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US nuclear test possible cover for more nuke production: Analyst

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The recent US subcritical nuclear test can be a camouflage for developing a more sophisticated stockpile of nuclear weapons.

In a Saturday interview, author and political scientist Kaveh Afrasiabi noted that the subcritical test, known as Pollux, involves underground high-explosives experiments on plutonium

He argued that although the test does not reach the critical mass and nuclear chain reaction, “You don’t have any international inspectors to verify the fact that there are no low-yield nuclear explosives involved.”

“This could be a cover for computer simulations for advancing new nuclear warheads. We don’t know that because the US program is shrouded in high secrecy,” the analyst pointed out.

On Wednesday, the US - the only country that has ever used atomic bombs against other countries - conducted a subcritical nuclear test in Nevada in a declared aim of providing “crucial information to maintain the safety and effectiveness of the nation's nuclear weapons.”

Afrasiabi pointed to the recent written requests by the heads of US nuclear laboratories to President Barack Obama to earmark more funds for conducting tests for new warheads and noted that Obama approved the plans despite Washington’s official announcements that it is not rebuilding any new warheads.

“There is a huge gap between the rhetoric and the actual policies when it comes to the US’ nuclear weapons policies,” he said.

“What needs to be done is for the international community to exert pressure on the US, as well as other members of the nuclear weapons club, to desist from such activities that pose a proliferation risk and the risk of a new nuclear arms race,” Afrasiabi pointed out.