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People's Daily Online – China
May 27, 2010

Ratifying START No Easy Process, Says Russian MP

Ratification of the new strategic arms reduction treaty (START) will not be easy, head of the Russian parliament's International committee Mikhail Margelov said Thursday.

"I wouldn't say that ratification is a swift and already nearly completed process. It's going to be a difficult process. We have already found certain points in the document that make a swift and easy ratification unlikely in both the Russian State Duma and the U.S. Senate," he said as quoted by the RBC news agency.

Still, both Russia and the United States had been following the agreed timetable for the process, he said. Margelov was sure the U.S. Congress would finish the ratification before its August recess.

Moscow and Washington signed the new START document in April. Under the new treaty, the warheads held by the two nuclear superpowers will be reduced to 1,500, about 30 percent lower than the previous treaty's limitation. Strategic offensive weapons will be based solely on the national territories of Russia and the United States.

The widely hailed new pact is conducive to easing tense U.S.-Russian ties and pushing forward nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation process on a global scale.

Source: Xinhua

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90853/7002672.html>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Medvedev Submits Russian-U.S. Arms Deal For Ratification

28 May 2010

President Dmitry Medvedev on Friday submitted the new Russian-U.S. strategic arms treaty for ratification to the lower house of Russia's parliament.

"Today I have submitted the strategic offensive arms reduction treaty with the United States for ratification," he said, urging Russian lawmakers to approve it simultaneously with the U.S. Senate.

Leonid Slutsky, first deputy head of the State Duma international relations committee, said the treaty could be ratified at the beginning of the fall session, which opens in September.

"All ratification procedures will proceed simultaneously with our American colleagues - senators of the U.S. Congress," Slutsky said.

He said parliamentary hearings could be held in the State Duma before July.

The new START treaty, signed on April 8 in Prague, replaces the 1991 pact that expired in December. The deal is expected to bring Moscow and Washington to a new level of cooperation in the field of nuclear disarmament and arms control.

The treaty stipulates that the number of nuclear warheads be reduced to 1,550 on each side over seven years, while the number of delivery vehicles, both deployed and non-deployed, must not exceed 800.

U.S. President Barack Obama told Medvedev on May 13 the United States had already submitted the document for ratification to the Senate.

On May 26, Obama called on the Senate Republicans at a closed-door meeting on Capitol Hill to cooperate in the soonest possible ratification of the strategic arms reduction deal with Russia.

The U.S. and Russian presidents earlier agreed that the ratification processes should be simultaneous.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100528/159200797.html>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E

Proposal For Nuclear-Free Mideast

By the Associated Press (AP)

26 May 2010

UNITED NATIONS — The president of a conference reviewing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty submitted a draft final document Tuesday that calls for a conference of Middle East states in 2012 to launch negotiations to establish the region as a zone free of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

If approved, a conference could put Israel and Iran, which has called for the destruction of the Jewish state, at the same table.

Moves toward a nuclear-free Mideast would also be expected to ease international concerns about the nuclear program of Iran, which Tehran insists is peaceful but Washington and its allies contend is aimed at building nuclear weapons. Iran, a party to the nonproliferation treaty, has repeatedly endorsed the idea of a nuclear weapons-free Mideast.

President Libran Cabactulan's Mideast proposal was the most highly anticipated and the one that diplomats say could make or break a final agreement by delegates from 189 nations that are parties to the NPT treaty, which is considered the cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament efforts.

The draft would have the NPT session endorse the convening by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of "an initial conference in 2012, to be attended by all states of the Middle East, leading to the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the states of the region..."

Cabactulan's draft also calls for the appointment of a U.N. special coordinator to prepare for the conference.

The proposal came in response to an Egyptian proposal to convene a negotiating conference in 2011, a year earlier.

With just four days left before the five-year review of the NPT ends, this proposal and many others in the 29-page draft document are expected to be the subject of intense debate. Under the rules of the conference, the final document must be approved by consensus of all nations that have ratified the treaty.

The draft document reaffirms the importance of a resolution adopted by the NPT review conference in 1995 calling for a zone in the Mideast free of weapons of mass destruction and expresses regret "that little progress has been achieved" towards its implementation.

The 1995 resolution was pushed by Arab states in an effort to pressure Israel to dismantle its unacknowledged nuclear arsenal, of perhaps 80 warheads, and join the nonproliferation treaty, which it still refuses to do. In exchange for its adoption, the Arabs acquiesced at the 1995 conference to the indefinite extension of the 1970 NPT treaty.

In a direct reference to Israel, Cabactulan's draft "calls on all states in the Middle East that have not yet done so to accede to the treaty as non-nuclear weapon states so as to achieve its universality at an early date."

The draft also urges India and Pakistan — the two other NPT holdouts which have both conducted nuclear tests — to join the treaty as non-nuclear weapon states "and to place all their nuclear facilities under comprehensive (International Atomic Energy) Agency safeguards without conditions and promptly."

It also "strongly urges" North Korea, which withdrew from the NPT in January 2003, to return to the treaty "at an early date" and fulfill its commitments under a 2005 agreement with the U.S., China, Russia, Japan and South Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and nuclear programs.

On the opening day of the monthlong conference, which ends Friday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said the United States, Israel's prime international supporter, is "prepared to support practical measures for moving toward that objective" of a nuclear-free Mideast.

She later told reporters regional instabilities mean conditions aren't right at this time for such a zone. But her endorsement of "practical" steps in that direction, a term echoed in Cabactulan's draft, represented the first U.S. backing for action.

Israel has said it wouldn't sign the nonproliferation treaty until a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace deal is in place. The draft document would have the NPT conference reaffirm its endorsement "of the aims and objectives of the Middle East peace process" and recognize that progress toward peace contributes to a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Diplomatic sources at the U.N., speaking on condition of anonymity about other nations' contacts, said earlier this month that U.S. diplomats were discussing the zone idea with the Israelis.

The Middle East would join five other nuclear-free regions — Africa, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the South Pacific and Latin America — covering some 116 countries that have outlawed the presence of atomic arms in their areas.

Other contentious issues in the draft document are a proposal for the secretary-general to convene a high-level meeting to “agree on a roadmap for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons” and proposals on reinforced inspections, security assurances for non-nuclear states, and withdrawal from the NPT.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/May/middleeast_May455.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

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Las Vegas Sun

Time Dwindling, Nuke Session Hunts For Compromises

The Associated Press

Thursday, May 27, 2010

In closed-door huddles here, in calls between capitals, diplomats of 189 nations searched for 11th-hour compromises Thursday on a consensus plan for doing more to check the spread of nuclear weapons in the world.

A monthlong conference to review and strengthen the 40-year-old Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) wraps up Friday, but negotiators still must resolve differences over many issues, including how quickly nuclear-armed nations should move toward disarmament, and how to make the Middle East a nuclear-free zone.

On point after point in a 29-page draft plan, delegates sought to whittle away objectionable passages and find language acceptable to all. But time was running short, tempering earlier optimism the talks could produce consensus.

It led U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to take the unusual step of writing an open letter to the conference, urging delegates "to be pragmatic and coalesce around solutions."

"There is too much at stake for the conference to repeat the failure of 2005," he wrote.

In 2005 the twice-a-decade NPT conference failed to agree on a consensus final document to advance the treaty's objectives, in part because of the stand of President George W. Bush's administration, which reversed U.S. support for such nonproliferation steps as ratification of the treaty banning all nuclear tests.

President Barack Obama has embraced the goal of nuclear disarmament, endorsed the test-ban treaty and taken other steps, such as concluding a nuclear arms-reduction treaty with Russia, that have improved the cooperative atmosphere at the 2010 conference.

But the ambitiousness of the draft "Final Declaration" cobbled together by the conference president, Libran Cabactulan of the Philippines, was proving a challenge to negotiators.

For the first time at an NPT conference, the proposed declaration offers complex action plans for all three of the treaty's "pillars" — nonproliferation, disarmament and peaceful nuclear energy.

Under the 1970 pact, nations without nuclear weapons committed not to acquire them; those with them — the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China — committed to move toward their elimination; and all endorsed everyone's right to develop peaceful nuclear energy.

The nuclear powers have viewed some disarmament proposals here as too ambitious, particularly in trying to set timelines for them to negotiate elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Cabactulan's draft would still call on the weapons states to consult among themselves on how to disarm and report back to the 2015 conference, after which a high-level meeting would convene to negotiate a "roadmap" for abolishing nuclear weapons. That plan was expected to continue to draw fire from the weapons states.

Even with a timeline, a disarmament action plan would leave a major gap, since it wouldn't oblige four nations which are not members of the treaty — India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea — all of which have or are suspected of having nuclear arsenals.

On the nonproliferation "pillar," the president's draft would have the conference urge all member states to accept the International Atomic Energy Agency's "additional protocol," which allows that U.N. watchdog agency to inspect suspect nuclear material and sites anytime and anywhere to guard against secret weapons programs.

But some developing nations object to the intrusiveness of such oversight, as well as to efforts to tighten up the nuclear trade, fearing this would limit their ability to develop nuclear power.

If the disarmament and nonproliferation plans are watered down, the conference's chief accomplishment _ if a consensus document is adopted _ might be in launching a process to turn the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

That Arab proposal, to pressure Israel to give up its undeclared nuclear arsenal, was endorsed by the 1995 NPT conference but never acted on. Cabactulan's draft now foresees a 2012 conference of all Mideast states "leading to the establishment" of a WMD-free zone.

Israel has long said a full Arab-Israeli peace must precede such weapons bans. But at this conference the U.S., Israel's chief supporter, said it welcomes "practical measures" leading toward the goal of a nuke-free zone, and U.S. diplomats have discussed possibilities with Israel.

All-important details, however, such as the specific purpose and legal standing of any 2012 meeting, would remain to be worked out.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2010/may/27/time-dwindling-uke-session-hunts-for-compromises/>

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Hindustan Times – India

Friday, May 28, 2010

Nuclear Treaty Talks On Brink Of Failure

By Reuters

Talks on shoring up the global anti-nuclear arms treaty were on the edge of failure on Friday as the United States and its allies clashed with Egypt over a push to pressure Israel to scrap any atom bombs it has.

For a month the 189 signatories of the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty have been meeting in New York in hopes of agreeing on a plan to shore up the troubled pact, which analysts say has been hit by Iran's and North Korea's atomic programs and failure by the nuclear powers to disarm.

The latest draft of a final declaration for the NPT review conference calls for UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to organize a meeting of all Middle Eastern states in 2012 on how to make the region free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD) as demanded by a 1995 NPT resolution.

The creation of a WMD-free zone would eventually force Israel to abandon any atomic bombs it has. The Jewish state, which like nuclear-armed India and Pakistan never signed the NPT, is presumed to have a sizable nuclear arsenal but neither confirms nor denies it. Israel is not participating in the NPT meeting.

In a radical departure from the previous US administration, President Barack Obama's negotiators had agreed to join the NPT's other four official nuclear powers -- Britain, France, Russia and China -- in backing such a conference while encouraging reluctant Israel to participate.

The five permanent UN Security Council members and a group of Arab states led by Egypt are close to a deal that would make the 2012 conference happen, delegates say. But the two sides have reached an impasse on the question of whether Israel should be named in the declaration as a problem state.

The Egyptians insist the declaration must state explicitly that Israel should join the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state, but the Americans are refusing, diplomats said.

Last-minute compromise?

One Western diplomat familiar with the talks described the situation as "not looking too hopeful." He said there was a "stark choice for the Arabs -- name and shame Israel or have a conference in 2012 to move forward the 1995 promise ... toward a WMD-free zone in the Mideast." "My bet is their (the Arabs') short-term political needs will trump their long-term strategic interest," he said.

Other delegates confirmed the possibility that the NPT review conference would fail to agree on a final declaration because of disagreements on the Middle East question, repeating what happened at the last NPT review conference in 2005.

But diplomats said they hoped the United States and Egypt -- the key players in the Middle East negotiations -- would strike a last-minute compromise that salvaged the conference.

"We've worked so hard for the past month," one diplomat said. "We've got a strong draft that would strengthen all three pillars of the NPT -- disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy. It shouldn't be thrown away."

Western diplomats said Israel had reluctantly agreed to attend the 2012 conference but only on condition that it not be "named and shamed" in the final declaration.

Iran's envoy to the UN nuclear watchdog, Tehran's chief delegate, accused the United States of causing the impasse at the NPT talks. Apart from the Middle East WMD-free zone, he said Washington and the other nuclear powers had rejected key demands of Iran and the other non-aligned developing nations.

Ambassador Ali Asghar Soltanieh said those demands were for a precise deadline for nuclear powers to disarm, a call for negotiations on a treaty banning the use of atomic arms, and a pledge from the five nuclear powers not to use atomic bombs on states without them, known as a "negative security assurance."

"The nuclear weapon states, particularly the United States, have not cooperated to find a solution for these four main issues," Soltanieh told reporters, adding that the NPT talks had reached a deadlock. If the nuclear powers refuse to compromise, "they should be blamed for consequences," Soltanieh said, adding that Tehran was prepared to block a declaration that it viewed as too weak. Since NPT meetings make decisions by consensus, Iran has a virtual veto.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/rssfeed/world/Nuclear-treaty-talks-on-brink-of-failure/Article1-549673.aspx>

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BBC – U.K.

Friday, May 28, 2010

Israel Deflects Pressure On Nuclear Weapons

By Tim Franks

BBC News, Jerusalem

As the UN conference on nuclear non-proliferation draws to a close, the most contentious area remains a region with no nuclear power stations, and no country which has declared that it has nuclear weapons: the Middle East.

There have been renewed efforts, at the conference, to have the Middle East declared a "nuclear-free zone". But such a push is drawing stiff opposition from Israel and its allies.

Israel is one of only four states (along with North Korea, India and Pakistan) not to have signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It is widely believed to have atomic bombs, although there has never been any certainty or clarity about Israel's nuclear capabilities.

The single whistle-blower there was, Mordechai Vanunu, paid a heavy price. He passed details to the Sunday Times newspaper about the highly secret nuclear research facility he worked at, next to the southern Israeli town of Dimona. After being snatched by Israeli agents abroad, in 1986, he spent 18 years in prison.

But the global consensus has overtaken the official Israeli refusal to confirm or deny whether the country holds nuclear weapons. Only this week, Henry Kissinger, the former National Security Adviser and Secretary of State to two US presidents, spoke, on the BBC, about "Israeli nuclear weapons".

'Pressure premature'

Uzi Even worked at the Dimona nuclear facility back in the 1960s. He is now a professor of chemistry at Tel Aviv University.

Mr Even will not talk about what Israel's military nuclear capability might be, but defence analysts at the London-based Jane's Group assess that Israel has enough fissile material for between 100 and 300 warheads.

Mr Even argues, though, that Israel's policy of nuclear ambiguity - essentially never confirming their existence, but allowing others to believe that Israel has nuclear weapons - has in the past proved very worthwhile.

Whatever pressure might be exerted at the NPT conference in New York, Mr Even says that talk of a nuclear-free Middle East is premature.

His view on Israel's need for nuclear weapons is common in Israel and goes some way to explaining Israeli attitudes on the issue: "There is no country in the world like Israel, which feels as threatened as Israel.

"And there is no country in the world which has any justification to keep nuclear weapons, except for Israel.

"It would be very foolish to ask us to disarm, because we won't. I am at the age where the Holocaust is very, very fresh in my memory."

But at this point, Mr Even departs from the Israeli establishment view. He says that the posture of the past - nuclear ambiguity - belongs in the past.

The Dimona reactor is, he says, reaching the end of its life, now that it is more than 40 years old, and should be shut down. There is also such a widespread belief, around the world, that Israel has nuclear weapons, there is no further need for nods and winks.

And Israel, he argues, needs access to new nuclear technology. Climate change demands that Israel build a nuclear power station, perhaps in a joint project with Jordan. All of which means that "damage from (nuclear) ambiguity outweighs its benefit".

'Safe for conventional war'

There would be a further benefit, Mr Even argues, to Israel now signing the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. It would force Iran to cede the moral high ground over its own nuclear ambitions.

But Iran is also one of the big reasons why the Israeli government has no plans to change its nuclear policy right now.

Dore Gold is an Israeli former ambassador to the United Nations, and president of the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs. He says that not just Iran, but Iraq, Libya and Syria have all pursued a military nuclear capability, despite being signatories to the NPT.

As Dore Gold puts it, making Israel sign, would just "make the region safe for conventional war".

Having Israel change its posture of nuclear ambiguity, he says, "would satisfy a small community of arms control experts in Washington and London, but it might leave the Middle East a much more dangerous place".

And that is why the Israeli government insists that the time to push for a nuclear-free Middle East is only after the region is covered by a comprehensive peace agreement.

At the moment, such a goal appears to belong in the category of Very Long-term Ambition.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/world/middle_east/10183302.stm

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The Star – Malaysia

Wednesday May 26, 2010

Russian Support For Sanctions "Not Acceptable" - Iran

By Robin Pomeroy

TEHRAN (Reuters) - President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Wednesday Russia's support for new U.N. sanctions against Iran was unacceptable and called on President Dmitry Medvedev to rethink his backing for the U.S.-led move.

Iran was snubbed by Russia and China last week when, just hours after it offered to ship some of its enriched uranium abroad, Washington announced that all five members of the U.N. Security Council backed a new sanctions draft.

In an unusually strong criticism of the Russian government, Ahmadinejad used a televised outdoor speech to directly address Medvedev who, he said, had bowed to U.S. pressure to support the squeeze on Iran over its nuclear programme.

"If I were the Russian president, when making decisions about subjects related to a great nation (Iran) ... I would act more cautiously, I would think more," Ahmadinejad said.

"The Iranian nation doesn't know: are they (the Russians) our friends and neighbours? Are they with us or are they looking for something else?"

He said Russia should not support countries which had "shown animosity to us for 30 years", referring to the United States, which has led the global push for new sanctions.

"This is not acceptable for the Iranian nation. I hope they (Russia) will pay attention and take corrective action," he said.

"I am hopeful that Russian leaders and authorities will pay attention to these friendly words and take corrective action and not let the Iranian nation consider them among the ranks of its historic enemies."

MISSILES, POWER PLANT

Russia and China have been far less hawkish on sanctions than the United States and Europe and, despite agreeing on the Security Council draft, ensured tougher measures that could cripple the OPEC oil producer's vital energy trade were kept out.

Russia has yet to deliver an order of S-300 surface to air missiles which could help Iran fend off any future attack on its nuclear facilities. It is also helping build the long-delayed Bushehr nuclear power station.

Russian officials have said sanctions will not affect the missiles order or work at Bushehr which is supposed to begin operating in August. But a deterioration in diplomatic relations is unlikely to help either project progress.

Pyotr Goncharov, a Moscow-based specialist on the Gulf, told Reuters Moscow would be surprised by Ahmadinejad's rhetoric.

"Moscow has repeatedly saved Iran from very tough sanctions, so Ahmadinejad's defiance is quite frankly out of place. It is simply the latest attempt by the Iranian president to lay the blame for his own problems at someone else's door," he said.

Ahmadinejad said the nuclear fuel swap agreed with Turkey and Brazil last week and presented to the International Atomic Energy Agency on Monday [ID:nLDE64N0GG] was a "historic opportunity" to break the deadlock and that U.S. President Barack Obama should seize it.

"It is unlikely that in future the Iranian nation will give a new opportunity to Mr Obama," he said.

Washington and many European countries are concerned that Iran's uranium enrichment is aimed at attaining nuclear weapons capability. Iran says it is for purely peaceful purposes and says it has a sovereign right to pursue nuclear technology.

Western critics of the deal with Turkey and Brazil say it would still leave Iran with enough material for one bomb, if enriched to high purity, and that it does not address what they see as an escalation of Iran's enrichment programme.

Ahmadinejad said the Tehran accord was Iran's "final word".

"If they told us the truth and they are looking for cooperation they should behave according to the articles of this declaration," he said.

"If they are seeking excuses they should know the path of any action and constructive dialogue will be closed in the future."

(Additional reporting by Ramin Mostafavi and by Guy Faulconbridge in Moscow; Editing by Alison Williams)

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/5/26/worldupdates/2010-05-26T172434Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-488082-3&sec=Worldupdates

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Wall Street Journal
May 26, 2010

Iran Urges Obama To Accept Nuke Swap Deal

By the *Associated Press*

KERMAN, Iran—Iran's president on Wednesday urged Barack Obama to accept a nuclear-fuel swap deal, warning the U.S. president will miss a historic opportunity for improved cooperation from Tehran if the offer is rejected.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also issued a stern warning to Russia, saying Moscow's support for the U.S.-led push for a new round of United Nations sanctions against Iran was contrary to the two countries' neighborly and friendly relations.

The remarks came just a day after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said Tehran's offer—submitted Monday to the U.N. nuclear watchdog—was inadequate and didn't address international concerns about Iran's atomic ambitions.

Washington has denounced the Iranian proposal, brokered last week by Brazil and Turkey, as an attempt by Tehran to avoid a new round of U.N. sanctions over its controversial nuclear program, which the West fears is geared toward nuclear weapons.

"There are people in the world who want to pit Mr. Obama against the Iranian nation and bring him to the point of no return, where the path to his friendship with Iran will be blocked forever," Mr. Ahmadinejad said during a rally in the southern town of Kerman.

Mr. Ahmadinejad also issued a stern warning to Russia, saying Moscow's support for the U.S.-led push for new U.N. sanctions against Iran was contrary to the two countries' neighborly and friendly relations.

Iran proposed last week to ship much of its low-enriched uranium to Turkey in return for nuclear fuel rods needed for a Tehran medical research reactor. The swap would diminish Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium that can possibly be used in making atomic bombs, if the uranium is enriched to a higher, weapons-grade level.

But the proposal didn't deter the U.S., Russia, China, Britain and France—the five permanent Security Council members—from agreeing on a draft fourth set of sanctions against Iran for refusing to completely halt uranium enrichment, as demanded by the U.N. Mrs. Clinton, speaking Tuesday in the Chinese capital, Beijing, called Iran's proposal a "transparent ploy."

Tehran's offer is similar to a U.N.-drafted plan that Washington and its allies last year pressed Iran to accept, but which the Mideast nation then rejected.

"If they (U.S. and its allies) are truthful when they say they seek cooperation ... they should accept this offer," Mr. Ahmadinejad said. "But if they seek excuses, they should know that the path to any interaction will be closed."

"Mr. Obama must know that this proposal is a historic opportunity ... (Obama should) know that if this opportunity is lost, I doubt the Iranian nation will give anew chance to this gentleman in the future," he added.

Like the U.N.-backed plan, Tehran's proposal would commit Iran to shipping 2,640 pounds of low-enriched uranium for storage abroad—in this case to Turkey. In exchange, Iran would get the higher-enriched uranium fuel rods within one year.

Although it seems to be a significant concession, Tehran is believed to have more nuclear material stockpiled since the International Atomic Energy Agency first made the proposal last October. The figure is estimated at about 5,500 pounds of low enriched uranium.

Iran's insistence that even with the deal it will continue to enrich uranium to 20%—from which it can produce weapons-grade material much more quickly than from lower levels—is an even greater problem for the West.

Mr. Ahmadinejad on Wednesday also singled out Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, saying Russia's leader had caved in to U.S. pressure for new sanctions on Tehran.

"Justifying the behavior of Mr. Medvedev today has become very difficult," he said. "The Iranian nation doesn't know whether (Russians) ultimately are friends, whether they stand by us or are after other things. This is not acceptable."

The unusually harsh words for Russia reflect a strain in Tehran's relations with Moscow, a longtime trade partner of Iran with more leverage over it than Western nations.

Mr. Ahmadinejad said Moscow had no excuse for giving in to U.S. pressure, and urged Mr. Medvedev to change his stance.

"I hope Russian leaders and officials pay attention to these sincere words and correct themselves, and not let the Iranian nation consider them among its enemies," he said.

Iran says its nuclear program is peaceful, and that uranium enrichment is meant exclusively for power generation. Tehran needs the fuel rods to power the research reactor, which also produces medical isotopes to treat cancer patients.

Mr. Ahmadinejad warned the reactor is running out of fuel, and stressed that the IAEA has a responsibility to supply nuclear fuel needed by member countries.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704717004575268101222954056.html>

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New York Times

May 27, 2010

Iran And Russia Exchange Acerbic Barbs On Sanctions

By ELLEN BARRY

Page – A10

MOSCOW — Russia and Iran publicly traded barbs on Wednesday, showing strains in their longstanding alliance because of Moscow's support for a new set of American-backed sanctions over the Iranian nuclear program.

During a televised speech in Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad lashed out at his Russian counterparts, who last week agreed, along with the other permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, on the draft language for the proposed new sanctions, which would punish Iranian financial institutions and countries that offer Iran nuclear-related technology.

“We do not like to see our neighbor supporting those who have shown animosity to us for 30 years,” Mr. Ahmadinejad said in the speech broadcast from the southern city of Kerman. “This is not acceptable for the Iranian nation. I hope they will pay attention and take corrective action.”

“If I were in the place of Russian officials, I would adopt a more careful stance,” he said.

The comments came a day after Iran’s ambassador to Moscow said he hoped Russia would dissuade the other Council members from imposing sanctions, and warned that Russia risked manipulation by the United States.

“Russia should not think that short-term cooperation with the United States is in its interest,” said the ambassador, Mahmoud-Reza Sajjadi. “The green light the United States is showing Russia will not last long.”

A top Kremlin aide said Wednesday that Russia was guided by its own long-term interests, and that “our position can be neither pro-American, nor pro-Iranian.”

The aide, Sergei Prikhodko, went on to say that Russia rejected extremism and unpredictability in the global arena, and that “those who speak on behalf of the fraternal people of Iran” should not forget this.

“No one has ever managed to save his authority by making use of political demagoguery,” Mr. Prikhodko said in remarks carried by Interfax, a Russian news agency. “And I am sure that the thousand-year-long history of Iran itself proves that.”

Russia has historically opposed sanctions against Iran, which it considers an important regional ally. That position began to shift late last year when Iranian leaders rejected a United Nations-brokered uranium enrichment plan, which Russia had helped draft, to defuse the standoff over Iran’s nuclear program.

With the threat of sanctions looming, Iran revived elements of the proposed compromise, striking a deal with Brazil and Turkey this month to send parts of its stockpile of enriched uranium abroad for further processing.

But that new agreement is also causing friction, particularly between the United States and Brazil. Angry at Washington’s dismissal of the deal, Brazilian officials on Wednesday provided a full copy of the three-page letter President Obama sent to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil in April, arguing that it laid the groundwork for the agreement they reached in Tehran.

“There continues to be some puzzlement” among Brazilian officials about why American official would reject the deal now, a senior Brazilian official said. “The letter came from the highest authority and was very clear.”

In the letter, Mr. Obama wrote that an agreement by Iran to transfer about 2,600 pounds of low-enriched uranium out of the country “would build confidence and reduce regional tensions by substantially reducing Iran’s” uranium stockpile. But he also made clear that the United States would continue to pursue sanctions while leaving the “door open to engagement with Iran.”

Susan E. Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations, said the letter from Mr. Obama to Mr. da Silva should not be taken in isolation. “No one document or discussion captures the totality of the discussion and their mutual understanding,” she said.

A number of countries led by the United States suspect that Iran has been enriching uranium because it wants nuclear weapons. The Security Council has repeatedly told Iran to halt the enrichment. The Iranians have ignored the demand, saying they are within their rights to enrich uranium to relatively low levels for use in reactors.

Last week, Russia’s foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, offered cautious support for a draft Security Council resolution that would impose a fourth set of sanctions on Iran. But he emphasized that the draft needed approval from the council’s nonpermanent members, and he encouraged Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to consider Tehran’s newest proposal to enrich uranium in Turkey.

Tension has also been building between Moscow and Tehran over a proposed sale of S-300 antiaircraft missiles to Tehran, a contract that Russia has suspended but not canceled. Washington has pressed Moscow not to deliver the weapons, which could help Iran shoot down American or Israeli warplanes should either try to bomb its nuclear facilities.

Alexei Barrionuevo contributed reporting from Rio de Janeiro.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/05/27/world/middleeast/27iran.html?src=mv>

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SpaceWar.com

Turkey Chides US In Iran Row, Urges Support For Swap Deal

ANKARA, May 27, 2010

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Turkey insisted Thursday that rejecting a nuclear swap deal with Iran would be unreasonable and said that a US push for fresh sanctions on Tehran was creating an "absurd situation."

The swap deal, brokered by Turkey and Brazil last week, does not amount to a thorough solution of the Iran nuclear standoff "but it is a step forward on resolving the swap issue, which is one of the important elements of the nuclear file," foreign ministry spokesman Burak Ozugergin told reporters.

"It is true that the glass is half empty... but we say that further action should be now taken to fill it," he added.

"It is unreasonable to reject the deal saying the glass is half empty."

The spokesman criticised the stance of the United States, which submitted a draft resolution at the UN Security Council for tough new sanctions on Tehran, shortly after Iran, Brazil and Turkey announced the deal.

"Submitting the paper a day after the agreement was reached means that you prefer to turn a blind eye to certain developments... This leads to an absurd situation," Ozugergin said.

The accord calls for Tehran to ship around half its stock of low-enriched uranium to Turkey and months later receive a supply of more highly-enriched uranium suitable for research and medical use.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said Monday it had received Iran's formal notification of the deal and would communicate the contents of the letter to the United States, France and Russia.

Western powers have been dismissive of the deal, arguing that it fails to allay key concerns about Tehran's uranium enrichment operations and that the international community should keep up the pressure on Iran.

"If suspicions persist on enrichment... the parties should sit down and talk," Ozugergin said.

"We are telling them to put the (swap) deal in their pockets and go on" talking.

He also hit back at criticism that the deal was technically flawed, notably suggestions that it failed to allocate enough time to produce the enriched uranium Iran would receive.

"We had contacts with Iran for the past eight or nine months... and we shared with third countries the main parameters of the talks. Is it now that they realise the fuel cannot be made within a year?" he said.

"There was time for technical considerations before Iran accepted the deal, but nothing much was said... Now it is our right, and Iran's also, to expect the other side to show good will and give an appropriate response," he said.

Turkey and Brazil, both non-permanent members of the Security Council, are opposed to fresh sanctions on Iran.

"We believe that a ground has been found to give further chance to negotiations," Ozugergin said.

Ankara's Islamist-rooted government, in power since 2002, has notably improved ties with Tehran, prompting discomfort in Israel, once a top regional friend, and raising eyebrows among Turkey's NATO allies.

<http://www.spacewar.com/afp/100527111909.njrd7hix.html>

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Khaleej Times Online – U.A.E.

US plans For Middle East Missile Shield Take Shape

By Reuters

28 May 2010

WASHINGTON - The Obama administration is working toward a Middle East missile defense that envisions adding an advanced radar site in a Gulf state to one already in Israel to thwart any Iranian attack, U.S. officials said.

The Obama administration has been quietly helping Arab states boost their missile defenses with the goal of tying them into one system. The process could take two or three more years, officials said.

The emerging Middle East plan resembles the “phased adaptive approach” President Barack Obama rolled out with much fanfare last September to integrate sea- and land-based missile defenses in and around U.S. NATO allies in Europe.

The Middle East buildup has been played down because of Arab sensitivities about U.S. military involvement and skittishness about any military cooperation with Israel, where the United States based a high-powered X-Band radar in 2008 to bolster Israel’s missile defenses.

U.S. military strategists believe a second high-powered AN/TPY-2 transportable radar in a Gulf state would boost the capabilities of the proposed regional missile umbrella. A candidate country to host it has not yet stepped forward.

U.S. officials want the new radar in the Gulf to be positioned in a location that would allow it to work with the AN/TPY-2 radar in southern Israel, which is operated by U.S. personnel. Built by Raytheon Co, the system locks on to targets in their boost, midcourse and terminal phases.

“The idea (of a regional security umbrella) has been out there for a while but the specific pieces are now starting to fall into place,” a military official said.

A diplomat from the region called the approach “plug and play” — first the building blocks of the system are put in place, then they are linked together and turned on.

The only other deployed AN/TPY-2 system was set up in 2006 in Shariki, Japan, as a hedge against missiles that could be fired by North Korea.

ACCELERATED BUILDUP

The missile defense buildup in Gulf states began under former President George W. Bush. It has accelerated under Obama, who is pushing for a new round of U.N. sanctions against Iran over its suspected nuclear weapons program. Iran says its program is to generate electricity.

Officials said linking two X-Band radar sites in the Middle East with Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, anti-missile systems was more a political hurdle than a technical one. At issue, among other things, is cooperation among Arab states that have a long history of mistrust.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton first proposed that Washington bring Middle Eastern nations under what she called a security “umbrella” to neutralize any Iranian missile launches. Some U.S. critics assailed her statement as an implicit admission that a nuclear-armed Iran was inevitable.

Kenneth Katzman, an expert on regional security issues, said Gulf states had boosted their ability to operate jointly with the Pentagon on increasingly advanced systems.

“This has improved the prospects for implementing a long-standing vision of a potential region-wide missile defense system,” said Katzman of the Congressional Research Service.

The deployments include expanded land-based Patriot defensive missile installations in Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, but the numbers are expected to grow, officials said.

Officials said the AN/TPY-2 system worked best when the installations were arrayed along an arc around the perceived threat area. It is unclear which Gulf state might agree to host a second regional X-Band radar, although three or four are viewed as potential candidates.

The Pentagon’s Defense Security Cooperation Agency notified Congress in September 2008 of a proposed sale of THAAD units worth up to \$7 billion to the United Arab Emirates. The AN/TPY-2 may be configured as part of the THAAD system.

The House of Representatives’ Armed Services Committee approved last week \$65 million as a kind of down-payment on more AN/TPY-2 radars. The provision was added to its version of a 2011 defense bill being debated by the full House.

COOPERATION IMPROVES

Since the X-Band radar site at Israel’s Nevatim air base in the Negev desert is said to be staffed by U.S. forces, rather than Israelis, U.S. officials say a link-up may be acceptable to Arabs who might otherwise balk at cooperating with the Jewish state against Iran’s Islamic authorities.

The two main radar arrays would mesh other sensors and weapons systems like the Patriot PAC-3 anti-missile. That would let each country detect Iranian missiles at the same time and then choose which systems to go after them, officials said.

The shared early warning system could be integrated with U.S. Navy cruisers and destroyers equipped with the Aegis ballistic missile defense system in offshore waters.

Iran's advances in missile technology and defiance of the United Nations have helped persuade Arab states to work more closely together on missile defenses, officials said.

U.S. officials also pointed to signs the perceived Iranian threat has at least in private helped open doors to Israeli-Arab cooperation unimaginable even a few years ago.

Israel is already on track to mesh more closely into the U.S. antimissile bulwark, military officials say.

Obama's approach is seen as good news for Raytheon, the world's biggest missile maker, and Lockheed Martin Corp, the Pentagon's No. 1 supplier. They build much of the hardware on which the new systems rely.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/displayarticle.asp?xfile=data/middleeast/2010/May/middleeast_May486.xml§ion=middleeast&col=

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Washington Post

UN Experts Say NKorea Is Exporting Nuke Technology

By EDITH M. LEDERER, The Associated Press

Friday, May 28, 2010

UNITED NATIONS -- North Korea is exporting nuclear and ballistic missile technology and using multiple intermediaries, shell companies and overseas criminal networks to circumvent U.N. sanctions, U.N. experts said in a report obtained by The Associated Press.

The seven-member panel monitoring the implementation of sanctions against North Korea said its research indicates that Pyongyang is involved in banned nuclear and ballistic activities in Iran, Syria and Myanmar. It called for further study of these suspected activities and urged all countries to try to prevent them.

The 47-page report, obtained late Thursday by AP, and a lengthy annex document sanctions violations reported by U.N. member states, including four cases involving arms exports and two seizures of luxury goods by Italy - two yachts and high-end recording and video equipment. The report also details the broad range of techniques that North Korea is using to try to evade sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council after its two nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009.

Council diplomats discussed the report by the experts from Britain, Japan, the United States, France, South Korea, Russia and China at a closed-door meeting on Thursday.

Its release happened to coincide with heightened tensions between North Korea and South Korea over the March sinking of a South Korean navy ship which killed 46 sailors. The council is waiting for South Korea to decide what action it wants the U.N.'s most powerful body to take in response to the sinking, which a multinational investigation determined was caused by a North Korean torpedo.

The panel of experts said there is general agreement that the U.N. embargoes on nuclear and ballistic missile related items and technology, on arms exports and imports except light weapons, and on luxury goods, are having an impact.

But it said the list of eight entities and five individuals currently subject to an asset freeze and travel ban seriously understates those known to be engaged in banned activities and called for additional names to be added. It noted that North Korea moved quickly to have other companies take over activities of the eight banned entities.

The experts said an analysis of the four North Korean attempts to illegally export arms revealed that Pyongyang used "a number of masking techniques" to avoid sanctions. They include providing false descriptions and mislabeling of the contents of shipping containers, falsifying the manifest and information about the origin and destination of the goods, "and use of multiple layers of intermediaries, shell companies, and financial institutions," the panel said.

It noted that a chartered jet intercepted in Thailand in December carrying 35 tons of conventional weapons including surface-to-air missiles from North Korea was owned by a company in the United Arab Emirates, registered in Georgia, leased to a shell company registered in New Zealand and then chartered to another shell company registered in Hong Kong - which may have been an attempt to mask its destination.

North Korea is also concealing arms exports by shipping components in kits for assembly overseas, the experts said.

As one example, the panel said it learned after North Korean military equipment was seized at Durban harbor in South Africa that scores of technicians from the North had gone to the Republic of Congo, where the equipment was to have been assembled.

The experts called for "extra vigilance" at the first overseas port handling North Korean cargo and close monitoring of airplanes flying from the North, saying Pyongyang is believed to use air cargo "to handle high valued and sensitive arms exports."

While North Korea maintains a wide network of trade offices which do legitimate business as well as most of the country's illicit trade and covert acquisitions, the panel said Pyongyang "has also established links with overseas criminal networks to carry out these activities, including the transportation and distribution of illicit and smuggled cargoes."

This may also include goods related to weapons of mass destruction and arms, it added.

Under council resolutions, all countries are required to submit reports on what they are doing to implement sanctions but as of April 30 the panel said it had still not heard from 112 of the 192 U.N. member states - including 51 in Africa, 28 in Asia, and 25 in Latin America and the Caribbean.

While no country reported on nuclear or ballistic missile-related imports or exports from North Korea since the second sanctions resolution was adopted last June, the panel said it reviewed several U.S. and French government assessments, reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency, research papers and media reports indicating Pyongyang's continuing involvement in such activities.

These reports indicate North Korea "has continued to provide missiles, components, and technology to certain countries including Iran and Syria ... (and) has provided assistance for a nuclear program in Syria, including the design and construction of a thermal reactor at Dair Alzour," the panel said.

Syria denied the allegations in a letter to the IAEA, but the U.N. nuclear agency is still trying to obtain reports on the site and its activities, the panel said.

The experts said they are also looking into "suspicious activity in Myanmar," including activities of Namchongang Trading, one of the companies subject to U.N. sanctions, and reports that Japan in June 2009 arrested three individuals for attempting to illegally export a magnetometer - which measures magnetic fields - to Myanmar via Malaysia allegedly under the direction of a company known to be associated with illicit procurement for North Korea's nuclear and military programs. The company was not identified.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/05/27/AR2010052706016.html>

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Thaindian News – Thailand

Sharif Says Clinton Offered 5 Billion Dollars Not Carry Out 1998 Nuke Tests

May 28th, 2010

By Asian News International (ANI)

Lahore, May 28 (ANI): Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) chief and former Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif on Friday claimed that when he was heading the government in 1997-98, the then US President (Bill Clinton) offered him a five billion dollar package for not carrying out nuclear blasts.

Addressing a function to celebrate the 12th anniversary of the nuclear blasts, Sharif said that the entire nation was united in favour of the nuclear blasts, but added that Washington and specifically Clinton, had warned him that if he went ahead with the tests, Pakistan could face sanctions and a ban.

Sharif said that Mushahid Hussain was the first person to tell him to go ahead with the nuclear blasts as a response to India's Pokhran II nuclear explosions.

The News quoted Sharif, as saying that it was his democratically-elected government that took the bold decision of carrying out nuclear explosions.

He said the people of Pakistan are the real heirs of the country, and criticized former President General Pervez Musharraf as a dictator who had placed the country in debts

It maybe recalled that on May 28, 1998, a few weeks after India's second nuclear test, Pakistan detonated five nuclear devices in the Chagai Hills of Chagai District in Balochistan.

These tests were referred to as Chagai-I by Pakistan.

Pakistan's fissile material production takes place at Kahuta and Khushab/Jauharabad, where weapons-grade plutonium is made by the scientists.

Pakistan's nuclear tests were perhaps an important turning point in Sharif's political career.

Sharif held a secret meeting with Pakistani nuclear scientists and it was decided to conduct the country's first nuclear tests. He also alerted the Pakistan Armed Forces in order to defend country's nuclear installations.

After the 1998 tests, Pakistan was declared the seventh country in the world to successfully develop and test nuclear weapons.

http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/south-asia/sharif-says-clinton-offered-5-billion-dollars-not-carry-out-1998-nuke-tests_100371419.html

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London Guardian – U.K.

Britain's Nuclear Arsenal Is 225 Warheads, Reveals William Hague

Foreign secretary says coalition government aims for a 'more open' weapons and defence policy

By Richard Norton-Taylor

Wednesday, 26 May 2010

William Hague, the foreign secretary, today announced a review into the circumstances when the government might use nuclear weapons as he disclosed the maximum number of warheads in Britain's arsenal.

Describing what he called a "more open" policy, Hague said Britain's total number of nuclear warheads would not exceed 225, including the maximum 160 already declared as "operationally available".

He also signalled that the coalition government is likely to downgrade the importance of nuclear weapons in military strategy reflecting decisions announced last month by the US.

The British review is expected to conclude that the UK would rule out using nuclear weapons in retaliation against attacks involving biological or chemical, or conventional non-nuclear weapons.

However, it is expected to make an exception, as the Obama administration did, for Iran arguing that Tehran is covertly developing nuclear weapons.

Successive British governments have based their nuclear doctrine on the principle that potential enemies would be deterred by the principle of "calculated ambiguity" or "uncertainty" about the circumstances in which they would be launched. The Labour government suggested it might use them against an attack with biological or chemical weapon by a non-nuclear state.

"We believe that the time is now right to be more open about the weapons we hold. We judge that this will assist in building a climate of trust between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states and contribute therefore to future efforts to reduce the number of nuclear weapons worldwide," Hague told the Commons.

He said: "The UK has long been clear that we would only consider using nuclear weapons in self-defence, including the defence of our Nato allies.

"However we are prepared to look again at our declaratory policy to ensure that it is fully appropriate to the political and security context in 2010 and beyond, and we will begin this work now."

Hague added: "This country has been deliberately ambiguous over the precise circumstances of use."

Liam Fox, the defence secretary, said: "Openness and transparency are essential if we are to move towards multilateral disarmament." The moves were announced as the Nuclear Proliferation Review conference in New York is drawing to an end.

The Labour government said four years ago when it announced a decision to renew the Trident missile system that it would cut Britain's 160 "operational warheads" by 20%. However, it had yet to do so, Whitehall officials said.

A decision has also to be made during this parliament about whether new warheads would be developed at the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Establishment. The Obama administration said in its new Nuclear Posture Review last month that the US would not manufacture any new nuclear warheads.

Former Liberal Democrat leader Sir Menzies Campbell called for the Trident nuclear defence system to be included in the forthcoming strategic defence review- – something the Conservatives have so far opposed – saying it was "illogical" to exclude it.

Under the coalition agreement, Trident would only be examined on the basis of "value for money".

Campbell said: I don't believe you can consider it from the point of view of value for money, if you don't consider the requirement for it and whether there are reasonable alternatives."

France has said its arsenal will include fewer than 300 nuclear warheads.. The US announced earlier this month that it had 5,113 warheads in its stockpile.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/may/26/uk-nuclear-weapons-stockpile-warheads>

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Press Release of Senator Lugar

Nunn-Lugar April 2010 Update

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

U.S. Sen. Dick Lugar announced the following progress in the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program last month.

- 6 Strategic nuclear warheads deactivated
- 2 Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) destroyed
- 6 ICBM mobile launchers destroyed
- 5 nuclear weapons transport train shipments secured
- 75 metric tons of Russian chemical weapons agent neutralized

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, of which Lugar is the Ranking Member, has continued its focus on the New START Treaty.

On May 25, former Secretary of State and National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger testified in support of the treaty. On May 19, former Secretary of State/Treasury James A. Baker, III, testified in support of the treaty. The previous day, Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff testified in support of the treaty.

In November 1991, Lugar (R-IN) and Sen. Sam Nunn (D-GA) authored the Nunn-Lugar Act, which established the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program. This program has provided U.S. funding and expertise to help the former Soviet Union safeguard and dismantle its enormous stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, related materials, and delivery systems. In 2003, Congress adopted the Nunn-Lugar Expansion Act, which authorized the Nunn-Lugar program to operate outside the former Soviet Union to address proliferation threats. In 2004, Nunn-Lugar funds were committed for the first time outside of the former Soviet Union to destroy chemical weapons in Albania, under a Lugar-led expansion of the program. In 2007, Lugar announced the complete destruction of Albania's chemical weapons.

The Nunn-Lugar scorecard now totals 7,539 strategic nuclear warheads deactivated, 781 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) destroyed, 498 ICBM silos eliminated, 168 ICBM mobile launchers destroyed, 651 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) eliminated, 476 SLBM launchers eliminated, 32 nuclear submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles destroyed, 155 bomber eliminated, 906 nuclear air-to-surface missiles (ASMs) destroyed, 194 nuclear test tunnels eliminated, 479 nuclear weapons transport train shipments secured, upgraded security at 24 nuclear weapons storage sites, built and equipped 20 biological monitoring stations, and neutralized 1337 metric tons of Russian & Albanian chemical weapons agent. Perhaps most importantly, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus are nuclear weapons free as a result of cooperative efforts under the Nunn-Lugar program. Those countries were the third, fourth and eighth largest nuclear weapons powers in the world.

Lugar makes annual oversight trips to Nunn-Lugar sites around the world.

<http://lugar.senate.gov/news/record.cfm?id=325271&&>

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Global Security Newswire

Obama Security Strategy Stresses WMD Threat

Thursday, May 27, 2010

U.S. President Barack Obama's National Security Strategy, released today, describes nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as the "gravest danger to the American people and global security" and outlines actions long stressed by his administration as necessary in addressing the threat (see *GSN*, May 24).

"The American people face no greater or more urgent danger than a terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon. And international peace and security is threatened by proliferation that could lead to a nuclear exchange," the document states.

"Indeed, since the end of the Cold War, the risk of a nuclear attack has increased. Excessive Cold War stockpiles remain. More nations have acquired nuclear weapons. Testing has continued. Black markets trade in nuclear secrets and materials. Terrorists are determined to buy, build, or steal a nuclear weapon. Our efforts to contain these dangers are centered in a global nonproliferation regime that has frayed as more people and nations break the rules," says the strategy.

To address the nuclear dangers, the strategy advocates adding enforcement mechanisms to deter violations of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, confronting nuclear threats posed by Iran and North Korea, securing loose nuclear weapons and materials within four years, assisting other countries in the development of civilian nuclear power programs and working to eventually rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Global nuclear disarmament will not be achieved during Obama's presidential term, but "its active pursuit and eventual achievement will increase global security, keep our commitment under the NPT, build our cooperation with Russia and other states, and increase our credibility to hold others accountable for their obligations," the strategy states.

"As long as any nuclear weapons exist, the United States will sustain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear arsenal, both to deter potential adversaries and to assure U.S. allies and other security partners that they can count on America's security commitments," says the document, which notes a nuclear arms control pact that Obama signed last month with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

"We are reducing the role of nuclear weapons in our national security approach, extending a negative security assurance not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against those non-nuclear nations that are in compliance with the NPT and their nuclear nonproliferation obligations, and investing in the modernization of a safe, secure, and effective stockpile without the production of new nuclear weapons.

"We will pursue ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And we will seek a new treaty that verifiably ends the production of fissile materials intended for use in nuclear weapons," the strategy adds.

The document also addresses the threat of bioterrorism.

Carried out effectively, a biological-weapon strike "would endanger the lives of hundreds of thousands of people and have unprecedented economic, societal, and political consequences," it states.

"We must continue to work at home with first responders and health officials to reduce the risk associated with unintentional or deliberate outbreaks of infectious disease and to strengthen our resilience across the spectrum of high-consequence biological threats.

"We will work with domestic and international partners to protect against biological threats by promoting global health security and reinforcing norms of safe and responsible conduct; obtaining timely and accurate insight on current and emerging risks; taking reasonable steps to reduce the potential for exploitation; expanding our capability to prevent, attribute, and apprehend those who carry out attacks; communicating effectively with all stakeholders; and helping to transform the international dialogue on biological threats," the strategy states (Diane Barnes, *Global Security Newswire*, May 27).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100527_9898.php

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Washington Times
OPINION/ANALYSIS

HOLMES: New START Negotiations: Show Us The Records!

By Kim R. Holmes, Special to The Washington Times
Wednesday, May 26, 2010

The Obama administration's drive to win Senate approval of the New START arms treaty with Russia has hit a speed bump. Several senators are asking to see the secret negotiating record from the administration's official talks with Russia.

Why? Because U.S. and Russian officials publicly disagree about what the treaty says. Senators have a right to know - before they consent to ratification of a treaty that affects national security - how those terms now at issue were handled during the negotiations.

The differences regarding missile defense are stark. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov asserts that the treaty links arms reduction to restraint on missile defense and that this linkage is legally binding. Russia, he says, can withdraw from the treaty if "the U.S.'s build-up of its missile defense strategic potential in numbers and quality begins to considerably affect the efficiency of Russian strategic nuclear forces."

Conversely, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton insists that the treaty "has no restrictions on our ability to develop and deploy our planned missile defense systems or long-range conventional strike weapons now or in the future."

However, in a "fact sheet" released about two weeks after Mrs. Clinton's claim, the State Department seemed less confident of her sweeping statement. The treaty "does not constrain the United States from deploying the most effective missile defenses possible," the State Department said.

But there's a big difference between "no restrictions" and those that may, in the administration's opinion, merely affect effectiveness. In fact, the State Department's fact sheet statement implies that concrete and practical limits could indeed be placed on missile defenses if Russia complains they affect their forces in some way.

Furthermore, there are reports that U.S. negotiators actually told the Russians that the U.S. had no intention of putting strategic missile defenses in Europe. Only a careful review of the negotiating record can set the record straight.

Mrs. Clinton recently misspoke when she testified that a Senate request to review the negotiating record would be unprecedented. In the past Democrats have asked for the negotiating records on the ABM Treaty and also the Intermediate Range Nuclear Arms Treaty. Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts may assert that these requests were not intended to establish a pattern, but he would be on firmer ground if the Senate did not apply this standard only to requests made by Republicans.

This is no mere academic exercise. When the Reagan administration asserted that a careful reading of the negotiating record for the ABM Treaty substantiated a broader interpretation on testing than was hitherto applied, Senate Democrats led by Sam Nunn demanded full access to the negotiating record. They hoped it would disprove the administration. It didn't.

History shows how important it is to know exactly what the Russians claim when it comes to missile defense. The Soviet Union supported a narrower interpretation of the ABM Treaty, even as it was secretly violating that treaty. Today, Moscow has made it clear that it sees the New START agreement as practically limiting what we can do to defend ourselves against ballistic missiles.

We can dismiss those claims all we want. But if the Senate were to vote for ratification of the treaty without knowing what assurances - if any - were made by U.S. negotiators, it would open the door for Russia to insist that we are perpetually in violation of it. Should we attempt to deal with, say, a future Iranian missile threat by expanding missile defense capabilities in Europe, Russia could invoke these assurances and accuse us of violating the treaty.

Who cares what the Russians say? The Obama administration does. It's the leitmotif of its "reset" strategy toward Russia. Even without an arms treaty, the administration bent to Moscow's will and sacrificed missile defense sites in the Czech Republic and Poland.

If it would do that voluntarily, what would it do if Russia were to level charges of treaty violations? Every missile defense opponent would claim the effort to defend ourselves and allies endangers "the arms control process" and undermines U.S.-Russian relations.

Russia will doubtless continue to press for additional arms negotiations to formalize and expand limitations on our missile defense. At some point it will likely ask either for separate negotiations on missile defense or for a START follow-on treaty focused on U.S. missile defense systems.

We should not sacrifice our ability to defend Americans. No treaty should hinder the future development, testing and deployment of U.S. missile defenses. There can be no ambiguity or uncertainty about this. The current debate over missile defenses reflects deeper and even more troubling aspects of this treaty. For the sake of just getting a treaty,

the president signed an instrument that establishes Russia as a dominant nuclear power; limits America's ability to respond to future threats; and will likely start rather than deter a future arms race.

•*Kim R. Holmes, a former assistant secretary of state, is a vice president at the Heritage Foundation.*

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2010/may/26/new-start-negotiations-show-usthe-records/>

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Los Angeles Times

OPINION

Iran's Nuclear Ambitions: Turkey And Brazil Step In

A deal they negotiated to take some of Iran's nuclear fuel isn't enough for the U.S., but it may be an interesting start.

BY DOYLE MCMANUS

MAY 27, 2010

Last week, just as the Obama administration was about to trumpet a diplomatic success in winning Russian and Chinese support for new United Nations sanctions against Iran, the wily Iranian regime of Mahmoud Ahmedinejad struck first — with an unexpected offer to ship thousands of pounds of nuclear fuel to neighboring Turkey.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton dismissed Iran's proposal, a hastily negotiated deal with Turkey and Brazil, as a "transparent ploy" to head off the U.N. sanctions she has been painstakingly pursuing for months.

And she was right. But that doesn't mean the United States and its allies should say no to the deal. Instead, they should figure out a way to pocket Iran's offer and challenge aspiring world powers Turkey and Brazil to make it better.

At the moment, the administration is focused on getting its sanctions resolution through the U.N. Security Council, and then, equally important, persuading as many countries as possible to impose additional sanctions that go beyond the relatively mild language of the resolution.

But as one official involved in the policy reminded me this week, sanctions aren't the aim of U.S. policy on Iran; they're only a means to an end. The real goal is inducing Iran to stop moving in the direction of nuclear weapons, which means halting its enrichment of uranium to the level needed to make a bomb.

That's why, in October, the United States and its allies offered Iran a deal: If the Tehran regime would swap most of its low-enriched uranium for highly enriched (but safeguarded) uranium for medical use, the push for more sanctions would be called off. The idea was to give the Iranians a face-saving way of slowing their progress toward nuclear weapons capability, without forcing them to say so explicitly.

Initially, Ahmedinejad said yes, but almost immediately his experiment in compromise ran afoul of Iranian domestic politics. The president's rivals, including some leaders of the purportedly moderate opposition, quickly attacked him for going soft on the Great Satan. Ahmedinejad briefly defended the deal, then accused the United States of poisoning the well by portraying it as a defeat for Iran — and backed down.

The lesson many Western officials took from the negotiations was that the old stereotype must be true: The Iranians are unreliable negotiating partners.

Since then, the picture has only gotten worse. Iran has continued enriching uranium, and it has defiantly declared that it plans to keep doing so even as it denies (without much credibility) that it intends to make nuclear weapons.

That's where things stood when Turkey and Brazil entered the picture. The deal they negotiated with Iran, on its face, looked similar to what the United States offered last fall: Ahmedinejad agreed to ship 2,600 pounds of nuclear fuel to Turkey in a swap for the medical uranium he says he needs.

But Clinton and other U.S. officials pointed out, correctly, that shipping out 2,600 pounds this year wouldn't slow Iran's program as much as it would have last year, because the Iranians now have larger stores of enriched uranium.

"The whole idea was to put more time on the clock, and this deal doesn't get you as much clock," a U.S. official said. And the Iranians paired their offer with a defiant declaration that they still intend to continue enriching other fuel.

Nevertheless, some officials in the Obama administration say that the Turkish-Brazilian deal might be the start of something significant.

"We're looking at it," one official said. "In its current form, it's only a half measure.... But if we can get assurance that the sanctions resolution is going to pass, and if the Iranians are able to sit down and go further" — meaning increase the amount of uranium they are willing to give up — "then it becomes interesting."

So the administration's first move has been to make sure it's hard-built coalition in favor of stepped-up sanctions, including Russia and China, would hold together. (That was a major item on Clinton's agenda during her visit to Beijing this week, and one reason her tone there was so tough.)

But its second move, now under discussion, may be to endorse Iran's new offer to ship much of its uranium to Turkey — if the plan can be strengthened to slow Iran's uranium enrichment program in a verifiable way.

"The temptation is to do what we've been doing for 30 years, which is to dismiss everything the Iranians put forward. You have to dismiss that temptation," one official said.

A deal the Iranians rejected when it came from the United States might be more palatable when it's sponsored by Turkey and Brazil, or so the diplomats' logic goes.

It's still a long shot. But it's a low-risk venture, well worth trying. The United States spent decades striking nuclear agreements with a repressive Soviet Union even as it supported efforts to democratize the Soviet bloc. We need to revive that uncomfortable combination of approaches as we wrestle with Iran.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-mcmanus-column-20100527,0,660113.column>

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