

Obama Administration Knew of Illegal North Korea Missile Technology Transfers to Iran During Talks



North Korean Sohae Launch Station November 2012

Source Space.com

Bill Gertz has a blockbuster expose in today's *Washington Free Beacon* of something we have been hammering away for years: the technology transfer of missile and nuclear technology between North Korea and the Iran, ["North Korea Transfers Missile Goods to Iran During Nuclear Talks."](#) The stunning disclosure was that US intelligence has known about the illegal transfer in violation of UN arms sanctions, as apparently did the Obama Administration. You recall the statement that Undersecretary of State Wendy Sherman made before a Senate hearing in early 2014. Sherman [said](#), "that if Iran can't get the bomb then its ballistic missiles would be irrelevant."

In a March 2014 NER article ["Has Iran Developed Nuclear Weapons in North Korea"](#) In March 2014, we wrote a New English Review article, we interviewed my colleague Ilana Freedman about her sources on Iran North Korean nuclear cooperation. She noted:

According to my sources, Iran began moving its bomb manufacturing operations from Iran to North Korea in December 2012. Two facilities near Nyongbyon in North Pyongan province, some 50 miles north of Pyongyang, have become a new center for Iran's nuclear arms program.

Over the last year, Iran has been secretly supplying raw materials to the reactor at Nyongbyon for the production of plutonium. At a second facility, located about fifteen miles north and with a code name that translates to 'Thunder God Mountain', nuclear warheads are being assembled and integrated with MIRV platforms. MIRVs are offensive ballistic missile systems that can support multiple warheads, each of which can be aimed at an independent target, but are all launched by a single booster rocket. Approximately 250-300 Iranian scientists are now reported to be in North Korea, along with a small cadre of IRGC personnel to provide for their security.

According to the reports, the Iranian-North Korean collaboration has already produced the first batch of fourteen nuclear warheads. A dedicated fleet of Iranian cargo aircraft, a combination of 747's and Antonov heavy-lifters, which has been ferrying personnel and materials back and forth between Iran and North Korea, is in place to bring the assembled warheads back to Iran.

Gertz's *WFB* reported:

Since September more than two shipments of missile parts have been monitored by U.S. intelligence agencies as they transited from North Korea to Iran, said officials familiar with intelligence reports who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Details of the arms shipments were included in President Obama's daily intelligence briefings and officials suggested information about the transfers was kept secret from the United Nations, which is in charge of monitoring sanctions violations.

While the CIA declined to comment on these allegations claiming classified information, others, Gertz queried said that "such transfers were covered by the Missile Technology

Control Regime, a voluntary agreement among 34 nations that limits transfers of missiles and components of systems with ranges of greater than 186 miles.”

One official said the transfers between North Korea and Iran included large diameter engines, which could be used for a future Iranian long-range missile system.

The United Nations Security Council in June 2010 imposed sanctions on Iran for its illegal uranium enrichment program. The sanctions prohibit Iran from purchasing ballistic missile goods and are aimed at blocking Iran from acquiring “technology related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.”

U.S. officials said the transfers carried out since September appears to be covered by the sanctions.

In a June 2014 [Iconoclast post](#) we drew attention to Iranian/North Korean joint development of large rocket boosters sufficient to loft nuclear MIRV warheads and the likelihood that Iran might have that capability within a few years. In June 2014, *The Algemeiner* [reported](#) an Iranian official announcing that it possessed a 5,000 kilometer (approximately 3,125 miles) range missile that could hit the strategic base of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean:

“In the event of a mistake on the part of the United States, their bases in Bahrain and (Diego) Garcia will not be safe from Iranian missiles,” said an Iranian Revolutionary Guard adviser to Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Majatba Dhualnuri.

Gertz cites 2009 State Department Classified [cables](#) revealed by Wikileaks confirming the Freedman analysis:

North Korea also supplied Iran with a medium-range missile called the BM-25 that is a variant of the North Korean Musudan missile.

“This technology would provide Iran with more advanced missile technology than currently used in its Shahab-series of ballistic missiles and could form the basis for future Iranian missile and [space launch vehicle] designs.”

“Pyongyang’s assistance to Iran’s [space launch vehicle] program suggests that North Korea and Iran may also be cooperating on the development of long-range ballistic missiles.”

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