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Wall Street Journal
May 29, 2010

Nations Agree On Nuclear Treaty

By JOE LAURIA

UNITED NATIONS — A month-long conference on containing the spread of nuclear weapons ended with 189 nations agreeing on small steps, including a contentious proposal to ban all weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East.

Iran was among the nations signing on to the unanimous agreement, after playing brinksmanship until the last few hours. Tehran objected to the wording of the final document in a section calling on countries to approve more intrusive inspections of nuclear inspections by the U.N.'s watchdog agency.

Iran, which has battled the agency over its inspections and is being threatened with new U.N. sanctions, is not mentioned by name in the document, a regular five-year update of the 40-year-old Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Israel, however, was singled out for attention, in the section setting up plans for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East.

Israel isn't a participant in the treaty nor the talks, and does not acknowledge having nuclear weapons capability—a significant irritant to its neighbors who have concluded otherwise.

The U.S., which also doesn't acknowledge Israel having nuclear weapons, agreed with Egypt to pursue plans on a nuclear-free Middle East as part of the talks—though the issue creates discomfort both for Washington and the Israeli government. The agreement calls for a conference on the matter in 2012, "to be attended by all states of the Middle East."

But the U.S. also said a peace agreement between Israel and its Palestinian neighbors must be in place first, and U.S. diplomats ended up disappointed that Israel was singled out in the final declaration. It reiterates a call for Israel to join the treaty and be placed under U.N. safeguards, like treaty members including Iran.

The U.S. "deeply regrets" the wording, and its effort on a nuclear-free zone has been "seriously jeopardized," said Ellen Tauscher, U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control and international security.

The 28-page final declaration was approved against a backdrop in which the U.S. and other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council have agreed to pursue new sanctions to punish Iran for failing to live up to its obligations under the treaty. The U.S. and Western allies believe Iran is developing nuclear weapons; Iran denies this.

Also during the monthlong conference, the U.S. declared publicly for the first time the size of its stockpile of nuclear warheads. The U.S. and Russia also recently combined on a disarmament agreement to reduce both their stockpiles.

The talks on nuclear nonproliferation played out partly as a proxy battle for the struggle over sanctions against Iran, starting the first day when U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sparred in separate speeches over one another's nuclear policy. Iran "tried very hard to spoil this conference," said Gary Samore, White House coordinator for weapons of mass destruction, security and arms control, in an interview. He said the U.S. "successfully isolated" Tehran, and "at the end of the day the Iranians found it very difficult to accept this document."

Under the agreement adopted Friday, the five recognized nuclear-weapon states—the U.S., Russia, Britain, France and China—commit to speed up arms reductions, take other steps to diminish the importance of atomic weapons, and report back on progress by 2014.

Mr. Samore said there were several new elements in this year's outcome, including new language making it harder for nations to withdraw from the treaty, and a mention for the first time of securing nuclear weapons and establishing a nuclear fuel bank.

The conference is convened every five years to review and advance the NPT, under which nations without nuclear weapons committed not to acquire them; those with them committed to move toward their elimination; and all endorsed everyone's right to develop peaceful nuclear energy.

The last NPT conference, in 2005, failed to adopt any consensus declaration, in part because U.S. President George W. Bush had withdrawn U.S. backing for such nonproliferation steps as ratifying the treaty banning all nuclear tests.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703957604575273033583884868.html?mod=WSJ_hpp_MIDDLETOPStories

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

US, Arabs Reach Deal At Nuclear Treaty Talks

By Reuters

29 May 2010

UNITED NATIONS - The United States and Egypt struck a deal on a push to pressure Israel to ultimately scrap any atomic bombs it has in a bid to avert a collapse of talks on shoring up the global anti-nuclear arms pact, envoys said on Friday.

But they said it was unclear whether Iran would attempt to single-handedly block an agreement on a final declaration that has now been agreed upon by the other 189 signatories of the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, who have been meeting for a month to find ways to strengthen the troubled pact.

“We have a deal that everyone can live with,” a Western diplomat told Reuters. “Now the question is will Iran do the right thing.”

The latest draft of a final declaration for the NPT review conference calls for U.N. 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, as demanded by a 1995 NPT resolution.

It also urges Israel to sign the NPT and put its nuclear facilities under U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards — a passage the Americans had wanted deleted. In the end, they backed down in the interest of salvaging the conference, delegates told Reuters.

The creation of a WMD-free zone would eventually force Israel to abandon any atomic bombs it might have. 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 that.

Israel is not participating in the NPT meeting.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?col=§ion=international&xfile=data/international/2010/May/international_May1559.xml

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The Hindu – India

New York, May 29, 2010

India, Pakistan, Israel Asked To Join NPT

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

In a departure from tradition of not singling out countries by name, the United Nations has asked India, Pakistan and Israel to join NPT and CTBT without further delay and pre-conditions.

The U.N.'s call to the three countries to join nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) came at the end of the month-long 2010 NPT review conference here on Friday.

The conference also decided on scheduling a meeting in 2012 to discuss the creation of a Middle East (West Asia) Nuclear Free Zone.

While it was expected that the names would be dropped in favour of a general statement calling for the universality of the NPT, the final document produced at the conference specifically called on India, Pakistan and Israel to accede to the treaty without further delay and pre-conditions.

“The conference remains convinced that universal adherence to the treaty can achieve this goal [of non-proliferation] and it calls upon all states not parties to the Treaty, India, Israel and Pakistan to accede to it without further delay and without conditions,” said the final document said.

The 189 delegates to the conference also called on the “three states, operating unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to reverse clearly and urgently any policies to pursue any nuclear weapon development or deployment and to refrain from any action which would undermine regional peace and security”, it said.

The NPT Review Conference is held every five years to assess the progress in reaching the goals set out in the 1970 treaty to disarm and stop the spread of nuclear weapons. India, Pakistan and Israel did not attend.

The U.S. took exception to the fact that Israel had been singled out in the text — a key demand of the Arab states.

U.S. President Barack Obama welcomed the accord but “strongly” opposed singling Israel out over talks on a nuclear weapons-free West Asia. “We strongly oppose efforts to single out Israel, and will oppose actions that jeopardise Israel's national security.

“The greatest threat to proliferation in the Middle East, and to the NPT, is Iran's failure to live up to its NPT obligations,” said Mr. Obama.

Iran's IAEA representative Ali Asghar Soltanieh, who attended the conference at the United Nations, welcomed the move. “It is a step forward in creating a world without atomic weapons,” he told the official IRNA news agency.

<http://beta.thehindu.com/news/international/article441557.ece>

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Times of India - India

Israel Denounces NPT 'Hypocrisy' As Iran Hails Accord

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

May 29, 2010

JERUSALEM: Undeclared nuclear power Israel on Saturday denounced the "hypocrisy" of a UN call for a nuclear-free Middle East that singled it out but ignored Iran, which is suspected of seeking the bomb and which welcomed the document.

"This accord has the hallmark of hypocrisy. Only Israel is mentioned, while the text is silent about other countries like India, Pakistan and North Korea, which have nuclear arms, or even more seriously, Iran, which is seeking to obtain them," a senior government official said on condition of anonymity.

"The fact that no reference is made to Iran is even more shocking, given that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has disclosed more and more information in recent months on the military character of Iranian nuclear projects," the official added.

Separately, an unnamed senior official was quoted on public radio as saying the decision was a "negative change for Israel," but also expressing doubt that it would lead to anything concrete.

In New York on Friday, the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty's 189 signatory nations proposed new steps towards disarmament and making the Middle East free of atomic weapons.

Diplomats approved a document that laid out action plans on the three pillars of the treaty -- disarmament, non-proliferation and promoting peaceful atomic energy.

The NPT called on Israel to join the treaty, which would oblige the Jewish state to do away with the nuclear weapons it is widely believed to have but does not acknowledge.

It mentioned "the importance of Israel's accession to the treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards."

US President Barack Obama welcomed the statement as strengthening "the global non-proliferation regime," but said he "strongly" opposed singling out Israel.

Iran's IAEA representative Ali Asghar Soltanieh told state news agency IRNA that the United States, despite opposing the text on Israel, would have to fall in line with other countries.

"The US reservation is symbolic and it is obliged to go along with the world's request, which is that Israel must join the NPT and open its installations to IAEA inspectors," he said.

The United States and other countries suspect Iran of using its nuclear energy programme as a cover for building an atomic weapon, a charge Tehran denies.

They are continuing efforts to impose a fourth set of UN sanctions on Iran for continuing to enrich uranium, a process that can produce nuclear fuel but in more refined form can provide the fissile core for a bomb.

"The greatest threat to proliferation in the Middle East, and to the NPT, is Iran's failure to live up to its NPT obligations," Obama said.

Soltanieh dismissed the US leader's stance.

"Of course this was to be expected, since (US Secretary of State) Hillary Clinton made such (statements) during the inaugural session (of the NPT meeting) and several times later," he said.

"The Americans are isolating themselves, since Iran's nuclear file is an (IAEA) agency issue. This conference was about the NPT and its future."

The document came after a month of deliberations that looked set to fail until almost the very last hour, with Israel's arch-foe Iran seeking tougher anti-Israeli language.

Soltanieh, whom many feared would veto the consensus text, said that despite its "limited" nature, the final statement was "a step forward... towards our common goal of nuclear disarmament."

The wording on the Middle East called for a conference in 2012 "to be attended by all states of the Middle East, leading to the establishment" of such a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

Washington vowed on Friday to work for a successful meeting in 2012.

It would be a one-time-only conference, with any follow-up dependent on agreement by all the parties. Israel opposes creating a nuclear weapons-free zone until Middle East peace has been achieved.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due in Washington for talks with Obama next week, and an Israeli official quoted by public radio on Saturday said the NPT question will be on the agenda.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World-Middle-East/-Israel-denounces-NPT-hypocrisy-as-Iran-hails-agreement/articleshow/5989408.cms>

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel

Saturday, May 29, 2010

Obama 'Strongly' Opposes Singling Out Of Israel At Nuclear Conference

189 signatories of Non-Proliferation Treaty back a declaration proposing a 2012 conference to discuss banning nuclear weapons from the Middle East.

By Natasha Mozgovaya and Reuters

United States President Barack Obama said Friday that he 'strongly' opposed efforts to single out Israel on the issue of nuclear non-proliferation and would oppose actions that jeopardize Israel's national security.

"We strongly oppose efforts to single out Israel, and will oppose actions that jeopardize Israel's national security," Obama said, adding that "the greatest threat to proliferation in the Middle East, and to the NPT, is Iran's failure to live up to its NPT obligations."

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference adopted Friday a declaration upholding principles of disarmament and calling for an international conference in 2012 with the aim to establish a nuclear-weapon-free Middle East.

The 189 NPT parties also decided to address North Korea in the final declaration, calling on that country to return to negotiations to settle the dispute over its nuclear activities.

The 28-page declaration was adopted by consensus, closing a month of debate that began on May 3. It contains a 22-point action plan.

U.S. National Security Adviser General James L. Jones also deplored the decision to single out Israel, calling the move "gratuitous".

"The failure of the resolution to mention Iran, a nation in longstanding violation of the NPT and UN Security Council Resolutions which poses the greatest threat of nuclear proliferation in the region and to the integrity of the NPT, is also deplorable," Jones said.

Under the NPT's action plan, the five recognized nuclear-weapon states - the United States, Russia, Britain, France and China - commit to speed up arms reductions, take other steps to diminish the importance of atomic weapons, and report back on progress by 2014.

The NPT is intended to stop the spread of atomic weapons, though it allowed the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia to keep their arsenals while calling on them to negotiate on disarmament.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon praised the adoption of the declaration and its plan of action.

"A strong spirit of compromise and cooperation has delivered a significant agreement to build a safer and more secure world," Ban said in a statement.

The action plan "lays the solid foundation to further strengthen the treaty and address the challenges ahead," Ban said. He welcomed the nuclear-weapon-states to commit themselves to actions to eliminate nuclear weapons.

Nuclear-weapons-free zones around the world and talks on nuclear disarmament are part of the NPT, which entered into force in 1970, but has so far failed to get the world's five nuclear powers to agree on a legal timetable for a total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Those powers - the United States, Russia, France, China and Britain - still resist pressure by other NPT parties to impose such a timeline.

The NPT conference chairman, Philippine Ambassador Libran Cabactulan, has said that the revised draft declaration was "carefully balanced" to reflect demands by all parties. He said adoption of the declaration would allow "all the seeds of hope planted throughout the conference would bear fruit."

The declaration called on the UN secretary general, the US, Russia and Britain to designate a facilitator to organize the conference in 2012 to be attended by "all" Middle East nations. Those three countries co-sponsored a resolution calling for a nuclear-weapons-free Middle East when the NPT met in 1995.

It said that resolution must be implemented in order to help the peace process in the Middle East region. It called on Israel to sign the NPT and to place "all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)."

The document called for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and chemical and biological weapons in the Middle East.

Sticking Points

The creation of a WMD-free zone would eventually force Israel to declare and abandon its atomic bombs. U.S. officials say such a zone could not be created without Mideast peace.

Israel, which like nuclear-armed India and Pakistan never signed the NPT, is presumed to have a sizable nuclear arsenal but neither confirms nor denies its existence.

The Obama administration changed U.S. policy by joining Britain, France, Russia and China in backing a Mideast nuclear conference while encouraging Israel to participate.

"We've got a strong draft that would strengthen all three pillars of the NPT - disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use of nuclear energy," a diplomat said.

Britain's chief delegate, Ambassador John Duncan, told Reuters the draft text was "unprecedented" in its scope.

The 2005 NPT review collapsed after participants could not agree on a WMD-free zone in the Middle East and in the face developing nations' annoyance with the United States for failing to meet previous disarmament pledges.

The creation of such a zone could ultimately force Israel to sign the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and abandon any nuclear weapons it has. But U.S. officials say this could not happen until there was peace in the region.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/obama-strongly-opposes-singling-out-of-israel-at-nuclear-conference-1.292804>

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Washington Post

At Nuclear Conference, U.S. Expects Little, Gains Little

By Mary Beth Sheridan, Washington Post staff writer

Monday, May 31, 2010

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It didn't end in failure.

That was perhaps the best the U.S. government could boast about a month-long conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which ended Friday in New York.

President Obama has made a priority of strengthening the treaty, which is in danger of unraveling after decades of curtailing the spread of nuclear weapons. Much of his ambitious nuclear agenda has been undertaken with an eye toward demonstrating U.S. compliance with the pact.

The United States got few of the specific goals it sought at the conference, such as penalties for nations that secretly develop nuclear weapons, then quit the pact (think North Korea). Language calling on countries to allow tougher nuclear inspections was greatly watered down.

And the conference's final document singled out Israel's suspected nuclear program -- but not Iran's secret facilities, which many think are part of an effort to build an atomic bomb. Gen. James Jones, the U.S. national security adviser, blasted that absence as "deplorable."

U.S. officials said the conference's final "action plan" at least represented a commitment by 189 nations to stand by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). The last review conference, in 2005, collapsed in failure, with many countries blaming the Bush administration.

"We've got the NPT back on track. There was so much criticism about 2005 . . . and a lot of doom and gloom about the treaty failing," said one U.S. official, who was not authorized to speak on the record. "We have to hold this treaty together."

The 40-year-old pact is built on a grand bargain: The original five nuclear powers promised to disarm gradually and all others foreswore the bomb. All treaty members were guaranteed access to nuclear energy, subject to the oversight of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

But the conference revealed the strains in the treaty. Non-nuclear countries complained bitterly that nuclear powers are not upholding their end of the bargain.

It was clear from the start that getting agreement would be difficult. The conference's final documents are reached by consensus, meaning that Iran, a treaty member, could block any initiatives. That explains why it wasn't named.

Israel, on the other hand, has not signed the treaty and did not attend the meetings.

"We did the most we could, considering the rules of the road," said Ellen O. Tauscher, the U.S. undersecretary for arms control.

Still, U.S. officials appeared frustrated that the Obama administration did not get more credit for its record. It has signed a new arms-reduction treaty with Russia, hosted a 47-nation summit on nuclear security and lessened the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense policy.

"The disarmament stuff Obama did, they just pocketed," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security. Non-nuclear countries, he said, "didn't give anything back."

Egypt's U.N. ambassador, Maged Abdel Aziz, who led the powerful 118-member non-aligned group, disagreed. He said non-nuclear countries ultimately dropped their demands for faster disarmament.

"We like Obama's ideas. We will make the first concessions," he said in an interview. "But we will see what is going to come."

His comments reflected skepticism among countries about how much Obama will achieve. The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with Russia has not been ratified, and Obama faces an uphill battle in winning Senate approval of a separate pact banning nuclear tests worldwide.

Aziz said non-nuclear countries are still smarting over the George W. Bush administration's decision to sell civilian nuclear technology to India, which hasn't signed the nonproliferation treaty. Obama voted for that deal as a senator.

"If you say countries outside the treaty are going to get . . . even more benefits than countries inside the treaty, than what is the benefit for me to bind myself with more [nonproliferation] restrictions?" Aziz asked. U.S. officials said they would continue to pursue tougher nuclear controls in more favorable venues, such as the U.N. Security Council and the IAEA.

Even before the conference started, the Obama administration "trimmed their sails on what they expected to get out of it. The main thing at this point was not to undercut their agenda going forward," said Miles Pomper, a nuclear policy expert at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

Not that the conference lacked for drama. Many diplomats expected the U.S. delegation would kill the final document because of the mention of Israel.

When the United States accepted it, the Iranian delegation was so surprised that it asked for a four-hour postponement of the final session so that members could call their government, diplomats said.

The Iranians finally agreed to the text, recommitting themselves -- at least verbally -- to the treaty's rules.

The adoption of a document "provides less excuse for people who would like this [treaty] to go off the tracks," the U.S. official said.

Seattle Times

May 29, 2010

Israel Rejects New Drive To Ban Nukes From Mideast

Israel, thought to be the Middle East's only nuclear power, has rejected a new U.N. call to come clean about its secretive nuclear program, calling it a "deeply flawed and hypocritical" act that ignores the threat posed by its sworn enemy Iran.

By AMY TEIBEL, Associated Press Writer

JERUSALEM — Israel, thought to be the Middle East's only nuclear power, has rejected a new U.N. call to come clean about its secretive nuclear program, calling it a "deeply flawed and hypocritical" act that ignores the threat posed by its sworn enemy Iran.

Israel declared late Saturday that it would not take part in a 2012 conference on establishing a nuclear-free Middle East - an Arab-led initiative backed by top ally U.S. and the 188 other signatories to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Although a series of U.S. conditions put the conference in doubt, the resolution, and the surprising U.S. support it received, added new pressure on Israel to give up what is almost universally believed to be a sizable nuclear arsenal. Israel refuses to confirm or deny the suspicions.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intends to discuss the resolution with President Barack Obama when the two meet in Washington Tuesday, the Israeli leader's office said.

Netanyahu was traveling in Canada Sunday, and a government spokesman declined what contacts had been made with the U.S. over the resolution.

But an Army Radio reporter traveling with Netanyahu in Toronto said his office unsuccessfully lobbied the U.S. to block the resolution ahead of Friday's vote.

Israel's so-called policy of nuclear ambiguity is a cornerstone of its military deterrence. It has long said that a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace must precede such weapons bans.

Israel has never signed the non-proliferation treaty, which requires members to open nuclear facilities to inspection and to disarm. In its statement, it noted that since it's not a member, it is not a party to the resolution.

"This resolution is deeply flawed and hypocritical: It ignores the realities of the Middle East and the real threats facing the region and the entire world," the government statement said.

It "singles out Israel" yet "the terrorist regime in Iran, which is racing to develop nuclear weapons and which openly threatens to wipe Israel off the map, is not even mentioned in the resolution," it added.

Despite its assertions to the contrary, Iran is widely suspected to be seeking to build nuclear weapons.

Israel sees Iran as its fiercest threat because of its nuclear program, its ballistic missiles capable of hitting the Jewish state and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's repeated references to Israel's destruction.

The Arab proposal for a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction was first endorsed at a 1995 non-proliferation conference but never acted on. At this month's review of the treaty at U.N. headquarters, many delegates considered a conference to begin talks on a nuclear-free Middle East to be a critical part of the final resolution.

The review's spotlight on Israel put the Jewish state in an uncomfortable position. While it tirelessly lobbies the international community to preventing Iran from acquiring atomic weapons, it insists on maintaining a veil of secrecy around its own nuclear capabilities.

Details and pictures leaked in 1986 to the Sunday Times of London by Mordechai Vanunu, a former technician at Israel's Dimona nuclear plant, led foreign experts to conclude Israel has dozens of nuclear weapons.

After Friday's vote, U.S. National Security Adviser Gen. James Jones said Mideast peace and full compliance by all countries in the region to their arms control and nonproliferation obligations "are essential precursors" of a nuclear-free Middle East.

The compliance demand appeared to be aimed at Iran, which is a party to the nonproliferation treaty.

Jones also faulted the resolution's decision to single out Israel while failing to mention Iran, which he said poses the greatest threat of nuclear proliferation in the region.

A sticking point had been a passage naming Israel, reaffirming "the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT," a move that would require it to destroy its arsenal.

On the other hand, the final document did not single Iran out by name as a member nation that has been found to be in noncompliance with U.N. nuclear safeguards agreements.

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2011985069_apmlisraelnucleartreaty.html?syndication=rss

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Arutz Sheva - Israel

30 May 2010

Israel Submarines Headed For Persian Gulf

By Hana Levi Julian

Israel has allegedly deployed a permanent submarine presence in the Persian Gulf to keep an eye on Iran, according to media reports published Sunday. The three German-built submarines are reportedly equipped with nuclear cruise missiles.

Flotilla 7 is comprised of three submarines that have visited the region before – the Dolphin, the Tekuma and the Leviathan. Each crew includes between 35 to 50 soldiers and is commanded by a colonel.

At least one will remain in the area at all times, until further notice, according to “Colonel O,” the commander of the force quoted in the reports. “We are an underwater assault force, operating deep and far – very far – from our borders,” he said.

The submarines can stay submerged as deep as 1,150 feet below the surface, for as long as a week, and can remain at sea for some 50 days. “We [also] serve as a solid base for collecting sensitive information because we can stay in one place for a long time,” said an officer in the fleet.

The force is intended primarily as a deterrent, however. “The 1,500 kilometer range of the submarines' cruise missiles can reach any target in Iran,” noted a navy officer quoted by British newspaper *The Sunday Times*.

The deployment was sent in response to the recent delivery of Iranian-produced ballistic missiles from Syria to Hizbullah terrorists in Lebanon and the opening of Syria to Hizbullah presence. The missiles have the capability of hitting air bases and other sensitive sites located deep in Israel, as far south as Tel Aviv and beyond.

Defense Minister Ehud Barak reportedly shared satellite imagery of the delivery of the missiles with U.S. President Barack Obama during his recent visit to the White House.

The *London Times* claimed satellite pictures show a Hizbullah base on Syrian soil which is a depot for arms to be delivered by Hizbullah truck fleet to Lebanon

Israel's Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is scheduled to meet with Obama for a quick visit later in the week. President Shimon Peres and possibly Defense Minister Barak will be accompanying him as well. It will be the third such meeting so far this year.

Israel is hoping to acquire two more submarines that are even more advanced in the near future, the Meko A-100 built by Blohm and Voss, a division of Germany's Thyssen-Krupp Marine Systems (TKMS) Group.

If the navy purchases the two vessels, it reportedly will arm them with air-defense capability, thus creating the world's first air defense corvettes – and giving the Israeli surface fleet independent air cover for the first time as well. (IsraelNationalNews.com)

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/news.aspx/137760>

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Press TV – Iran

Iran Warns Israel Against Deploying Subs

Sunday, 30 May 2010

A top Iranian lawmaker has called for "serious measures" against possible Israeli threats, amid reports that Tel Aviv is to deploy submarines in the Persian Gulf.

According to a *Sunday Times* report, Israel plans to send three German-made submarines with nuclear cruise missiles to the Persian Gulf near the Iranian coastline.

"If the report on the entrance of Israeli nuclear submarines is true, this will be a threat to the Persian Gulf region's security," the head of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Alaeddin Boroujerdi was quoted as saying by Mehr news agency.

"[Iranian] officials should seriously consider the issue and take the necessary measures to prevent this security threat in the region," he added.

Israel has never ruled out military action against Iran to halt the country's nuclear program. Iran says it will give a "crushing response" to any act of aggression.

Israel and the US, along with their Western allies, accuse Iran of pursuing nuclear weapons.

Iran has categorically denied the allegations, saying it has the right to a nuclear program for peaceful purposes as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

<http://www.presstv.ir/detail.aspx?id=128394§ionid=351020101>

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

‘Strike May Halt Iran's Nuke Program’

American-Israeli sociologist calls for a “different military option.”

By YAAKOV KATZ

May 30 2010

A military strike on Iranian military bases, airports, bridges, railroad stations and other key infrastructure could lead Iran to suspend its nuclear arms program, according to a paper that came out last week in a US Army publication.

Titled “Can a Nuclear-Armed Iran Be Deterred?” the article, which appeared in the current edition of *Military Review*, was written by American-Israeli sociologist and George Washington University professor Amitai Etzioni.

Attacking Iran’s nuclear facilities might not be effective, the Palmach veteran and Hebrew University alumnus writes, since, as opponents of such a strike argue, the location of key facilities may not be known, the facilities are well protected, and some are in heavily populated areas and bombing them would cause a great number of civilian casualties.

As a result, he calls for a “different military option.”

“The basic approach seeks not to degrade Iran’s nuclear capacities (the aim of bombing) but to compel the regime to change its behavior, by causing ever-higher levels of ‘pain,’” Etzioni writes.

Neither Israel nor the United States has ever publicly spoken about the targets that they would bomb if they decide to attack Iran. Most military thinkers have spoken about only targeting nuclear facilities and military sites that could be used by Teheran to retaliate.

Such a strike would come after Iran fails to live up to its international obligations and open up its nuclear facilities to inspections. The next step, Etzioni recommends, would be to bomb non-nuclear military assets such as the headquarters and encampments of the Revolutionary Guard Corps, as well as air defense installations, radar sites, missile sites and navy vessels that could be used to stop the flow of oil to the West.

If this campaign fails, Etzioni recommends bombing dual-use assets such as bridges and railroad stations. If a further tightening of screws is needed, then the attacker could declare Iran a no-fly zone like part of Iraq was even before Operation Iraqi Freedom was launched in 2003.

“This kind of military action is akin to sanctions – causing ‘pain’ in order to change behavior, albeit by much more powerful means,” the sociologist writes.

Etzioni shoots down those who say that any military action against Iran will help the regime in Iran suppress opposition and solidify its rule. “A weakening of the regime, following the military strikes, may provide an opening for the opposition,” he wrote.

Etzioni warns that time is running out and that “we cannot delay action much longer if we are to prevent Iran from crossing a threshold after which a military option will become much more dangerous to implement – for us and for them.”

<http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=176835>

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Seattle Times

IAEA Report Reduces Chances Of Iran Fuel Swap Deal

Iran has amassed more than two tons of enriched uranium, the U.N. atomic agency said Monday in a report that heightened Western concerns about the country developing the ability to produce a nuclear weapon.

By GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press Writer

VIENNA — Iran has amassed more than two tons of enriched uranium, the U.N. atomic agency said Monday in a report that heightened Western concerns about the country developing the ability to produce a nuclear weapon.

Two tons of uranium would be enough for two nuclear warheads, although Iran says it does not want weapons and is only pursuing civilian nuclear energy.

The U.S. and the four other permanent U.N. Security Council members - Russia, China, Britain and France - have tentatively backed a draft fourth set of U.N. sanctions against Iran over its refusal to stop enriching uranium.

Separately, the International Atomic Energy Agency - the U.N. nuclear watchdog - said Syria continues to stonewall agency reports to follow up on U.S. assertions that a facility destroyed three years ago by Israeli warplanes was a secretly built reactor meant to produce plutonium.

"Syria has not cooperated with the agency since June 2008" on most aspects of its investigation, according to the IAEA's Syria report. But it noted that Syria has admitted to small-scale nuclear experiments that it had previously not owned up to.

Syria denies allegations it was being helped by Iran and North Korea in developing a covert program.

But diplomats familiar with the Syria probe told The Associated Press of a visit to Syria in January by a high-ranking Iranian nuclear delegation led by Mahdi Kaniki, a deputy to Ali Akhbar Salehi, an Iranian deputy president and head of his country's nuclear program. The two diplomats asked for anonymity because their information was confidential.

For seven months, Iran refused to accept a deal brokered by the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency that foresaw Iran exporting 2,640 pounds (1,200 kilograms) of low-enriched uranium to Russia and France to be turned into fuel for Tehran's research reactor.

The West backed that offer because it would have committed Iran to exporting most of the enriched uranium it had produced and left it with less than the 2,200 pounds (1,000 kilograms) of material needed to produce enough weapons-grade uranium for a bomb.

Iran rejected the offer then but now says it is ready to ship out the same amount of material and has enlisted the backing of Turkey and Brazil in trying to reach a compromise and derail the new sanctions push.

Iran insists it has no interest in nuclear weapons. But its refusal to stop enrichment - which can create both nuclear fuel and warhead material - and its stonewalling of IAEA efforts to investigate suspicions it is interested in developing such arms have increased international worry.

The restricted International Atomic Energy Agency report said that the IAEA "remains concerned about the possible existence in Iran of past or current undisclosed nuclear related activities, involving military related organizations, including activities related to the development of a nuclear payload for a missile."

On enrichment, the report made available to the AP shortly after release to the U.N. Security Council and the IAEA's 35-nation board said Iran had now enriched 2,427 kilograms to just over three percent level.

That means shipping out 2,640 pounds (1,200 kilograms) now would still leave Iran with more than enough material to make a nuclear weapon. That makes the deal unattractive to the U.S and its allies

The report confirmed that Iran continues a separate program of small-scale enrichment of uranium, using 3.5 percent feedstock and enriching to near 20 percent - another hurdle for the West. Iran could produce weapons grade uranium much more quickly from the 20 percent level, making the separate program another hurdle to any fuel swap deal.

The U.S. and its allies view Tehran's insistence on continuing higher enrichment even as it offers to accept the swap deal with suspicion since it originally said it had to enrich to 20 percent as the first step in making fuel for the Tehran research reactor.

The IAEA also said that equipment had been removed from a laboratory it was investigating, confirming a report last week to the AP from diplomats familiar with the issue.

At issue is pyroprocessing, a procedure that can be used to purify uranium metal used in nuclear warheads.

In January, Iran told the agency that it had carried out pyroprocessing experiments, prompting a request from the nuclear agency for more information - but then backtracked in March and denied conducting such activities.

IAEA experts last month revisited the site - the Jaber Ibn Jayan Multipurpose Research Laboratory in Tehran - only to establish "that the electrochemical cell had been removed" from the unit used in the experiments, said the report.

http://seattletimes.nwsources.com/html/nationworld/2011997321_apeunucleariran.html?syndication=rss

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Bangkok Post – Thailand

31 May 2010

Iran Has Higher-Enriched Uranium

By Agence France-Presse (AFP)

Iran had produced at least 5.7 kilogrammes (12.5 pounds) of higher-enriched uranium, which it says it is producing for a research reactor, as of early April, according to a restricted UN report seen by AFP on Monday.

"On April 7, 2010, Iran withdrew 5.7 kilogrammes of UF₆ (uranium hexafluoride) from the first cascade" at its pilot fuel enrichment plant in Natanz, the International Atomic Energy Agency report said.

"According to Iran, this UF₆ was enriched to 19.7 percent."

But a senior diplomat with knowledge of the IAEA's Iran investigation said that the actual amount was more.

"The 5.7 kilogrammes was in early April. But it has continued to produce it since then. It's more," the diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The enriched uranium, which Iran says it needs for a research reactor that makes radioisotopes for medical purposes, but which the West fears is ultimately intended for a nuclear weapon, was being produced at an estimated rate of around 100 grammes per day, the diplomat added.

Iran, which has so far been enriching uranium to levels of no more than 5.0 percent in Natanz, started enriching to close to 20 percent purification in February, ostensibly to make fuel for a research reactor in Tehran.

The move, in defiance of UN sanctions, drew wide condemnation from western countries because it brings the Islamic republic closer to levels needed to make the fissile material for a nuclear bomb.

Tehran insists that its controversial nuclear activities are exclusively peaceful, but the West believes Iran is covertly seeking to make a bomb.

In an IAEA-brokered deal last October, the United States, Russia and France proposed that they take most of Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium (LEU) and turn it into the fuel rods for the research reactor.

But Iran was refused to take up the offer and has drawn up a deal with Brazil and Turkey instead.

And it has riled the West by insisting on further enriching uranium to higher levels on its own, even though it is not believed to have the technology to produce the fuel rods for the reactor.

According to the IAEA report, Iran has amassed some 2,427 kilogrammes of LEU so far, double the amount it says it is ready to transfer to Turkey for further processing.

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/breakingnews/179713/iran-has-higher-enriched-uranium>

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Los Angeles Times

Nuclear Equipment Missing From Iranian Lab, IAEA Report Says

An apparatus that could be used to extract plutonium for an atomic bomb is gone, the United Nations watchdog agency says.

May 31, 2010

By Borzou Daragahi and Julia Damianova, Special to The Times

Reporting from New York and Vienna — International arms control inspectors say sensitive equipment that could be used to extract plutonium for an atomic bomb has gone missing from a Tehran laboratory months after the apparatus was disclosed to a United Nations watchdog agency, according to an official report released Monday.

The report is expected to feed suspicions in the West that Iran is attempting to hide the nature and scope of its nuclear program.

On the other hand, Iran agreed in May to allow inspectors greater surveillance and access to the area where it is producing 20% enriched uranium meant for a Tehran medical reactor, clearing up one of the points of contention between the Islamic Republic and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Still, analysts and diplomats say overall cooperation between Iran and the agency seems to continue to deteriorate, a dynamic that emerged after the tenure of new IAEA Secretary-General Yukiya Amano began late last year.

"If Iran were really interested in cooperation with the agency, it would have allowed the IAEA to undertake additional surveillance measures before it started enriching up to 20%," said a Western diplomat in Vienna, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Iran's nuclear program has been a major point of contention with the West and Israel, which suspect the Islamic Republic of putting together the infrastructure to eventually build an atomic bomb. Tehran insists its nuclear program is meant for civilian purposes only and it accuses the West of trying to deny Iranians' their rights and national aspirations.

IAEA inspectors were told in January by a scientist or official at Tehran's Jaber Ibn Hayan Multipurpose Research Laboratory that Iran was conducting pyro-processing experiments, work potentially consistent with creating warheads that could be used in developing a nuclear weapon.

But during an April 14 inspection of the laboratory, the equipment — used to remove impurities from uranium metal — had been removed, said the agency's report to its board of governors ahead of a meeting next week. Iran had earlier backtracked, insisting to inspectors it was not engaged in pyro-processing work.

Arms control experts say the apparent attempt to experiment with pyro-processing adds to the cloud of suspicion that hangs over Iran's nuclear program.

"It will bring Iran close to being able to separate plutonium and thus have a second path to a nuclear weapon," said Mark Fitzpatrick, a former State Department nonproliferation specialist serving as an analyst for the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. "Given the evidence of military connections to Iran's nuclear program, it is worth asking the purpose for which Iran is studying the production of uranium metal."

The latest quarterly report by inspectors to the IAEA board of governors also suggested that Iran continues to produce enriched uranium at far less than capacity, feeding uranium into only 3,936 of the 8,528 centrifuges installed at a plant near the central town of Natanz.

Analysts have been divided over why Iran has failed to use its full enrichment capacity. Some have argued that evidence suggests Iran is experiencing technical and supply troubles. Others suggest Iran is hoarding its uranium supplies to use when it perfects a generation of more efficient centrifuges.

Times staff writer Daraghí reported from New York and special correspondent Damianova from Vienna.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2010/may/31/world/la-fg-iran-nukes-20100601>

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Philadelphia Inquirer
Tuesday, June 1, 2010

Iran On The Brink Of A Nuclear Bomb

By Faye Flam, Inquirer Staff Writer

In the last few months, Iran has advanced to the brink of having a nuclear weapon.

It has accumulated at least two tons of enriched uranium - enough to make two nuclear bombs, according to a U.N. report released Monday. Though the uranium is meant to be used for power generation and a medical reactor, it's a short step from there to bomb-grade fuel.

The same technology can easily be ramped up to make nuclear weapons, said physicist David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington. "If they wanted to make highly enriched uranium, they could do it," he said, referring to bomb-grade material. He estimates the Iranians are 18 months away.

Albright and other scientists who have followed the situation say Iran is moving toward a uranium bomb - the same type used on Hiroshima. Such weapons are relatively easy to engineer, they say. The challenge, as it was for Manhattan Project scientists, is getting enough of the explosive form of uranium, known as uranium 235.

But new technology makes that easier all the time.

Late last month, the five permanent member states of the U.N. Security Council proposed a tougher set of sanctions than any yet imposed on Iran. And a full Security Council vote could come sometime this month. Individual countries also are expected to impose their own sanctions. But experts doubt it will stop Iran's program.

Nor are experts optimistic about a plan for Iran to send some of its nuclear materials to Turkey. Many U.S. experts see the plan as a diversion.

There is evidence that Iranian scientists are working on ways to make and deliver nuclear weapons, said Albright, who worked with U.N. weapons-inspection teams in the 1990s to sniff out and dismantle Iraq's nuclear program. His group, ISIS, aims to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Iran's efforts prompted Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates to issue a secret memo last year warning that the United States was not prepared for a nuclear Iran. (Parts of that memo were leaked to the media this spring.)

"The U.S. position publicly is that we're going to stop them from getting nuclear weapons," Albright said. But short of waging war, he said, there is no clear plan for how to achieve that.

"Most people who are rational say we have to think about the day after they get nuclear weapons," he said.

Iran is allowed to develop nuclear power and even refine uranium for fuel under the rules of the international Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, adopted in 1970.

The constraint is the Iranians must let inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency come in to make sure the country is not pursuing weapons.

The Iranians have weakened those inspections since 2002, said Albright, by refusing to answer questions and building enrichment sites in secret.

Iran is still officially working within the international community, said Ivan Oelrich, vice president of the Strategic Security Program for the Federation of American Scientists. By contrast, North Korea rejected the nonproliferation treaty outright in 2003, after which it threw out the IAEA inspectors.

Iran's strategy may be to get as close to a nuclear weapon as possible without explicitly violating the treaty, Oelrich said. "They might like to occupy that spot where they have this ongoing latent capability without explicitly crossing the nuclear threshold."

What kept Iran from doing that years ago is the same challenge that faced scientists from the beginning of the nuclear era - concentrating enough U235. Unlike conventional explosives, where a small amount makes a small blast, nuclear weapons need a "critical mass" of material or they won't go off at all.

For better or worse, natural uranium contains only about 0.7 percent of U235. Most of the rest is U238. The two forms are isotopes - the same element, but with different atomic weights.

Both can be induced to release energy through fission; when blasted with particles, the nuclei of these jumbo atoms split into smaller fragments. That process converts a small amount of mass into a large amount of energy.

Back in the 1930s, physicists found that a trace component of natural uranium - U235 - could induce its own fission in a chain reaction. When the U235 atoms split into fragments, they release particles called neutrons and these hit other nuclei, shattering them and shooting off more neutrons.

They realized that could cause an explosion of unimaginable power, but some prominent physicists thought it would be impossible to amass enough U235 to get such a chain reaction going.

During the Manhattan Project, scientists found a way, eventually raising the concentration of U235 from less than 1 percent to close to 90 percent - the standard used for uranium weapons.

The Manhattan Project scientists started by turning the uranium into a gas - uranium hexafluoride - then running it through membranes to separate out the molecules with U238, which is heavier than U235. The machines were enormous and the process slow and expensive.

Now the preferred technique involves spinning the uranium hexafluoride gas in centrifuges. Centrifugal force pulls the heavier uranium 238 outward, leaving more U235 near the center.

It's a simple principle but a complex technology, since the centrifuges have to spin at more at 60,000 r.p.m. The idea is to spin it as fast as you can without having your machinery fly to pieces, said Arjun Makhijani, a nuclear engineer who heads the nonprofit Institute for Energy and Environmental Research.

Spinning that fast could start a centrifuge wobbling like an unbalanced spin cycle on a washing machine, he said. The bearings would also burn up unless the centrifuge used special materials.

Iran reportedly got the blueprints for its centrifuges from the infamous Pakistan-born engineer A.Q. Kahn, said Makhijani. Kahn learned about centrifuge technology in the Netherlands, where he had worked at a nuclear-enrichment facility while married to a Dutch woman. He took the technology back to Pakistan in the 1970s and is thought to have shared it with Syria, as well as Iran, in the 1980s.

Iran now has thousands of centrifuges spinning uranium, experts say.

Fuel for a nuclear power plant needs only 20 percent U235, said Makhijani, but once the concentration becomes that high, it takes only a few weeks to get it to bomb grade.

"It's a very short step from 20 percent to 90 percent," he said.

There was a time when the world encouraged Iran to develop nuclear power, said Makhijani. In the 1960s, the shah was in charge and "everyone wanted his money."

That all changed in 1979, when the shah was overthrown, but since then Iran again has begun working with other countries to build reactors.

The Iranians also have built a research reactor in Tehran designed to create radioactive materials used in cancer treatment, said Oelrich of FAS. "That puts us in a pickle," he said. If the international community tells the Iranians to stop, "they can claim we want their cancer patients to die."

One solution was for another country to give Iran finished fuel rods - uranium processed to 20 percent and shaped specifically for use in this reactor. In exchange, Iran would send out some of the uranium it has been enriching.

An original plan to send the uranium to Russia fell through.

Last month, Turkey and Brazil renegotiated a similar pact. The problem is that since the original deal was offered, Iran has accumulated much more enriched uranium, experts say.

One policy that has worked to some extent, said Albright, is sabotaging Iranian efforts by feeding bad materials and equipment into the black market that supplies Iran. The wrong metals or oils can break or ruin centrifuges.

"It makes sense to do this," he said, since it's illegal for Iran to be buying these materials in the first place. "If the Mafia is buying something, it's hard to say we have a responsibility to deliver them a high-quality product," Albright said.

A couple of cases of sabotage already have been made public - including one in which the bad equipment was manufactured at a U.S. national lab. That's all Albright knows, since it remains a classified project.

Even if Iran gets the bomb, said Albright, that doesn't mean the situation cannot be reversed, as occurred in South Africa after it acquired nuclear weapons in 1979.

The South African program wasn't discovered until 1984, said Albright. In 1989, South Africa gave up its weapons to become a respected member of the international community, he said. That occurred after extensive negotiations.

"That strategy can actually work."

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/front_page/20100601_Iran_on_the_brink_of_a_nuclear_bomb.html?viewAll=y#axz0pcBaignT

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The Star – Malaysia
Tuesday June 1, 2010

Iran Expands Atom Work, U.S. Sees Defiance

By Sylvia Westall

VIENNA (Reuters) - Iran is preparing extra equipment to enrich uranium to higher levels and continues to stockpile nuclear material, a U.N. watchdog report said, developments likely to raise tensions with the West over its atomic work.

Washington, which is leading a push for a fourth round of sanctions against the Islamic Republic, said the International Atomic Energy Agency report underscored Iran's refusal to comply with the international requirements needed for possible talks.

Tehran started refining uranium to the higher level of 20 percent in February, saying it wanted to produce fuel for a medical research reactor after talks with big powers on a fuel supply agreement stalled.

Earlier this month Brazil and Turkey resurrected parts of the proposal, under which Iran would ship 1.2 tonnes of its low-enriched uranium stockpile abroad in return for the fuel, seen as a way to reduce nuclear tensions with the West.

But the new IAEA report showed Iran's low-enriched uranium stockpile had grown to 2.4 tonnes, so that even if the 1.2 tonnes was shipped out now it would still leave Iran enough material for a nuclear weapon if enriched to higher levels.

Iran says its nuclear work is for peaceful uses only. But major world powers have recently backed a draft U.N. sanctions resolution against its atomic work.

"Based on this report Washington is going to feel justified in downplaying the Brazilian-Turkish-Iranian deal and focusing on sanctions instead," said David Albright, head of the Institute for Science and International Security.

Iran's raising of the enrichment level to 20 percent has heightened Western suspicions because it takes the material closer to the 90 percent purity needed to make atomic weapons.

The Islamic Republic is also thought to lack the capability to make the special fuel assemblies needed for the medical research reactor.

The nine-page IAEA report showed Iran pushing ahead with higher-level enrichment and failing to answer the agency's questions about possible military dimensions to its nuclear work and address concerns about possible undisclosed activities.

"This latest IAEA report clearly shows Iran's continued failure to comply with its international obligations and its sustained lack of cooperation with the IAEA," White House National Security Council spokesman Mike Hammer said.

The report said Iran had added a second set of 164 centrifuges -- nuclear enrichment machines -- to help refine the uranium but they were not yet operational. At the time of the previous report in February, Iran had only one set of centrifuges installed for the work.

The Islamic Republic has told the agency the extra machines will support the enrichment work by allowing material to be re-fed into the machines.

But analysts say they could be configured to expand the production, a move which would ring alarm bells in the West.

BETTER OVERSIGHT BUT LATE

Tehran has granted a months-old IAEA request to allow better oversight of the higher enrichment. The agency has said the measures should have been in place as soon as the work started to ensure the material was not being diverted for military uses.

Inspectors have been able to improve camera angles, keep track of nuclear material and equipment by putting it under agency seal and conduct inspections at short notice.

"This is good enough for when the cascades are eventually interconnected," said a senior official familiar with the investigation. "In this case the (inspections) regime is very tough."

But some said the changes paled in comparison with other issues.

"The fact that Iran allowed the IAEA to upgrade its safeguards approach for the 20 percent enrichment work is small comfort, given that Tehran continues to reject so many other IAEA requests necessary for proper application of safeguards," said Mark Fitzpatrick at London's International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"This latest report says Iran still refuses to answer questions about the Fordow plant, to provide access to heavy water-related facilities, to answer questions about the possible military dimensions and to provide advance design information."

Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's envoy to the IAEA, took an opposing view and said the report proved his country was cooperating well with the agency.

"Certainly this report ... shows Iran has carried out its commitments regarding the Non-Proliferation Treaty and all of Iran's activities, including enrichment, are under the complete supervision of the Agency," he told Iran's ISNA news agency.

The report said Iran had slightly increased the number of centrifuges enriching uranium to lower levels at Natanz to 3,936, the first expansion in around a year. The number installed but not enriching had fallen slightly to 8,610.

Analysts said the modest rise, after previous years of headlong expansion, suggested Iran could be concentrating its attention elsewhere. It also may be struggling to run large numbers of its 1970s-design centrifuges, which have been prone to breakdowns, they said.

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/6/1/worldupdates/2010-06-01T090440Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-489447-2&sec=Worldupdates

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Times of India – India

China Calls For Talks, Asks Iran To Cooperate With IAEA

Press Trust of India

June 1, 2010

BEIJING: China, a close ally of Iran, today asked the Islamic republic to improve its cooperation with the IAEA, after the UN agency's report said that Tehran was pressing ahead with its controversial atomic programme.

"China hopes all relevant parties will seize current opportunities to enable the resumption of dialogue to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue as soon as possible," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Ma Zhaoxu said at a media briefing when asked about latest IAEA report.

Ma said China appreciates the efforts the IAEA has made and expressed hope Iran will strengthen cooperation with the IAEA.

"We hope Iran will further step up cooperation with the IAEA and resolve the pending issues at an early date," he said.

Ma said China has taken note of the latest report by IAEA Director-General Amano Yukiy stating that Iran continued to produce highly-enriched uranium.

He emphasised that the long-term and proper resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue has to be achieved through dialogue and negotiation, which is in the interests of all parties concerned.

US officials in the recent past said China has agreed to back UN Security Council resolution to impose fresh sanctions against Iran but has not said anything openly in this regard except reiterating its stand for talks between relevant parties.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/china/China-calls-for-talks-asks-Iran-to-cooperate-with-IAEA/articleshow/5998867.cms>

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The Star Online – Malaysia

Tuesday June 1, 2010

Syria Reports Past Nuclear Work, Blocks Access - IAEA

By Sylvia Westall

VIENNA (Reuters) - Syria has revealed some details of past nuclear experiments to U.N. inspectors but is still blocking access to a desert site where secret atomic activity may have taken place, a confidential IAEA report said.

The International Atomic Energy Agency report, obtained by Reuters on Monday, said Syria was not allowing follow-up access to a bombed desert site which U.S. intelligence reports said had been a North Korean-designed nuclear reactor under construction, geared for atomic bomb fuel.

Israel bombed the site to rubble in 2007. Syria allowed the IAEA to inspect the site in June 2008 but has not allowed the agency to revisit it since then.

The agency says it needs to take more samples at the site to remove any doubts about Syria's past atomic activities. It also repeated a call for access to three military sites, whose appearance was altered by landscaping after the IAEA first asked to check them.

"Such access is essential to enable the agency to establish the facts and make progress in its verification, while protecting military and other information which Syria considers to be sensitive," IAEA chief Yukiya Amano wrote.

Syria, an ally of Iran which is under IAEA investigation over nuclear proliferation suspicions, has denied ever having an atom bomb programme and says the intelligence suggesting it had is fabricated.

TRACES AND EXPERIMENTS

Syria has allowed inspectors to visit a research reactor in Damascus where they have been checking whether there is a link with the bombed Dair Alzour desert site after discovering unexplained particles of processed uranium at both.

Some analysts say the uranium traces raise the question of whether it used some natural uranium intended for the alleged reactor at Dair Alzour in tests applicable to learning how to separate out bomb-grade plutonium from spent nuclear fuel.

On a recent visit to the Damascus reactor, Syria belatedly revealed that it had conducted experiments to irradiate and convert uranium-derived material during 2004, the report said.

Syria also provided the IAEA with information about amounts of previously undisclosed nuclear material.

"These were (experiments) with small quantities in order to learn the processes," a senior official familiar with the IAEA probe said. "They should have been reported to the IAEA under the safeguards agreement."

The official said it was not clear if the past work was just experimental, as Syria claimed, or if it could have had other uses. The report said the IAEA was examining further samples.

It urged Syria to cooperate with the agency's open questions about the work as soon as possible and said it should adopt the IAEA's Additional Protocol, which permits unfettered inspections beyond declared nuclear sites to hunt out any covert atomic activity.

The issue, along with the IAEA's concern about Iran's atomic programme, will be on the agenda at a meeting of the IAEA's 35-nation board of governors starting June 7.

http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2010/6/1/worldupdates/2010-06-01T092321Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-489503-1&sec=Worldupdates

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Yonhap News – South Korea
May 29, 2010

S. Korea Hails Declaration Of NPT Conference

SEOUL, May 29 (Yonhap) -- South Korea welcomed the declaration of an international conference on nuclear nonproliferation Saturday that urged North Korea to give up its nuclear ambition and quickly return to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty (NPT).

"The government believes it is a strong reaffirmation of the international community's position" on the denuclearization of North Korea, Kim Young-sun, a spokesman for the South Korean foreign ministry, said in a statement.

The NPT review conference, held every five years, unanimously adopted a joint declaration Friday, urging Pyongyang to fulfill its denuclearization commitments under six-party accords, "including the complete and verifiable abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs."

The month-long conference was held in New York, involving 189 countries including South Korea.

"This year's conference reaffirmed that North Korea will not be recognized as a nuclear state under any circumstances and urged the North to implement its denuclearization commitments under the six-party accord and the U.N. Security Council resolution," the ministry spokesman said.

North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 2003 and has since conducted two atomic tests in 2006 and again last year. The communist state is part of six-nation negotiations on ending its nuclear ambitions, but has boycotted the talks since the last round held in December 2008. The talks also involve South Korea, the U.S., Japan, China and Russia.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2010/05/29/51/0401000000AEN20100529002700320F.HTML>

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Hindustan Times – India

India Says No To NPT Again, Terms It Discriminatory

By Indo-Asian News Service
New Delhi, May 30, 2010

Against the backdrop of the UN asking it to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, India on Sunday made it clear that it can't be a party to an agreement that it regards as "discriminatory".

"Our position on NPT has been clearly articulated before. India's credentials in non-proliferation are well-known," said a government source in New Delhi.

"We have made it clear that we want complete, verifiable and universal disarmament," the source added.

India will not be party to any agreement that it regards as discriminatory, government sources stressed, while reiterating India's oft-repeated position.

At the end of the nearly month-long NPT review conference Friday, the UN has asked India, Pakistan and Israel to join the NPT and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) without further delay and pre-conditions.

Issues relating to non-proliferation are likely to be discussed in the first India-US strategic dialogue, chaired by External Affairs Minister SM Krishna and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in Washington June 3.

India, a de facto nuclear weapons state, has consistently rejected the NPT on grounds that it divides the world into the nuclear haves and have-nots and has instead pitched for universal nuclear disarmament.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-says-no-to-NPT-again-terms-it-discriminatory/Article1-550837.aspx>

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Press Release

NNSA Launches New Detection Capability

NNSA announces the deployment of a satellite that heralds the beginning of a new era of space-based nuclear explosion monitoring.

May 28, 2010

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) today announced the deployment of a satellite that heralds the beginning of a new era of space-based nuclear explosion monitoring.

On May 27, 2010, the U.S. Air Force (USAF) successfully launched the first IIF series of Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites, which carry improved nuclear detonation detection instruments built by Sandia National Laboratories and Los Alamos National Laboratory for the National Nuclear Security Administration.

"The deployment of these new instruments will significantly improve our ability to detect atmospheric or space-based nuclear explosions and verify compliance with nuclear test ban treaties," said NNSA Principal Assistant Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Ken Baker. "The launch advances President Obama's broader nuclear nonproliferation agenda and strengthens the NNSA-USAF partnership that has ensured continuous global nuclear detonation detection coverage for nearly half a century."

NNSA's nonproliferation research and development efforts work to reduce the threat to national security posed by nuclear weapons proliferation and possible detonation or the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials through the long-term development of new technology. In the area of nuclear detonation detection, NNSA provides operational sensor payloads for integration onto USAF satellites. These sensors are crucial components of the nation's independent means to verify compliance with international nuclear test treaties. All Global Positioning System satellites carry these sensors, thus the entire planet is monitored continuously for tell-tale signs of treaty violation.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science in the nation's national security enterprise. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability, and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; reduces the global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.

<http://www.nnsa.energy.gov/mediaroom/pressreleases/satellitelaunch05.28.10>

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel
ANALYSIS
May 30, 2010

ANALYSIS / U.S. Sacrificed Israel For Success Of NPT Conference

The conference of the signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is a diplomatic victory for Egypt and a failure for Israel.

By Yossi Melman

The conference of the signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is a diplomatic victory for Egypt and a failure for Israel. Israel can feel sacrificed by the U.S. on the altar of a successful conference. Israel's nuclear program, and the international assessment that it possesses an arsenal with dozens, if not hundreds of nuclear weapons, has become a hostage to the conference.

The U.S. preferred its overall interest in advancing the idea of limiting nuclear weapons throughout the world, tighter inspections of nuclear installations and the spread of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, over supporting Israel's needs. Therein lies the difference between the Obama administration and the one preceding it. During the previous meeting in 2005, the U.S. refused to accept parts of the draft document that called on Israel to join the NPT and turned down the idea of holding talks in order to create a region free of nuclear weapons - even at the cost of the conference's failure. President Barack Obama and his administration opted for success at the conference over Israel.

On the face of it, the proposal deals with Israel in a fashion similar to the concluding document of the 1995 conference. Then, the Clinton administration agreed to have Israel mentioned in the document so that the "universality" of the NPT would be agreed upon. Then, too, there were disagreements between Egypt and the non-aligned states and the United States. However this time the decision differs and pushes forth two key issues beyond the 1995 document.

It talks of a target date - 2012 - for holding a conference, and appointing a special coordinator who will visit the region and hold talks for holding such a conference. However, that is still very far removed from the possibility that Israel will join the NPT. This is a sovereign decision of Israel and it is not possible to impose it.

There are many understandings between Israel and the U.S., both verbal and written, which were reiterated by the Obama administration, including the fact that Israel will not be forced into the NPT. The U.S. also accepts Israel's view on the subject of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. The Israeli approach calls on all countries in the region to first recognize Israel's right to exist, sign peace agreements, enter into security arrangements, limit conventional arsenals and also non-conventional weapons - including chemical and biological agents in their arsenals, and their missile delivery systems.

Only then will it be possible to begin discussions on a nuclear-free zone. On Friday the U.S. expressed its "serious reservations" at the end of the conference regarding the holding of a conference in 2012. National Security Adviser James Jones said that peace in the Middle East and compliance by all countries in the region - hinting at Iran - of their commitment to the NPT are preconditions to a region free of weapons of mass destruction.

<http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/analysis-u-s-sacrificed-israel-for-success-of-npt-conference-1.292931>

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Khaleej Times Online – U.A.E.

OPINION/Editorial

Ridding The Middle East Of Nukes

30 May 2010

The month-long Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, held at the UN in New York, has concluded.

The significant development is that NPT member states have agreed to hold a conference in 2012 for making the Middle East a nuclear weapons free zone. What is more interesting is that there is unanimity on Israel signing the NPT. It is something the US has expressed its apprehensions about. President Barack Obama, for one, thinks it might jeopardise efforts to include Israel in the 2012 talks. However, this is indeed an important moment and will become more so if the NPT-signatories and the Non-Aligned member states are sincere in achieving this goal.

The Middle East hosts not only a nuclear-armed Israel, but its major rival Iran, allegedly pursuing its own covert militarised nuclear programme. While 2012 is still two years away—a long time for the rapidly shifting dynamics at play in the Middle East—it does impose a time frame. Moreover, it affirms the overwhelming support within the region and outside of clearing the region of nuclear weapons and those of mass destruction. Ironically, Iran an NPT signatory has reiterated that it will stand by its obligations as per the NPT regime—a strange contradiction when viewed against its recent activities and continued uranium enrichment prohibited by the Security Council and against International Atomic Energy Agency strictures.

Other important aims on the agenda of the five-yearly review were the US-led call for stricter security regime of NPT signatories including random and surprise inspections. It also called for penalties against those that had violated terms or exited the Treaty, for one reason or other, such as North Korea in 2003. At the same time Non-aligned member states were hoping to conceive a plan of action for complete nuclear disarmament, but that did not happen. Iran, for one, called on the five recognised nuclear powers to set a specific time-table to eliminate their arsenals.

The US seems to have hoped for more in view of what it feels it has done to prove its commitment towards disarmament in the past year. Both US and Russia, the world's largest nuclear powers had formulated a new strategic reduction treaty and announced significant cuts in their respective nuclear arsenals. Still, they possess arsenals large enough to destroy the world, ten times over. However, that should not be used as a argument against disarmament efforts. Rather, they should be hastened. It may be worthwhile for the US and allies of Israel to think how flat and illogical their arguments appear in the case of Iran. Hypocrisy and double standards are the usual charges when pressuring Iran on the nuclear front. Ridding the Middle East of nuclear weapons, in fact, offers a great opportunity to meanwhile work on achieving regional peace, so Israel can willingly abolish its own. It may also check any untoward ambitions of Iran on that front.

The good news is that there is general consensus and commitment on achieving this. Now what remains to be seen is how far all states concerned states work together.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/editorial/2010/May/editorial_May56.xml§ion=editorial&col=

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