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Articles & Other Documents:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <u>Top Officials Brief Senate on U.S.-Russian Nuclear Pact</u> | <u>Iran Belongs To World's "Nuclear Club," Cleric Says</u> |
| <u>Barack Obama To Hold Off On CTBT Ratification For Now: Official</u> | <u>Israel Won't Move On UN Call For Nuclear-Free Zone</u> |
| <u>Ahmadinejad: Age Of Nukes Is Over</u> | <u>South Korea Rules Out Nuclear Talks Before Ship Incident Solved</u> |
| <u>Five Permanent UN Security Council Members Support Mideast Nuclear Arms Ban</u> | <u>North Korea Set To Resume Nuclear Disarmament Talks, Says China</u> |
| <u>Iran Ready To Resume Talks On Nuclear Fuel Swap Scheme</u> | <u>Russian Warships Hold Nuclear Defense Drills In Indian Ocean</u> |
| <u>Iran Rejects West's Nuclear Hypocrisy</u> | <u>Russia Set To Keep Typhoon Class Nuclear Subs Until 2019 – Navy</u> |
| <u>IAEA Chief: Iran Refuses To Answer Key Nuclear Questions</u> | <u>Results Of Bulava Probe Due May 20 - Russian Navy</u> |
| <u>US, Other Big Powers Back Mideast Nuclear Arms Ban</u> | <u>Russia Seen Under Pressure To Disclose Arsenal Details</u> |
| <u>US Leader Biden Says Iran May Spark Nuclear Arms Race</u> | <u>West Europeans target US Nukes At Treaty Session</u> |
| <u>IAEA Chief Asks For Help In Opening Israel's Nuclear Program To Inspection</u> | <u>Advancing Europe's Security</u> |
| | <u>Too Much Mr. Nice Guy</u> |

Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threats and countermeasures. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

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Top Officials Brief Senate on U.S.-Russian Nuclear Pact

Friday, May 7, 2010

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and other top Obama administration officials addressed the Senate yesterday on a pending nuclear arms control treaty with Russia, the Defense Department said (see *GSN*, May 6).

Gates was expected to be accompanied at the briefing by other top U.S. officials, including Energy Secretary Steven Chu, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Gen. James Cartwright, vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said.

"As demonstrated by that briefing team, this treaty has broad interagency support," a press release quoted Morrell as saying.

Signed last month by U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, the successor to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty would obligate the two former Cold War adversaries to lower their respective strategic arsenals to 1,550 fielded warheads and to limit their deployed nuclear delivery vehicles -- missiles, submarines and bombers -- to 700, with another 100 permitted in reserve. Under a 2002 pact, Moscow and Washington had until 2012 to reduce their deployed strategic stockpiles to a maximum of 2,200 weapons each (U.S. Defense Department release I, May 6).

"The goal of this afternoon's engagement, which unfortunately is closed press, is to provide senators with an overview of the treaty and to answer any questions they may have about it. The secretary looks forward to working with the Senate throughout the ratification process," Morrell said of yesterday's event (U.S. Defense Department release II, May 6).

The Obama administration could officially submit the pact to the Senate for ratification as soon as today, Senator Richard Lugar told ITAR-Tass (Russia Today, May 7).

The pact is "significant" and would "result in a reduction of nuclear weapons" if ratified, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Michael Mullen said earlier this week.

Still, the nation's robust land-, air- and sea-based nuclear deterrent would be "sustained" under the treaty, Mullen said. "We're still able to deter; we're able to sustain a very strong nuclear triad," he said. "I'm very supportive of how the treaty came out."

The pact would help advance Obama's nuclear disarmament agenda, Mullen added (Defense Department release I).

One arms control analyst said he expected the Senate to ratify the agreement this year, Russia Today reported.

"Senate critics have raised two premiere arguments. One -- that the treaty constrains missile defense and the other -- that the Obama administration is not doing enough to enhance or renew the nuclear stockpile," said Tom Collina, an expert with the Arms Control Association.

"The administration dealt with both of those. On the first -- the treaty does not prevent the U.S. from pursuing the missile defense plans it currently has. There is nothing in the treaty that would prevent U.S. plans from moving forward and even conservative critics have admitted as much," Collina said.

"The other, in terms of modernization -- the administration has submitted a budget that will significantly increase the weapons complex activities that they are pursuing. So, on both accounts the administration really has addressed those concerns," he said.

Russia's legislature could put up less resistance than the Senate to the pact's ratification, said Duma International Affairs Committee Chairman Konstantin Kosachyov.

"We will have a substantial discussion and we will proceed with the ratification only when we know that we (have not made) any mistakes and this treaty is good for Russia, it's good for its national security, it does not damage our national interests and so on and so forth," Kosachyov said. "It is not easy either in Russia, but again it's much more difficult in the States, and this is why we want to synchronize our procedures" (Russia Today).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100507_1678.php

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Times of India

Barack Obama To Hold Off On CTBT Ratification For Now: Official

Agence France-Presse (AFP)
May 6, 2010

UNITED NATIONS: US President Barack Obama will hold off sending the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) to the US Senate for ratification until after it takes up the recently signed START arms control treaty, a top US official said Wednesday.

"The Obama administration's priority is to get the START treaty ratified," under secretary of state Ellen Tauscher told a press conference on the sidelines of a UN conference.

"That will take us through the legislative year," Tauscher said, adding that Obama will send the CTBT to the Senate "when the political conditions are right."

Both treaties need to be ratified by the Senate by a two-thirds majority and the Obama administration could struggle to get the necessary votes.

The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was signed on April 8 and provides for major cutbacks in both the US and Russian nuclear arsenals.

The CTBT, which bans nuclear blasts for military or civilian purposes, was signed in 1996 by 71 states, including the five main nuclear weapon states: Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

A total of 182 countries have signed the CTBT, including 151 that have also ratified it.

North Korea, India and Pakistan have not signed the CTBT and all three have carried out nuclear tests since 1996.

Another six countries -- the United States, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, China and Egypt -- have signed but not yet ratified the pact.

The CTBT cannot come into force until it is ratified by the required 44 states that had nuclear research or power facilities when it was adopted in 1996. Only 35 have done so.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa announced Tuesday at the UN conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that his country would soon ratify the CTBT.

"We hope that our decision... will be a positive incentive for other states to follow suit," he told reporters.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/US/Barack-Obama-to-hold-off-on-CTBT-ratification-for-now-Official/articleshow/5895732.cms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Al Jazeera Magazine - Qatar

Ahmadinejad: Age Of Nukes Is Over

May 5, 2010

Iran's president says Tehran rejects nuclear weapons, as both immoral and unpractical tools that powers build, stockpile and use to threaten others.

"The age of the nuclear bomb, the worst and ugliest weapon known to man is over. We reject atomic weapons both in moral and practical terms," Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in a press conference in New York on Tuesday afternoon.

"We believe those who build, store and use nuclear weapons to threaten others are committing the ugliest deed of all," he added.

Ahmadinejad described Washington's decision to disclose the number of its nuclear warheads as a step forward, but asked the US administration whether it took pride in possessing such destructive power.

"Just two bombs created that atrocity in two Japanese cities. Now do you think it is a source of pride to own 5,000 new generation warheads with greater destructive potential?" he asked.

Ahmadinejad said US nuclear weapons were a global threat, especially to the people in countries where they are stored.

He also commented on remarks by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon about the need for Iran to "restore trust within the international community on the peaceful nature of its nuclear program."

Ahmadinejad said if the UN headquarters were in Tehran and Iran held veto powers at the Security Council, Ban would not have spoken as he did on Monday.

He pointed out that Iran's atomic activities were under the full supervision of the UN nuclear watchdog and said that it was not up to Iran to prove its innocence.

"The US government claims that Iran's nuclear work has diverted from the peaceful path. We ask, 'What evidence do you have to prove that,' and they say 'We have no proof, but we are sure that you have deviated, you prove otherwise.' How can we move forward with such logic," asked Ahmadinejad.

The Iranian president was in New York to take part in the UN nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference.

Source: Press TV – Iran

<http://aljazeera.com/news/articles/34/Ahmadinejad-Age-of-nukes-is-over.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Ha'aretz Daily – Israel

May 5, 2010

Five Permanent UN Security Council Members Support Mideast Nuclear Arms Ban

U.S., Russia, Britain, France and China voice support for 'full implementation' of nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

By Reuters and Haaretz Service

The United States, Russia, Britain, France and China on Wednesday voiced support for making the Middle East a nuclear-arms-free zone, which would mean Israel would have to scrap any atomic bombs in its possession.

"We are committed to a full implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East and we support all ongoing efforts to this end," the five permanent UN Security Council members said in a unanimous statement issued at a conference taking stock of the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The 1995 resolution adopted by signatories of the landmark arms control treaty called for making the Middle East a zone without nuclear arms.

Israel, which is widely believed to have nuclear weapons, is the only country in the Middle East not to have signed the treaty and, along with India and Pakistan, one of only three countries worldwide outside the agreement. Iran, though a signatory, is accused by the West of flouting treaty requirements to disclose its nuclear activities.

On Tuesday, Arab countries sought to turn attention to Israel as delegates from 189 countries debated how to stem the spread of nuclear weapons.

On the second day of the month-long meeting at the United Nations, Arab countries were reiterating calls for a nuclear-free Middle East with criticism of Israel's unacknowledged nuclear arsenal and failure to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on Monday declared the need for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons, telling the United Nations General Assembly that the U.S. was "prepared to support practical measures for achieving that objective."

"We support efforts to realize the goal of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free-zone in the Middle East in accordance with the 1995 Middle East resolution," Clinton told delegates at the opening of a month-long review conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in New York.

"The Middle East may present the greatest threat of nuclear proliferation in the world today."

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/five-permanent-un-security-council-members-support-mideast-nuclear-arms-ban-1.288467>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Iran Ready To Resume Talks On Nuclear Fuel Swap Scheme

05 May 2010

Iran is ready to resume talks on the exchange of its low-enriched uranium for nuclear fuel, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has said.

The statement came during a news conference in New York, where a review conference on nuclear non-proliferation is under way, following a call by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for Iran to resume six-party talks on its controversial nuclear program.

"We are ready to exchange our 3.5%-enriched uranium for 20%-enriched fuel. We are ready for talks, during which we may agree the terms," Ahmadinejad said, adding "we are ready to pay for this [the exchange of low-enriched uranium for nuclear fuel] as much as necessary."

In line with a plan proposed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Islamic Republic is to ship out its low-enriched uranium to Russia for further enrichment and subsequently send it to France where it would be made into fuel rods.

Tehran has stalled the plan, suggesting it could consider a simultaneous swap of its low-enriched uranium for 20%-enriched uranium, but that the exchange should be simultaneous and would have to take place on its own territory.

Ahmadinejad's statement comes as the six international mediators on the Islamic Republic's controversial nuclear program - Russia, the U.S., Britain, Germany, France and China - have begun discussing the text of the resolution to impose harsher sanctions on Iran over its continuing nuclear activities.

Western powers accuse Iran of attempting to develop nuclear weapons under the guise of peaceful nuclear generation.

During the news conference, the Iranian leader said Iran was able to produce its own 20%-enriched uranium. However, he said, Tehran is ready to halt this activities if acceptable terms of the exchange of low-enriched uranium for nuclear fuel are agreed.

Ahmadinejad also said that Iran was not going to withdraw from the IAEA and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"My presence here (at the conference) shows that although we want to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but we will remain an active member of the NPT and the IAEA," he said.

NEW YORK, May 5 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20100505/158873111.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Saudi Telegraph – Saudi Arabia

Iran Rejects West's Nuclear Hypocrisy

5 May 2010

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad says countries that possess nuclear weapons cannot pass judgment on Tehran's nuclear program.

"The fact that some nuclear-armed countries seek to stop Iran's peaceful nuclear program violates the NPT and international law. They cannot deprive Iran of its legal rights through threats or pressure," Ahmadinejad told ABC on Wednesday on the sidelines of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty review conference, which is currently underway in New York.

He said that it is "discriminatory" to allow a country to manufacture nuclear weapons while other nations are denied the right to use nuclear technology meant for peaceful purposes.

The NPT requires all nuclear weapons states to dismantle their nuclear weapons, so everyone is wondering why these weapons have not been eradicated, Ahmadinejad noted.

He went on to say that no country can deprive Iran of its nuclear rights, adding that it is no longer acceptable to use threatening language against countries since the era of threats has come to an end.

Iran was one of the original signatories to the NPT, which allows countries that comply with the treaty to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

The International Atomic Energy Agency is the only international body authorized to verify the peaceful nature of independent countries' nuclear programs.

And as a member of the IAEA, Iran conducts all its nuclear activities under the full supervision of the agency's inspectors.

Source: Press TV

Miami Herald

May 5, 2010

IAEA Chief: Iran Refuses To Answer Key Nuclear Questions

By JONATHAN S. LANDAY, McClatchy Newspapers

UNITED NATIONS -- Even as it faces the threat of new U.N. sanctions, Iran is refusing to discuss its alleged military-related research or provide data on new uranium enrichment plants it plans to build - preventing the U.N. nuclear watchdog from verifying that Iran isn't seeking nuclear weapons - the agency chief said Wednesday.

"I haven't got the indications of positive change," International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Yukiya Amano told McClatchy. "It is for me time to continue to seek cooperation from Iran. Cooperation means taking concrete steps."

"The situation hasn't changed since my previous report," he said in an interview.

Amano was referring to a Feb. 18 assessment he submitted to the agency's 35-nation board of governors. It said that while IAEA inspectors had not detected illicit diversions of nuclear materials, the inspectors couldn't confirm that all Iranian nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes.

His comments amounted to a preview of a report that he is to submit in several weeks to the Vienna-based board of governors. They were in sharp contrast to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's assertions at the U.N. on Monday that suspicions about his regime's program are unjustified.

Amano, a veteran Japanese diplomat who was elected to head the U.N. agency in December, indicated that he doesn't think Iran will fully disclose its past and present nuclear activities - as required by its IAEA nuclear safeguards agreement - unless it feels additional international pressure.

"The IAEA is designed to implement safeguards. In this case, without a policy change on the part of Iran, we cannot do our work effectively. Policy change is needed," he said. "The IAEA is not designed primarily to change the policy of member states. In this area, influence, persuasion by interested countries is needed. There is a role to be played by the United Nations."

"Certainly we will continue to seek more cooperation with Iran. But only a synergy of effort by IAEA, the United Nations and interested countries would produce positive results," Amano continued.

He added that IAEA inspectors continue to monitor Iran's known nuclear facilities. They include the main uranium enrichment plant at Natanz and the small but incomplete underground Fordow enrichment plant near the holy city of Qom that was hidden from the IAEA until the U.S. and Britain disclosed its existence in September.

Amano and Ahmadinejad were at the U.N. for this week's opening of a nearly monthlong conference of 189 nations on bolstering the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The pact is the cornerstone of the global system to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons that the IAEA was in part created to oversee. Its mission also helps poorer nations develop nuclear technology for peaceful uses, including energy and medical research.

The conference comes amid negotiations among the U.S., Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany on a fourth round of sanctions that the U.N. Security Council is expected to slap on Iran for defying U.N. orders to suspend its uranium enrichment program.

Enrichment involves spinning uranium hexafluoride gas at supersonic speeds in thousands of machines called centrifuges. It produces low-enriched uranium fuel for power plants or highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons, depending on the duration of the process.

Iran insists that it's producing power plant fuel, but western governments contend that the program, based on technology sold by a Pakistani-led smuggling ring and hidden from the IAEA for 18 years, is part of a secret weapons development program.

Amano said that Iran still refuses to answer questions on several issues. One concerns a document that the IAEA found in Iran's possession that relates to the milling of uranium metal into a sphere, which can only be used for a nuclear weapon. The IAEA says the document originated with the smuggling ring. Others relate to the military's role in the nuclear program and information the IAEA obtained on weapons-related studies, which Iran allegedly conducted after 2004.

"In essence they say that the pieces of information that we have are forged and baseless," Amano said.

The studies are said to include work on developing a nuclear payload for a missile warhead and spherical implosion system, comprising conventional high explosives, that's used to trigger a nuclear explosion.

The IAEA is also waiting for Iran to provide details - as required by its safeguards agreement - about 10 additional uranium enrichment plants that Ahmadinejad announced in December would be built, Amano said.

Iranian officials said that construction of two plants would start in the first half of the new Iranian year, which began in March. The announcement, however, was greeted with doubt in the West because of Iran's serious financial problems.

Asked if he was concerned that Iran is secretly constructing additional uranium enrichment facilities, Amano replied, "We don't know. And 'we don't know' is the problem."

<http://www.miamiherald.com/2010/05/05/1615327/iaea-chief-iran-refuses-to-answer.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Times of India

US, Other Big Powers Back Mideast Nuclear Arms Ban

By Reuters

May 6, 2010

UNITED NATIONS: The United States, Russia, Britain, France and China voiced support on Wednesday for making the Middle East a nuclear weapons-free zone, which would ultimately force Israel to scrap any atomic arms it has.

The move, in a joint statement, reflected US concern to win Arab backing for sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program by offering a concession over its ally Israel, but Washington says the zone cannot be actually established yet.

"We are committed to a full implementation of the 1995 NPT resolution on the Middle East and we support all ongoing efforts to this end," the five permanent US Security Council members said in a statement issued at a conference taking stock of the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The 1995 resolution adopted by signatories of the landmark arms control treaty called for making the Middle East a zone without nuclear arms. The Jewish state has never confirmed or denied having nuclear arms.

"We are ready to consider all relevant proposals in the course of the (NPT) Review Conference in order to come to an agreed decision aimed at taking concrete steps in this direction," said the statement.

US support for the idea of creating such a zone in the future could be unwelcome to Israel, which has said it can only consider it once there is Middle East peace.

But diplomats from the Jewish state's Western allies say Arab states are pushing hard on the issue in exchange for their support in US-led efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program.

Egypt, which chairs the powerful 118-nation bloc of non-aligned developing nations, circulated a proposal to the 189 signatories of the treaty calling for a conference by next year on ridding the Middle East of nuclear arms in which all countries in the region would participate.

The United States and Russia, with the support of the other three countries allowed to keep nuclear weapons under the NPT, are negotiating with Egypt to come up with an acceptable compromise proposal, Western diplomats say.

Despite US support for the principle of the proposed zone, secretary of state Hillary Clinton said on Monday that the time was not yet ripe for creating the zone.

US undersecretary of state Ellen Tauscher told an audience of delegates and reporters on Wednesday it was hard to imagine negotiating "any kind of free zone in the absence of a comprehensive peace plan that is running on a parallel track."

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/US-other-big-powers-back-Mideast-nuclear-arms-ban/articleshow/5895884.cms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

BBC News – U.K.

May 6, 2010

US Leader Biden Says Iran May Spark Nuclear Arms Race

US Vice-President Joe Biden has warned that Iran's actions risk sparking a nuclear arms race in the Middle East.

His warning came in a speech to the European Parliament - the first by a top US leader since then-president Ronald Reagan spoke there in 1985.

Iran's leaders "spurn our collective good faith efforts", Mr Biden said, and risk "continuing isolation".

Iran insists it has the right to develop civil nuclear power. The US suspects it of seeking atomic weapons.

"Wouldn't it be ironic as the Iron Curtain fell... that a new arms race would emerge in some of the most unstable parts of the world," Mr Biden said.

"That would be an irony that our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren would not forgive us, in my view, to allow to come to pass," he added.

Pressure on Iran

Mr Biden's warning echoed the words of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who told delegates at a nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) conference this week that Iran had violated its obligations and should be held to account.

Earlier, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran accused states with nuclear weapons of threatening those who wanted to develop peaceful nuclear technology.

His comments prompted delegates from the US, the UK and France to walk out.

The US is negotiating with other Security Council members to impose a fourth round of UN economic sanctions against Iran over its uranium enrichment programme.

A listening administration

Mr Biden told MEPs in Brussels on Thursday that "we are back in the business of listening to our allies".

"It's no accident that Europe is my first overseas destination as vice-president. We need each other more now than we have ever."

He welcomed the new powers acquired by the European Parliament under the EU's Lisbon Treaty, saying "the Obama-Biden administration strongly supports a vibrant EU".

He stressed that a strong EU was "absolutely essential to American... long-term security".

On the dispute over EU personal data transfers to the US as part of anti-terrorism measures, he warned that "the longer we are without agreement the greater the risk".

"The terrorist finance tracking programme is essential to our security," he said, but added: "I understand your concerns".

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8664636.stm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Los Angeles Times

IAEA Chief Asks For Help In Opening Israel's Nuclear Program To Inspection

By GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press Writer
May 6, 2010

VIENNA (AP) — The head of the U.N. atomic watchdog is asking for international input on an Arab-led push to have Israel join the Nonproliferation Treaty, in a move that adds to pressure on the Jewish state to disclose its unacknowledged nuclear arsenal.

Israel, in turn, is suggesting efforts should focus instead on giving teeth to the nuclear treaty to prevent signatories like Iran from acquiring such weapons.

On Wednesday, The Associated Press disclosed that International Atomic Energy Agency chief Yukiya Amano had sent a letter soliciting proposals from the agency's 151 member states on how to persuade Israel to sign the treaty. And the world's five recognized nuclear-weapons powers — the U.S., Russia, Britain, France and China — reaffirmed the goal of a nuclear-free Middle East.

A string of Israeli officials, including a spokesman for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the minister of atomic energy, the deputy minister of foreign affairs, the minister of strategic threats and the minister of communication, all refused to comment on the recent developments.

The latest pressure is putting the Jewish state in an uncomfortable position. It wants the international community to take stern action to prevent Iran from getting atomic weapons but at the same time brushes off calls to come clean about its own nuclear capabilities.

In his letter, Amano asked foreign ministers of the IAEA's 151 member states to share views on how to implement a resolution demanding that Israel "accede" to the Nonproliferation Treaty and throw its nuclear facilities open to IAEA oversight.

In response Thursday, an Israeli government official noted that the treaty obligating nations to stop the spread of nuclear weapons didn't stop countries like Saddam Hussein's Iraq and now Iran from pursuing nuclear weapons programs. Iran denies that accusation, which has also been made by the U.S. and other world powers. The Israeli official spoke on condition of anonymity in keeping with his country's opaque nuclear policy.

Egypt has proposed that a Nonproliferation Treaty conference now meeting at U.N. headquarters in New York back a plan calling for the start of negotiations next year on a Mideast free of nuclear arms.

The U.S. has cautiously supported the idea while saying that implementing it must wait for progress in the Middle East peace process. Israel also says a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement must come first.

"The question is, how do you do that in the absence of a peace plan?" Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher said Wednesday of the "nuke-free" zone idea.

Still, Washington and the four other nuclear weapons countries recognized as such under the NPT appear to be ready to move from passive support to a more active role.

In her speech to the U.N. nuclear conference on Monday, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Washington would support "practical measures for moving toward that objective," while Tauscher said the U.S. has been working "for months" with Egypt on the issue.

Washington also has been discussing it with the Israelis, said another Western diplomatic source, who asked for anonymity since he was discussing other countries' contacts.

Russian arms negotiator Anatoly I. Antonov, speaking on behalf of the five NPT nuclear powers, said these nations were "committed to full implementation" of a Middle East nuclear free zone.

Amano's April 7 letter comes seven months after IAEA member states at their annual Vienna conference narrowly passed a resolution directly criticizing Israel and its atomic program, with 49 of the 110 nations present in support, 45 against and 16 abstaining.

The result was a setback not only for Israel but also for Washington and other backers of the Jewish state, which had lobbied for 18 years of past practice — debate on the issue without a vote.

The resolution "expresses concern about the Israeli nuclear capabilities," and links it to "concern about the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons for the security and stability of the Middle East."

The U.S. and its allies consider Iran the region's greatest proliferation threat, fearing that Tehran is trying to achieve the capacity to make nuclear weapons despite its assertion that it is only building a civilian program to generate power.

But Islamic nations insist that Israel's nuclear capacity is the true danger in the Middle East.

With divisions deep, Amano's letter foreshadowed intense feuding at that September conference.

"It would be helpful to me if Your Excellency could inform me of any views that your government might have with respect to meeting the objectives of the resolution," according to his half-page letter.

A senior diplomat from one of the IAEA member countries confirmed that his government had received the letter. He and an official from another IAEA delegation said that to their knowledge the agency was still awaiting responses. Both asked for anonymity because their information was confidential.

Associated Press writers Amy Teibel in Jerusalem and Charles Hanley at the United Nations contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/wire/sns-ap-eu-nuclear-agency-israel,0,2037881.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
May 7, 2010

Iran Belongs To World's "Nuclear Club," Cleric Says

By REUTERS

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran has entered the world's "nuclear club" and major powers should accept it, an influential cleric told worshippers on Friday, underlining Tehran's defiance in a dispute with the West over its atomic activities.

Ahmad Khatami, a conservative hardliner in the clerical establishment, also warned the major powers that Iran could "endanger your entire world" in any future confrontation.

The United States is lobbying U.N. Security Council members to back a fourth round of sanctions on Iran, to press it into curbing sensitive nuclear work the West suspects is aimed at making bombs.

Iran, the world's fifth-largest crude exporter, says its nuclear programme is aimed at generating electricity and has refused to bow to international pressure to halt it.

"In regard to the nuclear issue, you should regard the nuclearisation of Iran as a bygone fact," said Khatami, who is a member of a powerful clerical body, the Assembly of Experts.

"By God's grace, Iran has entered the world countries' nuclear club," said in a sermon broadcast live on state radio.

The United States and Israel, Iran's arch foes, have not ruled out military action if diplomacy fails to resolve the row.

Iran, a predominantly Shi'ite Muslim state, has said it would respond to any attack by targeting U.S. interests in the region and Israel, as well as closing the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway crucial for global oil supplies.

Addressing the six world powers which are now discussing a possible new round of sanctions on Iran -- the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia -- Khatami said:

"If you should want to stand up against this religious (Islamic) system you would be standing up against the religion of God, and if you should want to confront our religion we will endanger your entire world."

Khatami praised President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's attendance at this week's start of the month-long review conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which Tehran and Washington accuse each other of violating.

In his May 3 speech at U.N. headquarters in New York, Ahmadinejad urged the United Nations to punish countries like the United States that threaten to use nuclear arms.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton dismissed Ahmadinejad's comments as the "same tired, false and sometimes wild accusations," and she urged nations to focus on efforts to bring Iran to heel over its nuclear programme.

"Our president took part in this conference with full courage and intelligence," Khatami said. "If anyone wants to see how effective this trip was they should look at the indignation of the arrogant powers."

(Reporting by Hashem Kalantari; writing by Fredrik Dahl; editing by Diana Abdallah)

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2010/05/07/world/international-uk-iran-nuclear-cleric.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

Israel Won't Move On UN Call For Nuclear-Free Zone

By Reuters
7 May 2010

JERUSALEM - Israel has no plan to review its nuclear policies, a government official said on Friday, playing down efforts by world powers at a U.N. non-proliferation conference to promote a Middle East free of atomic arms.

Hoping to win Arab backing for sanctions against Iran, the United States and other permanent U.N. Security Council members on Wednesday called for ways to be found to implement a 1995 initiative that would guarantee nuclear disarmament in a region where Israel is widely assumed to have the only such weapons.

The declaration followed campaigning by Egypt to focus attention, during this month's nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) conference, on non-signatory Israel, which has set peace with all its neighbours as a precondition for joining the pact. "There is nothing new here, and no reason for a change of direction on our part," a senior Israeli official told Reuters.

Egypt, which heads a powerful bloc of non-aligned developing nations, has circulated a proposal to the NPT's 189 signatories calling for a conference by next year on ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons, with all regional countries taking part.

The United States and Russia, with the support of Britain, France and China, have been negotiating with Egypt to come up with an acceptable compromise proposal, Western diplomats say.

U.S. Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher told an audience of delegates and reporters on Wednesday it was hard to imagine negotiating "any kind of free zone in the absence of a comprehensive peace plan that is running on a parallel track."

Nuclear weaponry

Egypt was the first Arab state to make peace with Israel, in 1979, but few have followed suit. Iran, an NPT signatory whose uranium enrichment has stirred Western fears of an illicit bomb project — despite Tehran's denials — spurns the Jewish state. The Obama administration's outreach to Iran has prompted some analysts to predict the United States will reassess its 40-year-old "don't ask, don't tell" policy towards an Israeli arsenal that is believed to include some 200 atomic warheads — a grievance and perceived threat among many Arabs and Muslims.

But the Israeli official said the administration's attitude on this matter was so far "identical" to the line taken by its predecessors.

Israel neither confirms nor denies having nuclear weapons under an "ambiguity" strategy billed as warding off enemies while avoiding public provocations that can trigger arms races.

Those safeguarding the official reticence have frowned upon the very fact that Israel is being discussed at the NPT forum.

"We don't really like this matter, but is there anything to fear, really? I don't think so," Israel Michaeli of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission said in a radio interview on Monday, as the month-long conference opened in New York.

"Our complaint is that people make this comparison between Iran and Israel, when there is absolutely nothing to connect the two," he told Israel's Army Radio.

"Israel did not join the pact, did not undertake its obligations. To a degree it paid a price for this, but it has certainly never cheated or defrauded anyone."

The 1970 NPT expedites member-states' access to nuclear energy in exchange for their forswearing of nuclear weaponry.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=/data/middleeast/2010/May/middleeast_May109.xml§ion=middleeast

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Business Week

South Korea Rules Out Nuclear Talks Before Ship Incident Solved

Thursday, May 06, 2010

By Bomi Lim

May 6 (Bloomberg) -- South Korea said it won't resume multilateral talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons program until identifying what caused one of its naval ships to sink near the disputed border with the communist nation.

"It is our government's firm stance that there will be no six-party talks before the ship incident was resolved," Park Sun Kyoo, spokesman for President Lee Myung Bak, told reporters today in Seoul. "The U.S. and South Korea share the same view on this."

The remarks dim prospects of early resumption of the nuclear talks even as North Korean leader Kim Jong Il reportedly told China's President Hu Jintao he was ready to return to dialogue. The U.S. also indicated that North Korea's involvement in the March 26 sinking of the South Korean warship that killed 46 sailors may affect any negotiations.

China is host of the six-party forum that also includes Japan and Russia. The talks last met in December 2008 and Kim's regime vowed in April 2009 it will never return to the talks.

“North Korea’s behavior has affected the pace of talks in the past,” State Department spokesman Philip J. Crowley told reporters in Washington yesterday. “We are fully supportive of South Korea’s investigation. When that investigation is completed, we will draw conclusions that will have potential implications.”

Crowley urged North Korea to live up to its 2007 pledge to dismantle the weapons program.

Kim-Hu Summit

Kim said his country was ready to return to the nuclear talks at a meeting yesterday with Hu in Beijing, Yonhap News agency today reported without saying where it got the information. Kim, on his first trip abroad in four years, passed through the Chinese border city of Dandong on May 3 and made stops in Dalian and Tianjin before arriving in Beijing yesterday.

The summit came just five days after Hu met South Korea’s Lee in Shanghai, where Lee asked for China’s support over the ship incident. Lee has vowed to take “resolute” measures against those responsible for the incident amid growing speculation North Korea may be to blame.

South Korea’s Defense Ministry today denied a news report that investigators collected metal fragments of a torpedo from the area near the wreckage of the 1,200-ton warship Cheonan. The team also detected traces of gunpowder, Dong-A Ilbo newspaper reported earlier today, citing an official with the group it didn’t identify.

No Confirmation

The team hasn’t found signs of explosives nor has it confirmed that the aluminum parts came from a torpedo, a Defense Ministry official said today, declining to be named in line with ministry policy.

The ministry has said a torpedo most likely caused the explosion that split the patrol ship apart near the disputed western border with North Korea. Kim’s regime on April 17 denied it had anything to do with the incident.

“There is a common understanding among all interested countries including the U.S. and China that this is an issue of grave concern,” Kim Young Sun, spokesman for South Korea’s Foreign Ministry, told reporters today in Seoul. “All interested countries understand that an objective and thorough investigation into the Cheonan incident should come first.”

Editors: Paul Tighe, Bill Austin

<http://www.businessweek.com/news/2010-05-06/south-korea-rules-out-nuclear-talks-before-ship-incident-solved.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Guardian – U.K.

North Korea Set To Resume Nuclear Disarmament Talks, Says China

North Korean leader Kim Jong-il prepared to negotiate over weapons, reports Chinese news agency

Jonathan Watts in Beijing

Friday, May 7, 2010

North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-il, has promised to work with China to resume denuclearisation talks, according to state media reports of his secretive visit to Beijing this week.

The first official recognition of Kim's trip suggests the two nations are trying to decrease tensions on the Korean peninsula amid mounting evidence that a North Korean torpedo may have been responsible for the deadly sinking of a South Korean naval ship in March.

Kim – who has reportedly suffered severe health problems in recent years – travelled by armoured train to Beijing and at least two other Chinese cities on his first known foreign trip since 2006.

In a sign of the security concerns surrounding Kim, the governments and media of the two nations made no mention of the four-day visit until he and his entourage were on their way back over the North Korean border earlier today.

Footage of the visit, belatedly aired by Chinese Central Television, showed the 68-year-old Kim looking thin but more robust than a year ago as he exchanged toasts with the Chinese president, Hu Jintao, at the Great Hall of the People.

According to the Xinhua News Agency, the North Korean leader affirmed his commitment to the denuclearisation of the peninsula and said he would work with China to create favourable conditions for a resumption of six-party talks.

Hopes for a breakthrough in the on-off negotiations were tempered, however, by a very different report of the "unofficial visit" by North Korea's KCNA news agency, which made no mention of such a promise.

Known to hate flying, Kim has made five train journeys to China in the past 10 years – a sign of his impoverished nation's dependency on its powerful neighbour for fuel, food and diplomatic support.

As on previous visits, the undercurrent of the visit was that Kim should give up nuclear weapons so that his country can end its relative isolation and embark on an economic modernisation programme.

Kim was taken to Dalian – one of China's cleanest, most hi-tech cities – and Tianjin, a huge industrial zone that is pioneering China's efforts to move towards a powerful low-carbon economy. Hu also showed his guest a biotech facility in Zhongguancun, the IT heartland of Beijing.

According to KCNA, the North Korean leader was deeply impressed by the "tremendous change" of Tianjin into a "city full of vim and vigour".

In a hint that North Korea should be moving in the same direction, the Chinese prime minister, Wen Jiabao, reportedly told Kim that the two nations enjoyed "big potential for developing economic and trade co-operation" and singled out the need to speed up infrastructure development along their borders. A new bridge will be built across the Yalu river, which separates the two countries.

Kim said the longstanding friendship between the two nations had reached a new high, according to Xinhua.

His comments came against a backdrop of increasing tension with South Korea, which said today it had evidence that a torpedo sank its naval patrol ship, the Cheonan, in March with the loss of 46 lives.

Countering earlier suggestions that the vessel may have run into a stray mine, government officials said they found traces of the explosive RDX in the wreckage, which was more likely to have been used in torpedoes.

The South Korean president, Lee Myung-bak, recently told a conference of top generals that the sinking was not a "simple accident," according to the Yonhap news agency.

The agency also quoted the defence minister, Kim Tae-young, as blaming the sinking on a "surprise attack". North Korea has denied responsibility.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/07/north-korea-kim-nuclear-china>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russian Warships Hold Nuclear Defense Drills In Indian Ocean

05 May 2010

Two Russian warships conducted an exercise against a simulated nuclear attack with elements of chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) warfare in the Indian Ocean on Wednesday, a Navy officer said.

The Moskva guided-missile cruiser, the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet, teamed up on Sunday with the Northern Fleet's flagship, the Pyotr Veliky nuclear-powered guided-missile cruiser, and started a series of exercises in the Indian Ocean on Tuesday.

Wednesday's drills involved rescue at sea and helping a vessel in distress following a nuclear explosion.

According to the battle plan, the Aggressor delivered a nuclear strike with a yield of about 200 kilotons at a distance of some 15 miles from the Russian warships.

Northern Fleet CBR specialist Captain 2nd Rank Alexander Buichikov said both ships were hermetically sealed and completely impervious to a nuclear or chemical attack.

Tuesday's exercise involved rescue at sea, extinguishing a fire on board a vessel in distress and towing it to safety.

The two vessels are due to arrive in Russia's Far Eastern port of Vladivostok in June-July to take part in the Vostok-2010 large-scale strategic exercise.

The exact date of the drills has yet to be announced.

Russia announced in 2007 that it was building up its naval presence throughout the world, and foreign port calls by Russian warships have become more frequent.

RFS PYOTR VELIKY, May 5 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100505/158884417.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia Set To Keep Typhoon Class Nuclear Subs Until 2019 - Navy

07 May 2010

Russia's Typhoon class strategic nuclear-powered submarines will remain in service with the Navy until 2019, the Navy commander said on Friday.

The world's largest Typhoon class submarines entered service with the Soviet Navy in the 1980s. Three of the six vessels built are still in use.

"They [the Typhoon class subs] will remain in operation until 2019. They have good modernization potential," Adm. Vladimir Vysotsky said.

The Dmitry Donskoy submarine has been modernized as a test platform for Russia's new Bulava submarine-launched ballistic missile.

Two reserve vessels, the Arkhangelsk and the Severstal, are awaiting overhaul at a naval base in Severodvinsk in northern Russia. They will most likely be modernized to carry new-generation sea-based cruise missiles to match the U.S. Ohio-class submarines.

The Typhoon class subs have a maximum displacement of 33,800 tons and were built to carry 20 SS-N-20 Sturgeon solid-propellant SLBMs, all of which have been retired.

The Typhoons will be replaced in the future with the new Borey class strategic nuclear-powered submarines, which will be equipped with Bulava missiles.

NOVOROSSIISK, May 7 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100507/158917310.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Results Of Bulava Probe Due May 20 - Russian Navy

07 May 2010

A special investigation commission will announce on May 20 the official results of a probe into the latest failure of Russia's ill-fated Bulava ballistic missile, the Navy commander said on Friday.

The latest launch of the missile, which Russia hopes will be a key element of its nuclear forces, from the Dmitry Donskoy nuclear submarine in the White Sea ended in failure in early December 2009. Only five of 12 Bulava launches have been officially reported as being successful.

"The conclusions of the commission will be announced on May 20," Adm. Vladimir Vysotsky said.

He added that the Russian military had significantly improved the supervision of the missile manufacturing process because some experts had blamed inefficient quality control for being one of the main causes of the test failures.

The Bulava (SS-NX-30) is a three-stage liquid and solid-propellant submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM). It carries up to 10 MIRV warheads and has a range of over 8,000 kilometers (5,000 miles).

The missile has been specifically designed for Russia's new Borey class nuclear submarines.

The future development of Bulava has been questioned by some lawmakers and defense industry officials who suggest that the Russian Navy should keep using the more reliable Sineva SLBM.

The Russian military has insisted that there is no alternative to the Bulava and pledged to continue testing the missile until it is ready to be deployed with the Navy. At least four new test launches of the missile have been planned for the end of June.

NOVOROSSIISK, May 7 (RIA Novosti)

http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20100507/158916432.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Global Security Newswire

Russia Seen Under Pressure To Disclose Arsenal Details

Wednesday, May 5, 2010

The United States' announcement this week of the number of warheads in its nuclear arsenal could push Russia toward making a similar disclosure, but the Kremlin's greater reliance on nuclear weapons as a tool of security and authority makes such a gesture improbable, the *Christian Science Monitor* yesterday quoted experts as saying (see *GSN*, May 4).

The U.S. Defense Department's release of details on the nation's 5,113-warhead deterrent was "a big PR victory for [President Barack Obama], and a very strong signal that his talk of a nuclear weapons-free world is not just empty rhetoric," said Alexander Konovalov, head of the Moscow-based Institute for Strategic Assessments. "But for Russia it's not so easy to match this step, due to differences in our security doctrine and the role of nuclear weapons in our defenses."

Monday's disclosure "ends years of unnecessary and counterproductive secrecy" surrounding the U.S. nuclear arsenal, the Federation of American Scientists stated.

"Disclosing the size of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile puts pressure on other nuclear-weapon states to reciprocate," the organization said. "Russia, whose arsenal is more difficult to track and assess, should respond by divulging comparable information about the size and status of its nuclear stockpile."

The organization, which previously gave an estimate of the U.S. warhead count that was only off by 13 weapons, believes Russia holds roughly 2,600 launch-ready strategic nuclear warheads. The group also judged Moscow to possess around 2,050 tactical bombs, which are typically less powerful and placed on shorter-range missiles than their strategic counterparts (see related *GSN* story, today).

The United States has been a stronger proponent of nuclear disarmament than Russia because Washington is confident that its conventional forces could meet any military need, according to Russian experts.

"There is not the slightest possibility that Russia will reveal the number of tactical nuclear weapons it holds," former Russian Deputy Defense Minister Vitaly Shlykov said.

"The main thing that justifies Russia's claim to be a major regional power is its nuclear arsenal, and there is considerable leeway in our nuclear doctrine to use tactical nuclear weapons in an emergency," Shlykov said (see *GSN*, Feb. 9). "The mystique surrounding these weapons -- that is, their numbers and the conditions under which Russia might employ them -- is considered a very important advantage. I don't believe Russian leaders would contemplate giving this up."

"Russia would be very interested in negotiating a treaty covering tactical nuclear weapons, so why would we reveal the figures in advance?" added Gennady Chufirin, an arms control analyst at Russia's official Institute of World Economy and International Relations.

Another expert gave a different assessment.

"If we don't respond, it'll hurt Russia's image," said Yevgeny Bazhanov, vice rector of the official Diplomatic Academy in Moscow, a training center for Russian diplomatic officials.

"If Obama was strong enough to overcome the resistance of his military establishment and take this dramatic step, our leaders cannot do otherwise," Bazhanov said. "It's a matter of honor for them" (Fred Weir, *Christian Science Monitor*, May 4).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100505_7397.php

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

San Francisco Chronicle

West Europeans target US Nukes At Treaty Session

By CHARLES J. HANLEY, AP Special Correspondent

Thursday, May 6, 2010

UNITED NATIONS, (AP) -- Germany and other West European nations at the U.N. nonproliferation conference are calling for elimination of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe — "leftovers from the Cold War" — as a way to advance global arms control.

"They no longer serve a military purpose and do not create security," German state minister Werner Hoyer told fellow delegates to the 189-nation session to review the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Belgian disarmament official Werner Bauwens, speaking Thursday, the fourth day of the monthlong conference, urged the U.S. and Russia to launch negotiations "as soon as possible" to reduce their shorter-range nuclear weapons.

The United States still has an estimated 200 nuclear bombs at six NATO bases — in Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Turkey. They were stationed in Europe during the Cold War, potentially to be delivered at short range by those nations' warplanes or the U.S. Air Force in the event of an all-out war in Europe between NATO and the old Warsaw Pact.

The U.S. also has an estimated 900 tactical nuclear weapons stored on U.S. soil. The Russians have at least 2,000 such weapons, possibly many more, and since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and collapse of the Warsaw Pact have brought them all back to Russian soil from Eastern Europe and western former Soviet republics.

U.S. President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitry Medvedev signed a new treaty April 8 reducing the two countries' strategic nuclear weapons — those on intercontinental missiles and in long-range bombers and missile submarines. But the two nuclear powers have never negotiated reductions in the tactical arms.

This February, the foreign ministers of Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Norway called for high-level discussions in NATO on the future of "nuclear sharing," the term used for these old binational nuclear missions.

At a NATO foreign ministers' meeting last month, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said reductions in U.S. tactical nuclear arms must be linked to reciprocal cuts by the Russians.

Some European politicians say, however, they favor a unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. bombs if joint U.S.-Russian cuts aren't negotiated.

Germany's Hoyer, speaking Tuesday, referred to the bombs as "leftovers from the Cold War."

"The German government's intention to bring about, in agreement with our allies, the withdrawal of the tactical nuclear weapons still stationed in Germany can be seen in this light," he said.

Addressing the conference this week, Dutch Foreign Minister Maxime Verhagen and Norwegian delegate Gry Larsen also reiterated support for eliminating the Europe-based U.S. weapons as an example of their countries' efforts at arms control.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2010/05/06/international/i144528D77.DTL&type=politics>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

OPINION

May 6, 2010

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE (I.H.T.) OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Advancing Europe's Security

By JOSEPH R. BIDEN Jr.

This week I will sit down with NATO ambassadors to advance the ongoing dialogue among the United States and its closest allies on the future of European security. I do so because the United States is firmly committed to the view that any decisions about Europe's security must be made in close coordination with our European allies and partners. We will decide nothing about our European allies and partners without them.

The United States and Europe can take much pride in what we have achieved together: We have built the most successful alliance in history, one that has kept the peace in the Euro-Atlantic region for more than 60 years and helped transform Europe into a beacon of democracy and prosperity. These achievements have been sustained by security institutions, principally NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, built through the cooperation of Americans and Europeans over decades. But now it is vital that we ask how these institutions, which have served us so well, should adapt to the challenges — and opportunities — of a new era.

NATO is revising its "strategic concept," which contains the guiding principles for NATO's strategy to deal with security threats, to prepare the alliance for the challenges of the 21st century. Russia also has come forward with new ideas about European security. These issues deserve thoughtful consideration and discussion. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton outlined our approach to European security in a speech in Paris in January. As she pointed out, the United States does not believe Europe needs new treaties or institutions, but will instead seek to create a more secure Europe that takes into account the changing nature of the threats we face, and respects the core principles of existing institutions such as NATO and the O.S.C.E.

We will seek to uphold these principles by moving forward along the following, parallel tracks. First, we need to work together to broaden our commitments to reciprocal transparency about all our military forces, including both conventional and nuclear forces, and other defensive assets in Europe, including missile defenses. Our hope is to do this with Russia. We no longer see Europe in zero-sum, Cold War terms.

Promoting trust within Europe requires understanding how neighbors understand their security challenges and how they intend to confront those challenges. And the new START treaty demonstrates that trust and certainty are best built by increasing the exchange of information about our doctrine, forces and intentions.

We will come forward with proposals to improve military transparency through a variety of steps, including enhanced exchanges of military data and site visits. Just this week, the United States released information about the size of its nuclear weapons stockpile. We think it is in our national security interest to be as transparent as we can about the U.S. nuclear program. We call on other states to do the same.

Second, we will explore reciprocal limitations on the size and location of conventional forces. These should be relevant to the world of today and tomorrow, not yesterday's world. We should also be steering our militaries away from basing their exercises on scenarios that bear little resemblance to reality, instead working together to plan for real threats, especially those that come from outside of Europe.

Third, we have to devote more attention and resources to deterring and combating security threats to Europe that come from outside Europe. The threat of war among major powers that haunted Europe for centuries has receded, even if regional flashpoints remain. This is a great achievement, but today the Continent faces new and pernicious threats: the spread of weapons of mass destruction to rogue regimes with access to ballistic missile technology, the ongoing threat of terrorist attack enabled by havens in the border regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan, the prospect of cyber-attack by criminal networks and other actors, and significant energy security challenges. No nation in Europe is immune from such threats; they affect all countries on the Continent equally. Our common efforts, including through NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and our efforts to combat global terrorism, underscore this. We must focus our efforts to address these external challenges and update our security arrangements to meet the true risks we face today.

Fourth, we need a more effective conflict-prevention, conflict-management, and crisis-resolution mechanism to defuse crises before they escalate. The Russia-Georgia crisis in August 2008 reminded all of us that we cannot take security in Europe for granted or become complacent. To prevent such events from recurring, we support the creation of an O.S.C.E. Crisis Prevention Mechanism that, in situations of tensions between O.S.C.E. states, would seek to prevent crises before they start. And in the case that they do, it would empower the organization to offer rapid humanitarian relief, help negotiate a cease-fire, and provide impartial monitoring. We also believe that the O.S.C.E. should facilitate consultations in the case of serious energy or environmental disruption and dispatch special representatives to investigate reports of egregious human rights violations.

Finally, we must affirm that security in Europe is indivisible, the importance of territorial integrity for all countries in Europe, and the right of states to choose their own security alliances. Sustainable security in Europe requires peace and stability for all of Europe — not old or new Europe, East or West Europe, NATO or non-NATO Europe. It includes the partners and friends who seek the stability and prosperity that comes with the democratic standards of the E.U. and NATO.

We seek an open and increasingly united Europe in which all countries, including Russia, play their full roles. The indivisibility of security also means that all European countries must abide by certain shared rules: above all, a commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and the right of all countries to choose their own alliances freely. The threat or use of force has no place in relations among European powers. Nor can we allow large countries to have vetoes over the decisions of smaller ones. And most importantly, we cannot permit the re-establishment of spheres of influence in Europe.

The United States crossed the Atlantic twice in the last century in the defense of Europe and stood shoulder to shoulder with our allies through the Cold War. We did so because of our shared values and because of our shared security — the recognition that the peace and stability of Europe is essential to U.S. security. That is just as true today as it was in the 20th century and that is why we are engaging vigorously in the debate over the future of European security.

There is still much to do as we seek a fully democratic, secure, peaceful and prosperous Europe. With these principles, we can reinvigorate and guarantee European security for a new era.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. is vice president of the United States.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/06/opinion/06iht-edbiden.html?pagewanted=all>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

OPINION

May 7, 2010

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE (I.H.T.) OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

Too Much Mr. Nice Guy

By R. JAMES WOOLSEY

WASHINGTON — There are three ways in which I believe recent decisions by the Obama administration are, unintentionally, actually fostering the proliferation of nuclear weapons rather than constraining them.

When judging the various policies President Obama has put forth in recent weeks to move toward zero nuclear weapons, we should bear in mind the old dictum of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. — to really understand the law, “look at it as a bad man, who cares only for the material consequences which such knowledge enables him to predict.”

First, the president and others have proposed to enhance nonproliferation by sequestering nuclear material into one international depository. The idea is that those who need enriched uranium for peaceful means can obtain it from this facility as needed if they promise not to continue down the path of making weapons-grade material. More advanced reactor design may someday lower the proliferation risk. But this is also in the future.

We should not look at how the current nonproliferation regime would work through the eyes of, say, the Irish. We should look at it through the eyes of the governing powers in Iran and North Korea or like regimes who are inclined to secretly pursue weapons-grade material. In the world we live in, they are entirely capable of working hard to exploit the current regime or a future one in pursuit of nuclear weapons.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty as it currently exists grew out of President Eisenhower’s “Atoms for Peace” program in the 1950s. It actually encourages countries that obtain nuclear reactors to produce electricity to also enrich uranium. The problem is that if a country enriches uranium up to 3 percent, which is suitable to generate electricity, it has done nearly three-quarters of the work needed to move along the road to 90 percent enrichment, which is what is required to make a bomb.

Once a country reaches that higher level of enrichment, the weapons are the relatively easy part. A simple “shotgun” device like the bomb the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima is unfortunately, quite easy to design and construct. (That is why the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate that said Iran had halted its effort to build a nuclear weapon was deceptive. It gave the impression that the Iranians had halted what was most important to get to the nuclear bomb threshold — enriching uranium. But they were doing that in spades. They had possibly merely halted weapons design work.)

Either by withdrawing from the NPT — and thus avoiding monitoring — or by secretly placing their facility in a mountain, Iran or like-minded regimes elsewhere can process enough low-enriched uranium up to the 90 percent enrichment level it needs for a weapon.

The first Iranian bomb doesn’t have to be that sophisticated. Something that goes boom and sends a mushroom cloud up in the northern Iranian desert — even if it would not fit into the nose cone of a Scud — would still make Iran a nuclear power.

That would change the world.

Like Iran, other countries — including Venezuela and Saudi Arabia — say they want “peaceful” nuclear power for electricity. Given their vast oil resources, that is patent nonsense. They want a reactor in order to get on the road to highly enriched uranium and bomb material.

If we persist in sponsoring nuclear energy exports from the United States as well as other countries so that nations can have the technology for today’s light-water reactors — which gets them into the fuel cycle — we will become the Johnny Appleseed of nuclear weapons.

If the United States is helping spread light-water reactors and thus enriched uranium around the world in the name of peaceful atomic energy, it is creating a huge and dangerous problem.

Second, President Obama’s “Nuclear Posture Review,” which seeks to limit the circumstances in which the United States might use nuclear weapons, embodies hesitancy with respect to deterrence.

Some of the allies who once could rely on the United States to protect them from attack through “extended deterrence” may now doubt whether the U.S. nuclear umbrella still covers them. If, under Obama’s new policy, an ally is attacked by biological weapons, the United States is going to have to do a study to first see if whoever

attacked is observing the NPT or not, since we will not now hit back with nukes if the attackers belong to the NPT and are not in violation of it.

The idea is that if the United States just continually takes steps in good faith to clarify and reduce the circumstances in which we would use nuclear weapons to protect our allies, then the world may progress toward being nuclear-free.

However, the incentives could work just the opposite way. Some friends and allies who felt protected under America's nuclear umbrella are now going to start planning alternatives "just in case."

Right after the North Korean nuclear test, a Japanese official was asked if that test meant Japan would move to nuclear weapons. They do, after all, have tons of plutonium available from their nuclear energy program. "No," he said, "we have the mutual security treaty with the United States and we trust the Americans.... But," he added, "if we decided to have a nuclear weapon it would take less than 200 days to produce it."

Third, as a result of President Obama's new policies, it won't be just our worried allies who might move toward obtaining their own nuclear weapons, but our enemies as well. The United States has gone from something like 8,000 deployed weapons a decade ago to around 2,000 now. We are at present engaged in reducing another few hundred.

I haven't heard anybody in Syria or Burma saying, "Hey, that means we will never need nuclear weapons." There's one thing Osama bin Laden has said that is true: When people look at a strong horse and a weak horse, they like the strong horse better.

From the standpoint of a Syria, Iran or North Korea, the fact that the United States is holding out the dream of zero nuclear weapons and forswearing modernization even as they progress toward their own weapons makes the U.S. look more like the weak horse.

For these reasons, I'm afraid that enemies of the United States, some of whom have relations with terrorist groups, will be more, not less, inclined to move toward obtaining nuclear weapons.

In my judgment, we are not being smart about proliferation by moving in the direction President Obama has taken. Proliferation is going to be more, not less, of a problem.

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