

South Asia Analysis Group

Published on *South Asia Analysis Group* (<http://www.southasiaanalysis.org>)

[Home](#) > PAKISTAN's MISSILE DEALS WITH NORTH KOREA

PAKISTAN's MISSILE DEALS WITH NORTH KOREA

Submitted by asiaadmin2 on Mon, 09/24/2012 - 05:52

Paper No. 13

An Analysis

Pakistan's clandestine missile transactions with China have been continuously monitored by the US intelligence community and by the International Relations and Intelligence Oversight Committees of the two Houses of the US Congress. However, the same cannot be said of Pakistan's clandestine missile transactions with North Korea despite the serious threat posed by these transactions, in the short and medium terms, to the security of not only India, but also Japan and South Korea and, in the long term, to the security of Hawaii and Alaska in the U.S.

The threats to the security of Japan, South Korea and the US arise from the fact that Pakistan's transactions have, firstly, placed at the disposal of North Korea the badly-needed foodgrains for its starving population and thereby relieved pressure on the regime from the people, secondly, given North Korea scarce foreign exchange that could be used for the development of inter-continental ballistic missiles capable of hitting targets in Hawaii and Alaska and, thirdly, could enable the world-ostracised North Korean regime, through its co-operation with Pakistan, to benefit indirectly from the sophisticated technologies clandestinely procured by Pakistan from the West.

Pakistan has been paying for its missile deals with North Korea (according to US intelligence estimates, as cited by the NBC TV channel of the US on April 29, it is believed to have bought around 12 NODONG missiles) partly in cash, partly in foodgrains and partly in fertilisers.

The North Koreans are essentially a rice-eating people, but because of the acute starvation conditions, their Government was prepared to accept any kind of foodgrains. Thus, since 1996, Pakistan has been giving to North Korea wheat from its own production and importing wheat from the US to make up for the resulting shortage for its own population. Result: US wheat-farmers have been indirectly and unwittingly contributing to North Korean efforts to develop ICBMs capable of hitting Japan, South Korea and Hawaii and Alaska. The money saved from the Pakistani supply of wheat is being diverted by North Korea to its missile development programme.

It is, therefore, a thousand pities that the US Administration and Congress have recently decided to remove the post-Chagai sanctions on the supply of wheat and bilateral political risk and credit guarantees to Pakistan without insisting on Pakistan coming out clean with details regarding its missile transactions with North Korea and discontinuing these deals.

In contrast, Japan, while following the US example of not opposing an IMF bail-out package for Pakistan to prevent a total economic collapse, has, at the same time, made it clear that any resumption of bilateral economic assistance would depend upon not only Pakistan conforming to the nuclear non-proliferation regimes, but also calling off its clandestine missile transactions with North Korea which, in Tokyo's perception, pose a serious threat to the security of Japan and South Korea.

During a meeting with Sartaz Aziz, the Pakistani Foreign Minister, at the United Nations in September, the Japanese Foreign Minister, Masahiko Komura, was reported to have warned that "we have reliable information that the missile used in the April 1998 launch (Ghauri) by Pakistan was imported from North Korea" and described Pakistan's missile deals with North Korea as "unpardonable". He also reportedly told Aziz that the current sentiment in Japan, particularly in the Diet (Parliament), was against any assistance to importers of missiles from North Korea.

Concerned over the Japanese warnings, Aziz flew to Japan last week and met leaders of not only the Government, but also the Opposition in a futile bid to remove their fears of a possible threat to Japan's security from Pakistan's missile co-operation with North Korea.

Addressing the Foreign Correspondents' Association of Tokyo on November 19, Aziz, while admitting that Pakistan might have imported some missile components from abroad, denied knowledge of any such imports from North Korea. When the Japanese correspondents asked him to name the countries from which Pakistan imported the missile components, if not from North Korea, he declined on the ground that he, as the Foreign Minister, was not in the picture.

The Kyodo news agency of Japan reported that during his talks with Aziz in Tokyo, the Japanese Foreign Minister warned that Japan might re-consider even its decision to support an IMF bail-out package if Pakistan continued to co-operate with other countries in missile development. A Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman told the Press after the talks that the Pakistani Foreign Minister was clearly told that "imports of North Korean missiles were unacceptable from the standpoint of Japan's security."

Reporting on the talks, F.J.Khergamvala (November 20), the Tokyo correspondent of "The Hindu" of Chennai, said: " In September, Japan added to its list of pre-conditions for resumption of assistance to Pakistan the rider that it should not obtain missile-related items of technology from North Korea. The

Obuchi Government is concerned about reverse trade in material and knowhow from Pakistan to North Korea, but it is known to have informed Islamabad that by offering itself as a market for North Korea's missiles, Pakistan is encouraging Pyongyang's efforts to develop missiles of greater consequence and this directly impacts on Japan's national security."

The known missile capability of North Korea is as follows:

- **SCUD A:** A single-stage missile with a range of 300 kms, a payload of 985 kgs and a circular error probability (CEP) of 500 metres, plus or minus. It is 11.25 metres long, with a diameter of 0.9 metres and a fuel load of 4,000 kgs. First tested in 1984. Fully operational and deployed.
- **SCUD B:** It has the same parameters as SCUD A except that it has a range of 320 kms. First tested in 1985. Fully operational and deployed.
- **SCUD C:** A single-stage missile with a range of 550 kms, a payload of 500 kgs and a CEP of 500 metres. It is 12.55 metres long with a diameter of 0.9 metres and a fuel load of 5,000 kilos. First tested in 1990. Operational and deployed.
- **NODONG I:** A single-stage missile with a range of 1,000 kms, a payload of 1,000 Kgs and a CEP of 700 metres. It is 15.5 metres long with a diameter of 1.3 metres and a fuel load of 16,000 kgs. First tested in 1993. Operational and possibly deployed.
- **NODONG II:** A single-stage missile with a range of 1,500 kms, a payload of 1,000 kgs and a CEP of 800 metres. It is 15.5 metres long, with a diameter of 1.3 metres and a fuel load of 16,000 kgs. First tested in 1995. Commenting on the deployment of the NODONG I and II missiles, William Cohen, US Defence Secretary, said on July 10, 1998: "North Korea has completed its development of the NODONG missile, but I am not in a position to comment in terms of when or where or how there has been a deployment of the missile itself. It is of concern, obviously, should it be deployed and we will watch it very closely." Chun Yong-taek, the South Korean Defence Minister, said the same day: "The NODONG is ready to be used. The North Koreans are able to field these weapons when necessary, but when and where they will do this is a question to us also."
- **TAEPO DONG I:** A two-stage missile with an estimated range of 2,000 kms, a payload of 1,000 kgs and a fuel load of 20,000 kgs. These parameters are guesstimates and not yet confirmed. Analysts believe it is actually a combination of NODONG II as the first stage and SCUD C as the second. Believed to have been flight-tested in 1997 and used for the launching of a satellite on August 31, 1998.
- **TAEPO DONG II:** A two-stage missile, still under development. Is expected to have a range of 4,000 to 6,000 kms with a payload of 1,000 kgs. The first stage would be 18 metres long with a diameter of 2.4 metres and the second 14 metres long with a diameter of 1.3 metres.

According to the "Korea Herald" (March 9, 1998) of South Korea, North Korea had exported between 1987 and 1992, 250 missiles worth US \$ 580 million to Iran, Syria and the United Arab Emirates, but since 1993 has been exporting only components to be assembled in the importing countries. The North Korean regime does not deny the export of missiles and missile parts and says that , in view of the difficult foreign exchange situation, it would not be able to stop it unless and until the US-inspired economic sanctions against it are removed and it is compensated for the loss in export earnings.

That the US intelligence community has been warning the US Administration at least since the beginning of 1997 about Pakistan's clandestine missile co-operation with North Korea became evident from a paper of the Congressional Research Service (CRS) released on February 20, 1998, which quoted Gordon Oehler, former head of the CIA's Non-Proliferation Centre, as having stated on November 19, 1997, that Pakistan was developing a 1,500-km –range missile (Ghauri).

Despite this, the US did not take any action to stop the Pakistan-North Korea missile transactions for reasons which are not clear and Pakistan successfully tested the missile on April 6, 1998, It was believed to be none other than NODONG II, given a Pakistani name. The US reaction to the test was surprisingly mild . It merely imposed limited sanctions for two years against the entities involved in the transaction—mainly the Khan Research Laboratories of Kahuta

in Pakistan and the Changgwang Sinyong Corporation of North Korea—with the additional action at the Governmental level directed only against North Korea and not Pakistan.

These sanctions did not deter the two countries from continuing with their co-operation. The "Washington Times" reported on September 14, 1998, that the US intelligence agencies had told the Clinton Administration in mid-June that consignments of missile components for the production of more Ghauris had reached Pakistan from North Korea and that US spy satellites had detected a missile storage site near Kahuta.

The paper quoted Joseph Bermudez, an expert on the North Korean missile programme, as saying: " North Korean—Pakistani missile co-operation dates to the early 1990s and it is continuing, it is significant and it does pose a threat to the stability of South Asia."

A report on threats to US security from foreign missiles prepared by a Congressionally-appointed bipartisan Commission headed by Donald Rumsfeld, former US Defence Secretary, and submitted to a Congressional committee on July 27, 1998, said that Pakistan successfully concealed its missile development programme, particularly the development of the Ghauri missile, in underground facilities not picked up by US spy satellites. The report was alluding to the fact that the CIA was taken by surprise when Pakistan tested the Ghauri on an over-land trajectory from a launching site at Nathwala, near Jhelum, in Pakistani Punjab, whereas the CIA was anticipating the missile to be tested over the sea from Pakistan's usual testing ground on the Balochi coast.]

The Commission said that Russia, China, North Korea, Pakistan and Iran "have made extensive use of underground construction which enables them to do things such as development and storage and, indeed, even launching from underground, hidden site areas." The Commission added: " The Ghauri is a version of the North Korean NODONG missile. We believe Pakistan has acquired production facilities for this missile as well."

The Commission meant that in addition to the production facilities for the M-11 (Pakistan has reportedly named it Tarmuk) acquired from China, Pakistan has also acquired production facilities for NODONG I and II from North Korea.

The Commission also seemed to suspect that since Russia had declined to sell sensitive material to Pakistan which could threaten India's security, North Korea had been procuring from Russia material such as maraging steel required for missile production and passing it on to Pakistan.

Despite all these evidence and warnings, the Clinton Administration has chosen to turn a blind eye to the Pakistan-North Korea missile co-operation. This could destabilise not only South, but also East Asia, as evident from the concerns of Japan and South Korea.

The past reluctance of the Clinton Administration to act against China and Pakistan was attributed to an anxiety that the Administration should avoid any action which might derail its policy of constructive engagement with China. There are no rational grounds for explaining its equal reluctance to act firmly against the Pakistan-North Korea missile deals.

Testifying before a Senate committee on June 11,1998, Gordon Oehler accused the Clinton Administration of covering up evidence regarding China's M-11 deals with Pakistan in order to avoid imposing sanctions against China and Pakistan. One would be reasonable in suspecting a similar cover-up in the case of the Pakistan-North Korea deals.

Recent months have seen the emergence in the community of US intelligence professionals, serving as well as retired, of officers who have been projecting Pakistan as the front-line state in the US battle against international terrorism and calling for the strengthening of co-operation between the intelligence communities of the two countries. But, when they talk of battle against international terrorism, they mean terrorist groups threatening American lives, property and national interests and not groups threatening Indian lives, property and national interests.

The most articulate in this regard has been James Woolsey, former Director of the CIA in 1993-94, who resigned at the end of 1994 following Congressional criticism of his inadequate handling of the case relating to Aldrich Ames, the CIA officer who had worked for many years for the Soviet and Russian intelligence agencies. The "News" of Islamabad (September 7) quoted him as having told a Senate Committee after the US bombing of Afghanistan as follows: "Human intelligence is essential for counter-terrorism and Pakistan has been a key US ally in this regard. However, not only was Pakistan mistreated through the Pressler Amendment and other such laws, but also the US bombing in Afghanistan did not differentiate between the two training camps of the Kashmiris and the other two camps run by Osama Bin Laden." The paper quoted Woolsey as having criticised the Administration for not making a distinction between a friendly State like Pakistan and a terrorist group.

To achieve the easing of US sanctions against Pakistan and to avoid any strong action by the Clinton Administration against the Pakistan-North Korea missile deals, the Nawaz Sharif Government has been projecting itself to the US as a valuable ally in the US fight against international terrorist groups threatening the US. In order not to antagonise the strongly anti-American Islamic fundamentalist groups, which have considerable capacity for violence even inside Pakistan, the Sharif Government has been extending the co-operation covertly, while outwardly maintaining a distance from the US counter-terrorism efforts.

B.RAMAN

22-11-98

(The writer is Additional Secretary (Retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, and presently Director, Institute For Topical Studies, Chennai.)

Category:

Papers [1]

Topics:

WMD [2]

Copyright ©2012. All Rights are Reserved.

Source URL: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper13>

Links

[1] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>

[2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/wmd>