

## Newsmax

# North Korea Tests 'Super-EMP' Nuke

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**By: Ken Timmerman**

Gary Samore, a top Obama administration national security official, warned of new sanctions if North Korea conducted a third round of nuclear tests on Monday, as reports surfaced that North Korea has miniaturized its nuclear warheads so they can be delivered by ballistic missile.

North Korea's last round of tests, conducted in May 2009, appear to have included a "super-EMP" weapon, capable of emitting enough gamma rays to disable the electric power grid across most of the lower 48 states, says Dr. Peter Vincent Pry, a former CIA nuclear weapons analyst and president of EMPact America, a citizens lobbying group.

Samore, who handles arms control and non-proliferation issues, warned that "additional strong sanctions will be imposed on the North with the support of Russia and China."

North Korea's nuclear tests have been dismissed as failures by some analysts because of their low explosive yield. But Dr. Pry believes they bore the "signature" of the Russian-designed "super-EMP" weapon, capable of emitting more gamma radiation than a 25-megaton nuclear weapon.

Pry believes the U.S. intelligence community was expecting North Korea to test a first generation implosion device with an explosive yield of 10 to 20 kilotons, similar to the bomb the U.S. exploded over Nagasaki in 1945. He said, "So when they saw one that put off just three kilotons, they said it failed. That is so implausible."

The technology for producing a first generation implosion weapon has been around since 1945, and is thoroughly described in open source literature.

South Korean defense minister, Kim Kwan-jin, told his country's parliament on Monday that North Korea had succeeded in miniaturizing its nuclear weapons design, allowing them to place a nuclear warhead on a ballistic missile.

His analysis coincided with Congressional testimony in March by Lt. Gen. Ronald L. Burgess, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, who stated that North Korea "may now have several plutonium-based warheads that it can deliver by ballistic missiles."

The Soviet Union conducted an atmospheric test of an EMP weapon in 1962 over Kazakhstan whose pulse wave set on fire a power station 300 kilometers away and destroyed it within 10 seconds.

Such a weapon — equal to a massive solar flare such as the "solar maxima" predicted by NASA to occur in 2012 — poses "substantial risk to equipment and operation of the nation's power grid and under extreme conditions could result in major long term electrical outages," said Joseph McClelland of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Senate testimony last month.

Pry said that a group of Russian nuclear weapons scientists approached him in 2004 when he served as staff director of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack, to warn the United States that the technology to make that weapon "had leaked" to North Korea, and possibly to Iran.

"They told us that Russian scientists had gone to North Korea to work on building the super-EMP weapon," Pry told Newsmax. "The North Koreans appear to have tested it in 2006 and again in 2009."

North Korea's main partner in its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs is Iran. Dr. William Graham, chairman of the Commission to Assess the Threat to the United States from Electromagnetic Pulse (EMP) Attack, warned Congress three years ago that Iran had conducted missile launches in an EMP mode, detonating them high in the atmosphere.

Read more on Newsmax.com: "[U.S. Intel: Iran Plans Nuclear Strike on U.S.](#)"

Rep. Trent Franks, R-Ariz., has introduced legislation known as the SHIELD Act that would require U.S. utilities to harden large transformers and other key elements of the nation's power grid to protect them from a devastating EMP attack or a geomagnetic storm.

The House last year passed a similar measure by unanimous consent, but the bill died in the Senate, where Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D, N.M., and Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Ariz., the chair and ranking member of the Senate Energy Committee, insisted that the threat from cyberattack was more dangerous than the possibility of an EMP strike or a solar flare.

John Kappenman, the chief science adviser to the EMP commission, believes it would require just \$1 billion to harden an estimated 5,000 power transformers around the country to shield them from the impact of an EMP-like event.

"We built this infrastructure without any awareness of this threat," he told Newsmax. "We have no design code that takes this threat into account. We've been doing everything to design the grid to make it greatly more coupled, and therefore more vulnerable, to this threat."

He compared the national power grid to a series of giant skyscrapers, "and only now we've discovered that it's located on a big fault line."

President Obama's science adviser, John Holdren, warned in a March 10, 2011 Op-Ed co-authored with his British counterpart of the potentially catastrophic impact of a solar maxima event in the next 12 to 18 months.

"Space weather can affect human safety and economies anywhere on our vast wired planet, and blasts of electrically-charged gas traveling from the Sun at up to 5 million miles an hour can strike with little warning," Holdren wrote. "Their impact could be big — on the order of \$2 trillion during the first year in the United States alone, with a recovery period of 4 to 10 years."

Rep. Trent Franks, who authored the SHIELD Act, warned of "catastrophic consequences" should Congress fail to act.

"The U.S. society and economy are so critically dependent upon the availability of electricity that a significant collapse of the grid, precipitated by a major natural or man-made EMP event, could result in catastrophic civilian casualties," he said. "This vulnerability, if left unaddressed, could have grave, societal altering consequences."