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YAHOO News.com
October 12, 2009

Panel On Presidency In Nuclear Age at JFK Library

By BOB SALSBERG, Associated Press Writer

BOSTON – President Barack Obama should learn from the experience of previous U.S. leaders when grappling with thorny nuclear issues ranging from the ambitions of Iran and North Korea to the threat of terrorism, experts told a forum on the shaping of American foreign policy in a nuclear age.

The conference Monday at the John F. Kennedy presidential library called "The Presidency in the Nuclear Age," examined issues faced by U.S. presidents from the dawn of the nuclear arms race, through the Cuban Missile Crisis, Cold War and disarmament efforts, and up to present efforts to stem nuclear proliferation.

Theodore Sorenson, a top adviser to President Kennedy, said JFK demonstrated that a chief executive should not act hastily in a crisis.

"A president doesn't just take one option, such as a pre-emptive strike or invasion ... he wants to know what all the options are before acting," said Sorenson, recounting the careful deliberations in 1962 that ultimately led to Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev dismantling the Cuban missiles, preventing a confrontation that could have escalated to nuclear war.

Sorenson said Kennedy took the time necessary to learn all of his diplomatic and military options — even the possibility of taking no immediate action at all.

"If the decision had been made in 24-48 hours, I think it's quite likely that a different decision would have been made," said Graham Allison, an author and defense policy expert from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

JFK's daughter, Caroline Kennedy, told the audience that one could not help but notice the parallels between past and current conflicts in the nuclear age. She noted how the recent satellite photos of a hidden nuclear facility under construction in Iran were eerily reminiscent of the spy plane photos that first disclosed the presence of Soviet missile sites in Cuba.

"The question then, as it is now, is not whether nuclear weapons and the materials needed to build them are being developed," Kennedy said. "It's really how, through the use of diplomacy and international law, we can prevent these materials from getting into the wrong hands, and ever being used against innocent civilians."

The daylong conference included videotaped statements from former Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton, the latter reflecting on his own administration's successes and failures in the area of nuclear disarmament, and warning that the world is fast losing its "impetus to nonproliferation."

"I think it is unlikely that any country that gets nuclear weapons would knowingly initiate the use of them, even Iran," Clinton said.

"But every time you have nuclear weapons in more hands, you increase the chances of accidents and you increase the chances that unscrupulous people will either sell or steal material ... and give it to terrorists or criminals who could use the nuclear weapons in small dirty bombs."

Kenneth Adelman, who served as director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency under Ronald Reagan, warned that presidents and world leaders must avoid the "illusion" of progress in nuclear disengagement.

Speaking during a panel discussion "The Cold War and the Nuclear Arms Race," Adelman criticized the SALT I and SALT II treaties of the 1970s as examples of good intentions without concrete results. He said SALT only placed limits on nuclear weapons that were far above what the U.S. and Soviet Union were building at the time.

"If you were to restrict me from high jumping 6-feet-2, I can live with that, because I don't high jump 6-feet-2, I don't high jump 5-feet-2," said Adelman.

He also chastised the conference's host, the Kennedy library, for not including in an accompanying arms control exhibit the INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) treaty, signed by Reagan in 1987. Adelman said was the only treaty that ever eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons.

Kennedy School of Government professor Nicholas Burns, a former under secretary of state for political affairs in the George W. Bush administration, praised Obama for pursuing negotiations with Iran over that country's nuclear ambitions.

Even if those negotiations fail, however, it needn't be a pretense toward war, said Burns, noting that the Cold War taught the world that it was possible to control "malevolent" nations through containment and deterrence.

But Allison noted that deterrence isn't an option when it comes to terrorists bent on suicide to achieve their aims and that unlike nation states, terrorists who might use nuclear weapons "don't have return addresses."

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20091012/ap_on_re_us/us_presidency_nuclear_age_2

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Miami Herald
October 12, 2009

Reports: Russian General Challenges US on Missiles

By STEVE GUTTERMAN
Associated Press Writer

MOSCOW -- A top Russian general aimed tough remarks at the U.S. on Monday before Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton's visit, reconfirming plans for multiple-warhead missiles and warning Washington that refitting rockets with conventional warheads would raise the risk of nuclear war.

Lt. Gen. Andrei Shvaichenko's comments quoted by Russian news agencies come as Moscow and Washington seek to negotiate a replacement for a 1991 arms control treaty that expires at the end of the year. It is a major element in their efforts to mend relations that were badly strained during the Bush administration.

Clinton meets Tuesday with President Dmitry Medvedev and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Her visit will test Russia's willingness to cooperate on issues, including arms control and Iran's nuclear program, in the wake of President Barack Obama's recent decision to scrap a missile-defense plan that Moscow vehemently opposed.

Shvaichenko's words appeared designed to remind the U.S. of Russia's nuclear might and press it to heed Moscow's concerns.

Shvaichenko, commander of the Strategic Missile Forces, reiterated that Russia will begin deploying RS-24 missiles with multiple warheads in December, the same month that the START I treaty expires.

The U.S. has said the missiles would violate a treaty provision against adding multiple warheads to existing single-warhead missiles, but Russia asserts it is a new missile.

"Putting RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missiles in service will strengthen (Russia's) combat capabilities," ITAR-Tass quoted Shvaichenko as saying at the force's headquarters outside Moscow. He said the first deployment of the missiles would be in the Ivanovo province, northeast of the capital.

Reaching a deal to replace the treaty before it expires would be a strong sign of solidarity after years of acrimony.

But there are no guarantees. Pressing Russia's position on another prickly issue, Shvaichenko criticized plans aired during the Bush administration to fit some U.S. strategic missiles with conventional non-nuclear warheads, saying the launch of such missiles could provoke a mistaken nuclear strike in retaliation.

A state that detected such a missile heading in its direction "would determine the risk it faced according to a worst-case scenario," RIA Novosti quoted Shvaichenko as saying - meaning that it would likely respond with nuclear weapons. He said such a shift "would seriously undermine ... international security as a whole."

The U.S. State Department declined immediate comment on Shvaichenko's remarks.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/world/AP/story/1278741.html>

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People's Daily – China
October 10, 2009

Russia says U.S. Remarks on Possible Radars in Ukraine Unexpected

Russia is seeking clarification of the statement by a senior U.S. defense official that Ukraine might be included in revised U.S. missile defense plans, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies on Friday.

The magazine Defense News quoted Alexander Vershbow, a U.S. assistant secretary of defense, as saying that the United States was considering Ukraine as a place for installing early warning radars.

According to Vershbow, Ukrainian officials showed interest in the deployment of early warning radar systems on its territory.

"We would like to receive full clarification," said Lavrov, who was attending a summit of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the Moldovan capital of Chisinau.

"This statement is extravagant and rather unexpected," Lavrov told reporters, saying Vershbow "constantly makes statements that raise more questions than give answers."

Lavrov was to meet with his U.S. counterpart Hillary Clinton in Moscow next week. High on the agenda are the new U.S. missile shield program and talks on a new nuclear arms reduction treaty. Lavrov is widely believed to bring up Vershbow's statement at their talks.

U.S. President Barack Obama announced on Sept. 17 that Washington would abandon a Bush-era missile defense shield program while initiating a "phased, adaptive approach" in Eastern Europe.

The Bush administration had planned to deploy 10 missile interceptors in Poland and a radar system in the Czech Republic as part of its European missile shield to protect its European allies from missile threats from "rogue states."

Russia strongly opposed the Bush-era plans, saying they posed a threat to its national security.

Under the new plans, Washington would replace the land-based facilities in eastern Europe with sea-based defenses.

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90854/6779626.html>

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Defense Professional
October 12, 2009

Ukraine Says It Did Not Receive Request to Host U.S. Missile Defense Elements

KIEV | Ukraine has not received requests from the United States to host anti-missile facilities on its soil, President Viktor Yushchenko said on Friday according to RIA Novosti.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs Alexander Vershbow recently said the United States was considering Ukraine as a possible site for a radar station as part of its new missile defense configuration in Europe.

According to Defense News, Vershbow "added Ukraine to the list of possible early warning sites." He said Ukrainian officials "have mentioned" their interest in participating.

"I wouldn't want to see a hue and cry over the issue so I will simply say this: The Ukrainian side has not received any proposals," Yushchenko said.

However, he said Ukraine has two radar facilities - one in Sevastopol and one in Mukachevo in the country's west, which Kiev would like to "integrate into a European or global security system."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday that Moscow was seeking clarification of Vershbow's remarks.

Lavrov earlier said new U.S. missile defense plans posed no threat to Russia.

U.S. President Barack Obama in September scrapped plans to deploy a radar in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland, due to a re-assessment of the threat from Iran. Moscow fiercely opposed the plans as a national security threat.

According to the Obama administration's new plan, land-based missile-defense shields will not be implemented before 2015. Sea-based defenses will be operating in the Mediterranean up to 2015.

Moscow, which has consistently objected to the shield as a threat to its national security, welcomed the move. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said later that Moscow would scrap plans to deploy Iskander-M missiles in Russia's Kaliningrad Region, near Poland.

Medvedev said last November that Russia would deploy the missiles in Kaliningrad, which borders NATO members Poland and Lithuania, if the shield was put into operation.

<http://www.defpro.com/news/details/10430/>

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RIA Novosti – Russia (RIA = Russian Information Agency)

13 October 2009

Russia, U.S. In Talks On New Missile Defense System – Lavrov

MOSCOW, October 13 (RIA Novosti) - Russia and the U.S. will continue talks on a new missile defense system, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Tuesday after talks with the U.S. secretary of state.

"Today we exchanged views on how these consultations are developing. They will be continued," Lavrov said.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that the U.S. had presented to Russia its re-assessment of the Iranian missile threat and was expecting cooperation with Moscow on the issue of missile defense.

She said that Russian-U.S. missile defense cooperation would benefit not only the two former Cold War foes, but the whole world.

"We want to ensure that we answer every question asked by the Russian military or government... because we want to be as transparent as possible," she said.

U.S. President Barack Obama in September scrapped plans to deploy a radar in the Czech Republic and interceptor missiles in Poland, due to a re-assessment of the threat from Iran. Moscow had fiercely opposed the plans as a threat to its national security.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091013/156452695.html>

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Los Angeles Times

October 12, 2009

Diplomacy In The Lead On Iran Nuclear Issue -- for now

By Greg Miller and Julian E. Barnes

Reporting from Washington

Agreement to open Iran's hidden nuclear complex to inspection has reduced talk of military action and put diplomacy back on track -- at least for a while. But even as the U.S. tries to build international pressure, emerging details suggest it might already be too late for an armed strike.

Everything about Iran's newly disclosed site near the holy city of Qom complicates the task for the two most likely attackers, the U.S. and Israel. Iranian officials say that's precisely why they built the facility on an elite military base, fortified with steel and concrete, and buried under a mountain.

Less than a week after President Obama revealed that the U.S. knew about the site, Iran agreed to open it to inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency. In a subsequent visit to Tehran, IAEA Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei said inspectors would visit Oct. 25.

The Obama administration and its allies are concerned that, despite Tehran's denials, Iran's atomic program masks an effort to build nuclear weapons. Still, Obama has consistently said he favors engagement over confrontation. In part, that reflects a distaste for preemptive military action. But it's also a result of concerns over Iranian retaliation, the strain on a U.S. military force still heavily committed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the possibility that such an attack could close the window on political reform inside Iran.

Despite regarding Iran as an existential threat, Israeli officials have indicated they are willing to give diplomacy a chance. However, Obama insists he won't rule out any options, and administration officials say they won't wait forever to find out whether Iran is serious about cooperating.

Military planners in the U.S. and Israel developing contingencies for attacking Iran's nuclear sites have long struggled with a lack of good intelligence, the number and location of the dispersed sites and the distance their forces would have to travel to reach them. Details emerging about the Qom site make their task more difficult -- if not almost impossible.

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has said that any attack could at best delay construction of a bomb, if Iran intends to build one.

A military effort to cripple Iran's nuclear program would require dozens of missile strikes, not only on major facilities but on research installations and locations where centrifuges and other equipment are manufactured and stored, according to current and former U.S. officials. It might also require the insertion of troops.

"If you're going to have an effective campaign to go in and throw [Iran's nuclear program] back years, you're talking about a massive, massive effort," said a former senior U.S. intelligence official who was involved in examining such scenarios, and discussed them on condition of anonymity.

The main components of Iran's nuclear program include a uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, a heavy-water reactor at Arak, a uranium-conversion plant at Esfahan and the newly identified site near Qom.

In the past, U.S. spy agencies have struggled in assessing other nations' nuclear programs. In Iraq, the United States learned after the 1991 Persian Gulf War that it had missed major signs that Baghdad was pursuing the bomb. Twelve years later, the United States erroneously concluded that the work had resumed, only to discover after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that that assessment was wrong.

The Obama administration has never spelled out what might prompt a U.S. strike, deliberately leaving diplomatic maneuvering room. Nevertheless, former U.S. officials and experts said there are several possible thresholds.

Leonard Spector, director of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Washington, said the U.S. would almost certainly react "if we observe that they are producing highly enriched uranium or . . . were returning to the design and manufacture of actual weapons."

Although Iran is already enriching uranium at Natanz, the facility is not configured to deliver bomb-grade material. The IAEA's ElBaradei said in Tehran this month that there was no "concrete proof" Iran has an ongoing weapons program. U.S. spy agencies believe Iran's work on designing a nuclear warhead was suspended in 2003, although Israeli and British intelligence officials question that conclusion.

Some experts believe the United States might choose to hold off on any attack until Iran actually tested a nuclear device.

In one scenario, the United States could carry out a single missile strike on the Qom facility alone -- a step that might be easier to defend internationally but would do little to slow Iran's nuclear work.

If strikes are ordered, the U.S. has a major military advantage. Iran's air defenses are regarded as rudimentary. Still, the United States would probably use stealth aircraft and employ electronic measures to shut down Iranian radar and surface-to-air missiles.

When Israel attacked a nuclear facility being built in Syria in 2007, the Arab nation's radar was fed false information, preventing the government in Damascus from learning it was under attack until the first bomb fell.

John Wheeler, a former Air Force official, said the U.S. could use cyber warfare to weaken Iranian defenses, disabling the electrical grid and disrupting radio signals and cellphone towers.

One former Defense official said putting teams of special operations forces, known as SOFs, on the ground would improve the accuracy of bombing. Such a ground force could also place explosives at entrances to hidden bunkers, he said.

"The SOF guys would be safe for a while," said the official. "They could assure accurate target acquisition."

U.S. officials are developing an array of warheads designed to plunge into the earth and penetrate layers of concrete before being detonated by a delayed-action fuse.

The largest penetrator in the military's inventory is the 5,000-pound GBU-28. But much larger munitions, including the 30,000-pound "massive ordnance penetrator," are in development, although experts said early versions might secretly be available.

The Air Force also has a bomb 30 feet long that weighs more than 21,000 pounds. Although not a penetrating bomb, it could destroy exterior features, such as entrances, and severely damage a structure's interior.

Strikes employing such munitions would probably be successive, with the initial launches focused on entrances and outer defenses, followed by missiles meant to drill deeper into the center of the target.

Locating the center would be difficult. Satellite images of the Qom compound show tunnel entrances and vents scattered across a mountaintop, but they reveal little of the layout underneath.

"Unless you have good human intelligence, you probably don't have a good idea where inside the mountain the key target is," said a former senior U.S. military intelligence official. Partly for that reason, the official said, "it is possible to construct a facility that is simply beyond reach."

Nuclear warheads could destroy even a deeply buried structure, but are an unthinkable option for Washington.

Beyond the obvious diplomatic fallout, military options carry many other risks.

An attack could weaken the opposition movement disputing President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's reelection in June by uniting conservatives and reformers against a national threat.

Or it could give authorities an opportunity to take further action against those seeking more democracy.

If a military strike left even remnants of the program intact, it might well harden Iran's resolve to acquire the bomb - even if it hadn't been pursuing a weapons program before.

U.S. spy agencies have warned that Tehran might retaliate by launching missiles toward Israel; striking U.S. installations in Iraq and Afghanistan; closing off the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for oil shipments; and carrying out attacks on other continents through the militant group Hezbollah, which it supports.

"The assumption is that they would strike out, unleashing their terrorist clients and using whatever military capabilities they've got," said a former senior U.S. intelligence official familiar with classified assessments. "I don't think anybody seriously contemplates that they would say, 'Game over.'"

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran-options12-2009oct12.0.6282414.full.story>

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Reuters of India
October 12, 2009

Iran Dismisses U.S. Warning Ahead of Nuclear Talks

TEHRAN, Oct 12 (Reuters) - Iran dismissed on Monday a U.S. warning that major powers would not wait forever for Tehran to prove it was not developing nuclear bombs, saying any threats deadlines would have no impact on the Islamic Republic.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Hassan Qashqavi, speaking a week before a meeting in Vienna on a proposal to send Iranian uranium abroad for further processing, also reiterated Iran's refusal to discuss its "nuclear rights" with the six world powers.

"We have announced several times that we have nothing to discuss about that," he told a news conference in comments translated by Iran's state Press TV.

"That means continuation of our activities within the framework of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the safeguards agreement of the IAEA and enrichment on that basis," he said, referring to the U.N. nuclear agency watchdog.

Such comments by Qashqavi are likely to fuel Western suspicions that Iran is seeking to win time by engaging for the sake of engaging while further mastering enrichment technologies.

Western diplomats believe Iran is trying to show enough flexibility to keep trade allies Russia and China opposed to painful energy sanctions which could target its energy sector.

The West suspects Iran is seeking to develop nuclear bombs. Tehran says its atom work is aimed at generating electricity.

In London on Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said: "The international community will not wait indefinitely for evidence that Iran is prepared to live up to its international obligations."

Asked about the remark, Qashqavi said: "If there is a deadline or any kind of threat in their comments, they will not impact us in any way."

In talks that both sides have described as constructive, Iran agreed at a meeting with the six powers -- the United States, Russia, China, France, Germany and Britain -- in Geneva on Oct. 1 to allow U.N. experts access to a newly disclosed uranium enrichment plant near the city of Qom.

FUEL DEAL?

Western diplomats say Iran also agreed in principle to send about 80 percent of its stockpile of low-enriched uranium to Russia and France for processing and return to Tehran to replenish dwindling fuel stocks for a reactor in the capital that produces isotopes for cancer care.

Iranian, Russian, French, U.S. and U.N. nuclear energy agency officials will meet in Vienna on Oct 19 to flesh out conditions, such as amounts of uranium to be sent abroad.

"There are 150 hospitals dependent on this reactor ... we want to receive this fuel from outside. That's why we are going to have the meeting and we hope that we'll reach an agreement," Qashqavi said.

But, in line with comments by a spokesman for Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, he also suggested Iran could provide the fuel itself if there was no agreement on external supply.

Any suggestion that Iran may embark on further refining uranium is likely to add to concern among Western powers.

Enriched uranium can be used as fuel for power plants and, if refined much more to about 90 percent, provide material for bombs. Iran needs uranium refined to a purity of 20 percent for its Tehran reactor, from the 3.5 percent it has now.

For world powers, the fuel deal's payoff would be in diminishing Iran's stash of low-enriched uranium, enough to fuel one atomic bomb should Tehran choose to enrich it further.

For Iran it would preserve medical isotope production.

Tehran has repeatedly rejected demands to halt enrichment, despite three rounds of U.N. sanctions since 2006.

Progress in the Geneva talks was seen as heading off calls for an immediate round of tougher sanctions in the near future. (Reporting by Fredrik Dahl; editing by Samia Nakhoul)

<http://in.reuters.com/article/oilRpt/idINDAH22785120091012?sp=true>

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New York Times
October 13, 2009

Clinton Meets With Russian for Talks on Iran

By REUTERS

MOSCOW (Reuters) - U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Tuesday the time had not yet come for more sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program and praised what she said was Russia's help in tackling the issue.

Clinton, on her first visit to Russia since taking her post, quoted Russian President Dmitry Medvedev as saying sanctions against Iran might be inevitable, adding:

"But we are not at that point yet. That is not a conclusion we have reached. And we want to be very clear that it is our preference that Iran works with the international community...to fulfill its obligation on inspections."

Clinton generally played down differences with Moscow at a news conference held jointly with her Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

Instead she spoke of cooperation with Moscow on a range of international issues including nuclear disarmament and missile defense as part of a so-called "reset" of relations proclaimed by U.S. President Barack Obama.

"I feel very good about the so-called reset," she said.

State Department officials had said before the talks that Clinton would discuss with Moscow "specific forms of pressure" on Iran if it failed to keep promises not to pursue nuclear weapons but Clinton denied she had made any requests.

"We did not ask for anything today. We reviewed the situation and where it stood, which I think was the appropriate timing for what this process entails," Clinton said.

Lavrov restated Russia's position that talk of sanctions against Iran at this stage was counter-productive because international efforts should be focused on diplomacy.

Iran agreed at a meeting with world powers in Geneva on October 1 to allow U.N. experts access to a newly disclosed uranium enrichment plant near the city of Qom.

Officials called the talks constructive, but Clinton warned on Sunday the world would not wait forever for Iran to prove it was not building nuclear bombs.

U.S. President Barack Obama's decision to scrap plans for an anti-missile system located in eastern Europe has helped improve ties with Moscow after stormy relations under his predecessor George W. Bush.

But diplomats say that in return the United States now wants better Russian cooperation on an array of foreign policy issues such as the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, missile defense and a nuclear arms reduction treaty.

Lavrov said "considerable progress" had been made by U.S. and Russian negotiators toward a new bilateral treaty cutting their stocks of strategic nuclear weapons.

Both sides are working to a deadline of December for concluding a new treaty to replace the landmark Cold War-era START pact.

On missile defense, Lavrov said Russia had listened to U.S. plans for a new anti-missile system to replace the Bush-era plan for fixed radars and anti-missile batteries in central Europe which had upset the Kremlin.

But he was non-committal on U.S. proposals the two sides cooperate on missile defense.

"We want to know what are these plans, what they provide for, how the concept will function," he said. "The more we know about this concept, the sooner we will come to understanding of whether we can work jointly on a project."

Some Russian officials, including Moscow's ambassador to NATO Dmitry Rogozin, have suggested Obama's new missile defense plan involving sea-based and mobile missiles could pose an even stronger security threat to Moscow.

Russian officials say Moscow's concerns would only be addressed if it became an equal partner in any European anti-missile system.

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2009/10/13/world/politics-us-russia-clinton.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

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New York Times

October 10, 2009

Japan And S. Korea Agree To Joint Stance On North

By Choe Sang-hun

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea and Japan closed ranks on North Korea on Friday, adding a new demand to their proposed bargain for the North to abandon its nuclear program and vowing to enforce United Nations sanctions until they are convinced that the country will do so.

On Saturday in Beijing, China joined the other two countries in calling for an early resumption of the six-party talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions, Reuters reported.

The plea for the renewal of the talks, "so as to safeguard peace and stability in Northeast Asia," came in a statement issued at the end of a meeting of Premier Wen Jiabao of China, President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea and the new Japanese prime minister, Yukio Hatoyama.

In Seoul on Friday, President Lee and Prime Minister Hatoyama, who share skepticism about the North Korean government's intentions, reaffirmed their united stance when they met to prepare for the meeting in China.

Mr. Lee said during a news conference here with Mr. Hatoyama that their nations would keep the door open for dialogue, but would also enforce the sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council after the North's ballistic missile and nuclear tests this year.

"We agreed that North Korea must show a fundamental change in its attitude," Mr. Lee said.

The two leaders also amended their "grand bargain" — a term used by Mr. Lee to describe a sweeping set of incentives for an immediate halt to the North's nuclear program — to include a new demand: a full North Korean accounting of the fate of Japanese citizens believed to have been kidnapped and taken to North Korea in recent decades.

Mr. Lee and Mr. Hatoyama flew to Beijing later Friday for a meeting with Mr. Wen, who had returned Tuesday from a meeting with the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il.

Mr. Wen made a three-day journey this week to Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, and won a vaguely worded promise from Mr. Kim that his government would return to the six-nation nuclear disarmament talks — but only if it saw progress in bilateral talks with Washington.

In return, China agreed to ship aid and increase economic exchanges with the North.

That deal raised fears in Seoul and Tokyo that North Korea, a pariah state, was being rewarded without making a concrete concession on its nuclear weapons program.

Mr. Hatoyama defended the need for sanctions, saying, "We should not provide economic cooperation until North Korea takes concrete steps."

The Japanese have long sought to include the dispute over the abducted citizens in the "grand bargain," which would provide North Korea with a comprehensive package of economic assistance and security assurances in return for its immediately abandoning its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Until Mr. Lee, a conservative, came to office in early 2008, South Korea had resisted injecting that dispute into the already complicated nuclear talks.

The parties involved in the six-party talks are the two Koreas, the United States, China, Japan and Russia.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/10/world/asia/10korea.html>

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Bloomberg
12 October 2009

Clinton Says North Korea's Missiles Won't Deter Talks

By Brian Lysaght and Janine Zacharia

Oct. 12 (Bloomberg) -- Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said North Korea's test-firing of five short-range missiles today won't deter the U.S. from working to resolve the dispute over the communist nation's nuclear weapons.

"Our goals remain the same. We intend to work toward a nuclear-free Korean peninsula that can demonstrate in a verifiable way that it is," Clinton told reporters during a visit to Belfast, Northern Ireland. "The international community will not accept their continuing nuclear program."

North Korea fired the five missiles into the East Sea from an area south of Wonsan, Gangwon Province, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported, citing an unidentified South Korean government source.

The missile test follows a pledge on Oct. 10 by the leaders of China, Japan and South Korea to work together to restart the so-called six-nation talks aimed at removing North Korea's nuclear weapons. The U.S. and Russia are also parties to the talks.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, during a visit to Pyongyang on Oct. 5, won an assurance from North Korean leader Kim Jong Il that he is willing to resume the disarmament talks.

The North Korean government in a letter to the United Nations dated Oct. 1 said that dismantling its nuclear weapons is "unthinkable even in a dream," and that it won't disarm unless the United States does.

North Korea said in April that it was abandoning the six-nation talks for good after the UN Security Council condemned the country for launching a missile over Japan. North Korea tested a nuclear weapon on May 25.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601103&sid=akqSjW9teKEw>

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Washington Post
October 11, 2009

Clinton: U.S. Confident in Pakistan's Control over Nuclear Weapons

By Mary Beth Sheridan
Washington Post Staff Writer

LONDON, Oct. 11 -- Top U.S. and British officials said Sunday they believed that Pakistan's nuclear weapons were secure, after a stunning insurgent attack on the South Asian country's army headquarters.

"We have confidence in the Pakistani government and military's control over nuclear weapons," Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said after a meeting with her British counterpart, David Miliband.

The leading suspects in the weekend attack in Rawalpindi are Pakistani insurgents allied with the Taliban and al-Qaeda. The fact that the assailants wore army uniforms and made it into such a heavily guarded site raised questions about their infiltration of the armed forces.

The possibility of a nuclear weapon falling into the hands of extremists is one of the worst national-security nightmares for the Obama administration.

Clinton and Miliband said the attack showed that Islamic militants were increasingly threatening the Pakistani government.

But Miliband said there was "no evidence that has been shown publicly or privately of any threat to the Pakistani nuclear facility."

Clinton met with Miliband and Prime Minister Gordon Brown on the second day of her five-day European trip. A major topic of discussion was strategy on Afghanistan, which is under review in Washington.

Britain has the second-biggest foreign military force in Afghanistan, with about 9,000 troops, and is about to announce an increase of 500 more, according to British press reports. The war has generated growing public opposition in Britain, as in the United States.

In her visit to London, Clinton also sought to emphasize that the "special relationship" with Britain is still special. British newspapers have suggested that President Obama has at times snubbed his counterpart, Gordon Blair, a claim that U.S. officials deny.

Clinton praised Britain for what she called its pivotal role in advancing a recent U.S.-authored United Nations resolution on nuclear disarmament. She also said British leadership had been important in confronting Iran on its nuclear program.

"The international agenda is broad and deep, and the United States and United Kingdom are partners working to advance our shared values on every front," she said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/11/AR2009101100746.html>

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Boston Globe
October 11, 2009

Ex-Indian Scientists Call for More Nuclear Testing, Despite US Pact

By Rama Lakshmi, Washington Post

NEW DELHI - A little more than a year after India and the United States signed a historic civilian agreement lifting a 30-year ban on nuclear trade, some former top nuclear scientists here are arguing that India needs to conduct another weapons test.

The move would undoubtedly alarm nonproliferation advocates but would be needed for India to master the weapon and to ensure that it has a "credible nuclear deterrent" in its arsenal, according to two retired nuclear scientists.

One of the scientists, K. Santhanam, who coordinated India's nuclear weapons program when the country conducted five nuclear tests 11 years ago, has said the original thermonuclear device test was a dud. That assertion is being made at a time when the idea of a universal test ban is gaining momentum under President Obama. Speaking last month at the United Nations, Obama called for nations to quickly sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Some Indian analysts say Santhanam is speaking for a powerful but small group of nuclear scientists, diplomats, and military specialists who wish to prevent Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India from supporting Obama's call.

"Santhanam finally realized the enormity of consequences of India's never testing again," said Bharat Karnad, a member of the team that developed India's nuclear doctrine and a former member of the National Security Advisory Board.

"It has to do with the perception that Manmohan Singh is predisposed to offer no resistance to Obama's nonproliferation policy push and may sign the CTBT, and that the government has to be stopped from doing this. It is, in fact, about keeping our testing option open."

Singh's government immediately distanced itself from Santhanam and reiterated its commitment to the moratorium on tests. But Karnad said the question "is not whether India will test, but when."

Earlier this month, the former chairman of India's Atomic Energy Commission, P.K. Iyengar, also joined the chorus advocating more tests and said "nobody makes a weapon out of a single test."

Conducting a nuclear test would lead to the termination of the nuclear deal with the United States and would jeopardize fuel supplies. It would also flout India's voluntary moratorium on testing, declared in 1998.

"Santhanam and other Indian Dr. Strangeloves see this as a way to block progress toward disarmament and possibly get more nuclear testing going before it is too late," said Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based Arms Control Association. "Indian testing would likely trigger additional Pakistani testing . . . and could even provoke a resumption of Chinese testing."

The five Indian tests in May 1998 prompted archrival Pakistan to conduct tests of its own.

Santhanam said that the hydrogen bomb tested in 1998 "completely failed to ignite" and that the shaft, the frame, and the winches were found intact after the tests.

India's national security adviser, M.K. Narayanan, dismissed the scientist's statements as "horrific" and said researchers have verified the nation's capabilities. ■

http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2009/10/11/scientists_call_for_more_nuclear_testing_in_india_despite_us_pact/

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Bloomberg.com
12 October 2009

India Test-Fires Two Nuclear-Capable Missiles, Press Trust Says

By Bibhudatta Pradhan

Oct. 12 (Bloomberg) -- India test-fired two missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads within five minutes from a site in the Bay of Bengal off the country's east coast, the Press Trust of India reported, citing defense officials it did not name.

The locally made Prithvi-II surface-to-surface missiles, with a range of up to 350 kilometers (217 miles), were fired at 10.28 a.m. and 10.33 a.m. local time today as part of user trials by the army, the news agency said.

India and Pakistan have been testing a series of missiles since 2002, when the two countries came close to a fourth war. The peace process they began in 2003 was stalled by a militant attack on India's commercial capital, Mumbai, last November.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601091&sid=aRBO.dV4SiFE>

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Chattanooga Times Free Press

Oct. 13, 2009

Security of Pakistan Nuclear Weapons Questioned

By CHRIS BRUMMITT and PAMELA HESS

Associated Press Writers

ISLAMABAD — An audacious weekend assault by Islamic militants on Pakistan's army headquarters is again raising fears of an insurgent attack on the country's nuclear weapons installation.

Pakistan has sought to protect its nuclear weapons from attack by the Taliban or other militants by storing the warheads, detonators and missiles separately in facilities patrolled by elite troops.

Analysts are divided on how secure these weapons are. Some say the weapons are less secure than they were five years ago, and Saturday's attack would show a "worrisome" overconfidence by the Pakistanis.

While complex security is in place, much depends on the Pakistani army and how vulnerable it is to infiltration by extremists, said a Western government official with access to intelligence on Pakistan and its nuclear arsenal, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Analysts say a more realistic scenario would involve militant sympathizers getting work as scientists at the facilities and passing information to extremists.

"It's not thought likely that the Taliban are suddenly going to storm in and gain control of the nuclear facilities," said Gareth Price, head of the Asia program at London think tank Chatham House. "There are enough command-and-control mechanisms in place to prevent that."

A U.S. counterproliferation official in Washington said strong safeguards are in place and there is no reason to believe the nuclear arsenal is in imminent jeopardy of seizure by militants.

The official, who commented on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the matter publicly, said there is a major difference between attacking a nuclear site and actually seizing and using the nuclear material stored inside.

Security at Pakistan's isolated nuclear installations is believed to be significantly higher than at the army headquarters, which was relatively relaxed by the standards of other nations. Thousands of people and vehicles enter the headquarters compound in Rawalpindi daily, and the 10 attackers, while able to take dozens of hostages Saturday and kill 14 people before a commando raid ended the siege, never penetrated to the heart of the complex.

Pakistan is estimated to have between 70 and 90 warheads, according to Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project of the Federation of American Scientists.

Shaun Gregory, an expert on Pakistani security at the University of Bradford in Britain, said militants have struck near an air base in Sargodha, where nuclear missiles are believed to be stored, and the Wah cantonment, where missiles that could carry nuclear weapons are believed to be assembled. He added that the attacks did not appear to have targeted nuclear weapons.

Pakistan uses armed forces personnel to guard nuclear weapons facilities, and it physically separates warhead cores from their detonation components, Gregory wrote in the July issue of *The Sentinel*, the monthly journal of the Combating Terrorism Center.

The components are stored in protected underground sites. The warheads themselves are electronically locked to ensure that they cannot be detonated even if they fall in terrorists' hands, Gregory said.

The Pakistan military carefully screens and monitors the officers vested with protecting the warheads, drawing them almost exclusively from Punjabi officers who are considered to have fewer links to religious extremists or with the Pashtun area of Pakistan, where the Taliban garners much of its support.

No action or decision involving a nuclear weapon can be undertaken by fewer than two persons. But Gregory acknowledged the possibility of collusion between cleared officers and extremists.

The personnel assigned to sensitive nuclear posts go through regular background checks conducted by Pakistan's intelligence services, according to a 2007 article in the journal *Arms Control*, co-written by Naeem Salik, a former top official at Pakistan's National Command Authority, which oversees the nuclear arsenal.

"It is being acknowledged by the world powers that the system has no loopholes," Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas, a military spokesman, said Monday. "The system is foolproof, as good and bad as their own systems."

The U.S. and the British governments agree there is little risk of a weapon falling into militants' hands.

In London, British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said there is no evidence "that has been shown publicly or privately of any threat to the Pakistani nuclear facilities, said.

Gregory said in an e-mail to *The Associated Press* that he did not share Miliband's assertion, adding that "there is plenty of evidence of threat."

Individuals in the Pakistan military have colluded with al-Qaida in providing safe houses for Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the alleged mastermind of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and individuals in Pakistan's civil nuclear sector have met with al-Qaida figures, including Osama bin Laden himself, Gregory said.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton dismissed any suggestion militants could overthrow the government and gain control of the nuclear arsenal. "We have confidence in the Pakistani government and military's control over nuclear weapons," she said.

Kristensen said that while U.S. officials have said they have helped Pakistan increase security at its nuclear facilities, "they have not been allowed to go to those sites, so it's something they've had to do remotely."

Saturday's attack "somehow seems to show that the Pakistani military is perhaps a little overly confident" about some of its most important military facilities, he said.

"If a relatively small group of people is able to penetrate into their 'Pentagon,' then it might show something about the overconfidence of the Pakistanis, and that is worrisome — it's surprising that they were able to go in there relatively simply," Kristensen said.

He noted that the military headquarters is different from a nuclear facility. "One cannot compare insurgents going into an office building to them going into a nuclear facility for the nation's crown jewels," he added.

While stringent security checks on personnel are meant to prevent militant sympathizers from working at the facilities, Pakistan's nuclear establishment has seen serious leaks of nuclear knowledge and materials by insiders.

Top government scientist A.Q. Khan operated a global black market nuclear network for more than a decade until he was unmasked by U.S. intelligence. And the CIA has confirmed a meeting between Khan associates and bin Laden before 9/11.

Israel has not taken a formal position on the danger of Pakistan's nuclear weapons falling into the hands of terrorists. However, in a parliamentary briefing last year, Defense Minister Ehud Barak mentioned such a scenario as a nightmare for the world, according to security officials speaking on condition of anonymity because the session was closed.

"Pakistan's weapons are less secure today than they were five years ago, and it seems they're even less secure than under the Musharraf government," said Gerald Steinberg, professor of political studies and conflict management at Bar Ilan University in Israel, referring to the previous administration of President Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Steinberg said Israelis are becoming less confident of the U.S. ability to control events and put plans into action that would protect Pakistan's nuclear stockpile.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2009/oct/13/security-pakistan-nuclear-weapons-questioned/>

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Boston Herald
October 13, 2009

US Wants Bunker-Buster Fast, Denies Iran is Reason

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is speeding up delivery of a colossal bomb designed to destroy hidden weapons bunkers buried underground and shielded by 10,000 pounds of reinforced concrete.

Call it Plan B for dealing with Iran, which recently revealed a long-suspected nuclear site deep inside a mountain near the holy city of Qom.

The 15-ton behemoth — called the "massive ordnance penetrator," or MOP — will be the largest non-nuclear bomb in the U.S. arsenal and will carry 5,300 pounds of explosives. The bomb is about 10 times more powerful than the weapon it is designed to replace.

The Pentagon has awarded a nearly \$52 million contract to speed up placement of the bomb aboard the B-2 Stealth bomber, and officials say the bomb could be fielded as soon as next summer.

Pentagon officials acknowledge that the new bomb is intended to blow up fortified sites like those used by Iran and North Korea for their nuclear programs, but they deny there is a specific target in mind.

"I don't think anybody can divine potential targets," Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell said. "This is just a capability that we think is necessary given the world we live in."

The Obama administration has struggled to counter suspicions lingering from George W. Bush's presidency that the United States is either planning to bomb Iranian nuclear facilities itself or would look the other way if Israel did the same.

The administration has been careful not to take military action off the table even as it reaches out to Iran with historic talks this month. Tougher sanctions are the immediate backup if diplomacy fails to stop what the West fears is a drive for a nuclear weapon.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates recently said a strike against Iran's nuclear facilities would probably only buy time. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen has called a strike an option he doesn't want to use.

The new U.S. bomb would be the culmination of planning begun in the Bush years. The Obama administration's plans to bring the bomb on line more quickly indicate that the weapon is still part of the long-range backup plan.

"Without going into any intelligence, there are countries that have used technology to go further underground and to take those facilities and make them hardened," Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said. "This is not a new phenomenon, but it is a growing one."

After testing began in 2007, development of the bomb was slowed by about two years because of budgetary issues, Whitman said, and the administration moved last summer to return to the previous schedule.

North Korea, led by Kim Jong Il, is a known nuclear weapons state and has exploded working devices underground. The United States and other countries have offered to buy out the country's weapons program. The Obama administration is trying to lure Pyongyang back to the bargaining table after a walkout last year.

Iran is a more complex case, for both diplomatic and technical reasons. Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, claims its nuclear program is peaceful and meant only to produce energy, but the West suspects a covert bomb program that may be only a year or so away from fruition.

"I don't really see it as a near-term indication of anything being planned. I think certainly down the road it has a certain deterrent factor," said Kenneth Katzman, a specialist on Iran and the Middle East at the Congressional Research Service. "It adds to the calculus, let's say, of Ahmadinejad and Kim Jong Il."

Details about Iran's once-secret program have come out slowly and often under duress, as with last month's surprise confirmation of the hidden underground development site near Qom.

That revelation came a month after the Pentagon had asked Congress to shift money to speed up the MOP program, although U.S. and other intelligence agencies had suspected for years that Iran was still hiding at least one nuclear development site.

The MOP could, in theory, take out bunkers such as those Saddam Hussein had begun to construct for weapons programs in Iraq, or flatten the kind of cave and tunnel networks that allowed al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden to escape U.S. assault in Tora Bora, Afghanistan, shortly after the U.S. invasion in 2001.

The precision-guided bomb is designed to drill through earth and almost any underground encasement to reach weapons depots, labs or hideouts.

<http://www.bostonherald.com/news/national/general/view.bg?articleid=1204279&srvc=rss>

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London Daily Telegraph

11 October 2009

French al-Qaeda Suspect 'Alluded to Attacks', Magistrate Claims

By Alexandra Williams in Geneva

The 32-year-old French scientist of Algerian descent, who had also been employed by British government laboratories, was allegedly in contact with the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), a mainly Algerian militant network that associates itself with al-Qaeda.

"In his exchanges with the AQIM, he spoke of plans for attacks in general, but we're not talking on an operational level, it was not a case of means or dates," a magistrate, who asked not to be named, alleged.

The suspect had been under surveillance for a year as part of a wider investigation into the recruitment of fighters in Afghanistan. US intelligence services alerted French anti-terrorism authorities after intercepting his emails.

The physicist was seized hours before he was due to travel to Switzerland, where he works between Cern, the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, near Geneva, and the Federal Polytechnic Institute, in Lausanne.

A spokesman for Cern, a centre for research on particle physics, said he had been working with the high-profile Large Hadron Collider experiment, which aimed to investigate how the Universe formed after the "Big Bang". The institute said on Friday that his work did not bring him into contact with anything that could be used for terrorism.

Yesterday, a colleague described the physicist as "a considerate person and exceptionally clever" man. The colleague, who did not wish to be named, said the physicist had been unwell this year, and was on leave from February until July because of a bad back.

Four years ago the physicist worked at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Didcot, Oxfordshire, where he was carrying out research into nuclear physics. It is understood that MI5 and the Metropolitan Police have been in contact with the French secret service, in an attempt to establish if there are British links to the suspected activities.

The suspect is due to appear before an anti-terrorist magistrate on Monday. His younger brother, who was arrested with him on Thursday in Vienne, south-eastern France, has been released without charge, said a spokesman for the Paris prosecutor's office.

An al-Qaeda terrorist cell has been caught plotting to disrupt next year's football World Cup by launching attacks in South Africa, it was reported yesterday. The plan to target American government buildings by Somali-led militants was uncovered when intelligence officials intercepted phone calls in which suspects apparently discussed their strategy.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/6300017/French-al-Qaeda-suspect-alluded-to-attacks-magistrate-claims.html>

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Times of London

October 13, 2009

Hadron Collider Physicist Adlene Hicheur Charged with Terrorism

Charles Bremner and Adam Sage in Paris

A French physicist with the European atomic research centre near Geneva was charged with terrorism offences by a Paris judge last night after investigators said that he offered to work with the North African branch of al-Qaeda.

Adlène Hicheur, 32, who is of Algerian origin, was arrested last week with his younger brother after intelligence agents intercepted his alleged internet contacts with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

The physicist, who works at the giant atomic collider at CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research), which straddles Swiss and French territory, told the Islamic group that he was interested in committing an attack but had not begun any material preparation, according to police sources. He had acknowledged contacting the militant organisation, they said.

The brother was released last weekend without charge.

Judge Christophe Teissier, of the anti-terrorist branch, ordered the French internal security service, the DCRI, to open an investigation into the possible offence of “association with criminals in relation with a terrorist enterprise”. Judge Teissier placed the scientist under formal investigation and ordered his detention.

The arrest raised the possibility that Islamist militants could be seeking nuclear weapons technology or planning to attack nuclear targets.

Dr Hicheur is reported to have worked for the British Government’s Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) in Oxfordshire for about a year in 2005. He was placed under surveillance by French officers last year after US intelligence services intercepted internet messages he allegedly sent to contacts close to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (Aqim).

However, his arrest last week has sparked a furious row among France’s anti-terrorist magistrates. Judge Teissier’s critics say that he missed an opportunity to obtain invaluable information about Aqim networks by moving to detain the suspect at an early stage in his investigation. They said that he should have held off and kept the man under surveillance.

Brice Hortefeux, the French Interior Minister, is also being criticised for publicising the arrest. Detractors say that the publicity will have driven the suspect’s contacts underground.

CERN said that Dr Hicheur, one of 7,000 scientists working on the Large Hadron Collider, did not have access to any of the underground facilities and did not handle anything that would interest terrorists.

A spokesman described him as highly qualified: “This fellow has a doctorate in particle physics, so he is clearly an intelligent person,” he said.

The scientist also worked as an instructor in experimental physics at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne. “We are pretty shocked and surprised,” said Jerome Grosse, spokesman for the institute.

Residents in the suspect’s home town of Vienne, in eastern France, said that his success had made him a role model for young Muslims. “They are good boys,” said one neighbour of the suspect and his brother. “They are from a family of six children and from a very moderate Muslim family which is seen as a model of integration.”

The suspect’s brother is reported to have graduated from the University of Paris with a degree in biomechanics. After graduating, he taught at the 500-year-old Collège de France in Paris — one of the country’s most prestigious research institutes.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article6871774.ece>

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New York Times
October 12, 2009
EDITORIAL

Just Say No

Indian nuclear scientists are trying to bully their government into testing a nuclear weapon. That would be a huge setback — for India's relations with Washington, for the battle against terrorists, and for global efforts to halt the spread of nuclear weapons.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is resisting. He must continue to resist.

If India tests, the United States is bound by a 2008 agreement to cut off all sales of nuclear fuel and technology. That would be a huge setback to India's plans to expand its nuclear power generation and its economy.

We fear that if India tests, Pakistan will decide that it has to test. That would raise tensions between the two longtime rivals, and it would further distract Islamabad and its generals from the far more important battle against the Taliban and other extremists inside their country and along their border with Afghanistan.

Congress recently approved a five-year, \$7.5 billion aid package to strengthen civilian rule in Pakistan and encourage the fight against extremists. There would be strong pressure to cut that aid if Pakistan tested. And if India and Pakistan test (China also may be unable to resist), it could make it even harder for President Obama to persuade the Senate to ratify the test ban treaty.

India (followed by Pakistan) last conducted nuclear tests in 1998. Since then, there have been hints that it might test again. In recent weeks, the debate took on a new urgency when some former top nuclear scientists made the case publicly. K. Santhanam, a director for the 1998 test-site preparations, claimed those tests did not yield the desired results and were a "fizzle."

One has to wonder why he waited 11 years to raise the alarm. We suspect that Mr. Santhanam and his colleagues are worried that if Washington finally ratifies the treaty, India may feel compelled to sign on.

The treaty's appeal is undeniable. Some 182 nations have signed it and 150 have ratified it. It limits the ability of nuclear states to field fancier warheads and makes it harder for nuclear wannabes to develop weapons.

But it cannot enter into force until nine key states — including the United States, China and India — also ratify. Mr. Obama has pledged to work for Senate ratification and urged all other holdouts to do so.

So far, New Delhi does not seem to be taking Mr. Santhanam's bait. "India does not need to carry any more nuclear tests," the Indian Atomic Energy Commission chairman, Anil Kakodkar, said last month. He insisted that his agency has confidence in its ability to get the weapons data it needs by conducting simulated tests. He should keep insisting.

The United States should make clear that India has more to gain by focusing on economic growth and expanding global cooperation than on developing more nuclear weapons. And it should leave no doubt about how much India and the rest of the world have to lose if New Delhi makes the wrong choice.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/12/opinion/12mon1.html>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

EDITORIAL

12 October 2009

Optimism in the Pacific Rim

Winds of change are blowing across the Korean Peninsula. After saber rattling for long, North Korea is seriously mulling the option of getting back to the table for talks. This is good to see. Such a change of heart would not have been possible had Washington not agreed to oblige Pyongyang with a direct bilateral dialogue, keeping aside intricate issues that have obstructed rapprochement for long.

Thus, North Korea's hint at reviving multilateral talks over its nuclear programme comes as a whiff of fresh air. The standoff has to come to an end in the larger interest of peace and security in the region. In this context, it is doubly heartening to note that South Korea, Japan and China have come on board to de-nuclearise the volatile Peninsula.

With diplomacy gaining ground, the most important development is the realisation that it is vital to bring back North Korea into the comity of nations. It would help end its sense of marginalisation and provide it with an opportunity to scale down the level of militarisation. Moreover, the initiation of six-party talks, which include the two Koreas, the US, China, Russia and Japan, can give a fill up to the economic activity in the region and inspire trust in dealing with Pyongyang. It is a good departure from the policy of intimidation and sanctions, which have not worked to this

day. It can also go a long way in realising the dream of Korean unification, and bringing down an iron curtain that had hindered people to people contacts for the last half-a-century.

Beijing shoulders a greater responsibility to ensure that the entente gets going. There will be bounties for China as well in doing so, as it will help it reach out to the US, more as a regional pacifier than a power to deal with. Moreover, it will come as a relief for Japan to see that its concerns over the nuclear device and jingoism are taken care of with the personal involvement of China, ensuring a conscientious and constructive dialogue among the regional stakeholders at the end of the day.

A good beginning has already been made with the hobnobbing of former president Bill Clinton and the Dear Leader, Kim Jong-il. To supplement the trust, President Barack Obama had hinted at pursuing a personal level of interaction with the Communist state — without any preconditions. Perhaps, the US leader's agenda for making peace with the world, which has rightly won him the Nobel Prize, can find its experimentation on the Korean Peninsula before it is put to test in Middle East and Iran. The call to action can take a decent start from knocking at the doors of Pyongyang — ultimately relieving the Pacific Rim from the nightmares of war and destruction.

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticleNew.asp?xfile=data/editorial/2009/October/editorial_October24.xml§ion=editorial&col=

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Asia Times

OPINION

14 October 2009

North Korea begins 'Plan C'

By Kim Myong Chol

TOKYO - High-profile visits to Pyongyang by two foreign leaders - former United States president Bill Clinton in early August and Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao this month - have gone a long way towards dramatizing the senselessness of the much-publicized United Nations sanctions on North Korea. They have also helped North Korean leader Kim Jong-il to consider switching gears to a "Plan C" as a permanent nuclear power.

In an op-ed published in the Christian Science Monitor in July, Professor Zhiqun Zhu wrote, "Frankly, it is unrealistic for the US to ask North Korea to give up its nuclear technology. The reason is simple: The nuclear card is the only one North Korea has; it will not easily give it away. The ostrich policy of refusing to accept North Korea as a nuclear state has to be ditched. A solution to the North Korea conundrum must begin with recognizing the fact that North Korea has the ability to produce nuclear weapons and will remain nuclear-capable."

The New York Times, in an editorial published on June 17, wrote, "North Korea is developing a frightening track record of making good on its threats. True to its word, in recent weeks it has conducted a second nuclear test and several missile tests. It also may have resumed making fuel for nuclear weapons. And the threats keep coming. Over the weekend, the North vowed to make more nuclear weapons and to take 'resolute military actions' against efforts to isolate it."

Bloomberg reported on October 6, 2009, that in his October 1 letter to the United Nations Security Council, North Korean ambassador Sin Son-ho called dismantlement of the DPRK's nuclear weapons "unthinkable even in a dream", and that he had stressed that his government "won't give up its nuclear weapons unless the US completely disarms".

Plan C envisages the US belatedly learning to live in peace with a nuclear-armed North Korea and putting to rest scores of years of hostility between the two countries through signing a peace treaty and establishing full diplomatic ties. It also involves recognition of the DPRK's responsible behavior as a nuclear power and desire to join the US in its efforts to achieve global nuclear disarmament - major US allies such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands Canada and Australia already have diplomatic relations with the DPRK.

DPRK-China ties upgraded The most important result of Wen's trip, and of a joint message of three Chinese leaders including Chinese President Hu Jintao to North Korean supreme leader Kim Jong-il, was the fact that Kim Jong-il had upgraded DPRK-China relations into a new treaty alliance that bands together two nuclear weapons states.

As South Korean news agency Yonhap reported on October 5, Wen vowed, "Sino-DPRK relations will invariably develop, whatever change the international situation will undergo ... Sino-DPRK relations are on a new starting point. We hope to consolidate traditional friendship with the DPRK and expand exchanges and cooperation with it."

The Wen remark signifies China's determination to seek closer ties with a nuclear-armed North Korea and stand by it. The implications are a far cry from 1991, when paramount leader Deng Xiaoping said to visiting Kim Il-sung from a non-nuclear North Korea, "No matter how the international situation might change in the future, China would, as always, do its utmost to further strengthen the friendship between the two countries."

At that time, North Korea was non-nuclear. Today North Korea is capable of keeping the superpower US at bay. North Korea is the third most powerful nuclear weapons state after China. It has all types of nuclear arms: thermonuclear, atomic and neutron and inter-continental means of delivery that can effectively reach any target in the metropolitan US.

North Korea played an important role in helping Mao Zedong win the Chinese civil war and create the People's Republic of China in 1949. At the request of Mao for direct involvement in the Chinese civil war, Kim Il-sung provided the People's Liberation Army with military supplies for a million troops and sent 250,000 North Korean troops, who took part in the liberation of Manchuria and other parts of China.

North Korean troops and Chinese volunteers also fought shoulder-to-shoulder in the Korean War in the early 1950s, badly mauling the US military.

For Beijing, a nuclear-armed North Korea should be welcome as a most dependable ally because China has no other. This new treaty alliance between permanent nuclear powers is certain to be a major boon to peace and security in Northeast Asia and the rest of the world.

Tacit US acknowledgement of the nuclear status of North Korea is the greatest dividend of former US president Bill Clinton's trip to Pyongyang, intended ostensibly to plead with the DPRK's constitutional supreme leader Kim Jong-il to pardon two female US journalists arrested for straying into North Korea.

Indications are that the Obama administration is currently in the process of accepting a nuclear North Korea as the US did for Israel, India and Pakistan, since it has little hope of succeeding where the two previous administrations of Bill Clinton and George W Bush failed.

There are two major ironies in former president Clinton's trip to Pyongyang.

The first irony is the fact that this same president kept on predicting North Korea's imminent collapse during his eight years in the White House, from 1993-2001. Yet his visit has demonstrated beyond doubt that the North Korean leader is "unexpectedly spry" - in full control - and that his nuclear-armed DPRK is far from collapse but a force to be reckoned with as a permanent nuclear power.

President Barack Obama joined Clinton in telling the world that "North Korean leader Kim Jong-il is "pretty healthy", prompting a review of the hardline approach to North Korea within his administration that had been based on the North's chaotic collapse.

Clinton flew into Pyongyang, hat in hand, and met with Kim Jong-il. He tried to break the ice and pave the way for bilateral talks on the future relations between these two nuclear powers on behalf of the Obama administration.

The former US president apologized for the illegal entry of the two journalists, pleading for their pardon as well as asking Kim Jong-il to invite US special envoy Stephen Bosworth to Pyongyang for direct talks.

Clinton's earlier misplaced bet on the North Korea's implosion induced him to procrastinate implementing the American obligations of the landmark 1994 Agreed Framework to dismantle the North Korean plutonium program.

True, Clinton's belief that the DPRK would collapse in several years appeared founded, given the demise of the socialist camp and the death of Kim Il-sung, but his view lacked a proper understanding of North Korea. This nation is the only successor to the Korea's Koguryo empire (37BC-668 AD) and the Koryo (935-1392 AD), and Lee (1392AD-1910AD) dynasties, and this fact is lost on people from the US, a country with a history of just 200 years.

Former CNN reporter Eason Jordan stated at Harvard University March 10, 1999, "I can guarantee you this: When you hear about starvation in North Korea, you hear about famine in North Korea, you hear about the backwardness of the country, a lot of very levelheaded, logical thinking people think 'Well that country cannot survive. There is no way a country like that can survive.' And I'm here to tell you with absolute certainty those guys will tough it out for centuries just the way they are."

Mike Chinoy, former CNN reporter, agreed on January 28, 2008: "The [North Korean] system didn't collapse. [Speculation that the North Korean system would collapse after the death of founder Kim Il-sung] didn't hold true then and doesn't hold true now."

The second irony is that Obama seems to have a similar fate to former president Lyndon B Johnson, who had to ask the lower-ranking Major General Gilbert H Woodward to - on behalf of the Johnson administration - sign a US government apology for the USS Pueblo incident to win the release of its 82 crew from 11 months of captivity in North Korea.

The USS Pueblo crew members were caught red-handed while on a military mission, whereas the two journalists were detained after illegally entering North Korea. The reporters were well treated and not sent to prison.

Reacting to the USS Pueblo capture by North Korea in 1968, Johnson ordered a massive military build-up in the region to punish the DPRK, including 600 fighter jets and six aircraft carriers, while fighting a losing war in Vietnam. But he stopped short of ordering military reprisals on the DPRK, out of fear that a second Korean war would be sparked, defining later US policy behavior to North Korea.

Obama has spearheaded the imposition of UN sanctions on North Korea over its launch of a satellite and a nuclear test, while losing a war in Afghanistan that the majority of Americans consider not worth fighting. However, the US refrains from interdicting ocean-going North Korean ships since the Korean People's Army has vowed a quick military response to any such US action.

As the New York Times reported June 13, experts and diplomats agree that the sanctions on North Korea will be counter-productive. The Obama administration's initial reaction to the arrest of the two women journalists were nothing but verbal protests and schoolyard taunts, in the words of the July 24 edition of the Washington Post.

Obama's plummeting popularity numbers indicate that like Johnson's failed re-election bid in 1968, he will risk seeing his re-election bid collapse in 2012 over the war in Afghanistan.

A silver bullet for Obama to avoid this would be to borrow a page from former president Richard Nixon's playbook and fly Air Force One into Pyongyang for a photogenic landmark summit with Kim Jong-il to offer to live in peace with the nuclear-armed DPRK.

Nixon sent former secretary of state Henry Kissinger to Beijing in 1971, diverting public attention from the unpopular war in Vietnam. The following year Nixon made his groundbreaking visit to China and won his re-election by a landslide.

Ambassador Donald Gregg appearing on the edition of the Good Morning America television show on October 9, 2006 dismissed the fear of North Korea selling nuclear material as "a self-fulfilling prophecy." He added: "[North Korean negotiator] Kim Gye-gwan, a man I meet every time I go there, said last month, 'You're going to have to learn to live with a nuclear North Korea until you are willing to sit down and talk seriously with us.'"

Kim Jong-il will accept Obama's demand that North Korea should behave in a responsible way as a nuclear power and pledge not to transfer nuclear technology abroad.

Kim Myong Chol is author of a number of books and papers in Korean, Japanese and English on North Korea, including Kim Jong-il's Strategy for Reunification. He has a PhD from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Academy of Social Sciences and is often called an "unofficial" spokesman of Kim Jong-il and North Korea.

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