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London Guardian
14 May 2009

Mohamed ElBaradei Warns of New Nuclear Age

Julian Borger, diplomatic editor

The number of potential nuclear weapons states could more than double in a few years unless the major powers take radical steps towards disarmament, the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog has warned.

In a Guardian interview, Mohamed ElBaradei said the threat of proliferation was particularly grave in the Middle East, a region he described as a "ticking bomb".

ElBaradei, the outgoing director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said the current international regime limiting the spread of nuclear weapons was in danger of falling apart under its own inequity. "Any regime ... has to have a sense of fairness and equity and it is not there," he said in an interview at his offices in Vienna.

He has presided over the IAEA for more than 11 years and is due to retire in November at the age of 67. A bitter diplomatic battle is under way over his successor.

The IAEA director general is the custodian of a global arms control regime that is increasingly beleaguered. It was built around the 1970 nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) and the goal of restricting membership of the nuclear club to five postwar powers. It has been under strain in the last four decades, with Israel, India, Pakistan and North Korea developing weapons outside the NPT. But now ElBaradei says the system is in danger of collapse, with an abrupt spread in nuclear weapons technology.

"We still live in a world where if you have nuclear weapons, you are buying power, you are buying insurance against attack. That is not lost on those who do not have nuclear weapons, particularly in [conflict] regions."

He predicted that the next wave of proliferation would involve "virtual nuclear weapons states", who can produce plutonium or highly enriched uranium and possess the knowhow to make warheads, but who stop just short of assembling a weapon. They would therefore remain technically compliant with the NPT while being within a couple of months of deploying and using a nuclear weapon.

"This is the phenomenon we see now and what people worry about in Iran. And this phenomenon goes much beyond Iran. Pretty soon ... you will have nine weapons states and probably another 10 or 20 virtual weapons states." ElBaradei pointed to the spread of uranium enrichment technology around the world, but he was most concerned about the Middle East.

"When you see a lot of concern about the Middle East, it's a result of people feeling totally repressed by their own government and feeling unjustly treated by the outside world. This combination makes it a ticking bomb."

ElBaradei described the acquisition of nuclear weapons by a terrorist group as the greatest threat facing the world, and pointed to the rise of the Taliban in Pakistan: "We are worried because there is a war in a country with nuclear weapons. We are worried because we still have 200 cases of illicit trafficking of nuclear material a year reported to us."

He argued that the only way back from the nuclear abyss was for the established nuclear powers to fulfil their NPT obligations and disarm as rapidly as possible. He said it was essential to generate momentum in that direction before the NPT comes up for review next April in New York. "There's a lot of work to be done but there are a lot of things we can do right away," ElBaradei said. "Slash the 27,000 warheads we have, 95% of which are in Russia and the US. You can easily slash [the arsenals] to 1,000 each, or even 500."

Only deep strategic cuts, coupled with internationally agreed bans on nuclear tests and on the production of weapons-grade fissile material, could restore the world's faith in arms control, he argued.

"If some of this concrete action is taken before the NPT [conference], you would have a completely different environment. All these so-called virtual weapons states, or virtual wannabe weapons states, will think twice ... because then the major powers will have the moral authority to go after them and say: 'We are doing our part of the bargain. Now it is up to you.' "

ElBaradei won global fame – and the Nobel peace prize for himself and his agency – by standing up to the Bush and Blair governments over claims of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. His relationships with the Obama administration, and to some extent the Brown government, are better, since both have embraced banning nuclear weapons. Obama has started talks with Moscow on mutual cuts in arsenals.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/may/14/elbaradei-nuclear-weapons-states-un>

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China View
16 May 2009

UN Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Debate ends with no Agreement on Final Document

William M. Reilly

UNITED NATIONS, May 15 (Xinhua) -- Two weeks of debate at UN World Headquarters in New York over the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) ended on Friday without reaching agreement on a final document, despite last minute negotiations.

Still, the third and final session of the Preparatory Committee meeting, held May 4-15, laid groundwork for the NPT Review Conference mandated for April of 2010. The 2005 review failed to reach consensus on an outcome document.

A Review Conference has been held every five years since the 1968 NPT came into force in 1970. It has been ratified by nearly all the 192 members of the United Nations. The exceptions are India, Israel, and Pakistan who neither signed nor ratified the accord and have developed nuclear weapons. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) ratified it but withdrew in 2003.

How to deal with nations withdrawing from the treaty was a subject of debate.

The five permanent members (P5) of the UN Security Council -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, all nuclear weapon states -- issued a joint statement on Friday, reaffirming their support for the NPT and welcomed "the progress and substantive discussion at this Preparatory Committee meeting."

This latest "prepcom," as it is known in the halls of the United Nations, debated on Thursday the revised draft which had been submitted by the panel's chairman, Ambassador Boniface Chidyausiku of Zimbabwe, who said a consensus had not been reached for this session's outcome.

He green-lighted continuing negotiations overnight among various groups. Several states said differences were not that great and expressed hope a consensus could be reached to avert another session ending without agreement on an outcome document.

But, not reaching such accord was not necessarily a bad thing, Rebecca Johnson, executive director of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, told Xinhua.

First, she said the most contentious of issues facing delegates was the question of disarmament, and the recommendations in the chair's first draft "were stronger and much closer to where they feel they should be in 2010 than the wording in the second draft" outcome document.

Many of her colleagues in non-governmental organizations attending the meeting and several non-nuclear states felt some of the nuclear weapons states insisted on the disarmament language being heavily watered down for that revised draft, she said.

The countries who plugged for more negotiations were the ones who, in effect, already got what they wanted in terms of watering down disarmament commitments or they say, "No, we could've been happy to have adopted the recommendations in the first draft but the second one goes to far away from where we think our position needs to be in 2010," said Johnson, who holds a doctorate from the London School of Economics and Political Science

"I think also there is a division in respect to those who think any agreement on recommendations is better than no agreement," she said, adding there are others who say while the recommendations are not perfect, they offer a perspective.

The problem in diplomacy is that once there is agreed language it is transmitted and "evoked by everybody next year as being agreed language and those that like that language become completely embedded in it, invested in it and refuse to negotiate alternatives and that means that those who allowed it to go through for the sake of agreement while registering their discontent or their preference for different language are left out in the cold," Johnson said.

"While it is very useful for this prepcom to try to get recommendations that they can agree on, the process that at least demonstrates the ambience is better transmitted without full agreement," she said.

Asked if she was saying it was likely even without consensus that states could hold up this year's draft of a document and cite it, Johnson replied, "Yes, and they can take it as a resource to help their discussions and negotiations in 2010. It is not a hostage to fortune."

"You are not going to get states demanding this and only this is the end, agreed language, because in 2010 it's clear there will be a chair's working paper from 2007, 2008, 2009 to help the process," she said. "It can help identify many things that are problems. I mean the negotiations have to take place anew in 2010."

She described the two weeks of meetings as "a very, very successful prepcom."

Johnson said the reasons were not only Chidyausiku's chairmanship but "the changed attitude of the United States and to the (U.S. President Barack) Obama Administration. They clearly wanted a change, they wanted to find agreement, and they didn't use procedure to build up impenetrable obstacles to avoid discussing substance."

Obama said in Prague last month he was seeking nuclear disarmament.

The P5 statement reiterated their delegations' "enduring and unequivocal commitment to work towards nuclear disarmament, an obligation shared by all NPT states parties. We welcome the decision by the U.S. and Russia to negotiate an agreement to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and the recent emphasis on further steps, including promotion of entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty."

"This has actually been a very constructive and effective prepcom and to keep the positive atmosphere here together with the concrete and incredibly important decisions on the agenda and other procedural aspects is a real achievement," said Johnson.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/16/content_11381995.htm

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Straits Times – Singapore
May 16, 2009

Nuclear Meeting a Success

UNITED NATIONS - DELEGATES hailed the success of a two-week meeting to prepare for a major conference next year to review the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, even though it ended Friday without specific recommendations on disarmament, nonproliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Zimbabwe's UN Ambassador Boniface Chidyausiku, who chaired the preparatory meeting, said the session achieved what it set out to do: Delegates agreed on an agenda, a chairman and procedures for the review conference.

By contrast, the last review conference in 2005 was unable to agree on an agenda until nearly three weeks after it started - a major factor in the failure of the meeting.

Mr Chidyausiku credited President Barack Obama's for reversing former President George W. Bush's policy and pledging last month to reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons. He also lauded a new US-Russian cooperation and a new American willingness to engage the international community.

The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty requires signatory nations not to pursue nuclear weapons in exchange for a commitment by the five nuclear powers - the US, Russia, Britain, France and China - to move toward nuclear disarmament. The nonweapons states are guaranteed access to peaceful nuclear technology to produce nuclear power.

The nuclear powers issued a joint statement Friday welcoming 'the progress and substantive discussion' at the preparatory meetings and reaffirming their collective support for the NPT.

The nuclear powers welcomed the US-Russian agreement to further reduce their nuclear stockpiles and fresh efforts to promote the entry into force of the nuclear test ban treaty and to negotiate a new treaty that would end production of fissile material used to produce nuclear weapons, including uranium and plutonium.

They also agreed that action is needed to reinforce the International Atomic Energy Agency's nuclear safeguard system, to ensure full compliance by all states and to prevent users of nuclear energy from building nuclear weapons.

The US wants to ensure that the review conference strengthens IAEA inspections, deals with the issue of compliance when countries like Iran are in violation of their commitments, makes it more difficult for countries like North Korea to withdraw from the NPT, and looks at ways to prevent proliferation while supplying fissile material for peaceful nuclear energy, the official said. -- AP

http://www.straitstimes.com/Breaking%2BNews/World/Story/STIStory_377587.html

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China View
18 May 2009

Backgrounder: Treaties on Strategic Arms Reduction between U.S., Russia

BEIJING, May 18 (Xinhua) -- Russia and the United States started the first round of full-fledged talks on strategic disarmament on Monday to exchange opinions and put forward particular proposals on a new treaty that will replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) before it expires in December this year.

Since the 1980s, the United States and Russia (and its predecessor, the Soviet Union) have held rounds of talks and negotiations on strategic disarmament and have signed several treaties.

In July 1991, the United States and the former Soviet Union signed the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, or START I, which barred its signatories from deploying more than 6,000 nuclear warheads atop a total of 1,600 intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and bombers. The treaty took effect in December 1994, and was valid for a period of 15 years.

In January 1993, the United States and Russia signed START II, stipulating that the United States should reduce its total deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 3,500 while Russia cut its arsenal to 3,000. The treaty also banned the use of multiple-warheads on ICBMs. However, the treaty, although ratified, has never entered into force.

In May 2005, then U.S. President George W. Bush and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), or the Moscow Treaty, in Russia's capital. Under the treaty, the United States and Russia will slash their arsenals to 1,700 to 2,200 deployed strategic nuclear warheads each. Delegates from the two countries have met twice a year since the treaty came into force in June 2003 to discuss the implementation of the deal.

With the current START I set to expire on Dec. 5 this year, no new deal has been reached by the United States and Russia.

On April 1, U.S. President Barack Obama met his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev in London. The leaders said in a statement that the two countries would immediately begin bilateral intergovernmental negotiations to work out a "new, comprehensive, legally binding agreement" on reducing and limiting strategic offensive arms to replace the START treaty.

On April 24, U.S. and Russian negotiators reiterated in Rome that the two countries would do their utmost to reach a new draft treaty by the end of 2009. The two sides also decided to launch substantive talks in May.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/18/content_11397357.htm

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Deutsche Welle
18 May 2009

The US and Russia Begin Disarmament Talks

The US and Russia have begun renegotiating the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) on Monday in Moscow. START, one of the largest and most complex arms control treaties, was signed in 1991, and expires in December of 2009.

Both Washington and Moscow have indicated that the political will exists to overcome disagreements on the size, nature and purpose of their nuclear arsenals and strategic weapons.

"There are good chances for bringing our positions closer and for working out agreements," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said last week after a meeting with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington.

Seeking a replacement for START

The US delegation is headed by Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller. Anatoly Antonov, head of the foreign ministry department for security and disarmament, leads the Russian delegation.

The fresh START negotiations come as US President Barack Obama pushes ahead with his agenda to "reset" frayed ties with Russia.

In July, Obama is scheduled to travel to Moscow for a summit with his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev in which they will discuss, among other security challenges, the reduction of nuclear weapons arsenals. The White House said in a statement that the meeting will allow the US and Russia an opportunity "to deepen engagement on reducing nuclear weapons, cooperating on non-proliferation, exploring ways to cooperate on missile defense, addressing mutual threats and security challenges."

Disarmament process began at the height of the Cold War

Both sides have come to the conclusion that military deterrence is as effective with less warheads on either side, and have agreed to make cuts in the number of warheads they have deployed to around 1,000 to 1,500 each. Other issues include whether the treaty should cover delivery systems like bombers and missiles, verification procedures and information sharing.

The US and Russia both have an interest in ensuring the talks conclude with results.

"In support of its arms control interests and interest in strategic stability more generally, the United States should pursue a much broader and more ambitious set of strategic dialogues," said former US defense secretary William Perry, who is now part of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States.

Fjodor Lukjanov, editor in chief of the Moscow magazine *Russia in World Politics*, says a new START treaty is eminently important for Russia.

"Otherwise, there's the risk that the US might just let the treaty expire and then do what they like," Lukjanov says. "Russia has no other means to have control over the US' strategic potential."

<http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,4261037,00.html>

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Washington Times
May 18, 2009

Russia, U.S. Set for Nuke Meeting

Christopher Boian AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOSCOW -- Russia and the United States open fresh nuclear disarmament negotiations this week under pressure to strike a deal by year's end that experts say will have far-reaching consequences for world security.

The talks mark the resumption, after a generation of drift, of a process begun in 1969 at the height of the Cold War and are a central element of President Obama's stated desire to "reset" frayed ties with Russia.

The initial two-day negotiating session was due to start Tuesday. Heads of the U.S. and Russian delegations held a technical meeting in Rome last month, but the Moscow talks will mark the formal start of the process, officials said.

Disagreements between the two countries on the size, nature and purpose of their nuclear arsenals and strategic weapons systems abound, but both have indicated recently that the political will to overcome them now exists.

"There are good chances for bringing our positions closer and for working out agreements," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said last week after meeting Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton in Washington.

Pressure on negotiators was heightened after the White House announced that Mr. Obama will travel to Moscow on July 6 for talks with his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, on reducing nuclear weapons arsenals and other security challenges.

The meeting will allow the United States and the Russian Federation an opportunity "to deepen engagement on reducing nuclear weapons, cooperating on nonproliferation, exploring ways to cooperate on missile defense, addressing mutual threats and security challenges," the White House said.

The main agreement governing U.S. and Russian strategic nuclear weapons, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), expires Dec. 5 and there has been little specific discussion on the next step.

Areas of discord include nuclear warhead limits, delivery systems like bombers and missiles, and verification procedures.

Despite the technical complexity and tight schedule of the negotiations, both countries have deep-seated national interests in ensuring that the talks happen and conclude with results that both can hold up to the world as meaningful progress.

The format of the talks gives Russia strategic "parity" with the United States, a matter that diplomats say is of huge importance to Moscow as it seeks to recover the global prestige enjoyed prior to the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

"The moment appears ripe for a renewal of arms control with Russia," said the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, headed by former Defense Secretary William Perry.

"In support of its arms control interests and interest in strategic stability more generally, the United States should pursue a much broader and more ambitious set of strategic dialogues" with Russia and others, it said.

<http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/may/18/russia-us-set-for-nuke-meeting/>

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RIA Novosti
18 May 2009

U.S. Missile Shield may hamper Arms Reduction Talks in Russia

MOSCOW (RIA Novosti) - The controversy over U.S. plans for a missile shield in Europe may prevent Washington and Moscow from striking a new strategic arms reduction deal before yearend, a Russian business daily said Monday.

A team of U.S. negotiators led by Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller arrives in Moscow on Monday for a first two-day round of official U.S.-Russian talks on a replacement for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which is set to expire on December 5, 2009.

Despite optimism expressed by both sides, the Kommersant newspaper said there is only a very slim chance that Moscow and Washington will be able to adopt a new document by the December deadline, because Russia intends to link the issue with the deployment of U.S. missile defenses in Europe.

The Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty (START 1), signed in 1991, obliges Russia and the United States to reduce nuclear warheads to 6,000 and their delivery vehicles to 1,600 each. In 2002, a follow-up agreement on strategic offensive arms reduction was concluded in Moscow. The agreement, known as the Moscow Treaty, envisioned cuts to 1,700-2,200 warheads by December 2012.

According to a report published by the U.S. State Department in April, as of January 1 Russia had 3,909 nuclear warheads and 814 delivery vehicles, including ground-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) and strategic bombers.

The same report stated the United States had 5,576 warheads and 1,198 delivery vehicles.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his U.S. counterpart, Barack Obama, agreed during their London meeting in early April on an immediate start to talks on a new strategic arms reduction treaty.

Moscow, which proposed a new arms reduction agreement with Washington in 2005, expects the United States to agree on a deal that would restrict not only the numbers of nuclear warheads but also place limits on all existing kinds of delivery vehicles.

Moscow also insists on the effective use of control mechanisms and procedures, "which the previous administration ignored categorically," according to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

To meet the ambitious deadline, the sides have five months to overcome their differences in the approach to arms reduction, which includes the deployment of nuclear weapons in space and the so-called retrievable nuclear arsenals (stockpiled warheads).

However, they do not even have a draft document and the United States has not yet submitted its written proposals on the issue, the Kommersant said.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin could insist that Washington abandons plans to place 10 interceptor missiles in Poland and a tracking radar in the Czech republic before striking a new arms reduction deal. Russia says the U.S. missile shield would be a threat to its national security.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin reiterated during his recent visit to Japan that "Russia will certainly link missile defense with all related issues, including strategic arms reduction."

U.S. officials have traditionally maintained that the deployment of a U.S. missile "umbrella" in Europe was aimed at countering the threat of missile attacks from rogue states such as Iran, and repeatedly refused to consider it as a "bargaining chip" in negotiations with Russia.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090518/155035690.html>

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Washington Post

May 16, 2009

Developing Nations Seek Assurances on Nuclear Arms

By Colum Lynch

Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, May 15 -- U.N. nuclear talks hit a roadblock Friday as Cuba, Iran and other developing nations demanded that the five original nuclear powers accept legally binding commitments to dismantle their nuclear arsenals and provide assurances they will not use such weapons against states that do not possess atomic weapons.

The deadlock underscored the challenges the Obama administration faces in reinvigorating the 1971 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The pact commits the five powers -- the United States, Russia, France, Britain and China -- to dismantle their nuclear arsenals in exchange for pledges from nonnuclear states to forgo atomic weapons.

In this month's talks, the strongest resistance came from France. It said it would not yield to any legally binding commitments to undertake further reductions in its nuclear arsenal or to allow international inspections of its nuclear stockpile.

The breakdown cast a pall over a two-week session that has been generally marked by a rare spirit of cooperation on nuclear talks. Last week, the 189 signatories reached agreement on a procedural agenda for a major review conference on the treaty in New York next May.

Boniface G. Chidyausiku of Zimbabwe, who chaired the talks, said he had abandoned efforts to press for agreement on a more detailed set of recommendations that would provide a road map for the nuclear talks in New York. "It's dead," he said of the document.

But he sought to highlight the improved atmosphere in the nuclear talks that followed President Obama's commitment to place the treaty at the center of U.S. efforts to contain the nuclear arms race.

In an effort to reinvigorate that nuclear bargain, Obama pledged last month in Prague to negotiate with Russia a reduction in the U.S. nuclear arsenal and to press for a ban on the production of weapons-grade nuclear fuel and the ratification of a treaty banning nuclear tests.

But the moves were not sufficient to allay concerns by nonnuclear states that the five original powers are not prepared to accept total nuclear disarmament. They argued that the text under negotiation this week placed too much focus on efforts to contain the flow of nuclear technology.

Some arms control experts said it is unfair to cast all the blame for the breakdown in talks on Iran and Cuba. Rebecca Johnson, an expert on the treaty at the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy, said France has resisted any undertaking requiring a reduction of its own nuclear stockpile.

"The French are feeling anxious because Obama and [British Prime Minister] Gordon Brown have both said they want to see a world free of nuclear weapons," she said. "France wants to keep nuclear weapons."

Johnson said it was a mistake this week to press for agreement on recommendations for the New York conference, particularly at a time when the Obama administration has yet to assemble a full team to negotiate a new nuclear deal. She said the dispute detracted from what was an otherwise important achievement at this week's meeting: the agreement on a procedural agenda for next year's talks.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/15/AR2009051503518.html>

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Global Security Newswire
May 18, 2009

NPT Meeting a Success, Envoys Say

Diplomats over two weeks hammered out an agenda and chose procedures and a chairman for next year's Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty review conference, the Associated Press reported Friday (see *GSN*, May 8).

Delegates to the previous NPT review conference in 2005 agreed on an agenda only three weeks after the meeting had already started, paving the way for its failure, according to AP (see *GSN*, May 31, 2005).

The latest preparatory meeting, which ended Friday, "was truly successful," said Eric Danon, French ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. "We feel it was the best possible outcome to prepare for 2010," (Edith Lederer, Associated Press/NJ.com, May 15).

Still, envoys from the 189 NPT member states failed to agree on specific proposals for nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, along with ideas on civilian nuclear power. Zimbabwean Ambassador to the United Nations Boniface Chidyausiku, the preparatory session's chairman, declared one set of proposed recommendations "dead," the *Washington Post* reported Saturday (Colum Lynch, *Washington Post*, May 16).

"We're almost there, but we didn't want to spoil the atmosphere by going into acrimonious little differences between state parties," he said. Recommendations "could have been a bonus," but delegates lacked sufficient time to resolve their differences at the meeting, Chidyausiku said.

"The differences -- they were not major," he said. "With time, we could have done it."

Review conferences are held every five years in order to assess the operation of the treaty and strengthen its execution. The next session is scheduled for May 3-28, 2010.

The United States has until the meeting "to really focus on some of the issues that [U.S. President Barack Obama] has put forward," said one high-level U.S. official. Washington hopes to make it harder for countries to withdraw from the treaty, augment International Atomic Energy Agency inspections and bolster nonproliferation safeguards in the civilian energy sector (Lederer, AP).

Iran, Cuba and other developing countries pressed the five recognized nuclear-weapon states Friday to vow not to launch nuclear strikes on non-nuclear weapon nations and to pursue their treaty mandate to move toward elimination of their nuclear arsenals, the *Post* reported.

France has provided the most resistance on nuclear disarmament, said Rebecca Johnson, head of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy.

"The French are feeling anxious because Obama and (British Prime Minister) Gordon Brown have both said they want to see a world free of nuclear weapons. France wants to keep nuclear weapons," Johnson said.

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20090518_7220.php

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Times of India

14 May 2009

US Still Worried about ISI Links with Taliban

WASHINGTON: A top US military leader on Thursday acknowledged that Washington is still worried about the "links" of ISI with Taliban, but said as of now he is "comfortable" about safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

"Yes, sir," Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said when Senator John McCain specifically asked him 'Do you still worry about the ISI cooperating with Taliban?'

Mullen was testifying before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"I've believed over the last year, since I've been involved and visited Pakistan, that the ISI, in the long run, has to change its strategic thrust and get away from working both sides," Mullen asserted.

"That's how they have been raised, certainly over the last couple of decades, and that's what they believe," he said.

When asked about safety and security of nuclear weapons, Mullen said he is comfortable that it is secure.

"They have actually put in an increased level of security measures in the last three or four years. But there are limits on what we know in terms of a lot of the specifics, but I'm comfortable that from what I know of what we actually know and also what they told us, right now they're secure."

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/US/US-still-worried-about-ISI-links-with-Taliban-/articleshow/4531468.cms>

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FOX News

May 14, 2009

U.S. Has Plan to Secure Pakistan Nukes if Country Falls to Taliban

By Rowan Scarborough

United States has a detailed plan for infiltrating Pakistan and securing its mobile arsenal of nuclear warheads if it appears the country is about to fall under the control of the Taliban, Al Qaeda or other Islamic extremists.

American intelligence sources say the operation would be conducted by Joint Special Operations Command, the super-secret commando unit headquartered at Fort Bragg, N.C.

JSOC is the military's chief terrorists hunting squad and has units now operating in Afghanistan on Pakistan's western border. But a secondary mission is to secure foreign nuclear arsenals -- a role for which JSOC operatives have trained in Nevada.

The mission has taken on added importance in recent months, as Islamic extremists have taken territory close to the capital of Islamabad and could destabilize Pakistan's shaky democracy.

"We have plans to secure them ourselves if things get out of hand," said a U.S. intelligence source who has deployed to Afghanistan. "That is a big secondary mission for JSOC in Afghanistan."

The source said JSOC has been updating its mission plan for the day President Obama gives the order to infiltrate Pakistan.

"Small units could seize them, disable them and then centralize them in a secure location," the source said.

A secret Defense Intelligence Agency document first disclosed in 2004 said Pakistan has a nuclear arsenal of 35 weapons. The document said it plans to more than double the arsenal by 2020.

A Pakistani official said the U.S. and his country have had an understanding that if either Usama bin Laden, or his deputy, Ayman Zawahiri, is located, American troops and air strikes may be used inside borders to capture or kill them.

What makes the Pakistan mission especially difficult is that the military has its missiles on Soviet-style mobile launchers and rail lines. U.S. intelligence agencies, using satellite photos and communication intercepts, is constantly monitoring their whereabouts. Other warheads are kept in storage. U.S. technical experts have visited Pakistan to advise the government on how to maintain and protect its arsenal.

Also, there are rogue elements inside Pakistan's military and intelligence service who could quickly side with the extremists and make JSOC's mission all the more difficult.

"It's relatively easy to track rail-mounted ones with satellites," said the intelligence source. "Truck-mounted are more difficult. However, they are all relatively close to the capital in areas that the government firmly controls so we don't have to look too far."

JSOC is made up of three main elements: Army Delta Force, Navy SEALs and a high-tech special intelligence unit known as Task Force Orange. JSOC was instrumental in Iraq in finding and killing Abu Musab Zarqawi, the deadly and most prominent Al Qaeda leader in the Middle East.

There is speculation in the intelligence community that a secondary reason for Army Lt. Gen. Stanley McChrystal being named the next commander in Afghanistan is that he headed JSOC in 2006-08 and is read-in on its contingency missions in Pakistan.

Adm. Michael Mullen, Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, this month said that based on the information he has seen Pakistan's nuclear warheads are safe.

"I remain comfortable that the nuclear weapons in Pakistan are secure, that the Pakistani leadership and in particular the military is very focused on this," he said. "We the United States have invested fairly significantly over the last three years, to work with them, to improve that security. And we're satisfied, very satisfied with that progress. We will continue to do that. And we all recognize obviously the worst downside of -- with respect to Pakistan is that those nuclear weapons come under the control of terrorists. "

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/05/14/plan-pakistan-teeters-falling-taliban/>

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Hindustan Times
Indo-Asian News Service
Washington, May 15, 2009

‘Pak making more N-Weapons’

The chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, has confirmed reports that Pakistan is increasing its nuclear weapons programme.

The confirmation came during a Senate Armed Services committee hearing on Thursday when Democrat senator Jim Webb, an expert on defence issues, raised fears that Pakistan is adding to the nuclear weapons it traditionally has pointed toward India, and questioned whether US aid could be funding it.

Noting reports that Pakistan "may be actually adding on their weapon systems and warheads" Webb asked: "Do you have any evidence of that?" "Yes," Mullen answered. The US has urged Pakistan to focus on the extremist threat instead of India. "Historically, they haven't done that," Mullen said. "So right now, I'm encouraged by what's happened, but I certainly withhold any judgment about where it goes." IANS

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/StoryPage.aspx?sectionName=HomePage&id=cb534829-0ff3-4387-b1cd-ddba63ed69bc&Headline=%e2%80%98Pak+making+more+N-Weapons%e2%80%99>

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Pakistan News
May 16, 2009

PM for Retaining Nuclear Deterrence at All Cost

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani Saturday expressed the determination to retain the country's nuclear deterrence at all cost and said Pakistan could not be coerced to compromise on its core security interest.

"We are determined to retain nuclear deterrence at all cost, while ensuring fail-safe security of our nuclear assets," Gilani told the top leaders of his party at a meeting at the PM House.

Rejecting the "orchestrated campaign" by "Pakistan's detractors" who were casting doubts about security of Pakistan's nuclear assets, Gilani said, "No amount of coercion, direct or indirect, will ever force Pakistan to compromise on its core security interest."

In a policy statement made to the Central Executive Committee and the Federal Council of Pakistan Peoples Party, Gilani said the campaign against Pakistan has tried to link the country's internal situation with nuclear security to discredit Pakistan's nuclear capability.

"Disinformation is being spread deliberately to undermine Pakistan," the prime minister said while referring to reports in western media about the safety and security of country's nuclear assets and apprehensions that it might fall into the hands of militants and extremists.

"No foreign individual, entity or state has been provided, or will ever be provided access to our sensitive information," Gilani said amidst loud applause by the party members.

"Nuclear weapons are the cornerstone of Pakistan's deterrence strategy and enjoy complete consensus and support," he said and pointed out that the founder of Pakistan Peoples Party Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto initiated the country's nuclear program and the party was carrying out the legacy.

"Pakistan has developed and operationalized an immaculate nuclear weapons security regime, which is multi-layered, has stringent access controls and incorporates modern technical solutions and rigorous Human Reliability Programmes."

The Prime Minister said Pakistan conforms to international best practices and has the capacity to meet all challenges.

"Insinuations to the contrary are plain mischievous and designed to create doubts in the minds of the people of Pakistan. I dismiss these with contempt," Prime Minister Gilani said.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/updates.asp?id=77832>

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Times of India
16 May 2009

India Thinks Pak N-sites Already in Radical Hands: Report

By Chidanand Rajghatta, TNN

WASHINGTON: India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has told President Obama that nuclear sites in Pakistan's restive frontier province are "already partly" in the hands of Islamic extremists, an Israeli journal has said, amid considerable anxiety among US pundits here over Washington's confidence in the security of the troubled nation's nuclear arsenal.

Claims about the high-level exchange between New Delhi and Washington were made in the *Debka*, a journal said to have close ties with Israeli intelligence, under the headline "Singh warns Obama: Pakistan is lost." The brief story said the Indian prime minister had named Pakistani nuclear sites in the areas which were Taliban-Qaida strongholds and said the sites are already partly in the hands of "Muslim extremists." A sub-head to the story said "India gets ready for a Taliban-ruled nuclear neighbor."

There was no official word from either Washington or New Delhi about the exchanges, with India in the throes of an election and US winding down for the weekend. But US experts have been greatly perturbed in recent days about what they say is Washington's misplaced confidence in, and lackadaisical approach towards, Pakistan's nuclear assets. The disquiet comes amid reports that Pakistan is ramping up its nuclear arsenal even as the rest of the world is scaling it down.

"It is quite disturbing that the administration is allowing Pakistan to quantitatively and qualitatively step up

production of fissile material without as much as a public reproach," Robert Windrem, a visiting scholar with the Center for Law and Security in New York University and an expert on South Asia nuclear issues told ToI in an interview on Thursday. "Iraq and Iran did not get a similar concessions... and Pakistan has a much worse record of proliferation and security breaches than any other country in the world."

Windrem, a former producer with NBC whose book "Critical Mass" was among the first to red flag Islamabad's proliferation record going back to the 1980s, referred to recent reports and satellite images showing Pakistan building two large new plutonium production reactors in Khushab, which experts say could lead to improvements in the quantity and quality of the country's nuclear arsenal. The reactors had nothing to do with power-production' they are weapons-specific, and are being built with resources who diversion is enabled by the billions of dollars the US is giving to Pakistan as aid, he said.

Windrem also pointed out that Khushab's former director, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood met with Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and offered a nuclear weapons tutorial around an Afghanistan campfire, as attested by the former CIA Director George Tenet in his memoir "At the Center of the Storm." Yet successive US administrations had adopted an attitude of benign neglect towards Pakistan's nuclear program and its expansion at a time the country was in growing ferment and under siege within from Islamic extremists.

US officials, going up to the President himself, have repeatedly said in public that they have confidence the Pakistani nuclear arsenal will not fall into the hands of Islamic extremists, and they have Islamabad's assurances to this effect. But scholars like Windrem fear Pakistan's nuclear program may already be infected with the virus of radicalism from within, as demonstrated by the Sultan Bashiruddin incident.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India-thinks-Pak-N-sites-already-in-radical-hands-Report/articleshow/4537037.cms>

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China View
16 May 2009

France, Pakistan Agree on Civilian Nuclear Co-Op

PARIS (Xinhua) -- France has agreed to offer Pakistan its civilian nuclear technology, French media quoted Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi as saying on Friday.

"France has agreed to transfer civilian nuclear technology to Pakistan," Qureshi said after a meeting between Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris.

"What can be done for India can be done for Pakistan as well," the minister quoted Sarkozy as saying.

According to Qureshi, negotiations regarding the transfer of nuclear technology will be held in July and deals on such cooperation are likely to be signed during Sarkozy's visit to Pakistan in September.

Noting France is a very important partner to Pakistan, Qureshi expressed hopes for advancing cooperation with the country in various sectors.

Zardari said France had pledged 12 million euros (16 million U.S. dollars) in humanitarian aid to help internally displaced people in Pakistan. He said Sarkozy had been very generous during their meeting at the Elysee Palace.

This has been Zardari's first official trip to France since he became president in 2008.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-05/16/content_11383627.htm

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New York Times
May 18, 2009

Pakistan Is Rapidly Adding Nuclear Arms, U.S. Says

By THOM SHANKER and DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON — Members of Congress have been told in confidential briefings that Pakistan is rapidly adding to its nuclear arsenal even while racked by insurgency, raising questions on Capitol Hill about whether billions of dollars in proposed military aid might be diverted to Pakistan's nuclear program.

Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, confirmed the assessment of the expanded arsenal in a one-word answer to a question on Thursday in the midst of lengthy Senate testimony. Sitting beside Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, he was asked whether he had seen evidence of an increase in the size of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal.

"Yes," he said quickly, adding nothing, clearly cognizant of Pakistan's sensitivity to any discussion about the country's nuclear strategy or security.

Inside the Obama administration, some officials say, Pakistan's drive to spend heavily on new nuclear arms has been a source of growing concern, because the country is producing more nuclear material at a time when Washington is increasingly focused on trying to assure the security of an arsenal of 80 to 100 weapons so that they will never fall into the hands of Islamic insurgents.

The administration's effort is complicated by the fact that Pakistan is producing an unknown amount of new bomb-grade uranium and, once a series of new reactors is completed, bomb-grade plutonium for a new generation of weapons. President Obama has called for passage of a treaty that would stop all nations from producing more fissile material — the hardest part of making a nuclear weapon — but so far has said nothing in public about Pakistan's activities.

Bruce Riedel, the Brookings Institution scholar who served as the co-author of Mr. Obama's review of Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy, reflected the administration's concern in a recent interview, saying that Pakistan "has more terrorists per square mile than anyplace else on earth, and it has a nuclear weapons program that is growing faster than anyplace else on earth."

Obama administration officials said that they had communicated to Congress that their intent was to assure that military aid to Pakistan was directed toward counterterrorism and not diverted. But Admiral Mullen's public confirmation that the arsenal is increasing — a view widely held in both classified and unclassified analyses — seems certain to aggravate Congress's discomfort.

Whether that discomfort might result in a delay or reduction in aid to Pakistan is still unclear.

The Congressional briefings have taken place in recent weeks as Pakistan has descended into further chaos and as Congress has considered proposals to spend \$3 billion over the next five years to train and equip Pakistan's military for counterinsurgency warfare. That aid would come on top of \$7.5 billion in civilian assistance.

None of the proposed military assistance is directed at the nuclear program. So far, America's aid to Pakistan's nuclear infrastructure has been limited to a \$100 million classified program to help Pakistan secure its weapons and materials from seizure by Al Qaeda, the Taliban or "insiders" with insurgent loyalties.

But the billions in new proposed American aid, officials acknowledge, could free other money for Pakistan's nuclear infrastructure, at a time when Pakistani officials have expressed concern that their nuclear program is facing a budget crunch for the first time, worsened by the global economic downturn. The program employs tens of thousands of Pakistanis, including about 2,000 believed to possess "critical knowledge" about how to produce a weapon.

The dimensions of the Pakistani buildup are not fully understood. "We see them scaling up their centrifuge facilities," said David Albright, the president of the Institute for Science and International Security, which has been monitoring Pakistan's continued efforts to buy materials on the black market, and analyzing satellite photographs of two new plutonium reactors less than 100 miles from where Pakistani forces are currently fighting the Taliban.

"The Bush administration turned a blind eye to how this is being ramped up," he said. "And of course, with enough pressure, all this could be preventable."

As a matter of diplomacy, however, the buildup presents Mr. Obama with a potential conflict between two national security priorities, some aides concede. One is to win passage of a global agreement to stop the production of fissile material — the uranium or plutonium used to produce weapons. Pakistan has never agreed to any limits and is one of three countries, along with India and Israel, that never signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Yet the other imperative is a huge infusion of financial assistance into Afghanistan and Pakistan, money considered crucial to helping stabilize governments with tenuous holds on power in the face of terrorist and insurgent violence.

Senior members of Congress were already pressing for assurances from Pakistan that the American military assistance would be used to fight the insurgency, and not be siphoned off for more conventional military programs to counter Pakistan's historic adversary, India. Official confirmation that Pakistan has accelerated expansion of its nuclear program only added to the consternation of those in Congress who were already voicing serious concern about the security of those warheads.

During a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday, Senator Jim Webb, a Virginia Democrat, veered from the budget proposal under debate to ask Admiral Mullen about public reports "that Pakistan is, at the moment, increasing its nuclear program — that it may be actually adding on to weapons systems and warheads. Do you have any evidence of that?"

It was then that Admiral Mullen responded with his one-word confirmation. Mr. Webb said Pakistan's decision was a matter of "enormous concern," and he added, "Do we have any type of control factors that would be built in, in terms of where future American money would be going, as it addresses what I just asked about?"

Similar concerns about seeking guarantees that American military assistance to Pakistan would be focused on battling insurgents also were expressed by Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, the committee chairman.

"Unless Pakistan's leaders commit, in deeds and words, their country's armed forces and security personnel to eliminating the threat from militant extremists, and unless they make it clear that they are doing so, for the sake of their own future, then no amount of assistance will be effective," Mr. Levin said.

A spokesman for the Pakistani government contacted Friday declined to comment on whether his nation was expanding its nuclear weapons program, but said the government was "maintaining the minimum, credible deterrence capability." He warned against linking American financial assistance to Pakistan's actions on its weapons program.

"Conditions or sanctions on this issue did not work in the past, and this will not send a positive message to the people of Pakistan," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because his country's nuclear program is classified.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/18/world/asia/18nuke.html?hp>

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Press Trust of India
18 May 2009

Pak Making New Generation of N-Weapons: US Officials

New York, May 18 (PTI) Pakistan is producing more bomb grade uranium for new generation of nuclear weapons, even while being racked by insurgency, raising questions on Capitol Hill whether billions of dollars in proposed US military aid could be diverted to its nuclear programme.

The fears among the members of the US Congress have been raised by a confidential briefing by top military commander who has told them that Pakistan is rapidly adding to its nuclear weaponry.

Islamabad's moves to expand rapidly its nuclear weaponry, the New York Times said might complicate the US Administration's moves to speed up military and economic aid to Pakistan.

The paper said Pakistan efforts to build new nuclear weapons has been a source of concern to Washington, because it is coming at a time when the US is increasingly focused on trying to assure that Islamabad 80 to 100 nuclear bombs and missiles don't fall into the hands of terrorists groups.

US feels that Pakistan's moves to multiply its nuclear weapons is also ill-timed as it comes when President Barack Obama has called for a passage of treaty that would bar nations from producing more fissile material. PTI

<http://www.ptinews.com/pti%5Cptisite.nsf/0/72FB697C57FEC961652575BA0038916D?OpenDocument>

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Times of India
18 May 2009

Is the US Unwittingly Helping Pak's Nuke Program?

By Chidanand Rajghatta, TNN

WASHINGTON: Are American lawmakers and the Obama administration unintentionally funding a runaway Pakistani nuclear weapons program that may not only mean a mortal danger to the United States in the long run, but pose a more immediate existential threat to India?

Influential American commentators and media outlets are now starting to question what they see as Washington's indirect bankrolling of Pakistan's nuclear program through massive infusion of aid, even as US President Obama is insisting that he is confident Islamabad won't allow its nuclear assets to fall into extremist hands.

News of Islamabad's accelerated nuclear weapons program, exposed by US satellite imagery and reported in this paper last Saturday, is being scrutinized in the light of the administration-backed Congress move to pump billions of dollars of US aid into Pakistan. Confirmation last week by US' highest military official, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen, that Pakistan is indeed ramping up its weapons program, had added a sense of urgency to the review, particularly since the aid package is being finalized this week.

On Monday, the New York Times reported that members of Congress have been told in confidential briefings that Pakistan is rapidly adding to its nuclear arsenal, "raising questions on Capitol Hill about whether billions of dollars in proposed military aid might be diverted to Pakistan's nuclear program."

Indian officials have long maintained in private that money being fungible, any unconditional aid to Pakistan would result in the unstable country pumping more domestic resources into its bloated military, including into its nuclear weapons program. But the argument has found little traction in Washington, and the Indians have not pressed the argument, apprehensive that they will be seen as a spoiler who is blocking aid to Pakistan.

As a result, the administration has persuaded law-makers to either withdraw or dilute tough conditions they had proposed for disbursement of the five-year \$ 7.5 billion aid, including calling the country's nuclear weapons program to account, access to its nuclear smuggler A Q Khan, and ending the policy of terrorism towards India.

But now, Pakistan's drive to spend heavily on new nuclear arms has been a source of growing concern to some officials even inside the Obama administration, NYT said, because the country is producing more nuclear material at a time when Washington is increasingly focused on trying to assure the security of an arsenal of 80 to 100 weapons so that they will never fall into the hands of Islamic insurgents.

"The billions in new proposed American aid, officials acknowledge, could free other money for Pakistan's nuclear infrastructure, at a time when Pakistani officials have expressed concern that their nuclear program is facing a budget crunch for the first time, worsened by the global economic downturn," the paper said in a front-page story.

Pakistan "has more terrorists per square mile than anyplace else on earth, and it has a nuclear weapons program that is growing faster than anyplace else on earth," it quoted Bruce Riedel, the former White House official who conducted President Obama's Af-Pak policy review as saying.

But President Obama himself seems confident enough that the US, through the Pakistani military, had a handle on the country's nuclear weapons to the extent it will not fall into extremist hands. He has asserted this in several statements, and over the weekend, he proffered the view again in a Newsweek interview.

Asked if he was willing to keep the option alive to have American troops secure Pakistan's nuclear weapons if the country gets less stable, Obama said, "I don't want to engage in hypotheticals around Pakistan, other than to say we have confidence that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is safe; that the Pakistani military is equipped to prevent extremists from taking over those arsenals."

Not everyone is as sanguine. Calls to cap and roll back Pakistan's nuclear assets, if not extricate it outright, are growing.

"In exchange for a hefty aid package, (Pakistan, Iran, and North Korea) should allow the internationally supervised destruction of any and all nuclear weapons and facilities, along with ongoing foolproof inspections, or we will destroy them together with any retaliatory capabilities we deem necessary," was the message Conservative commentator Roger Chapin of the organisation Make America Safe, wanted Washington to send out.

But Obama said in the Newsweek interview that while as commander in chief, he has to consider all options, "I think that Pakistan's sovereignty has to be respected."

Chapin's argument: "Respecting the so-called sovereign rights of nations cannot even be a consideration when they pose a menace to our national security. Nor can Pakistan's professed need to be able to counter India's nuclear capabilities, especially since India threatens no one."

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/US-unwittingly-aiding-Pak-N-program-/articleshow/4546454.cms>

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Ha'aretz Daily
17 May 2009

Arab League: Israel's Nuclear Program More Worrying than Iran

By Avi Issacharoff, Haaretz Correspondent

Arab League Chief Amr Moussa on Sunday urged U.S. President Barack Obama to raise Israel's ambiguous nuclear program onto the agenda for discussion, rather than focusing on Iran's contentious uranium enrichment.

According to Moussa, Israel's ambiguous nuclear policy posed more concern for Arab leaders than the program now underway in Iran.

The Arab League announced during a summit in March that member states would walk away from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty if Israel ever officially acknowledges it has nuclear weapons.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller earlier this month called on Israel to join the NPT, a global pact meant to limit the spread of atomic weapons. Gottemoelle urged India, Pakistan and North Korea to sign the pact as well.

Gottemoeller declined to say whether Washington would take any new steps to press Israel to join the treaty and give up any nuclear weapons it has. Israel neither confirms nor denies whether it has what arms control experts assume to be a sizable atomic arsenal.

The remarks surprised Jerusalem officials, one of whom brushed off the NPT as having "failed to prevent any country that wanted to from obtaining nuclear weapons."

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1086079.html>

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Times of India
18 May 2009

Marriott Blast Suspect Arrested in Karachi

ISLAMABAD: An al-Qaida member suspected of having masterminded the suicide car bombing of the Marriott Hotel was arrested along with three accomplices in the southern Pakistani port city of Karachi on Sunday.

Muhammad Anwar, described by police officials as a local al-Qaida leader, was arrested with the three other men during a raid conducted by police on the basis of a tip-off, Geo News channel reported.

However, four of Anwar's associates managed to flee during the raid on a house in Model Colony area of Karachi where a meeting of banned religious groups was being held.

Police also seized 50kg of explosive materials, 22kg of sulphur powder, 35 gallons of nitric acid, 100 meter of detonating wire, 25 timer devices, over 1,000 capacitors, two Kalashinkovs and two pistols during the raid.

Officials told the channel that Anwar was a local al-Qaida commander and the head of a banned religious group.

They said he is believed to have masterminded last year's attack on the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad that killed nearly 60 people, including two US Marines and the Czech ambassador.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/World/Pakistan/Marriott-blast-suspect-arrested-in-Karachi/articleshow/4544612.cms>

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The Nation – Pakistan

May 18, 2009

4 Qaeda Activists Held; Bombs Seized

By: Mansoor Khan

KARACHI - The Crime Investigation Department (CID) has arrested four members of al-Qaeda after a brief clash in Karachi and seized a huge cache of explosives, fire-arms, chemicals and other stuff used in terror activities from their possession. Al-Qaeda commander Qari Zafar's brother is also among the arrested persons.

The arrested operatives were to target high profile political personalities, disclosed CID (Investigation) SSP Chaudhry Muhammad Aslam Khan while speaking at a Press conference here on Sunday. The official further informed that the arrested culprits were also involved in the killing of some intelligence officials.

The arrested militants are Muhammad Anwar alias Muhammad Asim alias Jabar alias Qasim alias Yasir alias Abu Darda, Rehan alias Mehmood, Azim alias Yousuf and Ghulam Haider alias Baba, while their four associates namely Jahangir, Saifullah, Azam and Misbahuddin succeeded in making good their escape.

SSP Aslam Khan said that he had constituted two teams lead by DSP Arif Aziz and DSP Asif Usman after receiving a tip-off about the presence of al-Qaeda members in Karachi. The CID teams raided their hideout located at the upper floor of the Khokhar Clinic, Model Colony. "We had a tip-off that some militants belonging to banned religious organisations were engaged in secret meetings upon which we conducted the raids," he said.

"As soon as the CID personnel reached the site the said culprits attacked them," the official said. In retaliation, arrests were made and huge cache of explosives, chemicals and other stuff, which was used in bomb making, and weapons were recovered.

The recovered explosive material included 50 kg Brownish Color C-4 Wabox high explosive, 22 kg Sulphur powder, 100 meter Detonating cord, 4 iron cylinders, 35 gallon nitric acid, 1000 capacitors of different types, 25 timer devices, integrated circuit, more than one thousand resistors, 200 ware boards, regulators, switches, different types of integrated circuits, relays (communicate device), wire borrow, LED, crystal, transistors, soldering wire, iron beat, mini drill, project boards, cutters, screw driver set, fuse elements, chips, two kalashnikovs, and two TT pistols.

SSP Khan further said that during the initial course of interrogation, the terrorist, Anwar was identified as a resident of Model Colony, brother of al-Qaeda commander Qari Zafar. It should be noted that Qari Zafar was also chief of the defunct religious outfit Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LJ) for Sindh. Qari Zafar is also wanted by the CID and his name was there in the Red Book as a mastermind behind Marriot Hotel bomb blast. Earlier, Anwar along with his companions Habibullah Burmi and Maulvi Abdul Muttalib was arrested in May 2003 and 583 kg explosives, five hand grenades, two kalashnikovs were recovered. He disappeared after getting bail since then. The SSP also said that currently Anwar was recruiting people for terrorism on the directives of his brother Qari Zafar. "He not only has sent various persons to Miran Shah for training but also used several persons in terrorist activities."

"Anwar used to send different types of chemicals, electronic devices, times that use in the bomb preparation and suicide jackets to his brother Qari Zafar via public transport for terrorist activities."

The accused, Rehan is affiliated with al-Qaeda and resided in Rachore Lane, and got training in Masakarul Farooq. Rehan was logistic supporter for Arab militants.

The culprit, Azim alias Yousuf hailing from Afghanistan was residing in Toori Bangash Colony. "He is affiliated with Tehreek Taliban Pakistan (TTP) whose chief is Baitullah Mehsud." He got training from Afghanistan and also participated in the fight with the security forces there. Azim recently got training of bomb making at the camp of Qari Zafar. Ghulam Haider is a resident of Lyari and affiliated with banned outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and got militancy training from Masakar Tayyaba.

According to the initial investigation, Anwar on the directives of Qari Zafar via Jahangir and Saifullah alias Keamari Wala killed the Intelligence Bureau (IB) officials, Ibrahim and Fazal in March 2008.

The arrested militants had planned to target the high profile personalities and also to kidnap traders for ransom. They also collected donations from Karachi to send it to Qari Zafar.

Youth commits suicide

A youth committed suicide while an old person killed in road mishap here on Sunday.

Atiqur Rehman son of Azizur Rehman, a resident of Sector 5-C, New Karachi Police Station shot himself to over a domestic dispute. His body was taken to the Abbasi Shaheed Hospital for legal formalities were completed.

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Karachi/18-May-2009/4-Qaeda-activists-held-bombs-seized>

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Dallas Morning News

OPINION

15 May 2009

Philip Taubman: Obstacles to Nuclear Disarmament

Almost from the moment the first atomic bomb was detonated in New Mexico in July 1945, the menacing aura of the nuclear age has inspired visions of a world free of nuclear weapons. Never more so than now, with the prospect that the Taliban could someday control Pakistan's nuclear weapons, North Korea might develop nuclear-tipped missiles, Iran may soon become a nuclear power, and terrorists could get a bomb.

A growing army of nuclear abolitionists, concerned that proliferation could catch fire at any moment, is advancing the cause, led by Barack Obama, the first president to make nuclear disarmament a centerpiece of American defense policy.

Yet even as the allure of disarmament grows, the obstacles seem as daunting as ever. Going to zero, as the nuclear cognoscenti put it, is a deceptively simple notion; just about everyone who knows nuclear weapons agrees it would be wickedly difficult to achieve.

That's because it would require a sea change in a dizzying array of defense matters, ranging from core defense policies to highly technical weapons programs. To fully grasp the political and military implications, consider what would have been involved had the great powers of the 19th century decided to abolish gunpowder.

Obama acknowledges that getting to zero won't be easy. "The goal will not be reached quickly – perhaps not in my lifetime," he declared last month before a huge crowd in Prague, Czech Republic. "It will take patience and persistence."

But like other proponents, Obama has made the eradication of nuclear weapons a pivotal goal, no matter how distant, to provide a lodestar for world leaders and citizens alike.

The new appeal of an old idea that long seemed quixotic is driven by the rise of new nuclear threats that in some ways make the nuclear equation more ominous and volatile than during the Cold War, even though there are far fewer weapons now. Obama said it himself in Prague: "In a strange turn of history, the threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up."

Nuclear conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was a prospect so harrowing that American and Soviet leaders recognized it was untenable, even as their generals planned for Armageddon. They possessed 70,000 nuclear warheads between them in the 1980s, but the weapons were under firm control, and neither side dared risk the retaliation that a first strike would draw.

The dynamic today is much less stable and more difficult for the United States to manage, as the turbulence in Pakistan shows. As the nuclear club expands, the security of weapons and technology diminishes. Terrorists would have no compunction about using a nuclear weapon, and their target could not easily retaliate against an elusive, stateless group.

The Obama administration and other advocates favor a reduction in American and Russian nuclear arsenals, to be followed by talks that include nations with smaller nuclear arsenals, like China. They want the U.S. Senate to ratify the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, would strengthen the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and would seek an accord to verifiably ban the production of fissile materials intended for use in nuclear weapons.

Sam Nunn, the former chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, likens such steps to building "a base camp" that offers "a vantage point from which the summit is visible and the final ascent to the mountaintop is achievable." It is an audacious agenda, but as alarm about nuclear threats rises, the chances of success seem to be growing, at least for some interim steps.

Past efforts have foundered. A 1946 plan died partly because its scheme to have a powerful international agency control nuclear technology required the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to give up their veto power on some nuclear matters. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 41 years old now, has proved ineffectual in moving the world toward nuclear disarmament.

Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev briefly considered eliminating nuclear weapons, during their 1986 summit. The idea died when Reagan refused to abandon his missile-defense program.

Gorbachev, still pushing hard for nuclear disarmament 23 years later, co-hosted an international conference on nuclear issues in Rome last month. He noted that nuclear disarmament would be untenable to many nations if it left America with overwhelming superiority in conventional military forces. That is one of the biggest potential sticking points.

Nuclear disarmament would also upend decades of American defense strategies. Since early in the Cold War, they have been pinned to the chilling concept that a nuclear attack on the United States, and perhaps a chemical or biological attack, would be answered with a devastating nuclear strike. Dismantling America's nuclear deterrence strikes many defense experts as unwise, if not suicidal.

How far can nuclear arms levels be reduced while still providing deterrence? The United States and Russia are opening talks that seem likely to bring the number of operational strategic warheads on each side down to 1,500, possibly 1,000.

Those numbers are generally deemed ample for deterrence. But the limit might have to go to 500 or fewer before nuclear-weapons states with smaller arsenals, including China, would start cutting. And thousands of American and Russian tactical nuclear weapons, designed for battlefield use, would have to be eliminated, too. At those levels, there is intense debate about whether American security would be gravely undermined.

One solution suggested by abolition advocates would be a form of latent or virtual deterrence, based not on weapons all but ready to launch, but on the ability to reassemble or rebuild them.

If arsenals are drastically reduced, the next steps toward abolition could be even trickier. Since scientific and engineering knowledge cannot be expunged from mankind's memory, the potential to build weapons will always exist. Efforts to hide a few weapons may be difficult to detect and prevent. And any nation able to enrich uranium usable in nuclear power plants, like Iran, has a capacity to produce highly enriched fuel for weapons. Nuclear arms experts have been analyzing these issues intently and have come up with plans to address them. The steps include improvements in the tools used to monitor and verify compliance with treaties and new ways to prevent cheating, including more intrusive inspections.

The notion of nuclear disarmament gained credibility a few years ago when four Cold War veterans – George Shultz and Henry Kissinger, former secretaries of state; William Perry, a former defense secretary; and Nunn – overcame their political differences to endorse the idea in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed. Now that it has been embraced by Obama and Russian President Dimitri Medvedev, the notion seems to be moving from the realm of fantasy to the hardscrabble world of policy and politics.

How far it goes may depend on how much world leaders and the public accept the proposition, as Nunn sometimes says, that "we are in a race between cooperation and catastrophe."

http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/dn/opinion/viewpoints/stories/DN-taubman_17edi.State.Edition1.1fcc1ac.html

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Washington Post

OPINION

May 19, 2009

Stopping An Iranian Bomb

By John P. Hannah

Hanging over yesterday's meeting between President Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu was one overriding question: Can the president's strategy of diplomatic engagement persuade Iran to cease its efforts to develop nuclear weapons? Unfortunately, history offers little cause for hope -- especially if the United States remains focused on trying to reassure Iran of America's benign intentions. Successful denuclearization of hostile

states is most likely to occur as a result of regime change, coercive diplomacy or military action, not U.S. pledges of mutual respect.

Consider: South Africa surrendered its nuclear arsenal in 1990 only after the apartheid regime began unraveling. Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine abandoned nuclear weapons after they emerged as independent states in the wake of the Soviet Union's collapse. In the 1980s, the decisions by Brazil and Argentina to end nuclear weapons programs were linked to their transitions from military dictatorships to liberal democracies.

Cases of successful nuclear reversal in the Middle East underscore the importance of coercion. In December 2003, Libya's Moammar Gaddafi accepted an American offer of rapprochement in exchange for giving up his nuclear weapons infrastructure -- after U.S. troops had provided him with the compelling example of deposing and capturing Gaddafi's fellow Arab dictator Saddam Hussein.

Stopping Hussein's own nuclear ambitions required even more extreme measures. In 1981, Israeli jets destroyed Iraq's Osirak reactor just before it began producing plutonium for nuclear weapons. Ten years later, U.S. success in the Persian Gulf War led to the dismantling of Hussein's crash program to enrich uranium for an atomic bomb.

Military force also proved necessary against Syria's rogue nuclear activities. In September 2007, Israeli planes bombed a nearly completed reactor that Damascus had been secretly building with North Korean assistance.

As for Iran, the facts are that America's greatest success in setting back Tehran's nuclear program came not as the result of any negotiation but in response to intense diplomatic and military pressure. The 2007 U.S. National Intelligence Estimate noted that in 2003 Iran halted its nuclear weapons design work (while continuing efforts to enrich uranium and develop ballistic missiles) because of increasing international pressure resulting from exposure of its covert nuclear program. Most observers noticed that Iran's decision coincided with the U.S. invasion of its neighbor Iraq and the toppling of Hussein's regime after three weeks of fighting -- something Iran's military had failed to achieve after eight years of war in the 1980s.

History's lesson for the Obama administration seems straightforward: Short of regime change or military attack, the method most likely to persuade an anti-American, terrorist-sponsoring state such as Iran to cease its nuclear weapons program is credibly threatening the regime's hold on power. While using intense diplomatic engagement with Tehran to make clear the historic opportunity that exists for reconciliation, the United States should simultaneously be working to confront the regime with a crippling combination of diplomatic pressure, economic sanctions and military coercion.

For the time being, at least, the administration seems inclined to pursue another tack. Rather than using engagement as a mechanism to clarify for Iran's rulers the stark choice they face, President Obama appears singularly focused on demonstrating America's intense desire for improved relations. The results so far are not encouraging, with successive expressions of U.S. goodwill reciprocated by a series of Iranian provocations: the launch of an Iranian satellite; the unveiling of a factory to produce nuclear fuel; the arbitrary arrest (and subsequent release) of an American journalist on trumped-up espionage charges.

Notably, the administration's approach is increasingly at odds with that of U.S. allies in the Middle East that seek to maximize pressure on Tehran. For the past month, Egypt has mounted a courageous public effort to rally America's Arab friends in opposition to an Iranian campaign of subversion that stretches from Iraq to Morocco. Instead of rushing to the defense of distressed allies, Obama has largely remained silent, instead opting to reiterate his interest in reaching some sort of accommodation with Tehran, the source of the region's problems.

Important differences have also emerged between the administration and Israel, particularly over the possible use of force to stop Iran's nuclear program. Both Vice President Biden and Defense Secretary Robert Gates have publicly warned Israel against any attack on Iran. Gates has openly speculated that any American military action would be counterproductive.

Can an approach premised on forgoing such crucial diplomatic and military leverage succeed with an Iran determined to acquire nuclear weapons? Given the stakes, we should all pray that it does. But given the history of tyrannical Middle Eastern regimes seeking nuclear arms, we must also acknowledge that the Obama strategy reflects the triumph of hope over experience.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/05/18/AR2009051802583.html>

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Wall Street Journal

OPINION
MAY 19, 2009

Iran's Nuclear Shopping List

Back when the Bush Administration was warning about Iran's nuclear progress, or its deadly meddling in Iraq, the typical Democratic and media response was to treat the Islamic Republic as innocent until proven guilty. This month, Democrat Robert Morgenthau supplied the proof.

In testimony to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that was largely ignored by the media, the legendary Manhattan District Attorney opened a window on how Iran is secretly obtaining the ingredients for an arsenal of mass destruction. Mr. Morgenthau, whose recent cases have exposed illicit Iranian finance and procurement networks, has discovered what he calls "Iran's shopping list for materials related to weapons of mass destruction." They add up to "literally thousands of records."

Missile accuracy appears to be a key Iranian goal. In one of Mr. Morgenthau's cases -- the prosecution of Chinese citizen Li Fang Wei and his LIMMT company for allegedly scamming Manhattan banks to slip past sanctions on Iran -- the DA uncovered a list that included 400 sophisticated gyroscopes and 600 accelerometers. These are critical for developing accurate long-range missiles. He also found that Iran was acquiring a rare metal called tantalum, "used in those roadside bombs that are being used against our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan." So much for the media notion that Iran has played no part in killing American GIs.

Mr. Morgenthau also noted that the material shipped by LIMMT "included 15,000 kilograms of a specialized aluminum alloy used almost exclusively in long-range missile production; 1,700 kilograms of graphite cylinders used for banned electrical discharge machines which are used in converting uranium; more than 30,000 kilograms of tungsten-copper plates; 200 pieces of tungsten-copper alloy hollow cylinders, all used for missiles; 19,000 kilograms of tungsten metal powder, and 24,500 kilograms of maraging steel rods . . . especially hardened steel suitable for long-range missiles."

Lest anyone think that these materials may have innocent uses, Mr. Morgenthau added that "we have consulted with top experts in the field from MIT and from private industry and from the CIA. . . . Frankly, some of the people we've consulted are shocked by the sophistication of the equipment they're buying."

Mr. Morgenthau's information is corroborated by a staff report for the Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Democrat John Kerry, which notes that Iran is making nuclear progress on all fronts, and that it "could produce enough weapons-grade material for a bomb within six months." The committee also notes that "Iran is operating a broad network of front organizations," and that authorities suspect "some purchases for Iran's nuclear and missile programs may have come through an elaborate ruse to avoid U.S. financial sanctions on dealing with Iranian banks."

As we've reported, Lloyds bank entered into a deferred prosecution agreement in January with Mr. Morgenthau's office in which it admitted to a \$300 million "stripping" scheme designed to hide the Iranian origin of banking transfers from 2001 to 2004. Several other banks are also in the crosshairs of Mr. Morgenthau and the Justice Department.

All this should put to rest any doubts about the Iranian regime's purposes and determination. As for what the U.S. should do about it, the committee report insists that "direct engagement" must be a part of American strategy, and so it seems fated to be under the Obama Administration. The least it can do is heed Mr. Morgenthau's central point about everything he's learned about Iran's nuclear progress: "It's late in the game, and we don't have a lot of time."

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124268823646932231.html>

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