

ENVIRONMENT SCAN – 06 JUL 2015

UNITED STATES Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

How Effective is National Security Strategy of America? The recent report on the National Security Strategy which was presented in U.S. congress by the Chairman, Chief of the Joint Chief of Staff stated that the immediate threat to American security is from the insurgent group from the Middle East. It also cautioned about the threat from some State actors such as Iran, Russia, North Korea and China. The threat it affirms though is minimal but, it is growing as exemplified by their conduct. Russia for example it claims, does not respect the sovereignty of its neighbours and is willing to use force against them. At the same time, Iran's and North Korean pursuit of Nuclear technologies and finally China assertive behavior in the Asia Pacific region are cause of concern and pose challenge to the international community. The report also admits that at present, none of the state actors are seeking direct military conflict with the United States or its allies but nonetheless, they pose security concerns. The other point it highlights is that the future conflict which US may face, would be a long drawn.

As per the report, United States is still the strongest nation with unique advantages by who in technology, energy, alliances and partnership but, its top place is being challenged with proliferation of ballistic missiles, and unmanned systems.

Despite the above description of threat, the focus of current United States, Security Strategy is similar to the strategy of 2010. The 2010 national security strategy issued by Obama made significant departure from the previous security strategies. The first National Security strategy of 2002 which was issued by President George W Bush was essentially interventionist in nature and propagated proactive military stance. It was drafted keeping the realities of time that time in mind particularly, the increase in extremism which had struck the heart of America with 9/11 attack on WTC. The 2010 National Security Strategy on the other hand abandoned military action as the first choice. It advocated partnership and increased engagement to project U.S. global influence by supporting allies and partners and maintaining an all-volunteer force to meet the security call whenever and wherever required. This policy is facing considerable criticism now firstly, due to the current ground reality of the Middle East, where ISIS has become formidable challenge and which strategic experts believe would take long time to defeat. The current military strategy of leading from behind and giving only Air support to Iraqi and Syrian rebel forces to fight ISIS, does not seem to be helping the cause a great deal. This limited action

has rather helped ISIS to establish roots in the region. Similarly, Russian re-emergence and Chinese assertiveness has demonstrated the decline of American hard power. Going by the general response, it seems that US will not realize its enunciated objectives of its National Security Strategy i.e. being able to deter, deny and defeat the state adversaries and being able to disrupt, degrade and defeat the violent extremists organization which actually comes with the prospect of the application of the hard power.

RUSSIA

Col Anadi Dhaundiyal

Spurned by the West, Georgians Look to Russia Despite Past Quarrels. In spite of fighting a brief war with Russia in 2008, the fiercely pro-Western nation of Georgia is witnessing Kremlin regaining toehold. With the West backing away from Georgia's path to E.U. and NATO membership after a year of conflict in Ukraine, pro-Russian sentiments are on the rise, filling the vacuum.

Comments. The Western Nations are wary of further provoking Russia and therefore Western politicians have quashed talks of NATO and the European Union expanding eastward anytime soon. Despite the growing Russian presence, Georgia remains unshakably committed to eventual membership in NATO and the E.U.

Russian Forces 'Practised Invasion of Norway, Finland, Denmark and Sweden'. As per the Uk daily 'The Telegraph of 26 Jun 15, Russian forces rehearsed the invasion of Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark during a military exercise involving 33,000 troops, according to a new study of Baltic security.

The manoeuvres, which allegedly took place in March, assumed that a Western-backed uprising against President Vladimir Putin was taking place in Moscow. Under the scenario posited by the exercise, Russia responded by launching a simulated assault on four regional neighbours.

Comments. Firstly, the western media would like to wargame and seed the idea of a western backed uprising in Moscow. An exercise on such a scenario is never likely to be wargamed with 33,000 soldiers. Secondly,

Finland and Sweden are officially neutral while Denmark and Norway are members of NATO. Norway is not an EU member but has adopted the same sanctions.

US/ NATO/ EU looks at military cooperation with certain states seemingly vulnerable Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. These would justify NATO buildup/ exercises in the region.

Finland has, way back in Sep 14 expressed reluctance in extending sanctions. Finland depends on Russia for 14 percent of its total trade, making it one of the most vulnerable EU states to any counter retaliation by Moscow.

Russia launches cargo ship after two failed missions. A Russian Progress supply craft mounted on a Soyuz-U rocket blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan on 03 Jul 15 and is expected to reach the International Space Station (ISS) on 05 Jul. Two failures in cargo delivery (one Russian in Apr and sec by a Pvt US firm SpaceX had delayed the resupply.

Comments. While Russian Space launch remains unpredictable/ unreliable at times, the US has pvt cos taking on space stn resup. Russia's troubled space industry, including a number of expensive mission failures and a scandal over unpaid wages at a new Vostochny Cosmodrome being built in the far East.

Russia, India Ready to Start Designing New Transport Aircraft. As per Ilyushin Aviation Complex Russia and India are ready to start working on a new multirole transport aircraft, which could conduct its maiden flight as early as in 2019. Russia and India signed an agreement on joint design and manufacturing of the new multirole transport plane in 2007. India has said it would order 45 aircraft, while Russia said it would need 100. The company has indicated that Russia will proceed with the development even if India withdraws from the project since Russia needs this plane.

JAPAN

Col Anadi Dhaundiyal

Japan Joins US-Australia War Games. For the first time 40 personnel from Japan's army – the Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) – will join the American contingent, while more than 500 troops from New Zealand are also involved in the two-week "Talisman Sabre" exercise of duration 5 Jul to 21 Jul. 30,000 personnel from the US and Australia are participating in the exercise.

Comments. Australia has stepped up its relationship with Japan in recent years and last July Abbott described his counterpart, the Japanese prime minister, Shinzo Abe, as “a very, very close friend”.

AFGHANISTAN

Capt (IN) Ranjit Seth

Demonstrators in northern Afghanistan blocked a highway in protest against raid on a village by American troops, which destroyed the weapons depot of a local strongman. It appears that American military is far more engaged in fighting than it's publicly stated 'advisory' role and that it still sees significant threats.

An American military convoy survived a suicide bomb attack in Kabul and faced a second wave of danger from the crowd that accused the soldiers of firing on them. The episode left one soldier wounded and highlighted the lingering frustration with American troops in the country.

McCain: Must Re-assess Afghanistan Troop Withdrawal. U.S. Sen. John McCain during a visit to the country's capital on Saturday said that the ongoing Taliban offensive in Afghanistan demands a reassessment of the Obama administration's current plan to drawdown U.S. forces. He said that Afghan national forces are fighting bravely, but suffering heavy losses in the field. American and international troops have already stopped playing a combat role, remaining as trainers for local forces. The international numbers will be reduced further at the end of 2016. But the U.S. senator (John McCain) said reductions should be based on conditions on the ground.

"With the rise of ISIS and the distinct fighting season that is marked this year, the threat environment continues to evolve in ways that clearly, in my view, demands a reassessment of the administration's current calendar-driven drawdown of U.S. forces with a plan that must be based on conditions on the ground," McCain said.

Afghan forces have struggled to fight off the Taliban since the U.S. and NATO combat mission officially concluded at the end of last year. More than 2,300 Afghan soldiers, police and pro-government fighters have been killed since the start of the year — more than the total number of U.S. troops killed since the 2001 invasion that ended Taliban rule.

Defense Minister Nominee Rejected. Afghan lawmakers rejected President Ashraf Ghani's nominee for Defense Minister, a position that has remained vacant for more than nine months. Masoom Stanekzai received 84 out of the 107 votes needed for parliamentary approval.

Stanekzai's rejection reflects in part a power struggle between Ghani and Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah. Stanekzai, the second nominee put forth by Ghani to be rejected, is also seen by some to be ineffective, based on the chaotic security situation around the country. Stanekzai has been serving as the country's top defense official in an acting capacity. In January, Gen. Sher Mohammad Karimi also failed to get enough votes in parliament. It could be months before a new nominee for the position is put forth.

Pakistan, Afghanistan Summon Envoys in Dispute. Pakistan and Afghanistan summoned each other's ambassadors to lodge protests over the detention of a Pakistani official in the Afghan city of Kandahar and a deadly cross-border shootout between Pakistani and Afghan border police (3 Jul).

It was reported that an official working in Pakistan's consulate in Kandahar was forcibly taken away by Afghan forces on Thursday. Hours later, according to the statement, Afghan authorities handed the official over to the Pakistani embassy in the capital, Kabul, about 450 kilometers away.

Pakistan also expressed concern over this week's cross-border shooting incident, in which an Afghan border guard was killed and two Pakistani security officers were wounded.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have a history of tense relations. The two governments have frequently traded accusations that each was harboring and assisting the other's militants groups along their shared border. That mistrust appeared to have improved last year following a Taliban attack on a Pakistani school that killed nearly 150 people, mostly schoolchildren.

On Thursday, Pakistan summoned the Afghan ambassador to protest the detention. Hours earlier Afghanistan had summoned Pakistan's ambassador to protest the June 30 cross-border shooting incident.

IRAN

Capt Ranjit Seth

Iran Nuclear Talks Held up Over Access to Scientists and Sites. In the final push for a comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran, accounting for the research and accomplishments of Iranian scientists, missile engineers and military officers is one of the last and most formidable

obstacles —on a par with the question of whether IAEA inspectors will be able, on short notice, to step into and inspect any place they suspect might conceal bomb-related work.

It is the third such effort by the IAEA since 2007 to come up with a plan to inspect the ‘possible military dimensions’ of Iran’s nuclear program. Over the next few days, the fate of the biggest diplomatic gamble of the Obama presidency may hinge on the freedom of IAEA inspectors to investigate evidence about past activity and pursue any suspicions activities including those on military bases.

However Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has said repeatedly that allowing foreigners to question Iranian scientists and visit military sites is off limits — and Iranian officials say that even in the United States, as with other nuclear weapons states, international inspectors are barred from many locations.

The argument for a full accounting from Iran is twofold. Without one, it is hard to assess how long it might take Iran to fabricate a weapon if it ever got hold of bomb-grade uranium or plutonium. And anything short of comprehensive answers to the inspectors would send a signal to other nations that the IAEA’s demands can be negotiated away.

Iran nuke talk’s deadline was extended to July 7

Iran Gets Its 13 Ton Hoard of Gold. Iran took over a 13-ton hoard of gold — worth nearly \$500 million — held up by sanctions after working out a deal on the sidelines of nuclear talks in Vienna, the country’s central bank chief told Iranian media.

The gold had been purchased before and was deposited in South Africa two years ago but could not be transferred to Iran due to the sanctions.

The transfer is evidence that the talks are having some success though the US said that the timing was unrelated to the current talks; rather it stems from an interim agreement reached in November 2013. That deal suspended sanctions on trade with Iran in gold and precious metals starting January 2014.

Iran’s Giant Super-Tanker Fleet. Iran’s biggest oil shipping company has amassed the world’s largest fleet of super tankers and is in talks to sail back into western waters should the Islamic Republic strike a nuclear deal.

NITC, the privatized Iranian shipping company has 42 very large crude carriers, known as VLCCs, after buying 20 such China-built vessels in the past 2½ years. It is the first time the company has disclosed the size of its VLCC fleet which it expanded as sanctions cut off access to European-insured vessels,

NITC's biggest rivals have fewer ships. Competitors such as Mitsui O.S.K Lines and Nippon Yusen Kaisha of Japan and Belgium's Euronav NV all stated owning fewer vessels. National Shipping Company of Saudi Arabia owns 31 super tankers.

Iran was forced to rely more on NITC, the former state-owned shipping company, to transport crude oil after Europe imposed sanctions on Iran and banned insurers from covering ships carrying the Iranian crude.

MIDDLE EAST

Brig Ranjit Singh

ISIS Plans to Develop Dirty Bomb. Australian Foreign Minister has issued a statement that ISIS has collected radio- active material from hospitals and research establishments in the cities captured in Iraq & Syria to build a large Dirty Bomb.

ISIS has Declared its Ambition to Develop Weapons of Mass Destruction. The cash rich group is planning to smuggle its first nuclear weapon from Pakistan to attack US within a year. It is also believed that ISIS may be developing poison gas weapons.

ISIS Threatens to Oust Hamas from Gaza Strip. ISIS has issued a video statement in Syria to oust Hamas from Gaza Strip, a rare public challenge. ISIS is opposed to truce with Israel & reconciliation with US backed Palestinian faction Fat eh. ISIS plans to impose Sharia in Gaza Strip and up root Jews from Israel.

ISIS Insurgents Attack Five Military Check Points in N Sinai Peninsula, Egypt, located between Israel, Gaza Strip & Suez Canal. The insurgents planned to lay siege to Sheikh Zabeid town close to Gaza Strip. This is supposedly the first step of ISIS to expand its influence in Gaza Strip.

IRAQ

Iraq Counter Offensive to Capture Mosul Delayed. The Iraq forces have delayed counter offensive to capture Mosul, which was scheduled in Apr/May due to capture of Ramadi in Anbar Province by ISIS.

NATO to Train Iraq Troops to Fight ISIS. The military alliance is close to launching a mission to train Iraqi officers. Despite, training thousands of troops, Iraqi Army has in many areas collapsed in the face of ISIS.

Iraq Forces have Entered a District of Tikrit under Control of ISIS, stepping up an offensive launched earlier to wrest the northern Iraq city from jihadists.

SYRIA

ISIS Lays Mines in Ruins of Syria's Ancient Palmyra Town, with the aim of blowing up the ruins or prevent Govt forces from advancing to the town. ISIS insurgents subsequently destroyed two ancient muslim mausoleums in Palmyra, the tombs of Mohd Bin Ali & Nazar Abu Bahaaeddine.

ISIS Crucifies Two Children Below 18 in Syria for not fasting during the month of Ramzan, to enforce its writ & religious traditions.

ISIS Offensive in Kobane. ISIS jihadis killed 146 civilians in its offensive on the Kurdish town of Kobane. The killing was widely seen as vengeance for recent defeats by Kurdish militia. The ISIS fighters are believed to have been pushed back by Kurdish fighters.

ISIS Attacks Syria Krdush Held Tal Abyad. ISIS enters Tal Abyad weeks after being pushed out by Syrian Kurdish forces. The town was held by ISIS since Aug 14 and recently captured by Kurdish fighters.

YEMEN

UN Brokered Yemen Peace Talks Tail. UN brokered peace talks held recently at Geneva between Houthis & Hadi Govt in exile failed to agree on temporary cease fire. The Saudi led air strikes continued to pound the Houthi strongholds and Houthis refused to withdraw from cities & towns as proposed by UN.

Humanitarian Crisis in Yemen. Owing to acute shortage of food, medicines, fuel & transport, UN has raised alert to the highest level. Even the evacuation of injured to the hospitals has been seriously affected. Children are the worst affected due to the conflict.

Houthi Rebels Pound Yemen Port City of Aden. The Houthi rebels have pounded the port city of Aden with Artillery Rockets killing 17 civilians.

PAKISTAN

Lt Col Anil Gorshi, NM**

Russian Stance Against Pakistan's Terrorism Financing Surprises India. Russia took a recent anti terror financing meet organized at Brisbane by opposing move by India to demand censure against Pakistan for its in action against JUD & LET. New Zealand and Australia also opposed the move, India is surprised with Russia's position which in the past has been very supportive of India stand on Kashmir to the extent of Vetoing resolutions in UN Security Council.

Analysis. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will hold talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Ufa on sidelines of BRICS and SCO Summit and counter terror cooperations will be part of talking points.

Last year India raised with Russia its displeasure with Moscow's decisions to seek arms to Pakistan,

Russia feels that it needs Pakistan to counter terrorist in the Af-Pak region and Control drug trade in Afghanistan.

India wants a reassurance from Moscow that its recent military cooperation agreement with Pak would not hurt core security interest in India.

Russia decision to strike a defence deal with Pakistan appears to be a reaction to India's move to enter into closer ties with the US.

LATIN AMERICA

Col Ajay Ramde

US and Cuba to Re-open Embassies. The US and Cuba have agreed on a historic deal to re-establish full diplomatic relations, severed 54 years ago in the heat of the Cold War.

Presidents Barack Obama and Raul Castro exchanged letters on July 15 agreeing to unfreeze ties on July 20, when embassies in Washington and Havana can be reopened. Incidentally, Obama - who was born the year the US embassy was closed, in 1961 - hailed the deal as a "historic step forward" that would end a failed and archaic US policy of isolating the island.

Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking from Vienna, said he would visit Havana to raise the US flag outside the future US embassy. On July 20, Castro will send Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez to open the Cuban embassy in Washington.

The move to normalize relations follows a historic meeting between Obama and Castro in Panama at the Summit of the Americas earlier this year. Just before that meeting, the State Department recommended to Obama that Cuba be taken off the terror list.

However, there's no indication the Republican majority in Congress is interested in codifying the normalization of relations with Cuba. The Republican majority in the House and the Senate is not interested in funding a new embassy — although it appears that is not needed — or to approve an ambassador or lifting the trade embargo that has been in place since the 1960s.

The U.S. outreach comes at a crucial time for Cuba as well. The Communist Party of Cuba knows the country can no longer count on others for economic support. The Soviet Union, its Cold War-era benefactor, has become history. To recover from its economic troubles, Cuba has moved to ease state controls over the economy and allow private capital greater play. Against this backdrop, better cooperation with the U.S. and the eventual removal of the blockade would prove boons for a changing Cuban economy.

US: Brazil Reviving Relations. US President Barack Obama and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff announced plans to up the amount of energy they use from renewable sources by 2030. The leaders of the two biggest economies in the Americas said they were pledging to generate 20% of domestic electricity from renewable resources by 2030. "These are very ambitious goals, a near tripling for the United States and more than double Brazil's current output," President Obama said at a joint news conference.

In addition, Brazil pledged to restore 12 million hectares, or 46,332 square miles, of its forests — about the size of England — by 2030 while it also pursues “policies aimed at eliminating illegal deforestation.”

Also on same day, China extended and solidified climate commitments made in November by releasing its own emissions reduction target in anticipation of the United Nations' climate meeting in Paris in late 2015. The world's largest emitter of pledged to reduce the amount of carbon emitted relative to the size of its economy by 60 to 65 percent by 2030, building on cuts already made and in line with a prior agreement with the United States.

Their announcement comes ahead of crucial climate talks at a UN summit in Paris in December. President Rousseff, 67, said her government had also pledged to eliminate illegal deforestation in the Amazon and to reforest swathes of degraded land. But that commitment will be met with skepticism by some environmentalists amid signs that Amazon deforestation is again on the increase.

President Rousseff acknowledged, Brazil also has to reduce its famously protective and bureaucratic barriers to outsiders if those opportunities are to be fully realized. Billions of dollars worth of contracts to build infrastructure projects across Brazil were recently announced and, as the biggest inward investor in Brazil, US firms are well placed to snap up much of that business.

For the US too, this is a relationship worth developing. US diplomats will have watched nervously of late as China increased its economic muscle and political influence in the region via loans and credit guarantees.

AFRICA

Col Ajay Ramdev

Tunisia: Massacre

Tunisia Fact file: is the northernmost country in Africa and, at almost 165,000 square KMs (64,000 sq mi) in area, the smallest country in the Maghreb region of North Africa. It is bordered by Algeria to the west, Libya to the southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea to the north and east. As of 2013, its population is estimated at just under 10.8 million. Its name is derived from its capital city, Tunis, located on the country's northeast coast.

Official Language: Arabic

Spoken Language: Tunisian Arabic, French and Berber

Ethnic Groups: Arab-Berber- 98%, European – 1% and Jews/others -1%

The tourism sector saw 6.1 million visitors in 2104. It represents 15.2% of Tunisia's GDP and

provides 4,73,000 jobs to 13.8% of the working population. France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom are the four traditional tourist markets.

Background. In a matter of hours and on three different continents, militants carried out attacks on 24 Jun 2015, that killed scores of civilians, horrified populations and raised thorny questions about the evolving nature of international terrorism and what can be done to fight it. On the surface, the attacks appeared to be linked only by timing.

In France, a man stormed an American-owned chemical plant, decapitated one person and apparently tried to blow up the facility. In Tunisia, a gunman drew an assault rifle from a beach umbrella and killed at least 38 people at a seaside resort. And in Kuwait, a suicide bomber blew himself up inside a mosque during communal prayers, killing at least 25 Shiite worshippers.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attacks in Tunisia and Kuwait

Tunisia: The gunman disguised as a vacationer attacked a placid Mediterranean resort, killing at least 38 — most of them British tourists — before being shot by the security forces. It sent shock waves through the country, which was still recovering from the massacre of mostly foreign tourists at a museum in Tunis, the capital, in March. The gunman had trained with a militant group in Libya this year alongside two Tunisians who had killed 22 people at the national museum.

Why Tunisia has been targeted? Some contend that Tunisia has been targeted partly because it has achieved a democratic transition and is often held up as the single success story of the Arab Spring. However, analysts believe that two main reasons for the attack are:

First, the threat posed by neighbouring Libya, a fractured country with porous borders that has been awash with weapons since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi, and where Islamic State now has an established presence.

And second, the Tunisian economy has become more fragile since 2011, and like other states in the region, the country has a large pool of unemployed or underemployed young men who may be susceptible to radicalisation. This has resulted in apparently large number of Tunisians, who have left to fight in Syria and Iraq, hundreds of whom are estimated to have returned home.

State of Emergency. The President of Tunisia has declared state of emergency on 06 Jul 2015. The state of emergency gives security forces more powers and limits the right of public assembly.

Authorities had already tightened security, deploying more than 1,400 armed officers at hotels and beaches. The state of emergency will be in place for a renewable period of 30 days.

Authorities have also pledged to close some 80 mosques that were operating outside government control and accused of spreading extremism. The last time Tunisia declared a state of emergency was in 2011, in the uprising which overthrew President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali. It was lifted in March 2014.

MYANMAR

Gp Capt GD Sharma, VSM (Retd)

Prospects of Constitutional Reforms in Myanmar. Myanmar election is slated sometime in Nov 2015. Pro-democracy leader, Aung san SuuKyi while could contest in election but, her claim to lead the government would not fructify even when her party wins majority in the parliament, in view of the restrictions imposed by article 436 and article 59(f) of the constitution.

Thus there is a need to change articles 436 and 59(f) of the constitution. The article 436 gives the veto power to the military lawmakers in the parliament who are guaranteed 25% parliamentary seats over any constitutional amendments. The latter provision, Article 59(f) prohibits parliamentarian to occupy the office of the president by those whose spouses or children hold foreign citizenships. This article can be amended only if the charter is allowed to be amended under article 436. It is alleged that the constitution has been drafted as such in 2008, to deny Aung San SuuKyi the top position in the government. The NLD has demanded abolishment of the article 59(f) but, this is not likely to happen. The parliament does not seek to change the provision but, is taking up this week, the amendment of constitution on another the issue, i.e. on eligibility of the candidate to occupy the office of the President whose children have married the foreigners.

RUSSIA'S HYPERSONIC GLIDE VEHICLE (HGV) YU-71 DEVELOPMENT

Air Cmde T Chand (Retd)

The Russia has been reportedly developing a Hypersonic Glide Vehicle (HGV) named Yu-71 for several years under a programme codenamed "Project 4202". According to Jane's Intelligence Review, the most recent flight test of this vehicle was conducted on 26 February this year. An SS-19 missile was used to deliver the Yu-71 to space. The vehicle is expected to have a speed of up to 10 mach and is designed to be extremely maneuverable with unpredictable trajectory, and can

evade an enemy's missile defense systems."This would give Russia the ability to deliver a guaranteed small-scale strike against a target of choice; if coupled with an ability to penetrate missile defenses, Russia would also retain the option of launching a successful single-missile attack.

Russia is expected to operationalise Yu-71 HGV between 2020 and 2025. Moreover, by that time Russia may have developed the Sarmat - a new ICBM that will be able to carry this HGV.

The test launch has been conducted from the Dombarovsky missile division site. The new hypersonic aircraft is part of Russia's plans to modernize its Strategic Missile Forces.

China has reportedly tested its hypersonic glide vehicle called "Wu-14," four times since January 2014. The weapon, which can carry nuclear warheads while travelling at 10 mach, can also reportedly neutralize the US missile defence system. The US too is believed to be developing the HGV System. The US and China are also working on the technology needed to build hypersonic glide vehicles and scramjet engines raising concerns about a new arms race among the world's top three superpowers.