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**Issue No. 753, 16 October 2009**

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New York Daily News

October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

## **Russia Warns It Won't Rule Out Using Nuclear Weapons For Preemptive Strikes**

BY Edward Glazarev

DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Moscow - Russia revamped its strategy on the use of nuclear weapons and said it would consider nukes for preemptive strikes if it feels its security is threatened, a senior Kremlin official told a Russian newspaper.

Russian and U.S. negotiators are in talks over a new bilateral pact to cut stocks of strategic nuclear weapons. Both sides are working towards a December deadline for a new treaty to replace the landmark Cold War-era START pact.

Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of the Kremlin's powerful Security Council, said Russia was revising its military doctrine to include new terms of use for its nuclear forces if it comes under threat in regional conflicts or local wars, Izvestia reported Wednesday.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who chairs the Security Council, will be presented with the new doctrine by the end of the year.

"Conditions of using nuclear weapons to repel an aggression with the use of conventional weapons not only in a large-scale but also in a regional and even local war have been revised," he said, without naming these conditions.

"Moreover, different variants are considered to allow the use of nuclear weapons depending on a certain situation and intentions of a would-be enemy. In conditions critical for national security one should not also exclude a preventive nuclear strike on the aggressor."

Russia's current doctrine states the "most important task is to be able to deter, including with the use of nuclear weapons, an aggression of any scale against Russia and its allies."

As Russia's conventional troops lack modern equipment and undergo a painful reform aimed to cut their numbers and create professional armed forces, Moscow relies heavily on its formidable arsenal of nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

The Kremlin prided itself on defeating tiny neighbor Georgia in a five-day war in August 2008. But many Russia watchers are skeptical that Moscow would be able to have the same success against a larger and stronger nation.

[http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/2009/10/14/2009-10-14\\_russia\\_warns\\_it\\_wont\\_rule\\_out\\_using\\_nuclear\\_weapons\\_for\\_preemptive\\_strikes.html](http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/2009/10/14/2009-10-14_russia_warns_it_wont_rule_out_using_nuclear_weapons_for_preemptive_strikes.html)

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Pravda – Russia

14 October 2009

## **Russia Officially Declares Right to Nuke Potential Aggressor**

A new version of Russia's military doctrine will contain details of using nuclear arms when repelling aggression with the use of conventional means of destruction in both large-scale and local armed conflicts.

Nikolai Patrushev, the head of Russia's Security Council, said in an interview with the *Izvestia* newspaper that Russia would consider an opportunity of using nuclear arms depending on circumstances and intentions of a potential enemy.

"In situations critical for national security, a preventive nuclear strike against the aggressor is not ruled out," he said.

The section of Russia's military doctrine about the opportunity to use nuclear weapons was formulated to preserve the status of a nuclear power for the Russian Federation. The document states that Russia can apply nuclear deterrence against potential enemies to prevent aggression against Russia and its allies.

Mr. Patrushev said that the edited version of the military doctrine would be prepared until the end of the year.

"It will be a transparent military doctrine, to let everyone know which security measures we elaborate in Russia and abroad, which goals we have and how we are going to achieve them," Patrushev said.

The current military doctrine was approved in 2000. It particularly says that Russia is entitled to use nuclear weapons in response to a nuclear attack or an act of a large-scale war against Russia.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said in an interview with *Echo of Moscow* radio station that the USA did not permit a nuclear first-strike under its own military guidelines.

[http://english.pravda.ru/russia/kremlin/14-10-2009/109884-russia\\_nuclear-0](http://english.pravda.ru/russia/kremlin/14-10-2009/109884-russia_nuclear-0)

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency  
14 October 2009

## **Changes in Nuclear Part of Russian Military Doctrine Unnecessary - Analyst**

MOSCOW, October 14 (RIA Novosti) - A revised military doctrine, which will soon be submitted to the Russian president, must keep provisions on the use of nuclear weapons intact, a Russian military expert said on Wednesday.

The head of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, said in an interview with the *Izvestia* newspaper earlier on Wednesday that the revised military doctrine would stipulate for preemptive nuclear strikes against potential aggressors and the use of nuclear weapons not only in large-scale conventional wars but also in regional and local conflicts.

"I believe that the military doctrine adopted in 2000 is outdated and contains a number of drawbacks, but I would certainly not change the wording of the provision on the use of nuclear weapons," Alexander Sharavin, the head of the Institute for Political and Military Analysis, said in an interview with *Echo Moskvy* radio.

The current military doctrine outlines the role of the Russian military in ensuring the defense of the country and, if necessary, preparing for and waging war, although it stresses that Russia carries out strictly defensive policies.

According to Sharavin, who in the past led a group on the development of Russia's military doctrine at the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, said that the current document stipulates the use of nuclear weapons only in large-scale wars when an aggressor has an overwhelming superiority over Russia in the number and power of weaponry.

"I think that the provision contained in the 2000 document is sufficiently comprehensive and should not be expanded because nuclear weapons are a political tool and an element of the strategic deterrent. If we announce that we will use these weapons in a local conflict, we will downplay its role," Sharavin said.

In addition, the revised document should outline a mechanism for making adjustments in the military doctrine in response to changes in the political and military situation, the expert said.

The new Russian national security strategy contains such a mechanism, while the 2000 military doctrine does not, Sharavin said.

[http://en.rian.ru/military\\_news/20091014/156468672.html](http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20091014/156468672.html)

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Washington Post  
October 14, 2009

## Russia Not Budging On Iran Sanctions

By Mary Beth Sheridan  
Washington Post Staff Writer

MOSCOW, Oct. 13 -- Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton held lengthy talks with senior Russian officials Tuesday as part of an intense American effort to improve relations, but she made few gains on a top U.S. priority -- increasing pressure on Iran.

Clinton urged her Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, to work together on developing possible sanctions in case international negotiations over the Iranian nuclear program fail, said a U.S. official close to the talks.

But the Russian was cool to the idea, saying he was concerned about backing Iran into a corner, the U.S. official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive sessions.

Emerging from four hours of talks with Clinton, Lavrov told reporters that "threats, sanctions and threats of pressure" against Iran would be "counterproductive."

Senior administration officials said that the differences are tactical rather than substantive. Both sides agreed that Iran would face sanctions if it failed to carry out its obligations, a State Department official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

But failure to win a Russian commitment to a set of specific sanctions in advance could leave the administration vulnerable to Republican criticism that it gave the Kremlin what it wanted by overhauling missile defense plans in Europe but that it got nothing in return.

Russia's support is key to getting U.N. Security Council approval of any sanctions, but the country has traditionally been cautious on confronting Iran, a key trading partner and neighbor. In recent years, however, Russia has grown increasingly concerned about indications that Iran could be developing nuclear weapons, analysts say. Iran insists that its program is aimed only at producing energy.

Lavrov told reporters that Russia wants to focus on negotiations for now -- particularly the concessions made by Iran this month, after the revelation that it had built a secret nuclear facility near Qom. Under heavy international pressure, the Islamic republic agreed to admit inspectors and send much of its uranium to Russia for enrichment.

Clinton emphasized in her meeting with Lavrov that she favors a two-track approach of negotiations and the threat of punishment.

"We need to prepare the track of pressure. There's cajolement and there's pressure" at the same time, said the official close to the talks, describing her argument.

"Where the Russians have a different approach is. . . they want to exhaust all the diplomatic avenues before we talk about sanctions," the official said.

During her visit, part of a five-day European trip, Clinton also met with civil-society activists at Spaso House, the U.S. ambassador's residence, promising them that promoting democracy remains an important part of the administration's agenda.

"We will lead based on values and not just interests," Clinton said.

Several of those in attendance said that they liked Clinton's speech, noting that she spoke not only about improving governance but also about accountability of the government, a subject that was not emphasized as often in the Bush years.

"It's a signal for people we are not alone," said Natalia Budaeva, country director for the International Republican Institute.

Clinton concluded her evening with a night at the opera -- Prokofiev's "Love of Three Oranges." She wraps up her visit to Russia on Wednesday with a trip to Tatarstan.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/13/AR2009101300221.html>

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The Star – Malaysia  
October 14, 2009

## **Russia's Putin Warns Against Intimidating Iran**

By Darya Korsunskaya - Reuters

BEIJING (Reuters) - Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin warned major powers on Wednesday against intimidating Iran and said talk of sanctions against the Islamic Republic over its nuclear programme was "premature".

Putin, who many diplomats, analysts, and Russian citizens believe is still Russia's paramount leader despite stepping down as president last year, was speaking after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Moscow for two days of talks.

"There is no need to frighten the Iranians," Putin told reporters in Beijing after a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

"We need to look for a compromise. If a compromise is not found, and the discussions end in a fiasco, then we will see."

"And if now, before making any steps (towards holding talks) we start announcing some sanctions, then we won't be creating favourable conditions for them (talks) to end positively. This is why it is premature to talk about this now."

Clinton failed to secure any specific assurances from Russia on Iran during her visit, leaving her open to criticism at home that she had not received anything from Moscow after earlier U.S. concessions on missile defence.

Iranian, Russian, French, U.S. and U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency officials will meet in Vienna on Oct. 19 to discuss how to implement a plan agreed in principle at talks in Geneva for low-grade Iranian uranium to be enriched overseas to a purity suitable for nuclear reactors but not weapons.

The Geneva talks on Oct. 1 also produced Iranian agreement for international inspectors to visit a second enrichment plant now under construction near Qom. Apparent Iranian concession reduced pressure for a widening of economic sanctions some analysts said could be extended to the oil and gas industry.

Clinton said she would have liked to have seen Putin but that their agendas did not coincide. Putin left for a trip to the Russian Far East and China before her arrival in Moscow.

On the contentious issue of missile defence, which has divided Russia and the United States in the past, Putin said he hoped the United States would not renege on its promise to scrap plans for an anti-missile system in central Europe.

"We are being guided by what the head of the American state is saying," Putin said. "He said there would be no anti-missile shield in Europe. We are satisfied by this statement, and to make assumptions what happens next is not quite right."

Moscow had opposed plans by previous U.S. President George W. Bush to deploy interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic, viewing this as a direct threat to Russia's national security.

Putin said however Moscow "feels no euphoria" about Bush's successor Barack Obama's promise to roll back the shield plans.

"We treated this decision with reserve, calmly," he said. "In any case, the country's leadership accepted it with understanding and gratitude. We believe this was Obama's right and courageous decision."

(Writing by Guy Faulconbridge and Dmitry Solovyov, editing by Michael Stott and Janet McBride)

[http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/10/15/worldupdates/2009-10-14T230443Z\\_01\\_NOOTR\\_RTRMDNC\\_0\\_-431606-3&sec=Worldupdates](http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/10/15/worldupdates/2009-10-14T230443Z_01_NOOTR_RTRMDNC_0_-431606-3&sec=Worldupdates)

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Agence France-Presse (AFP)

News Hosted by Google  
October 14, 2009

## US Calls for Chinese Support on Iran Nuclear Issue

BEIJING — The United States said Wednesday it needed China's support if progress is to be made in curbing Iran's nuclear programme, ahead of crucial talks on the issue this month.

"If we are to make real progress on sending a consolidated message to Iran, we are going to need the support of China," US Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell said on a visit to Beijing.

"We're going to need to see more cooperation and coordination between the United States and China if we are going to be effective in Iran."

China is a close ally of Iran, and has repeatedly opposed sanctions against Tehran over its nuclear programme.

Tehran says the programme is for peaceful nuclear energy, but the West fears it masks a drive to make a nuclear bomb.

Negotiations over the issue have been strained but Iran has recently tried to make a show of greater cooperation since taking part in talks in Geneva with major world powers at the beginning of the month.

Iran and six other nations -- Britain, France, Russia, China, Germany and the United States -- are to meet at the end of October for a second round of talks aimed at allaying Western concerns over Tehran's nuclear programme.

Campbell was in Beijing for meetings with officials at China's foreign ministry on a range of geopolitical issues and to lay the groundwork for a visit by President Barack Obama next month.

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hQoyBWvs6bVsZ6yzyI5PdUt61\\_DQ](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5hQoyBWvs6bVsZ6yzyI5PdUt61_DQ)

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New York Times  
October 15, 2009

## Some See Iran as Ready for Nuclear Deal

By MICHAEL SLACKMAN

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — Iran says it has no plans to build nuclear weapons. Western nations say they do not believe Iran and periodically release intelligence reports that they say prove Iran has been working on building a bomb.

For years, that has been the point of contention in an intractable international dispute.

But as the United States and its Western allies prepare for a second round of direct negotiations with Tehran this month, that may no longer be the central question. The more pertinent point, Iran experts and regional analysts say, is that Iran finally may be ready to make a deal.

The analysts cite a confluence of factors, from Iran's internal political crisis to the change in leadership in Washington, and one overriding point: Iran's leadership may have achieved much of what it set out to accomplish when it stepped up its clandestine nuclear program in 1999.

In contentious, high-stakes negotiations, deals are possible when both sides have a chance to declare victory, and that point may have been reached.

"If the Iranian endgame is to keep enrichment, and if the United States' endgame is to make sure there are no nuclear weapons in Iran, then it can be a win-win," said Trita Parsi, author of a book on Iran and president of the National Iranian American Council, an independent advocacy group in Washington. "Those who have been criticizing the administration for compromising or giving Iran a concession, they are wrong. It is not a concession to adjust to an unchanging reality."

For Iran, this is not exactly about compromising — which it has shown little appetite for — as much as cooperating. For the West, it is not about winning concessions but about developing verifiable assurances that Iran is not producing weapons.

“I think the Iranians are simply in no mood to accept any serious limits on the expansion of their program,” said Flynt Leverett, director of the Iran Project at the New America Foundation. “From their point of view, they already suspended enrichment for almost two years, from 2003 to 2005, and from their perspective, they got nothing for that and they’re not going to do that again.”

But Mr. Leverett said Iran sees “that by expanding, they’ve gotten the attention of the international community and they have cards to play.”

And that may have been Iran’s primary goal from the start.

There are many analysts inside and outside Iran who say that Tehran’s objective has been to master — or at least appear to master — the process of preparing nuclear fuel, fashioning a warhead and providing the means to deliver that warhead, but not actually to build a weapon.

This is in line with a recent report from the International Atomic Energy Agency, which found that Iran had acquired “sufficient information to be able to design and produce a workable” nuclear weapon but did not present evidence that it was trying to produce one. Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issued a fatwa, or religious edict, in 2005 banning the production of nuclear weapons.

Tehran knows that actually deploying a weapon could undermine its regional strength by driving smaller oil-rich neighbors to seek their own nuclear umbrella, presumably from the United States. Rather, experts say, Iran’s intention all along was to strengthen its hand in dealing with the West, to achieve legitimacy, security and recognition of its leadership in the region. Iran’s meeting with the United States and Western powers in Geneva brought it within reach of those goals.

The United States negotiated directly with Iran and, perhaps more important, Iran walked away with an implicit acceptance of its right to continue enrichment on its own soil, which it considers a matter of national sovereignty.

“They are already where they wanted to be,” said Abbas Milani, head of Iranian studies at Stanford, even before the Geneva meeting. “They are virtually a nuclear state; the issue of national pride is resolved.”

Writing in his blog, *Informed Comment*, Juan Cole, an expert on Iran and the contemporary Middle East, described Tehran’s goal as “nuclear latency,” which he said explained why the leadership had insisted it was not trying to build weapons while also driving hard to master construction of a bomb.

“Nuclear latency has all the advantages of actual possession of a bomb without any of the unpleasant consequences, of the sort North Korea is suffering,” Mr. Cole wrote.

There is other evidence that this was Iran’s goal from the start.

Hassan Rowhani, a cleric who served for years as Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator and the head of its Supreme National Security Council, published in 2005 a private speech he gave a year earlier.

While there have been tactical disagreements over the years between hard-liners and pragmatists like Mr. Rowhani, the speech indicated that there was no dispute over the end goal.

“The world did not want Pakistan to have an atomic bomb or Brazil to have the fuel cycle, but Pakistan built its bomb and Brazil has its fuel cycle, and the world started to work with them,” he said. “Our problem is that we have not achieved either one, but we are standing at the threshold. As for building the atomic bomb, we never wanted to move in that direction and we have not yet completely developed our fuel cycle capability.”

When Iran met with Western powers in Geneva, it offered what appeared to be a compromise. It said that it would allow inspectors into a recently disclosed enrichment facility near the holy city of Qum and it agreed to send its modestly enriched fuel to Russia to be processed further. Tehran also agreed to keep talking, which seemed to contradict President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s insistence that Iran would deal only with the I.A.E.A. about its nuclear program.

But back at home, the hard-liners declared success.

“Prior to the talks, they used to speak of suspension and sanctions against Iran, but after the talks there has not been any word of suspension or sanctions. Rather, Iran’s package of proposals was the focus,” said Ayatollah Ahmed Khatami, a conservative cleric, during a Friday Prayer sermon at Tehran University last week.

Even if the West manages to extract a deal from Iran that both sides can accept, and even if it can verify implementation, there are other, serious considerations, experts said. Some analysts said that there was concern the



West could undermine whatever fragment of a reform movement survived in Iran after the disputed June presidential election and government crackdown.

There is also the chance that a latent nuclear program could become active, which is why some, like Mr. Parsi of the National Iranian American Council, argue that monitoring and inspections — more than trying to end enrichment — should become the West's primary demands.

There is also the danger that making a deal now will send the message that the way to get what you want is to emulate North Korea and act belligerently. But Mr. Parsi said that might also provide Washington policy makers with a valuable lesson.

“Sometimes,” he said, “a compromise is an adjustment to reality.”

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/15/world/middleeast/15iran.html?\\_r=1&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/15/world/middleeast/15iran.html?_r=1&hp)

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Jerusalem Post  
October 15, 2009

## 'Israel may Attack Iran After December'

JPost.com Staff , THE JERUSALEM POST

Israel is making preparations to carry out military attacks in Iran after December, a French magazine reported overnight Wednesday.

According to the report in *Le Canard Enchaîné* quoted by Israel Radio, Jerusalem has already ordered high-quality combat rations from a French food manufacturer for soldiers serving in elite units and has also asked reservists of these units staying abroad to return to Israel.

The magazine further reported that in a recent visit to France, IDF Chief of General Staff Lt.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi told his French counterpart Jean-Louis Georgelin that Israel was not planning to bomb Iran, but might send elite troops to conduct activities on the ground there.

These, according to the magazine, could involve the sabotage of nuclear facilities as well as assassinations of top Iranian nuclear scientists.

Israel has recently toned down rhetoric against Iran so as not to hinder US diplomatic efforts for Iranian transparency regarding its nuclear program, but neither Jerusalem nor Washington have so far made any unequivocal statements to the effect that the military option against Iran was no longer being considered.

Israel has maintained that it has the military capability to tackle Iran on its own if sanctions against the Islamic Republic prove ineffective.

Israel accuses Iran of seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. Teheran maintains that its nuclear program is peaceful.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1255547721120&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

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Wall Street Journal  
October 16, 2009

## U.S. Considers A New Assessment Of Iran Threat

By Siobhan Gorman and Jay Solomon

WASHINGTON -- U.S. spy agencies are considering whether to rewrite a controversial 2007 intelligence report that asserted Tehran halted its efforts to build nuclear weapons in 2003, current and former U.S. intelligence officials say.

The intelligence agencies' rethink comes as pressure is mounting on Capitol Hill, and among U.S. allies, for the Obama administration to redo the 2007 assessment, after a string of recent revelations about Tehran's nuclear program.



German, French and British intelligence agencies have all disputed the conclusions of the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, or NIE, in recent months, according to European officials briefed on the exchanges.

Intelligence on the state of Iran's nuclear capabilities has for years been politically fraught within Washington and among U.S. allies and international institutions like the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Rewriting an NIE is a major undertaking because it is the most comprehensive of U.S. intelligence reports and reflects the combined judgment of all 16 American intelligence bodies.

The 2007 report created a political headache for the Bush administration when Republicans and some allied governments such as Israel criticized the broad public conclusion that Iran was backing off its nuclear ambitions.

The report reversed earlier findings that Iran was pursuing a nuclear-weapons program. It found with "high confidence" that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003, and with "moderate confidence" that it hadn't been restarted as of mid-2007.

So far, intelligence officials are not "ready to declare that invalid," a senior U.S. intelligence official said, emphasizing that the judgment covered the 2003-2007 time frame only. That leaves room for a reassessment of the period since the December 2007 report was completed, the official suggested.

The spy agencies "have a lot more information since we last did" a national intelligence estimate, the official said. Some of it "tracks precisely with what we've seen before," while other information "causes us to reassess what we've seen before," the official added.

If undertaken, a new NIE likely wouldn't be available for months. The U.S. and its allies have imposed an informal December deadline for Iran to comply with Western demands that it cease enriching uranium or face fresh economic sanctions.

A shift in the U.S. intelligence community's official stance -- concluding Iran restarted its nuclear weapons work or that Iran's ambitions have ramped up -- could significantly affect President Barack Obama's efforts to use diplomacy to contain Tehran's capabilities.

Any timeline for negotiations could be shortened if a new NIE concludes Tehran has restarted its atomic-weapons work, said officials involved in the diplomacy. But the White House could also use the new report to galvanize wider international support for sanctions against Tehran.

"Countries would no longer be able to hide behind the NIE," said a European official working on Iran.

U.S. intelligence officials have been discussing whether to update the 2007 NIE on Iran's nuclear capabilities, though no decision has been made yet on whether to proceed, a senior U.S. intelligence official said.

"At some point in the near future, our analytic community is going to want to press the reset button on our judgments on intent and weaponization in light of Qom and other information we're receiving," the senior intelligence official said, referring to Mr. Obama's recent revelation that Tehran was secretly assembling a uranium-enrichment facility at a military base outside the holy city of Qom.

Intelligence analysts have been plying the White House with shorter two- or three-page analyses on Iran, and Vice President Joe Biden's office and National Security Council officials have expressed interest in a new estimate, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Representatives for the director of national intelligence, the vice president and the NSC declined to comment.

In addition to the Qom disclosure, European intelligence services and United Nations inspectors have gathered new information pointing to a resumption of Iran's weapons work.

Germany's intelligence service, the BND, publicly challenged the U.S. NIE by disclosing information during a court case this year that pointed to ongoing Iranian nuclear-weapons work. The BND gave specifics on Iranian purchases of high-speed cameras and radiation detectors that could be used in testing atomic detonations.

A working paper composed by the IAEA, meanwhile, detailed evidence that Iran was continuing to experiment with nuclear warhead designs, according to people who have viewed it.

"The U.S. is being directly challenged by its closest allies" on Iran's weapons work, said David Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector who heads Washington's Institute for Science and International Security and has viewed portions of the IAEA paper.

In the U.S., lawmakers in both parties are calling for new assessments.

"We need a much better intelligence picture of Iran," said California Rep. Jane Harman, who chairs the intelligence subcommittee on the House Homeland Security Committee and was the top Democrat on the House intelligence panel. Rep. Harman said intelligence officials should assume that the latest revelation of a secret enrichment facility may not be the only one, until they can disprove that assumption.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125565146184988939.html>

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Washington Post  
October 16, 2009

## **U.S. Mulling New Assessment of Iran Threat: Report**

Reuters

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. spy agencies are considering whether to rewrite a controversial 2007 intelligence report that asserted Tehran halted its efforts to build nuclear weapons in 2003, the Wall Street Journal reported Friday.

The possible reassessment comes as pressure is mounting from Congress and among U.S. allies for the Obama administration to redo the 2007 assessment, after last month's revelation of a second uranium enrichment plant in Iran.

German, French and British intelligence agencies have all disputed the conclusions of the 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, or NIE, in recent months, the Journal said, citing European officials briefed on the exchanges.

The report reversed earlier findings that Iran was pursuing a nuclear-weapons program. It found with "high confidence" that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003, and with "moderate confidence" that it hadn't been restarted as of mid-2007.

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If undertaken, a new NIE likely wouldn't be available for months, the Journal said. The United States and its allies have imposed an informal December deadline for Iran to comply with Western demands to cease enriching uranium or face fresh economic sanctions.

The 2007 U.S. intelligence estimate at the time dampened international support for further sanctions on Iran, which denies any plans for atomic weapons and says its uranium enrichment work is intended only for electricity production.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/16/AR2009101600204.html>

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Jerusalem Post  
October 16, 2009

## **China 'Strongly Opposes' Iranian Nukes**

BY YAAKOV LAPPIN

China is firmly opposed to an Iranian nuclear arms program, Beijing's ambassador to Israel, Zhao Jun, has told *The Jerusalem Post* in an interview.

Zhao's comments represent some of the most unambiguous remarks made by a Chinese official on the matter in recent weeks.

"China's position on the Iranian nuclear issue has been consistent and clear-cut. We support maintaining the international nonproliferation regime. In this sense, we are strongly against the idea that the Iranians should develop nuclear weapons," the ambassador said.

"And at the same time, we believe that each country, according to the nonproliferation nuclear weapons treaty, has the right to utilize nuclear power in a peaceful way and for a peaceful purpose," Zhao added.

On Thursday, China's Premier, Wen Jiabao, hosted Iranian First Vice President Muhammad Reza Rahimi in Beijing, and said Sino-Iranian relations had "witnessed rapid development."

Wen added that "cooperation in trade and energy has widened and deepened," according to the Chinese state Xinhua News Agency.

Back in Israel, Zhao told the *Post* his country would continue to back diplomacy as a means of solving the nuclear crisis, and denied that China's flourishing energy trade relationship with Iran was behind Beijing's refusal to back tougher sanctions.

China is the second largest crude oil importer in the world, while Iran possesses the globe's second biggest crude oil reserves. Twelve percent of China's oil imports come from Iran.

Iran also buys gasoline from China, due to the Islamic republic's inability to refine enough crude oil.

But those energy ties were not influencing China's approach to the nuclear crisis, Zhao insisted in his interview. "I don't agree with these claims or these assessments on China's position. I think some people drew this conclusion because they got distorted reports on China's position.

"China has been pursuing a foreign policy of peace and independence. We judge the issue according to its merits," he said. "We'll let people see by their own eyes, rather than read reports and jump to conclusions," he added.

The ambassador, who spoke with the *Post* on Wednesday, said he was optimistic over the chances of a renewed diplomatic push led by the US to resolve the crisis. "We welcome the recent progress made in Geneva. I hope that all parties could invest more diplomatic efforts to push for talks and negotiations to search for a more comprehensive, long-term and appropriate solution to the Iranian nuclear issue," Zhao said.

When asked if China's position would change if diplomacy failed, he said, "I think that so long the international community and all the parties make efforts together, there will be a breakthrough."

The ambassador said he hoped efforts to kick-start Israeli-Palestinian peace talks would succeed, adding that China had appointed a special Mideast envoy who visits the region twice a year.

"At the moment the international community is extremely concerned about the stagnation of the process. We do urge the parties concerned to resume dialogue and negotiations as early as possible, because it is in the interests of the stability of this region and its peoples.

"China will continuously play its part in the Middle East peace process," Zhao said.

"My hope, and that of the Chinese people, is that through joint efforts with all parties concerned, a lasting and just peace in this region will prevail," he added. "As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China has always been playing an important role in the Middle East process."

Asked if China was concerned over recent threats made against it by al-Qaida following bloody riots between Muslim Uighurs and Han Chinese in the western Xinjiang province, the ambassador said, "We have been checking whether these threats are genuine or not. I can assure you if these threats are serious we will treat them accordingly."

China has sentenced six Uighurs to death in recent days for their roles in the disturbances. "These riots were premeditated and masterminded by a small group of separatists now in exile. Their main motive is to split the country. But the Chinese people, the entire nation, is strongly against this idea," Zhao said. "We consider them as terrorists because of the methods they used. Innocent people were killed in the streets using knives and swords. People's heads were chopped," he added.

"That's why they should be dealt with according to Chinese laws. This is a normal practice. For example, In Israel, I don't think the government would allow this to happen."

Turning his attention to Sino-Israeli relations, Zhao had warm words for the Jewish people, and said the future of political and economic cooperation between the two countries was bright.

"Both the Chinese nation and Jewish nation are great nations. In the long course of history, both the Chinese and Jewish peoples have made outstanding contribution to the advancement of world civilizations," he said.

Zhao noted how Shanghai had provided refuge to more than 30,000 Jews fleeing the Holocaust, and said that during a recent dinner with former prime minister Ehud Olmert, whose grandfather fled to safety in China, Olmert "was proud to consider China as his second homeland."

On the economic front, Zhao said Sino-Israeli trade was blooming.

"There has been tremendous progress in economic and trade relations. When we established diplomatic relations in 1992, the trade volume between the two countries was only \$50 million. Last year, there was \$6.4 billion US in trade. That shows remarkable achievements," Zhao said.

The ambassador noted that Israel imported household appliances, textiles, garments and shoes from China, while China imported hi-tech products, medical devices, agricultural technology and communications equipment from Israel. Some 200 Israeli companies now operate in China, he added, while Chinese companies are competing for construction tenders in Israel.

"We hope that in a couple of years, we can reach \$10b. in trade between the two countries," he said.

Zhao avoided the sensitive issue of past military trade between Jerusalem and Beijing, which had sparked the ire of Washington in 2005, leading to the cancellation of an Israeli contract to upgrade unmanned aerial vehicles sold to China in 1999.

"There is no military trade between the two countries due to various reasons, and I'm not going to tell you exactly what the reasons are. But we are happy with the present situation of normal trade," Zhao said.

On Saturday evening, China is set to launch what it describes as the "largest cultural exchange program between the countries" since relations were established. The program, called "Experience China in Israel," is co-sponsored by the Chinese Information Office of the State Council and the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

It will include a performance by 55 dancers from the China Disabled People's Art Troupe, called *My Dream*, at Tel Aviv's Opera House on Saturday and Sunday; *A Close Look at China*, which will include photographs of the daily lives of members of China's 56 ethnic groups, at Jaffa's Museum of Antiquities, and the launch of Chinese movie week at the Tel Aviv Cinematheque.

Tel Aviv University will also hold a symposium on "China, Israel and the World economy," which will be attended by President Shimon Peres.

"This marks another milestone in bilateral ties and will help bring two peoples even closer," Zhao said.

"Israel is a very friendly country toward China. It is a very nice and beautiful country. I'm very happy - and proud - to be appointed ambassador to this great nation and country. During my two-and-a-half-year stay in Israel, I've made a lot of friends," he said.

Zhao said he has encountered some criticisms of China in Israel, but added that he found them to be "genuine, and from the bottom of the heart, without any ulterior motives. It's not like in some other countries."

He is a former director-general of the European Department in China's Foreign Ministry, and was based in London for more than five years, and in other European capitals.

"Not in every place I went to were the people like the Israeli people. The majority of people are nice, but sometimes you find... we call them the troublemakers," he said, laughing heartily. "So this is the impression I got from Israeli people. Genuine, honest, hard-working, extremely intelligence, and friendly."

"The Jewish people and Chinese people have been admiring each other even before the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries 17 years ago," Zhao said.

"Anti-Semitism is not a word that is in the Chinese dictionary," he said.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1255547731932&pagename=JPost%2FJPostArticle%2FShowFull>

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Los Angeles Times  
October 16, 2009

# China's Links to Iran A Snag for Sanctions

By David Pierson

Reporting from Beijing

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said Thursday that his nation was committed to deepening its ties with Iran, a declaration that underscores the difficulty the United States will face in seeking broad economic sanctions against Tehran in an effort to rein in its nuclear program.

"The Sino-Iranian relationship has witnessed rapid development, as the two countries' leaders have had frequent exchanges, and cooperation in trade and energy has widened and deepened," Wen said at a meeting in Beijing with visiting Iranian Vice President Mohammad Reza Rahimi, according to the official New China News Agency.

The U.S. and its allies are counting on China and Russia, veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council, for support in pressuring Iran to abandon activities the West fears could lead to the development of nuclear weapons.

But Washington is finding little support in either Moscow or Beijing. On Tuesday, during a visit to Moscow by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said further sanctions on Iran would be "counterproductive."

"We believe that at this stage all efforts must be focused on supporting the negotiating process," Lavrov said.

President Obama disclosed last month that Iran was building a second uranium enrichment plant. Iranian officials say their nation's nuclear program is for civilian energy purposes only, and Tehran has said it will allow United Nations inspectors to visit the facility.

But the United States, leading Western powers and Israel believe that the Islamic Republic's ultimate aim is to develop nuclear weapons. The Security Council has imposed sanctions on Iran in each of the last three years on account of Tehran's nuclear activities.

But undercutting hopes that China would take a tough stance on Iran now are the ever-growing economic ties between the two countries. More than 100 Chinese state firms operate in Iran, largely helping with infrastructure projects.

In the face of the sanctions already in place, two-way trade between China and Iran grew 35% last year, to \$27 billion, according to [irantracker.org](http://irantracker.org).

More important, China has signed an estimated \$120 billion worth of oil deals with Iran in the last five years to keep the world's third-largest economy on a rapid growth path.

New punitive measures on Iran might drive up the price of oil for China, the world's second-largest buyer of crude oil and a rapidly expanding consumer of automobiles.

Iran, for its part, needs China to help vitalize its oil and natural gas industries, which are underdeveloped because of the existing economic sanctions. Last year, the China National Petroleum Corp. signed a \$1.76-billion deal with the National Iranian Oil Co. to tap Iran's North Azadegan oil field, which is expected to produce 75,000 barrels a day by 2012.

In March, the two nations signed a \$3.2-billion, three-year pact to develop the South Pars gas field beneath the Persian Gulf. Geologists say the underwater cavity may be the world's largest source of natural gas. And in August, China signed a \$3-billion deal to expand Iran's Abadan and Persian Gulf refineries.

Because China has few oil reserves, it must go abroad to secure energy. Beijing often has little choice but to turn to volatile states such as Iran and Venezuela, because safer sources of oil have long been tapped by developed countries.

At the same time, China may have to balance its economic needs with maintaining a stable relationship with the U.S., especially now that Beijing would like to see itself as a bigger global player. Iran will be a key issue for Obama when he visits China in November.

Zhou Yongsheng, a professor at China Foreign Affairs University in Beijing, said China is in a difficult position.

"I think [Chinese officials'] decision is absolutely complicated by oil. They have to maintain good relationships with countries . . . where crude oil is produced.

"At the same time, the U.S. and Chinese relationship has reached new heights, and I think China will be willing to cooperate in many cases."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-fg-china-iran16-2009oct16,0,1478722.story>

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Yonhap News – South Korea  
14 October 2009

## **N. Korea says Peace Treaty with U.S. Necessary for Denuclearization**

By Tony Chang

SEOUL, Oct. 14 (Yonhap) -- North Korea on Wednesday urged the United States to replace their armistice agreement with a peace treaty in order to settle the ongoing nuclear stalemate, putting Washington at the center of a nuclear deadlock ahead of expected bilateral talks.

"The nuclear issue on the peninsula can be fundamentally settled only when the U.S. repeals its hostile policy toward the DPRK and replaces the armistice agreement with a peace accord," the Rodong Sinmun, newspaper of the ruling Workers' Party, said in a commentary.

DPRK, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is North Korea's official name. The commentary was carried by the North's Korean Central News Agency.

The two Koreas are still technically at war, since the 1950-1953 Korean War ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty. Both sides keep heavily-armed troops deployed on their side of the border.

The North has long sought a peace treaty with the United States, who signed the armistice on behalf of the U.N. forces that fought in the war, claiming that the lack of it is proof of U.S. hostility toward its regime.

"A peace accord should be concluded between the DPRK and the U.S. if the nuclear issue on the peninsula is to be settled," the paper said.

The paper also slammed comments by Philip Crowley, U.S. assistant secretary of state, that the North would be further isolated for keeping its nuclear program.

"(The paper) dismisses this (Crowley's remarks) as shameless, preposterous and brigandish sophism as the nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is a product of the U.S. hostile policy toward the DPRK," KCNA said.

North Korea is boycotting the six-party denuclearization talks in protest at U.N. sanctions for its nuclear and missile tests earlier this year, although its leader Kim Jong-il recently expressed his willingness to return to dialogue on the condition that expected bilateral talks with the U.S. produce results.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/10/14/1/0401000000AEN20091014007700315F.HTML>

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Chosun Ilbo – South Korea  
15 October 2009

## **China 'Mostly Worried About N. Korean Regime Stability'**

China may be concerned about North Korea's nuclear armament but worries more about the stability of the North Korean regime, an academic said Monday. Yun Duk-min, a professor of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, told an international seminar on South Korea-China-Japan relations in Seoul sponsored by Dongseo University's Japan Center, "China has been attentive to the resumption of the six-party nuclear disarmament talks rather than to the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. It merely talks about the principle of a peaceful resolution but offers no specific ideas."

Yun said while the North's nuclear and missile provocations hurt China's basic interests by sparking debate about nuclear armament in South Korea and Japan, Beijing is hesitating to apply pressure on Pyongyang. "In the event the U.S. recognizes North Korea as a de facto nuclear power like India and Pakistan, China worries if participating in

strong sanctions will weaken its position."

Jin Jingyi, a professor at Peking University, ascribed the impasse in the six-party talks to the crashing of the geopolitical strategies of the countries involved. "So long as America's Northeast Asia strategy evolves around strengthening its alliances with Japan and South Korea, a resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue is unlikely," he said. "And if America does not cooperate with China, which is emerging as the leading power of the new Northeast Asia, the geopolitical significance of the Korean Peninsula will increase and leave the North Korean nuclear issue unresolved."

Cho Yang-hyun, a professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, said the new Japanese government will find it difficult to depart from the previous Liberal Democratic Party's North Korea policy unless external conditions like Washington-Pyongyang relations change. "The island country's Democratic Party administration will avoid a conciliatory attitude toward the North until the Upper House election in July next year," Cho said. "But there are chances for Pyongyang to attempt to improve relations with Tokyo through epoch-making concessions on a DP leadership visit to the North, a Tokyo-Pyongyang summit and the Japanese abductees issue."

[http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2009/10/15/2009101500303.html](http://english.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2009/10/15/2009101500303.html)

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Yonhap News – South Korea  
15 October 2009

## **N. Korea seems to want Nuke Agreement like U.S.-India Deal: Former U.S. Official**

By Tony Chang

SEOUL, Oct 15 (Yonhap) -- North Korea seems to want recognition as a nuclear power, but may ultimately be willing to agree on a partial denuclearization deal like the one the U.S. offered India in 2005, a former U.S. National Security Council (NSC) official said Thursday.

"I think they want to keep their nuclear weapons ... (but) I think they're willing to give up some of their weapons ... if they can get a deal, like the deal that was given to India," Victor Cha, former director for Asian affairs at the White House NSC during George W. Bush's presidency, said during a session at the World Knowledge Forum in Seoul.

The communist country has been dragging its feet for years in nuclear disarmament negotiations with South Korea, the U.S. and other regional powers. The country conducted its first nuclear test in 2006 and its second one in May this year.

Cha, currently director of Asian Studies at Georgetown University, was referring to the U.S.-India nuclear deal signed in 2005, under which India agreed to separate its civil and military nuclear facilities and place all its civil nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. In exchange, the U.S. agreed to work toward full civil nuclear cooperation with India.

Pyongyang appears to want the international community "to effectively recognize North Korea as a nuclear weapons state" and would allow the IAEA to inspect a portion of its nuclear facilities. But it also wants to "maintain the privilege to keep a portion of their nuclear capability separate, outside the international inspection," he said.

The North, according to Cha, also appears to want a security assurance from the U.S., but not in form of either a peace treaty or an agreement on the end of the Korean War, but one guaranteeing the continuity of the current regime during any type of reform of the country.

"They essentially want assurance ... that the regime should stay in power as the North enters the international community in a reform process," said Cha.

"The most difficult part of reform for a regime like North Korea's is that the process of opening up could lead to collapse of the regime. That is obviously (something) they don't want," the professor said.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/10/15/79/0401000000AEN20091015008300315F.HTML>

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Press Trust of India  
October 16, 2009

## **India Notifies Separation Plan to IAEA**

STAFF WRITER

Mumbai, Oct 16 (PTI) India has notified its Separation Plan to the International Atomic Energy Agency, almost 14 months after the 35-member board of governors of the IAEA approved the country-specific nuclear safeguards agreement.

The notification formalities were completed last night, a crucial step in paving way for the implementation of international civil nuclear cooperation, Department of Atomic Energy sources said.

The India Specific Safeguards Agreement (ISSA) or the 'umbrella' agreement approved by consensus by the IAEA Board on August 1 last year can now officially enter into force formally separating India's civilian and strategic nuclear establishments.

India will be placing a total of 14 Indian reactors under ISSA of international nuclear watchdog by 2014.

[http://www.ptinews.com/news/334154\\_India-notifies-separation-plan-to-IAEA](http://www.ptinews.com/news/334154_India-notifies-separation-plan-to-IAEA)

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RIA Novosti – Russia  
16 October 2009

## **Nuclear Sub Nerpa to Enter Service in December**

VLADIVOSTOK, October 16 (RIA Novosti) - The Nerpa nuclear attack submarine will enter service with Russia's Pacific Fleet in December 2009 and will then be leased out to the Indian Navy, a high-ranking fleet official said on Friday.

The Nerpa, which was damaged in a fatal accident during tests in November last year, has been docked at the Amur shipyard's Vostok repair facility in the town of Bolshoy Kamen in Primorye Territory since the end of new sea trials following repairs.

"The submarine has undergone a range of sea trials, and [final] state tests will begin in late October or early November, after which the Nerpa will be adopted by the Pacific Fleet," the spokesman said.

He said a crew of Indian submariners would undergo a course of training together with Russian specialists and servicemen in early 2010.

They will subsequently operate on their own under the supervision of Russian instructors, after which the submarine will be leased to the Indian Navy under the name INS Chakra.

On November 8, 2008, while the Nerpa was undergoing sea trials, its onboard fire extinguishing system went off, releasing a deadly gas into the sleeping quarters. Three crewmembers and 17 shipyard workers were killed. There were 208 people, 81 of them submariners, aboard the vessel at the time.

India reportedly paid \$650 million for a 10-year lease of the 12,000-ton K-152 Nerpa, an Akula II class nuclear-powered attack submarine.

Akula II class vessels are considered the quietest and deadliest of all Russian nuclear-powered attack submarines.

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091016/156489764.html>

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People's Daily – China  
October 14, 2009

## **Cambodia Approves Law of Non-proliferation of Nuclear, Chemical Weapon**

Cambodian National Assembly on Wednesday approved the law of non-proliferation of nuclear weapon, bio-chemical weapon, radioactive weapons and chemical weapon.

"This law bans on producing, recycling, transferring, transporting the kinds of these weapons in the country, and we will create authority for controlling and investigating the chemical substances as well as a laboratory for observing these substances in the country," said Tea Banh, deputy prime minister and minister of national defense. "We do not want to see these substances destroying our people's health and lives," he added.

"We need peace and good environment in the country and we experienced the disaster of the weapons in the world," said Oeung Noeng, chairman of the committee of national defense, interior, investigation and clearance of the National Assembly.

"We have purpose to set up a region of ASEAN without the nuclear weapon," said Cheap Yeam, chairman of the audition, banking and finance. "When we have this kind of law, we will show other countries, United Nations, and IEAE (International Energy Agency) that we do not produce these weapons."

"We also show them that we are not the threat of regional security and the war monger," he said, adding that "our country is poor; we need the help from donor and other friend countries to develop the country and we do not have abilities to produce this kind of weapons."

He also expressed his concerns for some countries in the world that produced nuclear weapons because they could destroy the world and threaten security of the world.

He added this law follows to Cambodian constitution in 1993 and ASEAN charter, and International Conventions that Cambodia is signatory state.

<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90777/90851/6783505.html>

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BREITBART.com

October 15, 2009

## **Bill to Ban Nuclear Weapons Reaches Belgian Senate**

BRUSSELS Associated Press (AP) - (Kyodo)

A measure to specifically ban nuclear weapons in Belgium was sent to the Belgian Senate on Thursday.

It aims to forbid the creation, repair, selling, transport and stock of nuclear weapons on Belgian soil and to direct the country to make extra efforts to ban nuclear weapons.

The proposed law is comparable to Japan's three non-nuclear principles of not possessing, producing or allowing nuclear weapons on its territory.

The most recent Belgian law on weapons dates back to 2006. It is a renewal of an old law dating back to 1930, and seriously restricted keeping or buying weapons as well.

But the 2006 law made no mention of nuclear weapons.

The current proposition, prepared by Socialist Sen. Philippe Mahoux, is the first step in the process of effectively banning all kinds of nuclear weapons in Belgium.

According to Mahoux, it would fit in with the obligations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which more than 180 countries, including Belgium and Japan, have signed.

He says the possible presence of such weapons in Belgium is a consequence of the country's engagement in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, even though this treaty "does not say anything about a hypothetical 'nuclear obligation.'"

At the same time, he argues, the measure will fit smoothly into NATO's recent plans to redefine its strategic concept.

Apart from opposition based on humanitarian considerations, keeping nuclear arms would undermine arguments by countries like Belgium and the United States to convince other countries not to start making nuclear weapons, Mahoux says.

Mahoux's supporters in the Socialist party say that at this moment the atmosphere is good for having a vote on such a law, referring to growing support for U.S. President Barack Obama's proposal for a world free of nuclear weapons. But the full procedure will take until May 2010 to be completed.

Members of the Walloon Liberal Party MR are said to be opposed to the law because they reportedly think European defense is not possible without such weapons.

There are plans to set up a working group with NATO specialists and weapons experts and to raise public awareness on the issue of nuclear weapons and the possibility of them being present on Belgian soil.

International reports that about 20 such weapons exist in Belgium have been neither officially confirmed nor denied as the Belgian government remains silent on the subject.

Last year, during a visit to a Belgian military base used by NATO and a supposed stock base of nuclear arms, Belgian Defense Minister Pieter de Crem caused an uproar by inadvertently referring to Belgium's "nuclear capacity."

[http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9BBIE780&show\\_article=1](http://www.breitbart.com/article.php?id=D9BBIE780&show_article=1)

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Global Security Newswire  
October 15, 2009

## **Russia Reports Eliminating 42 Percent of Chemical Warfare Materials**

A senior Russian official said yesterday the nation has destroyed nearly 42 percent of its full depository of chemical warfare materials, Interfax reported (see *GSN*, Aug. 10).

A total of 16,705 metric tons of chemical agents have been destroyed to date, Sergei Serbin, head of the international cooperation office for Russia's chemical weapons storage and disposal department, said during a conference near the disposal plant at Shchuchye in the Kurgan region. Russia at one point held 40,000 metric tons of material, the world's largest stockpile of substances banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention.

"The disposal is proceeding as planned," Serbin said during the event. "The yearly target for Russia has been accomplished by 77 percent. As for the Shchuchye facility, it has destroyed 86 percent of the yearly target."

Nearly 776 of the 5,450 metric tons of sarin nerve agent stored at Shchuchye have been destroyed.

Difficulties were anticipated as the plant began operations last May, Serbin said (see *GSN*, May 29). "Naturally there were some, but nothing extraordinary happened, and the equipment is being adjusted. The facility is stable now, and there is even some power reserve," he said.

Six chemical weapons disposal plants have opened so far in Russia. The nation intends to dispose of 45 percent of its chemical arsenal by the end of this year and to have disposed of all chemical weapons by April 29, 2012, the deadline set by the convention (Interfax I, Oct. 14)

The second part of the Shchuchye disposal plant is likely to come online in the latter half of 2010, Serbin said. With the addition of the new section, the facility would be able to destroy 1,700 metric tons of material each year, he added.

"Construction efforts are in progress and equipment is being installed. the facility will have two segments with a similar capacity," he said (Interfax II, Oct. 14).

[http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw\\_20091015\\_2221.php](http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20091015_2221.php)

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Global Security Newswire  
Oct. 15, 2009

## **Tiny Sensors in Development for Chemical, Biological Threat Detection**

The U.S. Army is funding the development of a new system that could be used to uncover biological and chemical weapons materials, a Missouri university announced this week (see *GSN*, Oct. 6).

Researchers at the Missouri University of Science and Technology have received nearly \$530,000 to develop pinhead-sized detection devices, along with the means to produce the sensors and field them in a conflict situation.

Zeolite, a crystal with a molecular arrangement and unique traits that enable it to identify and hold specific chemicals, is being used to create the sensors.

The tiny devices would be deployed on the battlefield using small "motes" -- mechanisms energized by batteries, capable of carrying about 12 sensors and using wireless networks to communicate. The motes could be operated through remote control, ensuring military personnel are not exposed to lethal chemical agents (Missouri University of Science and Technology release, Oct. 12).

[http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw\\_20091014\\_2121.php](http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20091014_2121.php)

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San Francisco Chronicle  
October 14, 2009

### **Missile Commander Ousted at ND Air Force Base**

By JAMES MacPHERSON, Associated Press Writer

Bismarck, N.D. (AP) --The missile wing commander at North Dakota's Minot Air Force Base was relieved of his command Wednesday after a series of missteps at the unit, including two crashes of vehicles carrying missile parts in just more than a year.

Col. Christopher Ayres was not ousted for any misconduct or wrongdoing, but the Air Force said it had lost confidence in his ability to command the base's 91st Missile Wing given recent incidents, which also included three ballistic missile crew members falling asleep while holding classified launch code devices.

The 91st Missile Wing oversees 150 Minuteman III missiles, sunk in hardened silos, in central and western North Dakota.

"It comes down to performance and accountability," said Air Force spokeswoman Laurie A. Arellano. "With nuclear weapons, our nation expects no less than perfection."

A Wednesday call to the base to reach Ayres was not returned.

Maj. Gen. Roger Burg, commander of the 20th Air Force in Air Force Space Command, made the decision to oust Ayres, according to the military. The 20th Air Force maintains and operates land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles based in Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota.

Ayres "will be moved to another position within the Air Force," Arellano said. She did not elaborate. Col. Ferdinand Stoss, former vice commander of the 90th Missile Wing at Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyo., will take over as commander of the 91st Missile Wing.

Ayres has been in the Air Force since 1985, and had been the base missile wing commander since May 2008.

During his tenure, three ballistic missile crew members fell asleep holding launch codes in July 2008 and were discharged a year later.

Also in July 2008, a vehicle carrying a rocket booster for an unarmed Minuteman III ballistic missile overturned while being transported from the base to a launch facility in northwestern North Dakota. The military estimated it spent about \$5.6 million to recover the rocket from a ditch. And this August, a semitrailer carrying rocket engine parts from the base overturned when the driver became distracted by an insect that flew in a window and landed on the driver's back, the military said.

A court-martial also is pending for a Minot officer accused of stealing a missile launch control device, allegedly because he wanted a souvenir.

Minot Air Force Base's 5th Bomb Wing was recertified in the handling of nuclear weapons last year after months of retraining in the wake of a 2007 mix-up in which a bomber mistakenly flew to Louisiana armed with nuclear missiles. Base commander Col. Bruce Emig was ousted following the B-52's flight to Barksdale Air Force Base and replaced by Col. Joel Westa.

The Air Force in August created a new Global Strike Command at Barksdale to better manage the nation's nuclear arsenal. The new command will consolidate control of long-range ballistic missiles and bomb wings that carry nuclear weapons.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2009/10/14/national/a143942D46.DTL>

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London Daily Guardian

OPINION

14 October 2009

## Can Iran Afford A Nuclear U-turn?

By Meir Javedanfar

Barack Obama has reason to be proud of himself. The Geneva meeting with Iran on 1 October produced results that exceeded the expectations of many. First, the fact that the Iranians discussed the nuclear programme at all was an important accomplishment: Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had previously stated on several occasions that the nuclear file was closed and that it would not be part of the negotiations. Second, Iran apparently agreed to ship some of its low-enriched uranium (LEU) to Russia and France for processing from 3.5% to 20% purity.

Obama owes this achievement to a number of developments. One is the post-election disturbances in Iran, which damaged the regime's image as a stable administration while reducing its legitimacy. The other important source of leverage was information from the American, British, French and Israeli intelligence communities about the secret site in Qom. The growing international pressure that followed the exposure of Qom eroded Iran's negotiating position.

Meanwhile, the Iranian government also walked away with accomplishments of its own. Many in Iran have taken the recent agreement to allow Iranian-produced LEU to be processed in Russia as western recognition of its right to enrich uranium on its soil. This has been one of Iran's key demands and is therefore considered a victory – as was confirmed during last Friday's prayers in Tehran University by Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami.

Despite achievements by both sides, significant challenges remain. According to the agreement reached in Geneva, Iran will in principle send about 80% of its stockpile of LEU outside the country. The latest report from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated that Iran possesses 1359kg of LEU, of which about 1087kg should be shipped abroad. However, Iran has agreed to this only in principle. Obama has to wait for the 19 October meeting between Iran, the IAEA, France, Russia and the US to see how much of its LEU Iran is actually willing to hand over.

Conflicting reports are now emerging from Iran. Two days after the Geneva meeting, Peyman Jebelli, the media secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, denied that a deal had been reached over Iran's LEU at all. This was followed by another statement from Ali Shirzadian, spokesman for the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran (AEOI) who said that Iran will need "up to 660lb (300kg) of the more enriched uranium to keep the Tehran reactor running for another 10 to 15 years". This would mean that Iran would only have to give up 300kg – 22%, not 80% – of its stock of LEU. According to Dr Rasool Nafisi, a prominent Iran expert at Strayer University, "it takes a little over two months for Iran to replace the LEU shipped to Russia-France for the exchange. Therefore what is the breakthrough from the Geneva talks?"

Obama's other possible challenge is the forthcoming National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) report. One of the main reasons why Obama received the support of the US political establishment to negotiate with Iran in the first place is because according to the most recent NIE report, released in 2007, Iran abandoned the military part of its nuclear programme in 2003. It should be noted that this finding is in direct contrast to the British intelligence services' view that Iran is working on making a bomb.

The next NIE, which is released every two years, is due in November. Should it reverse its previous findings and say that Iran has restarted the military part of its nuclear programme, Obama could find domestic support for his dialogue with Iran dropping drastically. He could also find the Senate and Congress calling for immediate and much

tougher sanctions. Such a finding could also increase the credibility of US hawks, many of whom back military action.

Meanwhile, the Iranian leadership has its own set of challenges ahead. At the 1 October meeting in Geneva, Iran was not required to stop enriching uranium on its own soil. Furthermore, the agreement to allow it to ship its LEU to the west was not made on the condition that it would eventually have to do this. However, Ayatollah Khamenei could soon find that the west will start pressuring him to stop uranium enrichment in Iran – either temporarily or permanently.

This is now an even more difficult decision for the Iranian leadership to take, as they have already sold their "victory" to the Iranian public. To comply would mean an embarrassing U-turn. After the recent disturbances at home, this could damage the conservatives' position. However, if they don't agree to it, crippling sanctions, or even war, could follow.

After a promising start, the road ahead is full of challenges. Success depends on trust and compromise, from both sides. In this case, if history is anything to go by, being realistic means being pessimistic.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/oct/14/iran-nuclear-talks-obama>

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RIA Novosti (Russian Information Agency)

OPINION & ANALYSIS

14 October 2009

## **New Russian Nuclear Doctrine to Reflect New Threats - Expert**

**Question:** Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of Russia's Security Council, said in an interview to Izvestia that a new concept of Russia's Military Doctrine would be submitted to the president by the end of the year. He said it would list situations in which preemptive nuclear strikes can be delivered to repel external threats to Russia and contain aggressions. What are the reasons for that decision, and in which cases can nuclear weapons be used?

**Pavel Zolotarev:** I think this is a rather loose interpretation of what he said. Of course, the new doctrine will preserve a degree of uncertainty as regards the conditions in which nuclear weapons can be used. This is essential, because the bigger the degree of uncertainty as regards the use of nuclear weapons, the more effective the deterrent will be.

[In other words, we are talking] not so much about a large-scale war, as in the past when the threat came from the United States – and a conflict with the U.S. could only be a large-scale war, which limited the sphere of the use of nuclear weapons. But, since Russia and the U.S. are no longer enemies, nuclear weapons are becoming less important as a means of ensuring security in their relations.

Russia and the U.S. now see nuclear weapons as a burden, and are thinking more of ways we can cooperate to stop nuclear proliferation. This is why we are drafting a new treaty with the United States, and not because we want to look at each other through gun sights and calculate each other's missiles.

But, since there are nuclear weapons in the world, and they will not be liquidated in a long time yet, we should set the rules of their use. The formulas sealed in the doctrine will stipulate broader use of nuclear weapons. I cannot say exactly how they will be worded, but the general attitude will be such that the level of uncertainty as regards the use and conditions of the use of such weapons will persist.

**Question:** Isn't this formula too aggressive for other states?

**Pavel Zolotarev:** I think that this will largely depend on the wording. I think that since the working group drafting the military doctrine includes representatives of the Foreign Ministry and other professionals, they will invent a formula that will not alarm other states.

**Question:** In other words, Russia will not review the defensive nature of its military doctrine?

**Pavel Zolotarev:** Of course not, but the range of tasks has exceeded the old limits, because the form of deterrence on which we relied during the Cold War – actually, we did not see any other form – is no longer effective. But since there are nuclear weapons in the world, we should envision broader tasks for nuclear deterrence.

**Question:** Why cannot we use conventional weapons to attain this goal in local conflicts and wars?



**Pavel Zolotarev:** Because they cannot guarantee that you will attain your goals and repel the threats that arise. Since Russia has a huge territory and is reforming its armed forces – in other words, it is reducing the number of military personnel – the mobilization readiness of the economy and the people is decreasing. Therefore, Russia has taken this precaution to protect itself from the possibility of unexpected situations when a local conflict develops into a large-scale war for which Russia is not ready. It is for this eventuality that Russia has nuclear weapons.

**Question:** Will the doctrine list the countries against which such preemptive strikes could be launched?

**Pavel Zolotarev:** Absolutely not, because Russia has not listed its enemies in its doctrines since 1993. They provided factors, one way or another, that could create a military threat, but the task at any given moment is to assess the situation, the direction from which the threat may come, and ways to respond to it.

But we do not have a concrete enemy, and there will be no direct link to any state.

<http://en.rian.ru/analysis/20091014/156466830.html>

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The Daily Star – Lebanon

OPINION

October 15, 2009

## **If Implemented, Obama's Nuclear Agenda will Render 2010 A Critical Year**

By Joseph S. Nye

The announcement of a secret uranium-enrichment facility located on a military base in Iran has sharpened President Barack Obama's efforts to place nuclear proliferation issues at the top of the world agenda. 2010 will be a critical year. In September, both at the United Nations and at the Group of 20 Summit in Pittsburgh, many countries agreed to work on Obama's nuclear agenda. But, in the midst of those meetings, it was revealed that Iran has been secretly building a second enrichment facility with the potential to produce weapons-grade uranium.

In early October, Iranian officials met in Geneva with representatives of the permanent members of the UN Security Council (plus Germany) and agreed to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect the hitherto secret plant. In addition, the Iranians said that they would export their existing low-enriched uranium to be fabricated into nuclear fuel outside of Iran.

If these measures are implemented, they will represent important steps. There has been widespread fear that Iran would abrogate the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and use its enrichment facilities to develop a nuclear weapon. It is not yet clear whether words will be matched with deeds.

Meanwhile, the United States and Russia, whose stockpiles contain more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, are negotiating in Geneva to produce a strategic arms reduction treaty to replace their START I arms-control agreement, which expires in December. If those talks are successful, they may yield cuts of up to one-third of all strategic nuclear warheads.

The US Senate would then consider the new treaty for ratification next year. The Obama administration is also consulting with Congress on when to re-submit the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was rejected by the Senate 10 years ago.

International agreements regulating the size and composition of national defenses have often been controversial in the Senate. The new strategic arms-reduction treaty, which is still a work in progress, and the CTBT have already aroused skepticism from opposition legislators and opinion-makers. If Obama submits both treaties to the Senate in 2010, he will need to convince the public that they serve an integrated strategy for enhancing national and international security. If he fails and the Senate rejects one or both of the treaties, it could have a strong negative effect on the non-proliferation regime.

In May, 189 member states of the NPT will meet in Vienna to review its status. When the NPT entered into force in 1970, it was intended to limit the number of nuclear-weapons states to five (the US, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, and China). Overall, the treaty has been a success. Many people, including President John F. Kennedy, believed in the 1960s that there would be dozens of countries with nuclear weapons by now, and that their use would be highly probable. Fortunately, this has not been the case.



Since 1970, three states that never signed the treaty have acquired nuclear weapons (India, Israel and Pakistan). In addition, North Korea violated its treaty obligations and detonated two crude devices. Iran's suspected nuclear-weapons program has now raised new fears that the global nonproliferation regime may unravel.

Averting that danger will require multiple, coordinated, and sustained efforts for many years to come, but ratification of post-START and the CTBT would help. For example, a new arms-reduction agreement would improve the US-Russian relationship, and that in turn could translate into a more constructive Russian position on Iran in the Security Council. Senate approval of the CTBT would also restore America's credibility in its efforts to get other countries to forgo nuclear testing.

Next March, Obama will host a Global Nuclear Security Summit with the aim of developing new means to combat nuclear smuggling and terrorism. In addition, his proposed long-term goal of abolishing nuclear weapons will require a great deal of preparatory work before it becomes an operational, rather than an aspirational objective.

Obama will need to begin discussions with the Russians, for example, on how to handle the question of short-range nuclear weapons, and how to regulate anti-ballistic missile defenses to maintain stability in a world of fewer offensive weapons. At some point, he must open discussions with countries like China, France, and Britain to understand better the conditions for transparency and verification that would be necessary for a clearer path toward eventual elimination of nuclear weapons in accordance with Article VI of the NPT.

At the same time, Obama cannot allow these long-term issues to divert his attention from crucial short-term issues. So long as the world remains a dangerous place with several nuclear weapons states, Obama must reassure US allies about the credibility of American guarantees of extended deterrence. Otherwise, reductions that create anxieties in other countries could lead them to develop their own weapons and thus increase the number of nuclear weapons states.

Obama will also need to pursue negotiations to persuade North Korea to return to the Six-Party talks with the objective of eventually giving up its nuclear weapons (as South Africa once did). And, of course, he will need to pursue the negotiations with Iran to persuade them to keep their word and remain in the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state.

How successful Obama is in managing the domestic politics and international diplomacy of his nuclear agenda will be an important factor in his effectiveness as a world leader.

More importantly, his progress in 2010 will say a lot about the world's ability to maintain the existing 60-year taboo against the use of nuclear weapons.

[http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition\\_id=1&categ\\_id=5&article\\_id=107538#](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=5&article_id=107538#)

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Wall Street Journal  
OPINION  
OCTOBER 15, 2009

## **Beijing Is Violating North Korean Sanctions**

By GORDON G. CHANG

Kim Jong Il hugged Wen Jiabao on the Chinese premier's arrival in Pyongyang on October 4. Analysts were surprised at the time that the reclusive North Korean supremo made the trip to the tarmac to show his affection. Now we know why: Mr. Wen came to the North Korean capital less to mark 60 years of diplomatic ties with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—the ostensible purpose of the trip—than to sign commercial pacts with it. By doing so, China undoubtedly violated United Nations Security Resolution 1874 by giving Kim the means to keep his nuclear arsenal in the face of intense international pressure.

Xinhua, the official Chinese news agency, was sparse with details on the deals. It merely stated the two communist states "signed a series of agreements on cooperation and announced that a new highway bridge over the Yalu River will be built." But reports from South Korean newspapers indicate Beijing, as a part of a comprehensive package, also agreed to provide financial assistance to Kim's destitute state. Chinese grants to the North total at least \$200 million.

Never mind that U.N. Security Council Resolution 1874, unanimously adopted June 12, forbids many, if not most, commercial contacts with Kim's Korea. Paragraph 19 calls on U.N. member states "not to enter into new

commitments for grants, financial assistance, or concessional loans to the DPRK, except for humanitarian and developmental purposes directly addressing the needs of the civilian population, or the promotion of denuclearization." Paragraph 20 calls on members "not to provide public financial support for trade with the DPRK . . . where such financial support could contribute to the DPRK's nuclear-related or ballistic missile-related or other WMD-related programs or activities."

Beijing's new commercial contracts appear to have little or nothing to do with providing assistance to the North Korean people. They look as if they will strengthen the country's economy, which means they bolster the regime. And of course, anything that bolsters the regime helps it, at least indirectly, keep its weapons programs. Averting that kind of cycle seems to have been the rationale behind paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Security Council's strictly worded resolution in the first place.

Beijing voted in favor of Resolution 1874, but only reluctantly. China and the North have, during their decades of diplomatic relations, maintained unusually close ties. Each of them is the other's only formal military ally. Beijing, from its perch on the U.N. Security Council and its seat on the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency, has consistently used its position to shield its client state. China has transferred atomic technology to North Korea, both directly and through its other nuclear client, Pakistan.

Yet perhaps Beijing's most important help has been commercial. China's trade with the state has soared since Pyongyang's October 2006 nuclear test, thereby helping the impoverished regime survive tightening sanctions. In 2008, China's trade with the North increased 41.3% from the year before to \$2.79 billion. This jump helped account for the 3.7% expansion in North Korea's economy in 2008 as the country pulled out of a downturn especially evident in the two preceding years. In the first eight months of 2009, trade was off slightly—down 6.2%, according to Reuters. The new raft of agreements inked early this month could erase that small decline.

The new deals could help the North directly in maintaining its arsenal. An increasing portion of China's trade is channeled through businesses directly controlled by the North Korean military. The Chinese could condition the granting of aid and the execution of last week's agreements on Pyongyang's return to the "Six Party" Talks on denuclearization; analysts think Beijing might do so. But China's track record of not pushing the North to abide by nuclear agreements suggests this will have at best limited impact.

The Chinese, if they had wanted, could have used their extraordinary leverage to much better effect. China accounted for about 73% of the North's total international trade last year, and Beijing has provided an estimated 90% of North Korea's oil, 80% of its consumer goods and 45% of its food. Without China, the North would not have had the ability to fund either its expensive nuclear weapons or missile programs. Yet regardless of Kim Jong Il's behavior, the Chinese have, year in and year out, supported his dangerous ambitions.

The question now becomes what other countries will do about China's violation of this U.N. resolution. Seoul already has requested clarification of the terms of the agreements, to help determine whether they violate the U.N. rule. Washington can be at least as resolute as its South Korean ally and demand, in public, an explanation from Beijing of the precise nature of its economic relations with the sanctioned Pyongyang regime. There is no point in working through the U.N. if permanent Security Council members are allowed to violate its resolutions

Whatever the outcome of those efforts, last week's deals send a powerful signal to the United States, Japan and South Korea that Beijing will undercut any sanctions they may put in place to bring the North Koreans back to the bargaining table or persuade them to surrender their nukes. And the agreements send another important message to Pyongyang. As one of China's netizens noted during Mr. Wen's visit, "It must be a huge encouragement for North Korea that, when the whole world is isolating them, our premier is there to give them hope."

Mr. Chang is the author of *Nuclear Showdown: North Korea Takes On the World* (Random House, 2006).

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704107204574474424116638040.html>

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Washington Post  
October 16, 2009

## **A Hitch in Iran's Nuclear Plans?**

By David Ignatius

Since you're probably not a regular reader of the trade publication *Nucleonics Week*, let me summarize an article that appeared in its Oct. 8 issue. It reported that Iran's supply of low-enriched uranium -- the potential feedstock for nuclear bombs -- appears to have certain "impurities" that "could cause centrifuges to fail" if the Iranians try to boost it to weapons grade.

Now *that's* interesting. The seeming breakthrough in negotiations on Oct. 1 in Geneva -- where Iran agreed to send most of its estimated 1,500 kilograms of low-enriched uranium abroad for further enrichment -- may not have been exactly what it appeared. Iran may have had no alternative but to seek foreign help in enrichment because its own centrifuges wouldn't work.

"The impurities, certain metallic fluoride compounds, would interfere with centrifuge enrichment" at Iran's facility at Natanz, reported the newsletter's Bonn correspondent, Mark Hibbs.

This news strikes me as a potential bombshell. If the *Nucleonics Week* report is accurate (and there's some uncertainty among experts about how serious the contamination problem is), the Iranian nuclear program is in much worse shape than most analysts had realized. The contaminated fuel it has produced so far would be all but useless for nuclear weapons. To make enough fuel for a bomb, Iran might have to start over -- this time avoiding the impurities.

You've got to hand it to the Iranians, though, for making the best of what might be a bad situation: In the proposal embraced in Geneva, they have gotten the West to agree to decontaminate fuel that would otherwise be useful only for the low-enriched civilian nuclear power they have always claimed is their only goal.

"It's especially cheeky for Iran to try to leverage as a concession their willingness to receive international cooperation in supplying nuclear fuel," noted George Perkovich, the director of the nonproliferation program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

The Oct. 1 tentative agreement had been hailed because Iran was pledging to send its 3.5 percent LEU, as the low-enriched uranium is known, to Russia, where it would be boosted to the 19.75 percent level needed to fuel a research reactor in Tehran that produces medical isotopes. Under the tentative Geneva agreement, France offered to fabricate the higher-enriched uranium into fuel assemblies.

"The potential advantage of this, if it's implemented, is that it would significantly reduce Iran's LEU stockpile, which itself is a source of anxiety in the Middle East and elsewhere," a senior U.S. official enthused to reporters after the Geneva talks. A further meeting with Iran is set for Vienna on Monday to work out the details.

But hold the cheers, negotiators, and let's go back to the technical stuff. "If Iran's uranium feedstock must be decontaminated before it is re-enriched . . . that would suggest that the breakout scenario in Iran does not pose a near-term threat," Hibbs reported. "That is because re-enrichment by Iran of the LEU processed at Natanz without decontamination could destroy centrifuges used for this purpose." The *Nucleonics Week* story explained that the French company Areva "has uranium conversion-related technology and equipment that could decontaminate Iran's LEU."

How would those impurities have gotten into the uranium feedstock in the first place? That's an intriguing question. It seems that the problems reportedly arose at an Iranian plant at Isfahan that converts raw uranium into the gaseous form that can be enriched in the centrifuges. The Isfahan plant hadn't adequately removed molybdenum and other impurities, *Nucleonics Week* reported in 2005.

And where did the equipment at the malfunctioning Isfahan conversion plant come from? You can bet that the Iranians have been worrying about that one for a while. Indeed, the Iranians are probably wondering what other parts of their vaunted nuclear establishment may be prone to malfunction.

And if that's not enough to make the Iranians paranoid, there's the leak about the secret enrichment plant they had been burrowing into a mountain at a Revolutionary Guard base near Qom. If the United States found out about that, what else does the Great Satan know?

Here's the bottom line: There may be more time on the Iranian nuclear clock than some analysts had feared. The fuel stock that the Iranians have worked so hard to produce might damage their centrifuges if they try to enrich it into a bomb. Making a deal with Iran to enrich nuclear fuel outside the country makes sense, so long as the international community can monitor where and how it's used -- and learn whether there's a secret stash.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/15/AR2009101502761.html>

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