to Urge Early Accession to the Mine Ban Treaty

International Campaign to Ban Landmines, 23 June 2006, www.icbl.org

Can Lebanon become a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty before the 8th Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty, which is likely to take place in the Middle East - one of the regions with the lowest rates of adherence in the world - in 2007? The signs are encouraging, as the ICBL Diplomatic Advisor Satnam Singh found out over three days of remarkably high level meetings.

In an effort to promote the universalization of the Mine Ban Treaty in the Middle East and North Africa, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines conducted a high level visit to Lebanon from 14 to 16 June. This followed encouraging signals from key figures in the country in late 2005 and early 2006, indicating that Lebanon is seriously looking at joining the Ottawa Treaty. The ICBL decided in favor of the mission with the hope that the visit would contribute to speeding up the process, leading to Lebanon's accession to the Treaty by next year, if not earlier, when the Eighth Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty is due to take place in neighboring Jordan..

Mr. Satnam Singh, ICBL Diplomatic Advisor was in Beirut for three days and had a series of meetings with high ranking officials and key national leaders, organized by the LandminesResourceCenter at the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Balamand (LMRC).

Meetings were held at an exceptionally high level, including with the Lebanese Prime Minister H.E. Mr. Fouad Seniora, H.E. Mr. Fawzi Salloukh, Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Chief of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General. Michel Sleiman, In addition Mr. Singh met deputies from the Lebanese Parliament including Mr. Ali Bazzi in representation of the Speaker of the House, H.E. Mr. Nabih Berri who was out of the country on State business.

Political leaders in Lebanon seemed very supportive of the Mine Ban Treaty. No one viewed landmines as a "military necessity" and they all claimed Lebanon never used landmines. They linked their position to tensions with Israel, lamenting that mines had been planted by Israeli forces in the Lebanese territory and that Israel was not forthcoming in handing over maps of minefields, nor did it show signs of wanting to ban the use of landmines. Mr. Singh, however, advised Lebanese decision makers to consider accession to the Mine Ban Treaty independently of the position of their neighbors, viewing it purely as a humanitarian issue. Nobody, after all, knows the humanitarian consequences of the use of landmines better than the Lebanese people, who have undergone so much suffering because of these weapons.

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Mr. Singh also visited different mined areas in Lebanon and had a closer look at how non-governmental organizations are coping with providing assistance to the victims. There are indeed local capacities in this regard, but they need international fiscal assistance in order to meet the huge needs of survivors, especially in view of the Government's lack of requisite resources. Mr. Singh was able to meet with people and communities from different political, ideological, social, and confessional backgrounds.

As Prime Minister Siniora said, the visit of Mr. Singh was timely. Hopefully, it would be only a matter of short time before the inter-ministerial discussions in the Lebanese Government lead to Lebanon's accession.

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NZ Cash to Shut Russian Reactor

The New Zealand Herald, 26 June 2006, www.nzherald.co.nz

New Zealand is contributing $500,000 to a United States-led project to shut down one of Russia's last Soviet-era nuclear reactors.

New Zealand and the Unted States will today sign a memorandum of understanding which will result in both countries helping Russia to permanently shut down a plutonium-producing nuclear reactor at Zheleznogorsk.

U.S. ambassador William McCormick said both New Zealand and the United States recognized that the three remaining plutonium production reactors in Russia constituted a proliferation threat.

Disarmament and Arms Control Minister Phil Goff said the Zheleznogorsk reactor was old and produced enough plutonium as a by-product to create one nuclear weapon a week.

"The reactor is also unsafe. According to one expert, the Chernobyl reactor was an improvement on this model," he said.

Mr. McCormick said the shutdown of the reactor at Zheleznogorsk was part of a series of multilateral initiatives the United States was involved in to address non-proliferation, disarmament, counter-terrorism, and nuclear safety issues.

Mr. Goff said the reactor would be replaced with a fossil fuel plant, and New Zealand's contribution would be used to ensure that it met the highest possible environmental standards.

Mr. McCormick said New Zealand and the United States would work with the Russian Government to construct replacement electricity generation capacity.

Mr. Goff said the $500,000 funding was in addition to the $700,000 the country had committed this financial year to a British-led project to destroy chemical weapons at Shchuch'ye in Russia.

The $1.2 million New Zealand was spending this year was part of its contribution to the G8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, he said. This was on top of the $1.2 million New Zealand had committed previously to destroying chemical weapons of mass destruction in Russia.

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Bush Urges All Nations to Halt Illicit WMD Proliferation Trade

U.S. Department of State, 23 June 2006, http://usinfo.state.gov

President Bush welcomed new supporters of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), including those in the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, as 60 PSI partners gathered in Warsaw for a high-level political meeting hosted by Poland.

"I join President Lech Kaczynski in welcoming PSI supporters," Bush said in a June 23 White House statement, commending all attendees for their readiness to deny terrorist and rogue states access to weapons of mass destruction and related materials.

He urged "all responsible states to join this global effort to end the WMD proliferation trade."

Since PSI was launched in Krakow in 2003, the initiative has expanded "from a handful of nations to a global partnership of more than 70 countries from all around the world," the president said.

"Together, we are working to disrupt the financial activities of networks that support proliferation, as called for in United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 1673," Bush said.

"Together, we are shutting down front companies and proliferation networks and interdicting cargo carrying these dangerous materials, whether transported by land, air or sea," the President said.

PSI supporters are in Warsaw to network and identify ways to further enhance their ability to counter WMD proliferation, he added.

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Treaty to Replace START Sought

The Moscow Times, 28 June 2006, accessed via lexis-nexis

President Vladimir Putin called on Russia and the United States on Tuesday to negotiate a new nuclear-arms treaty and urged the Russian diplomatic corps to bolster the nation's global prominence while avoiding confrontation.

Putin's comments outlining the nation's foreign policy, at a biannual address to senior Foreign Ministry officials, also touched on everything from nonproliferation to repatriating ethnic Russians to maintaining influence in the so-called near abroad.

"We call for the renewal of dialogue on key weapons-reduction issues -- proposing first of all to our American partners to launch negotiations on replacing the START treaty," Putin said. The START I treaty, which U.S. and Soviet leaders signed in 1991, set limits on strategic delivery systems for nuclear warheads. START, also known as the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, further mandated verification of strategic arms cuts.

Putin's call for a new nuclear-arms treaty appeared to be an effort to bring back the era of detailed arms reductions, which dates to the Cold War. That era ended in May 2002, when Putin and U.S. President George W. Bush signed the three-page Moscow Treaty, which commits the two countries to cut their nuclear warheads. Cuts specified in the Moscow Treaty are to be verified, as dictated by START. But that verification comes to an end in 2009, when START expires.

Calling Putin's comments a "very significant development," Ivan Safranchuk, head of the Moscow office of the Washington-based Center for Defense Information, said the proposal reflected Kremlin concerns that the Moscow Treaty would be nothing more than a piece of paper once START expires.

"Theoretically, either side would be able to do what it pleases in terms of strategic arms buildup since the verification regime will no longer be in place," Safranchuk said.

Putin, he added, is keen on preserving some semblance of strategic arms parity with the United States. While Bush has had some reservations about entering into protracted arms negotiations, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak has already held talks with senior U.S. diplomats on the issue, Safranchuk said.

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Kevin Ryan, senior research fellow at Harvard University's Belfer Center and a former defense attache at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, said Bush should take advantage of Putin's call for a new treaty.

Ryan noted there was little to be gained from lengthy negotiations, which harken back to the 1970s and 1980s, but that comprehensive treaties were valuable to the security of both countries.

Putin, in his speech, stressed that Russian-U.S. relations were critical to global stability but called for these relations to be based on equality and mutual respect -- reflecting frustrations in Moscow that Washington is convinced of U.S. superiority and routinely flouts world opinion.

Putin said he would oppose any "ultimatums that lead to a deadlock and undermine the authority of the [UN] Security Council," a reference to U.S. efforts to punish Iran for its uranium-enrichment program. And, in another reference to the confrontation with Tehran, he said "dialogue, not isolation of certain states, is the way to solve crises."

The president also struck a decidedly different tone from many foreign-policy hawks in the United States who talk of a "war of civilizations" between the West and Islam. Saying that Russia would not enter any "holy alliances," Putin said Russia supported open communication "between civilizations..."

…Putin did say he supported the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the military-political alliance of former Soviet republics that, with Russia's urging, has cooperated with NATO to fight terrorism and drug trafficking and conduct peacekeeping missions…

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Bulgarian Inspectors Monitor Russia under Open Skies Treaty

ITAR-TASS, 27 June 2006, accessed via lexis-nexis

Bulgarian inspectors are monitoring Russian strategic military facilities under the Open Skies Treaty, a Defense Ministry source told ITAR-TASS on Tuesday.

The inspection will be over on June 29, the source said.

An An-30B based at the Kubinka airfield near Moscow will fly 2,000 kilometers above southwestern Russia.

The Open Skies Treaty was signed in 1992 between 27 countries of Europe, the United States and Canada. Finland, Latvia, Sweden, Lithuania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia joined the treaty in 2002-2003. The instrument verifies the compliance with armament control accords and builds up confidence in the military sphere. It now has over 35 members.

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Russian Experts Start Open Skies Treaty Inspections in Britain

ITAR-TASS, 28 June 2006, accessed via lexis-nexis

Russian experts started their Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty verification mission in Britain on Wednesday.

“Flights are made in order to control military activities in the monitored member states," a Defense Ministry official told ITAR-TASS.

He said a Russian An-30B plane is making flights under the Open Skies Treaty. Russian experts will work for three days. They are allowed to carry out aerial and radar photography of territory in Britain.

Usually, such flights last three to four hours. The plane will make flights from the air base Brize Norton in Oxfordshire.

Twenty-seven European countries, the United States, and Canada signed the Open Skies Treaty in 1992. Finland, Latvia, Sweden, Lithuania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia joined it in 2002-2003. The main purpose of the treaty is to verify compliance with arms control and military confidence-building agreements. The treaty has more than 35 member states and their number continues to grow.

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