



Missile Defense Briefing Report: No. 195

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Related Categories: Military Innovation; Missile Defense; Europe; Iran

IRAN'S WMD QUEST

A 55-page threat assessment developed by the Belgian, British, French, and German intelligence agencies has warned that Iran is moving ahead in its WMD efforts - including its attempts to build and field a longer range ballistic missile that could reach Europe. Among other revelations, the top secret study, compiled in July 2005 and revealed by London's *Guardian* newspaper on January 4th, notes that Iranian "import requests and acquisitions" for the Islamic Republic's ballistic missile and nuclear programs are being "registered almost daily." According to the assessment, Iran has established an extensive network of front organizations in Europe and the former Soviet Union, and is working through those entities to acquire know-how, training and even technology for its nuclear-, chemical- and biological weapons programs and its ballistic missile arsenal.

TOKYO PLANS SEA-BASED DEFENSES

The Japanese government is planning to purchase 36 SM-3 interceptors from the United States by the end of the decade as part of the evolving missile defense partnership between Washington and Tokyo. The Kyodo news service (January 10) reports that the acquisitions will help enable Japan's deployment of a sea-based missile defense capability built around the Aegis ship warfare system. According to the news agency, a cooperative test of Japan's emerging sea-based defenses is also in the works, and is slated to take place in 2008. The national plan, overseen by the Japanese Defense Agency, calls for an initial operational Aegis anti-missile capability by 2007.

NEW MISSILE DEFENSE MOMENTUM IN NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is moving toward discussions of a "strategic missile defense system," America's top diplomat to the Alliance has disclosed. *Jane's Defence Weekly* (January 11) reports Victoria Nuland, the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, as saying that member states are "beginning a conversation" about the possibility of fielding an Alliance-wide system to defend against long-range ballistic missile attacks. The talks, which are being led by NATO Assistant Secretary General Marshall Billingsley, mark an evolution of Alliance thinking about the ballistic missile threat; until now, NATO members have only agreed upon the need for a tactical, "single-theater" missile defense shield.

THE SUN SETS ON SBIRS

The Lockheed Martin Corporation's troubled Space Based Infrared System (SBIRS), a satellite system designed to provide early warning of missile launches, has suffered another - potentially fatal - setback. Since initially being funded in 1996, the SBIRS program has experienced numerous complications, resulting in a ballooning budget and slipped development timelines. Now, the *Journal of Net-Centric Warfare* (January 9) reports that the U.S. Air Force is scaling back its plans for the project, reducing the planned number of SBIRS spacecraft from five to three or fewer. Simultaneously, the Pentagon reportedly is planning to ask Congress next year for approval to start work on a new, more modern early warning satellite system to replace SBIRS.

DETERRENCE, TAIWANESE STYLE

The Agence France Presse (January 8) reports that Taiwan is responding to the expanding missile threat with a strategic offensive of its own: the development of cruise missiles. The news agency cites *Jane's Defence Weekly* as saying that Taipei is working on three different prototypes of a cruise missile that "will be deployed on mobile land-based platforms" with "production of up to 50 missiles before 2010 and up to 500 missiles after 2010." The Taiwanese cruise missile, dubbed the Hsiung Feng 2E (Brave Wind), will have a range exceeding 600 kilometers (373 miles), allowing Taiwan to "strike as far south as Hong Kong and as far north as Shanghai."

Moreover, Taiwan's Chungshan Institute of Science and Technology, which developed the "Brave Wind," eventually hopes to extend the missile's range to some 1,000 kilometers (621 miles). But such a move would require specialized engine components from the United States, and Washington has so far balked at the technology transfer - a hesitance *Jane's* suggests may be linked to limitations imposed by the Missile Technology Control Regime.