

Center for American Progress
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OPERATOR: Good day, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the U.S.-Russia Nonproliferation conference call. All lines have been placed on a listen-only mode. If you would like to submit a question at any time, you would have to wait until the question and answer session towards the end of the conference.

If you should require assistance throughout the conference, please press star zero.

At this time, it is my pleasure to turn the floor over to your host, Adam Blickstein. Sir, the floor is yours.

ADAM BLICKSTEIN, PRESS SECRETARY, NATIONAL SECURITY NETWORK: Thank you very much. I'd like to thank everyone for joining us, the National Security Network and the Center for American Progress, on our conference call previewing the upcoming U.S.-Russia nuclear talks as well as discussing Korea's nuclear ambitions.

As most folks know, next week President Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev meet in Moscow to restart (ph) critical nuclear arms control talks. And most other topics they'll be discussing, a replacement for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START. And looming over these talks are North Korea's nuclear ambitions with the regime. Of course, on the wake of May's (ph) reported nuclear tests, threatening to launch a missile towards Hawaii over the July 4th weekend.

To talk about these issues and some other topics of nonproliferation and U.S.-Russia relations as well as North Korea are Samuel Charap, Fellow at the Center for American Progress who focuses on Russian politics and the U.S.-Russian relations, Paul Carroll, who's a Program Director at Ploughshares Fund who focuses on North Korea's nuclear challenge, and he also recently spent some time in North Korea where he held meetings with various officials from the regime, and also Andrew Grotto who's a Senior National Security Analyst at the Center for American Progress, and he specializes in U.S. nuclear weapons policy and in nuclear nonproliferation policy.

So on behalf of the National Security Network and the Center for American Progress, I'd like to thank everyone for being on the call and turn the floor over to Samuel for some opening remarks.

SAMUEL CHARAP, FELLOW, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS: Thanks, Adam. Before I start, I just wanted to mention that the Center has a new report on U.S.-Russia policy coming out tomorrow which contains a strategy and new policy recommendations for the administration. The launch is tomorrow at 10, and it will be live – broadcast live on the American Progress site. It will feature – the launch event will feature Former Secretary of Defense Bill Cohen and John Podesta will be giving the introduction.

So I'm going to focus on the summit broadly. But first I'd like to give a bit of a prehistory of sort of how we got to where we are. The Obama Administration inherited a relationship in Patters (ph). Disagreements had spiraled out of control and the two countries were barely on speaking terms.

Russian actions were certainly central to this deterioration, especially the August war in Georgia last year. But Bush Administration policy was also an important factor in the decline. Basically the Bush Administration neglected Russia policy. It saw Russia as a function of other foreign policy priorities and ended up sort of lacking a Russia strategy in itself. So that ended up allowing the relationship to deteriorate towards the end of Bush's presidency.

The Obama Administration's approach thus far – which has been encapsulated in of course the infamous reset button – basically was a tactic designed to improve the toxic atmosphere in the relationship that it inherited. In other words, to create an environment that would allow the two countries to discuss issues of shared interest and to manage disagreements.

And up to this point it's been a relative success. We saw this most vividly at the meeting in London between the two presidents, Obama and Medvedev, in April, and the joint statement that they released which outlined over 20 initiatives

for joint cooperation and in the active START negotiations that have been going on since April. And there have been disagreements in the interim, but they have not spiraled out of control.

Of course, the summit will be the real test of the reset. And I think at this point the administration would like to move from atmospherics to concrete deliverables – or in other words, take the reset and turn it into a new operating system. I think there's a desire on both sides to do that.

But Russia, of course, remains a difficult partner. Our interests diverge, especially in the former Soviet region where Russia declares that it wants to establish a sphere of privileged interest. And our relationship generally will always be a mixture of competition and cooperation.

So on to the summit. President Obama will be visiting on July 6 to 8. He'll meet with both Prime Minister Putin and President Medvedev. The main point here is that the agenda will be relatively traditional for U.S.-Russia and U.S.-Soviet relations that is a heavy focus on security.

Clearly the number one priority is START, strategic arms reduction treaty, negotiating a replacement for it. It is a cornerstone of the arms control regime and expires in December. The presidents are expected to approve a framework to guide negotiations going forward. And my colleague, Andy Grotto, will get into the details.

Other – the other top priority will be nonproliferation. The presidents I think had expected to talk a lot about Iran. But given the political situation there, I don't think that will be sort of headline coming out of the summit. Perhaps there will be a discussion of the S300 (ph) surface to air missiles failed (ph) that Russia had planned but then postponed – sale to Iran, that is. It still has not made a definitive decision, and I imagine the U.S. will pressure Russia to do so.

And then there will be other nonproliferation initiatives to fit in with the Obama Administration's goal of securing weapons materials.

A third security issue will be Afghanistan. And we hear now that Russia may allow military cargo transport through its territory. It already allows civilian transport. But – and this could prove very important for the U.S. in terms of getting material to Afghanistan.

There are also signs that there might be a military-military cooperation agreement, which would be a major step forward given that at the end of the Bush Administration all bilateral military ties were cut off. And there will be discussion in North Korea, I'm sure, and Paul will elaborate on that.

There of course will be discussion of ballistic missile defense. I imagine that the two presidents will try to focus on the positive here and specifically on the Russian proposal to include a – their station in Azerbaijan at Gobolev (ph) and the American idea of stationing installations on Russian territory. But I wouldn't be surprised if the Russian side raised yet again its objections to the U.S. plans to install – to station installations in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Some non-security issues that will be on the agenda include discussion of the economic crisis. I imagine they're going to agree to disagree on Georgia but call for restraint. The presidents are also scheduled to attend a business forum, a U.S.-Russia business forum, and a civil society summit. President Obama will also speak at the graduation ceremony of the new economic school, University of Moscow.

But the upshot is that the major focus is going to be on arms control and that there are going to be relatively other – a few other deliverables. But the positive tone will be a sign that the overall atmosphere for the relationship continues to improve and that this in the future will allow for cooperation on other issues.

The policy recommendations in the Center's report are intended to broaden and deepen this agenda. In the months following the summit, the administration should try to expand the agenda beyond the traditional security focus to include such issues as climate change and energy efficiency, arctic-related problems, and try to engage with Russia in the former Soviet region.

And tomorrow morning the report will be available at our Web site, americanprogress.org. Thank you.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thanks. And Paul, if you want to go ahead.

PAUL CARROLL, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, PLOUGHSHARES FUND: Absolutely. Thank you. Two things to preface this because the call is also about the upcoming Russian summit. And of course I'm here to talk about North Korea partly because the North Koreans have shown a real talent at, in some cases, stealing the headlines.

The early April missile launch during President Obama's Prague speech and European trip really seized the headlines in a way that was frustrating for many of us in the nuclear and security community. And there's a lot of, I guess, anticipation that a similar occurrence may occur over this next holiday weekend.

But it is important to link the issues. Of course there's a broad fabric of national security and nuclear arms control agendas running across the U.S.-Russian summit and North Korea, Iran, and so forth. So what I wanted to do today was a couple of things. One is to address what I see as the nature of the threat from North Korea and give my assessment of the response so far from the Obama Administration and from the international community, but then also suggest what we need to be doing as sort of next steps.

The nature of the threat, really I think what we need to keep our eye on is the fact that the fundamental nature of the threat from North Korea has not changed. We have not seen a quantum leap in their missile capacity. We have not seen a quantum leap in their very rudimentary nuclear weapons capacity. Yes, they conducted a second test in late May. But that test is still – the jury is out. It seems like it was perhaps two to four kilotons, but that is not quite known yet.

Meanwhile, they still only have somewhere between 30 to 50 kilograms of separated plutonium which is good for somewhere between perhaps six to eight quote/unquote bomb's worth of material.

Now they have ejected EI (ph) inspectors. They have removed the Department of Energy team that was at their Yonghong (ph) nuclear facility, and so all signs are that they plan to sort of go back to the drawing board and begin irradiating and separating more plutonium. But even that is limited. They can only generate at most about one bomb's worth a year of plutonium.

This is essentially where we were a couple of years ago. So I think it's important to maintain the facts on the ground, which are yes, the North Korean situation is serious. It is an international threat. But the main threat is the risk of transfer of technology, of skill, of assistance (ph), as we saw for example in Syria and the relationship they have with Iran on missile transfers.

Secondly, the recent provocations and activities I think have been more about their internal dynamics and the succession question. I won't call it a succession crisis because I think that's inaccurate. It's definitely a primary concern of theirs and should be something that we keep our eye on as well.

But similar to the Iranian elections and their aftermath, I think we need to be fairly cognizant of the limits of what U.S. behavior can do. In a way I think there's a certain element of their missile test in April and then their nuclear detonation in May that almost said you know keep away.

Many analysts will say this was their effort to get our attention. You know we've forgotten them, we've ignored them. And I think there's some merit to that, but I also think that there is a double-edged sword here. They need to – as you know many have said and I agree with – they need to show that they are strong. They need to rally the troops, so to speak, internally.

And Kim Jong-il, it's very questionable what his longevity is going to be. But I think it would be premature to say this is going to be imminent. So it is about internal dynamics, and it is somewhat to a lesser extent about the dynamics of the U.S. relationship and their sort of ability to get away with what they can but also get our attention to an extent.

Now secondly, the response. I do believe that the Obama Administration has done a number of good things. They have not taken the bait in terms of over-reacting or hyping the threat that the missile launch in April and the nuclear test in May presented. I think the statements from the administration were right that this is not something that you know oh my god, we've got to do something dramatic and right away or the whole world's going to war. That's not the case.

However, the sanctions approach, which has been pursued pretty aggressively by the Obama Administration, has very strong limits. And I think we've almost reached those limits now. As one of my colleagues has said you know we only have so many hours in that quiver. And we're pretty much down to maybe only one or two left.

But beyond that they're not very effective arrows. I've noticed some quotes in recent stories where administration officials are quoted as saying the new ambassador in charge of sanctions, they want someone who's thinking about sanctions implementation 24 hours a day. But what I didn't see is the word effective. They're not thinking so much about the long term effectiveness or success of sanctions. And it's extremely limited.

Personally I think the sanctions drum is more about domestic political pressures. And the Obama Administration understandably seeing that they can't be seem to be doing nothing. And it's also somewhat about keeping the other five parties in the six-party process more or less on the same page. I think it's almost a way to see to what extent China is willing to push on the North. And perhaps, given that we're talking about the U.S.-Russian summit, to what extent Russia can be kept on the same page and perhaps play a more active role in this issue. They've been pretty much behind the scenes in the whole last several years on the six-party talks.

Now finally I'll talk about the need, what I see as our need. I think that we've been very much engaged in tactics and less so on strategy. By that I mean we've been talking about – or the administration has been focused on – what do we do now? They just detonated another weapon. What's our response? And what do we do this weekend if they launch another missile?

And while those are valid questions, those are the trees and we've lost sight of the forest. The forest is the overall strategy. What is our objective? What is our ultimate goal with North Korea?

And I think the answer correctly is yes, we need to denuclearize the Korean peninsula, North Korea, but we also need to recognize that from their perspective, this means a broader strategic engagement and relationship with the West and particularly with the United States. And those things often get dropped off the agenda or off the discussion. We need to not mistake negotiating tactics with strategic planning.

And so what do we do? Well, I think we're beginning to see some steps. Kurt Campbell was recently confirmed by the Senate. And he will be the Secretary of State for East Asia, which is great. However, the bench is pretty thin.

Stephen Bosworth was appointed as the special envoy several months ago, and that's great. But the optics of it are not that persuasive not only to people like me but I think to the outside world. Stephen Bosworth, as excellent as he is, is technically a part-time special envoy. He maintains his position at Fletcher School, and I think that's fine. But what does that look like to the outside world? The recent humanitarian or human rights ambassador is a full-time position.

So I think that we are short-changing our strategic planning team and our policy team. We need to get back on the tracks with the longer-term strategy and engagement and be more proactive about what we should be doing. Instead of saying what do we do when they do this, we need to be saying what does the U.S. do now to forestall a missile launch and to bring them back, bring the North Koreans back to the negotiating table.

So I'll leave it at that.

BLICKSTEIN: Hey, thanks, Paul. Appreciate it. And Andrew, if you want to go.

ANDREW GROTTTO, NATIONAL SECURITY ANALYST, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS: Sure thing. I'm Andy Grotto, Center for American Progress. Thank you all for joining us.

I'm going to be pretty brief because I know that I'm sure you guys have a lot of questions to ask. So I just want to put a few ideas on the table.

So what would a successful summit look like? You know the two sides we're dancing around are arms control and a whole suite of proposed areas for bilateral cooperation now since last spring at Soci (ph). So from my perspective, the summit is a success if they finally get to first base and announce a concrete action plan for replacing START.

Another point I want to leave you with is you know so the United States, arms control has become something like a war shack (ph) test for the broader U.S.-Russian relationship. You know Samuel pointed out the U.S.-Russian relationship is characterized by both cooperation and competition, always has been, probably always will be. The fact is the two sides have a common interest in some areas but conflicting interests in other areas.

For those who see Russia primarily as a necessary, those decidedly and perfect partner, arms control looks like an ideal vehicle for the United States and Russia to define the relationship in the 21st Century. For those who see Russia primarily as a menacing competitor, arms control looks like an unnecessary distraction.

I tend to fall pretty squarely in that first camp. You know from my perspective arms control is the one area in the bilateral relationship where the two countries not only have enduring common interests but literally decades of experience with each other.

Now to be sure, the two sides haven't done serious arms control since the late 1980s, early 1990s. I mean negotiations for the SORT treaty, the Moscow treaty, were pretty straightforward in large part because the two sides didn't try to come up with a new verification regime so it simply adopted the START agreements provisions. So there's going to be a learning curve.

Negotiations will take time, particularly when you consider you know the complexity of the issues. But I actually think this learning curve is healthy because it will force the two sides to be creative and hopefully even serve as a firewall to cold war-like thinking.

Why don't I stop there and happy to take questions.

BLICKSTEIN: Thanks, Andy. Appreciate it. And if the operator wants to open up the floor for questions, that'd be great.

OPERATOR: Thank you. The floor is now open for questions. If you do have a question, please press star one on your telephone keypad at this time. Questions will be taken in the order they are received. If you are using a speakerphone, we ask that while posing your question you pick up your handset to provide favorable sound quality. If at any time your question has been answered, you can remove yourself from the queue by pressing one.

Again, ladies and gentlemen, if you do have a question or comment please press star one on your telephone keypad at this time.

And our first question comes from Ben Feller from the Associated Press. Sir, you may state your question.

BEN FELLER, ASSOCIATED PRESS: Great. Thank you very much. I think this is best for Andrew, but however you'd like to respond. I just wanted to follow up on the point you were making about the summit's a success if the leaders announce a concrete action plan for replacing START. What does that actually mean? What's a concrete action plan? How will we know if it's you know some genuine improvement as opposed to SPIN (ph)? And if they are going to announce it, it would have to be done already, right? Or is there actually some negotiation that might happen on site? Thanks.

GROTTO: Sure. Thank you. I think that you know one thing to look for is how specific are they about counting rules, number of deployed weapons, number of weapons in storage, delivery vehicles, that sort of thing. You know if there are specific numbers, I think that demonstrates that the two sides have gone a long way to reaching a final agreement.

I suspect that most of the hard work is finished, at least in terms of getting START replaced. Now remember, the key thing about START is its verification provisions, the actual count, you know the limits on operationally deployed war heads were superseded by the Moscow Treaty, the SORT treaty.

And so that's sort of the main thing in the Inbox that the administration has to answer.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thanks. I don't know if anyone else wants to chime in or we'll go to the next question. Great. Let's go to the next question.

OPERATOR: OK. And our next question comes from Alexandra Oliner (ph) from the Financial Times. Alexandra (ph), you may state your question.

ALEXANDER OLIMER (ph), THE FINANCIAL TIMES: What exactly is Obama pursuing in the summit? And what would make content satisfy him at the end of the summit? And what would prove defeating for him?

GROTTO: I'm going to defer to my colleague, Samuel.

CHARAP: I think the most important thing he's looking for of course is sending out the framework for START. But I think they'll – the administration wants deliverables on these other security issues. So hopefully there will be announcements on nonproliferation on Afghanistan and other related issues that are on the security agenda.

I think that it will – and both sides are trying to make it a success. So at the end of the day, I would be very surprised if it ended up being a failure because it's not in either side interest for that to happen. I think it would be a defeat, especially if hostilities were to break out in Georgia. Russia is currently conducting a military exercise in the areas of its country that border that region. So clearly that would be a major problem.

But otherwise I – if they do get deliverables, I think that would be – that would be what Obama is looking for.

GROTTO: Yes, just to jump in. This is Andy again. Just to jump in on Samuel's point, I think that the fact that the two sides both want this conference to succeed marks a clear, pretty significant departure from you know the bilateral relationship you know since five, six years ago.

OLIMER (ph): How much do you think Obama would be willing to negotiate on to achieve the type of framework, more specifically to do the missile shield (ph) in Eastern Europe? Would he be willing to sacrifice that?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Yes, I mean I think at this point now you know missile defense in Europe seems to you know be – I mean, I think it's going to die a natural death. I mean you know the Congress has already said that procurement for interceptors is contingent on those interceptors being successfully flight tested in an operationally realistic manner.

Now in plain English what that means is that they have to be proven to work. And we're still a long way away from that. And meanwhile the administration has said pretty clearly that you know the plan for Europe is linked to the Irani missile threat. And so if that threat were to disappear, the Irani missile threat were to disappear, then so would the underlying rationale for missile defense in Europe.

OLIMER (ph): Thank you.

CHARAP: On that point, I think although there have been noises from the Russian general staff and even from the president that a START agreement is contingent on the U.S. making its position clear on the installations in Poland and the Czech Republic, I think they're going to try to avoid that subject at the summit and focus on these two areas where they could cooperate on ballistic missile defense that is the site in Azerbaijan and possible installations on Russian territory.

And I think the idea that there would be a quid pro quo, although it's sort of implicit in some of the Russian statements, is false. That is, I don't think the Obama Administration ever said you know we give you – we'll give up on this and if you give us X in return. That's just not the way diplomacy (ph) works. And I don't think that was what Obama offered Medvedev in that letter that I think has been misinterpreted.

OLIMER (ph): Sorry. Thank you very much. Who was speaking?

CHARAP: That was Sam. Sorry.

OLIMER (ph): OK. Great. Thank you.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thanks. We can go to the next question.

OPERATOR: Our next question comes from Jonathan Weisman from the Wall Street Journal. Jonathan, you may state your question.

JONATHAN WEISMAN, WALL STREET JOURNAL: I'm kind of flabbergasted about what you just said about missile defense because, I mean, everything that we're hearing from Moscow and for more (ph) correspondence in Moscow say that this is a big issue and that the Russians not only want some kind of reassurance about the third (ph) site in Poland and the Czech Republic but they want it in writing. And I'm wondering why you guys suddenly think that this is an issue that can be easily finessed.

The other issue that the Russians are pushing very hard on is NATO expansion and how hard the United States is going to push for inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO. And I'm wondering what you're hearing that the administration or President Obama is willing to offer Medvedev and Putin on NATO issues?

CHARAP: I didn't want to imply – I don't want to imply that – or explicitly say – that the issue can be easily finessed. I just meant to emphasize that I think they're going to focus on the positive. And at a summit like this, having a big public blow up, I mean it may – as they did in London – agree to disagree on that issue.

Clearly it's very important to the Russians. But I don't think it will – that it's in their interest to have a big public blow up at the summit on that issue.

On NATO enlargement, once again, I don't think the Obama Administration will engage in a quid pro quo here. They have demonstrated their commitment to Ukraine and Georgia's long-term Euro-Atlantic integration. They have not made a commitment on NATO membership or even a NATO membership plan in the short term. But they have supported the annual national programs that were passed at the Bucharest summit.

So although this could be another issue that comes up where they agree to disagree – and clearly this is a major issue for the Russians – I don't see the Obama Administration engaging in a quid pro quo.

GROTTO: And I would just add that you know I think it's useful to think of you know the summit is the first step in a longer term process of arms control where these other issues – which as you suggested are hugely important to the Russians. We'll be there (ph).

You know so the goal for next week's summit is to determine what the you know to answer that item in the mail which is START expires at the end of the year. We both want something there to replace it. Let's get that done.

Once that's done, once we've cleared that out of our Inbox, we can then move on to a more ambitious arms control agenda where these other issues – missile defense, NATO expansion, let's not forget tactical nuclear weapons – would all have to be addressed in a systematic way. And that's why you know we have to look at this as a process that will unfold over quite possibly the president's entire first term.

WEISMAN: I mean, do you see anything, any room for a – not a quid pro quo, that's obviously more cut and dry than you know is probably in the offering – but is there any chance that Obama is ready to at least kind of soften the Bush (ph) line in either explicitly or implicitly on both the missile defense and the NATO issues just to ease the tension?

CHARAP: This is Sam again. On NATO, he certainly wouldn't do it in Moscow. That's just – linking our relations with our partners in the former Soviet region with our relationship to Moscow is not something that the administration will do.

WEISMAN: OK.

GROTTO: Yes. On missile defense, I mean I think you know I think the president's already said, as I mentioned in response to the first question, that you know Congress has imposed conditions. Those conditions have to be satisfied as

a matter of U.S. law. And then the president has also said that you know the installations are contingent on or you know are related to Iran, not Russia.

And you know I would add that you know it's not like this is exactly popular in the Czech Republic, for example. I mean you know majorities there are posed to you know to intercept to the radar. So you know a quid pro quo, I don't think the administration will go there. I don't think it should go there. But I don't think it needs to go there either.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thanks. And if anyone has any questions about North Korea and the purported missile launch they're going to fire towards Hawaii this weekend, feel free to ask about that as well. And let's go to the next question.

OPERATOR: And our next question comes from Howard LaFranchi from The Science – The Christian Science Monitor. Sir, you may state your question.

HOWARD LAFRANCHI, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR: Hi. Thanks. That was a good introduction because these questions I think are for Paul about North Korea. First of all, at the summit what specifically might Obama be looking for from Russia? I think we understand that China's kind of a big player there. But what specifically from Russia might he be looking for?

And then also what – going back to what you said, you talked about the administration needing to get on to how to bring the North Koreans back to the negotiating table. But how certain are we that they want to come back to the table?

CARROLL: Well, with Russia I would say there are three things that he could ask or discuss at the summit. The first is simply more active participation. As I said earlier, the Russians have played a fairly minor role during the six-party process over the last several years. They chaired one of the working groups which was not really a throwaway working group but a lesser priority working group on a regional security mechanism. They did hold a meeting or two in Moscow. But compared to the other actors in, as you said, particularly China, Russia has had a smaller role.

So I think discussing Russia's willingness and also what it can bring to bear on the North Korean issue would be something that would be worthwhile to explore. The second thing that's much more concrete actually is getting Russia's help in finding out more about the North Korean missile program. Some recent analyses that were just done on the most recent launch indicate that they probably coddled these things together. They didn't build them all from scratch themselves. That's been their history.

They get some sort of SCUD (ph) technology, maybe even actual rocket motors of Russian construction, not necessarily from the Russian government, mind you, but during the early and mid 90s when the Soviet Union had recently fallen apart and our focus was on nuclear materials, some you know there could have been some transfer and some selling of rockets.

And so I think asking Russia to help investigate that would be useful. Thirdly is Iran. And I mention Iran because Iran and North Korea are tied at the hip in many respect with respect to proliferation. So I think that it's an indirect way of bringing the North Korean issue on to the discussion agenda that that would be useful.

In terms of getting North Korea back to the table, it's a very good question. I think that my answer would be we have to work on the assumption that the North Koreans, as much as their recent activity is very provocative and pushes us away, they still have a broader long-term agenda that has a strategic relationship with the West, and particularly with the U.S., as a fundamental organizing principle of their security.

Kim Il-sung, their great leader, basically said this prior to his death in the early 90s, said you know our future ultimately lies with our ability to strengthen and to some extent normalize that relationship. So we I believe have to act on that assumption, as difficult as it may be. And we have to test that assumption.

And certainly the Bush Administration years did not test that assumption. They turned their back and crossed their arms. And only late in their administration did they decide, oh, we better kind of figure this out.

I think the Obama team recognizes that need. It's tough to do in the immediate term with both two journalists in North Korea as well as the provocative behavior, but we need to keep our eye on the long-term goal.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thanks. Let's go to the next question.

OPERATOR: And our next question comes from Page van der Linden from DailyKos.com. And you may state your question.

PAGE VAN DER LINDEN, DAILYKOS.COM: Hi there. It's actually a follow-up to the missile defense questions. I think you pretty much covered everything there. And my question was just how big a role do you think it will play in the summit? And I do believe you answered that except I'm still wondering if it really will come up and if the Obama Administration will actually solidify what they're going to do with missile defense because as of yesterday – or actually two days ago – Mullen (ph) was talking about that the administration is feeling pretty optimistic about installing a missile defense shield in Poland.

So I'm getting again on the – I just would like some clarification there, some mixed messages here about whether or not it will be discussed and what role it's going to play.

GROTTO: Well, I'm sure it'll be discussed. I think that you know – I mean Samuel was right when he mentioned – when he said that you know one outcome is they agree to disagree. And you know recognizing that this issue, while you know vitally important for the Russians, is not something that is appropriate – you know there's no value added in linking this summit, you know the outcome of this summit to an outcome on missile defense. So I sort of see two parties deferring this you know in the near term.

But like I said you know I think the administration has been pretty clear on this. And you know we'll just have to wait and see.

VAN DER LINDEN: Thank you very much.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thanks. And operator, if you could just remind everyone how to ask a question and then we'll move to our next one.

OPERATOR: OK. And again, ladies and gentlemen, if you do have a question or a comment please press star one on your telephone keypad. And our next question comes from John Doyle from Aviation Week. Sir, you may state your question.

JOHN DOYLE, AVIATION WEEK: Hi. I wanted to kind of follow-up on some of the things that have already been asked and some of the things you gentlemen have said. I guess the first part of my question is what should we look for in terms of reaction or public response by both the U.S. and Russia if the North Koreans do decide to launch a missile over that weekend? What will the tea leaves tell us, depending upon what is said?

CARROLL: Well, my expectation would be if there...

DOYLE: I'm sorry. Who's speaking?

CARROLL: ...it's Paul Carroll. My expectation would be that if there is another launch, another attempt, that – I'll go back to my sort of quiver analogy – there's not a heck of a lot more that can be done. The successful security counsel revolution after the wake of the most recent test I believe is about as close to the goal line as we're going to get in terms of keeping the coalition together.

By that I mean – I mean it's not hard to get South Korea and Japan to sign up to strong sanctions and tow the line, so to speak. It's much tougher to get Russia and China to do so because remember, the China's calculus is different than ours when it comes to their security assessment of North Korea. They can, to some extent, tolerate a nuclear North Korea. They're worried about collapse and refugee flows and so on.

And so if there's a missile launch, my expectation would be we're going to see stronger redirect. We're going to see an attempt to have some improvements or enhancements, I should say, of the margins on the existing resolutions. And by that I mean they will require parties to implement them rather than just suggest that they implement them.

And that could get dangerous. We've seen the recent tracking of the North Korean ship on the high seas, and I could see a scenario where in the weeks after, another test and another security council resolution or something like that plays out a little more actively. And by that I mean shots would be fired.

And so that is extremely treacherous when it comes to actual you know heighten risk of a conflict. But my hope would be that the Obama Administration and the other parties would try to keep their cool. They don't – the North as well doesn't have any quivers left. They only have so many rockets, particularly of a long-range type. I imagine that they're going to – they're going to sort of spend their load pretty soon.

DOYLE: If no one else wants to chime in on that, I wanted to ask you know is either side a winner if the rocket does go up? Does it make a point for either one of them? Or is it a distraction?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: No, I think that's a very good question because, after all, the facts on the ground do matter, whether they succeed in launching a three-stage rocket that actually puts something in the atmosphere. That shows an advancement of their system. And I'll go to my earlier points about the fundamental nature of the risk for North Korea.

These tests are not – you know I don't want to diminish the seriousness of them. But to date they've only attempted three launches over the last you know decade or more. And they've all been failures. But they get a little bit closer each time. So it would matter.

I think a new missile launch; the North frankly has the most to lose. If they have another flameout like they did in 2006, it would be an embarrassment to them. So they've either got to be really confident that they would succeed more than they did in April or they may be playing for something else. And we may not in fact see a missile test. We may see some type of a reproachment (ph) or perhaps the journalist card would be played. There may be some behind-the-scenes arrangement where the two journalists are returned.

So that would be my hope. That would be the rosier scenario obviously.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Actually I've got a quick logistical question, I think, that may be a benefit to some of our people who joined us. A transcript will be available I think in four or five hours after we're done here, I believe. Adam, correct me if I'm wrong. And if any of you are on a deadline in the mean time, just you know feel free to e-mail either NSN (ph) or Cap (ph) and we'll get (ph) your quote cleared in time.

BLICKSTEIN: I'll you know give my contact information at the end of the call. I think we might have a recording. I'm not sure about a transcript. I can send around the recording as well.

Are there any other questions?

SUZI EMMERLING, CENTER FOR AMERICAN PROGRESS: This is Suzi Emmerling from the Center for American Progress. We will have a transcript and audio posted by tomorrow morning for anybody interested in that.

BLICKSTEIN: Perfect. Are there any other questions?

OPERATOR: And this is the operator. We have one more question from Marjorie Miller from the LA Times.

BLICKSTEIN: Perfect.

MARJORIE MILLER, LA TIMES: Hi. I'm sorry if you already addressed this. I've been doing a little bit of multi-tasking here. But on the question of Iran and are we hoping for any Russian moves on Iran at the summit?

CHARAP: This is Sam. I was under the impression that this would be a big topic of discussion until the recent political turmoil in Iran. And I think now it will be almost impossible to sort of have a deliverable given how volatile the situation is there.

However, I would not be surprised if the Obama Administration tries to push Russia to definitively cancel the sale of the S300 (ph) surface-to-air missiles which they were planning on selling to Iran. They have apparently frozen it but it's still sort of dangling out there.

MILLER: And you don't see any kind of linkage or quid pro quo with missile defense in Iran?

CHARAP: Well, like I mentioned earlier I don't think that the Obama Administration is going to be engaged in quid pro quos with Russia, period. So yes.

MILLER: OK. Thank you.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thanks. And if there are no further questions, I'd like to wrap up the call. Are there any other questions or is that about it?

OPERATOR: That about wraps up the question and answer, sir.

BLICKSTEIN: Great. Thank you. Appreciate it. And I'd like to thank everyone for joining us on the call, especially our speakers, Sam, Paul and Andy. And if you have any questions either for me or for Suzi over at the Center for American Progress, you can contact me at 202-289-7113. My e-mail is ABLICKSTEIN@MSNETWORK.ORG and Suzi, if you want to give your contact information, that'd be great.

EMMERLING: Thanks, Adam. This is Suzi Emmerling. If you have any questions for us here, our fellows at Center for American Progress, my phone number is 202-481-8224. And my e-mail address is SEMMERLING@AMERICANPROGRESS.ORG (ph).

BLICKSTEIN: Thanks, Suzi. And if, like I said, if anyone has any follow-up questions or would like to speak to any of these experts, feel free to call myself or Suzi. And thanks everyone again for joining us. And have a good July 4th weekend. Appreciate it. Bye.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Thank you.

OPERATOR: Thank you. This does conclude today's teleconference. We thank you for your participation. You may disconnect your lines at this time, and have a great day.

END