

China Arming Iran With Advanced Missile Technology

Missiles For Iran And Threats To America

By Charles R. Smith

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While China publicly states that it is not a threat to U.S. national security, dangerous actions taken by the Chinese government are putting America and her allies at risk.

China is arming Iran with advanced missile technology. Recent Iranian missile tests highlight the close working relationship between Beijing and Tehran.

While Chinese diplomats in the U.N. talk of finding peace with a nuclear Iran, the People's Liberation Army is rapidly provided Tehran with advanced weaponry.

Iran demonstrated its newfound missile technology from China by test-firing a new anti-ship missile during recent military exercises. The shore-launched firing of a C-701 anti-ship missile was carried out by Iran during the large-scale war games. Iranian reports described the test-firing of a "Kosar" missile during the games.

China Precision Machinery Import-Export Corp. (CPMIEC) has been working for two years with its Iranian counterpart, the Aerospace Industries Organization, developing a radar-guided variant of the C-701 cruise missile. The radar-guided C-701 is designated "Kosar" by Iran.

The Iranian test is the first demonstration of a radar-guided C-701, giving the small missile the capability to search and lock onto a target ship without direct control. CPMIEC sources claim the new C-701/Kosar is equipped with an advanced millimeter-wave radar seeker that can provide high-resolution target imagery, allowing the missile to identify its target and select a specific impact point.

In addition, Iran also fired an air-launched version of the Chinese C-802 cruise missile, named "Noor" by Iran. The launch platform was believed to be a Russian Mil-17 helicopter.

The C-802 anti-ship missile was developed by China HaiYing Electro-Mechanical Technology Academy (CHETA), also known as 3rd Aerospace Academy, located in the southwest suburbs of Beijing. The C-802 is powered by a turbojet with paraffin-based fuel and carried a 363-pound high-explosive warhead. The turbojet gives the sea-skimming weapon a range of over 100 miles. The missile could pose a threat to major warships including U.S. aircraft carriers.

Iran also demonstrated a modified Shahab-3 ballistic missile, vaguely described by Tehran as having stealth capabilities and multiple warheads. Instead, the weapon appears to have been equipped with decoy or dummy warheads designed to confuse anti-missile defense such as Patriot or the Israeli Arrow system.

The Chinese missile proliferation to Iran has brought sanctions against some of the specific PLA-owned companies involved. However, the Bush administration officially gave the Chinese government a waiver against broader sanctions that should have been imposed due to the weapons sales to Iran.

China has previously been sited as the source of missile, nuclear, chemical and biological weapons sales to Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Pakistan, North Korea and Libya. In one case, detailed Chinese blueprints of an atomic bomb were turned over to U.S. intelligence officials by Libya. Libya has since abandoned its WMD projects and has invited U.S. and European allies to help dismantle its nuclear and chemical weapons programs.

Chinese President Hu Jintao is scheduled to visit President Bush in Washington, D.C., on April 20. The proliferation issue is not scheduled for discussion between Bush and Hu.

Port Insecurity

Meanwhile, another national security issue involving China is nearing the boiling point. The Bush administration selected Hong Kong-based Hutchison Whampoa to operate a U.S.-made nuclear weapons detection system at a container ship port in the Bahamas.

Hutchison Whampoa is documented as being closely linked to the Chinese government, and the China Ocean Shipping Company (COSCO) is the official flag carrier of the Chinese government. Hutchison has exclusive rights to and control of all Chinese ports south of Guangzho.

However, a recent failure has brought the capability of Chinese port security operations into question. Twenty-two illegal Chinese immigrants managed to make it to America inside a container loaded

onto the MV Rotterdam, a COSCO ship.

The Rotterdam arrived at Seattle's Harbor island with a 40-foot metal container filled with 18 men and four women. The illegal immigrants were caught by an unarmed guard and a local truck driver moments after they freed themselves from the container.

According to a report by Brad Knickerbocker of The Christian Science Monitor, the discovery showed "just how easy it would have been to load that 40-foot metal box aboard the MV Rotterdam, a vessel of China Shipping Line, with a weapon of mass destruction."

"If this was a chemical weapon exploding in Seattle, the plume could contaminate the rail system, Interstate 5 and SeaTac Airport, not to mention the entire downtown business and residential district," stated Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash.

It is no coincidence that Hutchison Whampoa operates all the main terminals in Shanghai; Hanghuabang, Jungonglu, Baoshan, the Waigaoqiao Terminal and the Shanghai Mingdong Container Terminal. Hutchison and COSCO are so closely linked that the Hong Kong company has a virtual exclusive contract to handle all loading and security.

The MV Rotterdam incident highlights the poor security and often corrupt activities associated with COSCO. COSCO has been linked in the past by U.S. intelligence agencies to illegal smuggling and international arms trafficking. COSCO ships have carried weapons to Iran, Iraq and Cuba.

COSCO Ships

James Mulvenon, a China analyst with the RAND Corporation, said that the Chinese Communist Party's military organ approved establishment of COSCO as an arm of the Chinese navy in 1985.

Mulvenon stated in his book "Soldiers of Fortune" that COSCO's establishment "legitimized the use of navy ships for civilian shipping and thus provided a legal cover for the navy's smuggling."

According to Mulvenon, the Chinese navy was linked in 1985 to illegal smuggling in foreign cars, vans, TVs and VCRs out of Hainan island in the South China Sea.

On March 18, 1996, undercover Customs and BATF agents accepted delivery of guns smuggled aboard the COSCO ship Empress Phoenix. The undercover agents had lured the Chinese into making a trial shipment of Chinese machine guns, as part of an ongoing sting

operation dubbed "Dragon Fire."

The Chinese representatives of China North Industries and Poly Technologies made it clear to the undercover agents that everything in the PLA inventory was available for sale, from grenade launchers to shoulder-fired Red Parakeet surface-to-air missiles.

Federal agents unpacked COSCO crates containing 2,000 Poly Technologies AK-47s delivered from the hold of the Empress Phoenix. It was the largest seizure of fully operational automatic weapons in the history of U.S. law enforcement.

In 1998, U.S. intelligence agencies tracked a COSCO freighter from Shanghai to Karachi, Pakistan, with a load of weapons-related goods, including specialty metals and electronics used in the production of Chinese-designed Baktar Shikha anti-tank missiles.

On April 12, 2001, the Vancouver Sun reported that the sound of laughter alerted crew members of the COSCO ship Pretty River to the presence of what turned out to be two containers of Chinese being smuggled into the country at the retired navy base at Long Beach, Calif.

New Policy Needed

These samples of Chinese shipping security do not give one a warm fuzzy feeling about allowing Hutchison Whampoa to protect America against nuclear weapons smuggled on board a COSCO ship. The Bush administration should reconsider its decision to select Hutchison and assign the task to U.S. officials either in Homeland Security or the Coast Guard.

In addition, President Bush should confront Chinese President Hu with the facts. The continued Chinese missile proliferation and poor security measures threaten the entire globe. The Bush policy of "look the other way" will not protect America nor will it bring peace between the U.S. and China.

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