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Press Trust of India
October 21, 2009

Stop Terrorists from Acquiring Nuke Weapons: Clinton

By Lalit K Jha

Washington, October 21 (PTI) US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton today said stopping terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons should be top priority for the international community.

"Stopping terrorists from acquiring the ultimate weapon was not a central preoccupation when the NPT was negotiated.

But today, it is. And it must remain at the top of our national security priorities," Clinton said in her major speech on nuclear non-proliferation at the US Institute of Peace.

"The US-led diplomatic campaign began with countering immediate proliferation threats. And we'll seek over time to improve verification, stiffen penalties, disrupt illicit proliferation networks, reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism and allow nations to enjoy the peaceful benefits of nuclear power, while deploying safeguards against proliferation," Clinton said reiterating US policy.

http://www.ptinews.com/news/339923_Italy-inaugurates-first-offshore-gas-terminal

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New York Times
October 22, 2009

Clinton Says Iran and North Korea Must Curb Nuclear Ambitions

By BRIAN KNOWLTON

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton took a tough approach on Wednesday on several proliferation issues, saying that Iran and North Korea must take decisive action to curb their nuclear programs, and not just talk about doing so, if they expected to enjoy an easing of global pressures.

She also foreshadowed the results of a review being conducted by the Pentagon, which she said would produce a "transformational document" on the role, size and composition of the United States' nuclear stockpile.

Mrs. Clinton hinted at broad changes in thinking since the last review in 2001. "Now is the time for fresh views on the role of the U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal," she said. "We can't afford to continue relying on recycled cold-war thinking."

Her comments seemed calculated to shield President Obama from criticism by some in Congress who contend that his call for deep reductions in nuclear stockpiles could jeopardize the country's defenses.

"We must do more than reduce the numbers of our nuclear weapons," she said. "We must also reduce the role they play in our security."

In her speech on the administration's nonproliferation efforts, an address the State Department had billed as particularly important, Mrs. Clinton sought to impart a sense of urgency.

"Unless we act decisively and act now, the situation may deteriorate catastrophically and irreversibly," she said in the speech, delivered to the United States Institute of Peace, a government-financed research center, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

Her remarks on Iran were particularly timely. Earlier in the day, during talks in Vienna, Tehran tentatively agreed to ship much of its stockpile of enriched uranium to Russia.

She welcomed the offer as "a constructive beginning" but cautioned that the United States would not put up with any Iranian tactics that seemed intended to buy time.

Similarly, while welcoming North Korea's return to six-nation talks about dismantling the country's nuclear program, Mrs. Clinton said that any improvement of relations would depend on credible actions by the North Koreans. No normalization of ties was possible with a nuclear North Korea, she said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/22/world/22clinton.html>

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Washington Post
October 22, 2009

Clinton Urges Support For U.S.-Russian Arms-Control Treaty

By Mary Beth Sheridan

With a congressional battle looming, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton on Wednesday defended the administration's broad arms-control agenda and said that reducing U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles would be a critical first step in preventing the spread of the deadly weapons to other countries.

Clinton took aim at President Obama's critics in what was billed as a major address on nuclear nonproliferation at the U.S. Institute of Peace. Speaking to a room packed with experts on nuclear issues, she urged support for a new U.S.-Russian arms-control treaty and a global pact banning nuclear testing.

"Clinging to nuclear weapons in excess of our security needs does not make the United States safer," Clinton said. "And the nuclear status quo is neither desirable nor sustainable. It gives other countries the motivation -- or the excuse -- to pursue their own nuclear options."

Obama has won international recognition, including a Nobel Peace Prize, for his plans to strengthen the world's fragile nuclear nonproliferation system and move toward an eventual "world without nuclear weapons." But in coming months, his strategy will be put to the test in the Senate. Failure to win ratification of the U.S.-Russian pact and the test-ban treaty would weaken Obama's ability to persuade other countries to crack down on the spread of nuclear weapons.

Deepti Choubey, a nonproliferation expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said that Clinton's speech appeared aimed at showing that "the administration has a holistic approach for shoring up the nonproliferation regime, and you can't choose among these measures."

Clinton emphasized the "alarming" range of nuclear proliferation risks in the world today, including North Korea's weapons program and Iran's secretive efforts to enrich uranium. The Islamic republic says it is developing civilian nuclear energy, but other countries fear it could produce a bomb.

In an apparent swipe at George W. Bush's administration, Clinton said that it was easy to advocate a "go-it-alone" attitude toward nuclear weapons. "But we have seen the failed results of this approach," she added.

She acknowledged that negotiating a new deal to reduce U.S. and Russian nuclear stockpiles would not solve the Iranian or North Korean nuclear problems. But, she said, the pact would demonstrate to skeptics worldwide that the U.S. government was sticking to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the grand global bargain of 1968 in which the nuclear powers promised to gradually disarm and other countries pledged to forgo such weapons.

"It will help convince the rest of the international community to strengthen nonproliferation controls and tighten the screws on states that flout their nonproliferation commitments," Clinton said.

The U.S. and Russian governments are racing to complete the pact, which would replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). That 1991 treaty halved the superpowers' nuclear stockpiles and contains the only mechanisms allowing each side to verify the other's nuclear weapons. It will expire Dec. 5.

Already, some U.S. senators have expressed concern about whether the new pact contains too many concessions. Ratification "is not going to be an easy proposition," Sen. John Kyl (Ariz.), a member of the Senate Republican leadership, said last week.

An even bigger challenge for the administration will be getting Senate approval of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which did not win ratification in 1999.

Clinton said the pact would give the United States more power to challenge states engaged in suspicious testing activities. Other countries, she said, "rightly or wrongly view American ratification . . . as a sign of our commitment to the nonproliferation consensus."

Critics have questioned whether it is possible to verify that countries are observing the treaty and have expressed concerns about whether it would prevent modernization of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

In what aides called an important passage in her speech, Clinton said that a major, Pentagon-led review of U.S. nuclear strategy will be a "key milestone."

The review, which the State Department is helping to formulate, is expected to be complete by January.

"We must do more than reduce the numbers of our nuclear weapons. We must also reduce the role they play in our security," Clinton said, adding: "We can't afford to continue relying on recycled Cold War thinking."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/21/AR2009102103858.html>

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New York Times
October 21, 2009

Iran Resists Deal To Ship Nuclear Fuel To Outsiders

By David E. Sanger

VIENNA — President Obama's effort to buy some time for diplomatic engagement with Iran appeared to run into further obstacles on Tuesday, when an Iranian delegation here balked at a deal in which it would ship much of its nuclear material out of the country temporarily, so that it could be converted for medical purposes.

At the end of a long day and evening of direct talks between American and Iranian officials, the two sides agreed to extend the discussions into a third day, in hopes of reaching an agreement.

Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who intervened in the discussions on Tuesday, said, "We are making progress, although slower than expected." Later, Dr. ElBaradei, whose term ends soon, insisted that "we are moving forward" and held out hope for an agreement.

Privately, even members of Dr. ElBaradei's own staff were more pessimistic, saying they had grave doubts that Iran would agree to give up what in nuclear parlance is called "breakout capacity." That is the ability to renounce the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and try to convert reactor fuel into bomb fuel.

"That's their main leverage in the world," said one senior official at the agency. "Even if they don't want a weapon, that's the main thing they have going for them, other than oil."

Iranian officials said little on Tuesday, leaving the international agency's headquarters in the evening, apparently to call Tehran for instructions. A Western diplomat who attended the discussions said, "We don't know at this point whether this project will go forward or not."

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because negotiations were continuing, and they said they did not want to prejudice the outcome.

The United States and the European Union insisted on Oct. 1 that Iran had agreed to use its own uranium to refuel a research reactor in Tehran. That would require roughly 2,600 pounds of fuel, or three-quarters of what Iran is known to possess. Calculations by the International Atomic Energy Agency and outside researchers concluded that it would probably take Iran about a year to replace that fuel with new production, which it is carrying out in violation of three United Nations Security Council resolutions.

If the Obama administration can persuade Iran to give up much of its existing fuel stockpile, it will be able to argue to Israel and others in the Middle East that, at least for a year, Iran will be unable to pose a nuclear threat. But the administration would then have to negotiate an end to Iran's production of new fuel.

Iran's foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, repeated in Tehran on Tuesday that the country would never give up that capacity. Mr. Mottaki also objected to France's participation in the talks in Vienna, saying the French had repeatedly reneged on past nuclear deals with Iran, some dating back decades.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/21/world/middleeast/21nuke.html>

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Washington Post
October 22, 2009

Iranian Officials Accept Draft Deal on Uranium Transfer

By Glenn Kessler

Washington Post Staff Writer

Iranian negotiators on Wednesday accepted a draft agreement that would transfer the bulk of Iran's enriched uranium stockpile out of the country, providing a major boost for the Obama administration as it seeks to engage the Islamic republic.

The deal, which must be affirmed by the government in Tehran, would require Iran to rid itself of nearly 80 percent of its reported stash, effectively delaying any attempt by its scientists to develop a nuclear weapon. It would also allow the Obama administration more time to pursue talks with Iran.

U.S. officials and other diplomats stressed that the deal would be only the first step in a difficult process to persuade Iran to suspend its uranium-enrichment activities and that suspension remains the primary goal. Nonetheless, they said Iran's willingness to accept the draft agreement would be viewed as an early test of its intentions.

For Iran, the deal would mean much-needed fuel for a research reactor that is used for medical purposes. Russia would convert Iran's enriched uranium into reactor fuel, while France would take that material and fashion it into the metal plates used for the reactor. U.S. officials conceived of the plan as a humanitarian gesture that Iran would have difficulty turning down; they also purposely included Russia, which has close ties to Tehran.

Administration officials argue that if Iran does not accept such gestures, it will be easier for them to build the case for tough sanctions and bring Russia and China, which have been skeptical of such tactics, on board.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei, who oversaw the negotiations in Vienna, said he wants a final answer by Friday on the draft agreement, which he has circulated among the negotiators.

"I cross my fingers that by Friday we have an okay by all the parties concerned," ElBaradei told reporters. "I very much hope that people see the big picture -- that this agreement could pave the way for a complete normalization of relations between Iran and the international community."

Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, said that the draft is "on the right track" but that it needs approval from Tehran. "We have to thoroughly study this text and also [need] further elaboration in capitals," Soltanieh told reporters.

Iran has enough low-enriched uranium, in theory, to produce one nuclear weapon. If it agrees to the deal, it would be nine to 12 months before the country could once again have enough uranium to be able to take the risky step of enriching it to weapons grade, according to most estimates.

The transfer of the material, combined with last month's disclosure of a secret enrichment site in Iran, would be "a significant setback to Iran's nuclear weapons activities," said David Albright, a former weapons inspector who is president of the Institute for Science and International Security.

"The solution is suspension, and this is a step toward that," Albright said, adding that the year gained for diplomacy under this deal would be "plenty of time" to achieve that goal.

Keeping up the pressure on Iran, a team of IAEA inspectors is due to visit the newly disclosed facility in the city of Qom on Sunday; diplomats from major powers will meet with Iranian officials in Geneva this month to press for substantive talks on Iran's nuclear program.

Iran had tentatively agreed to the reactor deal at a meeting in Geneva on Oct. 1. This week's meetings were intended to reach a final agreement on technical issues, such as timing and payment for the transaction.

Many of the details remain shrouded in secrecy, but a French diplomat said that the document is "not that far from what" the United States and its allies were seeking -- for the material to be transferred by the end of the year, for the material shipped to make up a significant part of Iran's stockpile and for Tehran to transfer all uranium at once, rather than in batches. He spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks.

Obama administration officials on Wednesday would not comment on the talks.

Up until Wednesday, the talks teetered between stalemate and collapse. Iranian officials, perhaps attempting to sow division among the parties, refused to meet with negotiators from France, saying it had reneged on a previous nuclear agreement. Much of Tuesday's negotiations consisted of bilateral sessions, including a direct meeting between the U.S. and Iranian teams.

The U.S. delegation was led by Deputy Energy Secretary Daniel B. Poneman, making the talks the highest-level negotiations between the two countries since the Iranian revolution three decades ago.

France is one of two countries with the technical expertise to fabricate the metal plates for the reactor -- the other is Argentina -- but under an apparent face-saving compromise, Iran will contract with Russia, which, in turn, will subcontract work to France, diplomats said.

The French diplomat said the difficulties were typical of any dealings with Iran. "They like to bargain," even if they are prepared to say yes, he said. "It is just the way they do it."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/21/AR2009102100636.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

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New York Times

October 22, 2009

Iran Deal Would Slow Making Of Nuclear Bombs

By David E. Sanger

VIENNA — Iranian negotiators have agreed to a draft deal that would delay the country's ability to build a nuclear weapon for about a year, buying more time for President Obama to search for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear standoff.

Under the tentative accord hammered out in international talks here, Iran agreed to ship about three-quarters of its known stockpile of nuclear fuel to Russia for conversion into a form it could use only in a peaceful nuclear reactor, participants in the negotiations said Wednesday. But the arrangement would still have to be approved by Friday in Tehran and Washington.

If Tehran's divided leadership agrees to the accord, which Iran's negotiators indicated was not assured, it will remove enough nuclear fuel from Iran to delay any work on a nuclear weapon until the country can replenish its stockpile of fuel, estimated to require about one year. As such, it would buy more time for Mr. Obama to try to negotiate a more comprehensive and more difficult agreement to end Iran's production of new nuclear material.

Obama administration officials expressed cautious optimism that the agreement could increase the chances of striking a broader diplomatic accord and put off any decision about whether to address the Iranian nuclear threat by other means, including military action. In particular, the United States is seeking to convince Israel that negotiations have reduced the risk that Iran could throw out nuclear inspectors and quickly turn its reactor fuel into bomb fuel.

"There's a part of this that's about getting our diplomacy with Iran started, and a part that's about convincing the Israelis that there's no reason to drop hints that they are going to reach for a military solution," one senior administration official said from Washington.

The Friday deadline for Iran to respond also poses a major test for its embattled leadership, one that is "intended to explore the proposition of whether Iran really wants to negotiate its way out of this problem," in the words of one White House official.

"We want it to make it clear we've made bona fide offers to the Iranians," the official said.

The agreement was conceived as a test of Iran's intentions. Iran claims that it needs the uranium fuel it has produced — in violation of several United Nations Security Council resolutions — for peaceful purposes, citing, among other uses, the Tehran Research Reactor, which makes medical isotopes. Iran said it needed to further enrich 2,600 pounds of uranium, which amounts to three-quarters of its claimed stockpile of the fuel, for that purpose.

Under the draft agreement, Iran would ship that fuel to Russia for further enrichment, and Russia would return it to Iran in the form of metal fuel rods. Those could be used in a reactor but not a nuclear weapon. The deal would take away enough of Iran's existing stockpile of uranium to make it difficult to produce a nuclear weapon until it has time to produce more raw fuel.

Some White House officials argue that the Bush administration, by refusing to talk to Iran, never forced its leadership to make such a choice. If Iran rejects the accord, administration officials believe, that could make it easier to get Security Council approval for harsher financial sanctions, a step that Russia and China have steadfastly resisted so far.

The same theory applies to Iran's behavior on Sunday, when a team of atomic energy agency inspectors is to arrive for a first look at a newly revealed nuclear enrichment plant buried deep inside a mountain near the holy city of Qum. Inspectors have already asked Iran for far more than just a visit. They say they want engineering drawings, permission to interview scientists and others involved in planning the long-hidden nuclear site, and explanations about whether there are other hidden plants to feed the one at Qum with nuclear material. So far the Iranians have not responded.

Even if approved, the deal will represent only one small step toward resolving what has become one of the most complex foreign policy challenges facing Mr. Obama and the Middle East. Because Iran continues to produce nuclear fuel at a rapid clip, this accord would be only a temporary fix, though a symbolically important one.

American officials, including the head of the negotiating delegation here, Daniel B. Poneman, dodged reporters on Wednesday and declined to discuss the contents of the agreement drafted by the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei. He set the deadline of Friday for all sides "to give, I hope, affirmative action" to the accord, which he said was "a balanced agreement."

Dr. ElBaradei, who is leaving his job at the end of next month, said he hoped that leaders in the West and in Tehran would "see the big picture" and approve the agreement. But his voice was tinged with doubt.

While the amount of uranium that would be exported is significant, a critical part of the agreement is the timing of the shipments. Mr. Poneman, the deputy secretary of energy, and other American officials have so far refused to discuss such issues.

"We are not going to get into the details," said Mike Hammer, a spokesman for the National Security Council.

The energy agency's experts said Iran would have too little fuel on hand to build a nuclear weapon for roughly a year after a shipment to Russia. But if the 2,600 pounds of fuel was shipped out of Iran in small batches instead of all at once, the experts warn, Iran would be able to replace it with new fuel almost as quickly as it leaves the country.

Also of concern is the possibility that Iran might have more nuclear fuel in its stockpile than it is letting on. The agency's estimate that it has 3,500 pounds of low-enriched uranium "assumes that Iran has accurately declared how much fuel it possesses, and does not have a secret supply," as one senior European diplomat put it on the sidelines of negotiations in Vienna.

Ultimately, Mr. Obama would have to get Iran to agree to give up the enrichment process as well. Otherwise, the fuel taken out of circulation in the draft accord would soon be replaced.

It was not immediately clear why a draft agreement could not be declared final. But it appeared that the Iranian delegation lacked that authority as it navigated an Iranian leadership that is clearly divided on the question of whether, and how quickly, to pursue the nuclear program.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/22/world/middleeast/22nuke.html>

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Ha'aretz – Israel
22 October 2009

Yossi Melman / Draft Nuclear Deal is a Victory for Iran

By [Yossi Melman](#)

The already distant option of military action against Iran drew even further away on Wednesday, as a draft agreement on Iran's nuclear program dealt a serious blow to chances that the United States will attack Iran.

The full draft of the agreement between six world powers and Iran is still to be published, and the little we know leaves a lot of question marks. However, if the draft is confirmed and if Iran fulfills the agreement to the letter, the Islamic Republic will have scored a major achievement in the war of attrition it has been running against the international community, while still relentlessly pursuing its nuclear program.

The agreement removes all justification for an attack on Iran's nuclear sites over claims it is violating international commitments and attempts to obtain nuclear arms.

The military option seems to have been postponed by at least 18 months, the time frame allocated for the agreement. Israeli policy on Iran has suffered a particularly strong setback, as the agreement also narrows the possibility of significant sanctions against Tehran.

However, the agreement also signifies that Iran is, eventually, vulnerable to pressure, and is aware of the international community's demand and concerns over its nuclear program. The agreement distances Iran by at least 18 months from obtaining enriched uranium, which could then be further enriched to produce nuclear weapons.

Although the agreement essentially contradicts the UN Security Council, which demands a stop to all Iranian enrichment of uranium, it does not contain a clause guaranteeing the removal of the sanctions already imposed on Iran. Those sanctions are fairly light, but their maintenance is a reminder that Iran is still must prove the innocence of its intentions.

At the end of the day, any compromise agreement buys time for all involved. Iran gets relief from international pressures without stopping the uranium enrichment, and the West gets a time-out, while maintaining vigilance over the Tehran's nuclear program.

The agreement can become a landmark in a long journey toward trust and understanding between Iran and the West. But there is also the risk the deal is a one-off, or that Iran will break it, continuing to develop knowledge, technology and materials needed for nuclear weaponry. This possibility considered, the Mossad's estimate Iran could begin producing nuclear arms by 2014 remains as valid as it ever was.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1122794.html>

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Tehran Times – Iran
October 22, 2009

‘Nuclear Program is Symbol of Iranian Culture’

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN-- The nuclear program is the symbol of Iranian culture and the people's resolute determination, the president's senior aide said here on Wednesday.

Mojtaba Samareh Hashemi stated that Iran's nuclear program has various dimensions and has "greatly influenced other nations."

In a conference entitled Nuclear Success: Cultural Dimensions and National Identity, which was held at the University of Tehran, he said, "The nuclear issue is the symbol of the Islamic Republic of Iran's technical and political capabilities, the bravery of the nation and the Supreme Leader, its pursuit of dignity, and the Iranian-Islamic national identity. Today, the world identifies the Iranian nation with these characteristics."

He warned about the innate audacity and greed of the hegemonistic powers, saying that when these powers pressured and coerced the previous administration, they adopted a soft-line policy and made some retreats in order to build confidence, but then the oppressors stepped up their pressure and demands.

Samareh Hashemi stated, "When (President Mahmoud) Ahmadinejad issued the order to remove the seal on the Natanz nuclear facilities, that day was a day of rejoicing for the Iranian nation and its young nuclear scientists."

And during his trips to the provinces, the president turned the nuclear issue into a public demand, he noted.

"Today, even in the most remote villages, people call for their inalienable right to access to nuclear energy."

And the people's presence in the political arena is the pillar of the establishment's strength, he observed.

"The people's united and constant presence is an invincible power."

He went on to say that the discourse of justice and logic is something that no one can oppose.

"The Iranian nation is seeking justice, peace, and sincerity, and undoubtedly the discourse of justice is destined for victory," he opined.

"The Iranian nation will not concede its right to defend its dignity. Courage, resistance, and justice-seeking are part of the Iranian national identity. The Iranian nation (and its) officials and leaders will certainly win.

http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=206126

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Reuters

October 22, 2009

Senior Iranian MP Casts Doubt on Atom Fuel Deal

By Parisa Hafezi

TEHRAN (Reuters) - A senior Iranian MP rejected on Thursday the idea of sending enriched uranium abroad for further processing, hinting at Tehran's reluctance to embrace a proposal meant to ease international tension over its nuclear ambitions.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog has presented a draft deal to Iran and three big powers for approval by Friday. It would cut Iran's quantity of low-enriched uranium (LEU) below the threshold that could yield a nuclear weapon if it were refined to high purity, while providing Iran with fuel for a nuclear medicine facility.

Diplomats say the plan would require Iran to send by the end of the year 1.2 tons of its known 1.5-tonne LEU stockpile to Russia, which would enrich it further. It would be shipped on to France for conversion into fuel plates, then returned to Iran to power a reactor making radio-isotopes for cancer care.

"They (the West) tell us: you give us your 3.5 percent enriched uranium and we will give you the fuel for the reactor. It is not acceptable to us," parliament's deputy speaker, Mohammad Reza Bahonar, was quoted as saying by ISNA news agency.

"The IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) is obliged to provide us with the fuel, based on safeguards," he said.

The U.N. agency provides technical aid to member states for developing civilian nuclear energy. But U.N. sanctions on Iran ban trade in sensitive nuclear materials with the country.

Iran has yet to give an official reaction to the deal draft submitted by IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei on Wednesday after three days of talks in Vienna failed to finalize the deal as the IAEA, France, Russia and the United States had wanted.

Western diplomats said this was because Iran raised many questions about fundamental aspects of the plan which it had already agreed to in principle at talks in Geneva on October 1. ElBaradei's plan contains the key terms sought by the powers.

IRAN "REVIEWING" PROPOSAL

Iran, which says its nuclear program is only for producing electricity, has already amassed enough LEU for one bomb if it were enriched to a concentration of about 90 percent, compared with the 20 percent suitable for the Tehran reactor.

Iran's IAEA envoy hinted after Wednesday's close of the talks that his government may seek amendments to the draft fuel plan. Western diplomats suggested this could unravel the deal.

A senior Iranian official, who declined to be named, said Tehran was still considering the draft. "The proposal is being reviewed and we will later announce our stance," he told Reuters.

The head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, Ali Akbar Salehi, said Iran had the capability to enrich uranium to 20 percent on its own but it did not need much fuel for the plant.

"Despite the fact that we have the capacity and capability to produce enrichment uranium at 20 percent, we prefer to procure this fuel from abroad," Salehi told Iran newspaper.

"But if we receive any signal that the providers are reluctant to give it to us, then to prevent the reactor's closure we have no option but to produce it inside (Iran)."

Only France and Argentina, which in 1993 provided the reactor's fuel stock, now set to run out in about a year, have the technology to fabricate the fuel needed by the plant, Western officials say.

They say the LEU deal would effectively test Iran's stated intention to use enriched uranium only for peaceful purposes, and buy time for negotiations on the West's ultimate goal -- for Iran to halt enrichment in return for trade and technology benefits.

Iran has repeatedly ruled out halting its enrichment activities, but world powers will press for a nuclear freeze at further talks at senior foreign ministry level, planned soon.

"As I said before, we will not relinquish our rights (to enrich uranium), we are committed to our rights," Salehi said.

(Additional reporting by Hashem Kalantari; writing by Fredrik Dahl; Editing by Mark Heinrich and Mark Trevelyan)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSTRE59L2KI20091022?sp=true>

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Jerusalem Post - Israel

22 October 2009

Officials Fear Iran 'Buying Time' As Inner Cabinet Mulls Strategy

BY JPOST.COM STAFF

Israeli assessments regarding a nuclear deal under negotiation with Iran is that it benefits mainly the Islamic regime as it allows Teheran to "buy time" and gives the republic legitimacy to enrich uranium, Israel Radio reported on Thursday.

In Jerusalem, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu convened his seven-member inner cabinet to mull Israel's strategy regarding the deal, which, if accepted by Iranian leaders, would delay Teheran's ability to make nuclear weapons by sending most of its known existing enriched uranium to Russia for processing.

However, Iran's deputy parliament speaker Mohammad Reza Bahonar was quoted by the official IRNA news agency as saying Iran "doesn't accept" the offer, drummed up at a nuclear meeting in Vienna.

Iran proposed the deal on the presumption that in exchange for transferring what it considers to be a relatively small amount of uranium to be enriched abroad, it would gain legitimacy to enrich uranium on Iranian soil, officials reportedly told Israel Radio.

The unnamed officials were quoted as saying that they believe that under the cover of this legitimacy, Teheran would be able to pull off almost any trick, as Iran knows that international supervision is not efficient enough to reach every underground facility and every hidden batch of centrifuges.

In this way, the officials maintained, Iran hopes to gain more time and support from the public in Western countries. But Israel fears that at a certain point, the Islamic republic could return to enriching uranium at full capacity because according to the deal, the arrangement is limited in both time and amount.

The Israeli assessment is that the Americans are supporting the deal although they are not naive and are aware of the Iranian deceptiveness, the radio station reported. But Washington is apparently interested in taking confidence-building steps and in engaging diplomatically with Iran until this option is exhausted. The administration of US President Barack Obama is taking this path to ensure that eventually, it will be able to demand extreme measures and supervision of Iran to prevent it from attaining a nuclear military capability, Jerusalem officials reportedly said.

According to the report, officials have refrained from publicly commenting on the subject because the government's policy was to maintain contact at the inter-governmental level, and not issue public statements that could potentially harm the complicated American campaign.

Also speaking on Israel Radio, Brig. Gen. (ret.) Shlomo Brom, a senior research associate at the Institute for National Security Studies and former director of the Strategic Planning Division in the Planning Branch of the General Staff, explained that the understandings reached between Iran and the West meant the Iranian nuclear threat would not be imminent.

"As a result of the initial agreement, the urgency of the threat will be reduced, because the biggest concern was that Iran would take all of the low-grade uranium in its possession, a considerable amount, and enrich it to a military grade within a short time, enabling it to build a nuclear bomb," Brom said. "The amount [of uranium] that would be left in Iran [after it transfers uranium to be enriched abroad] would not be sufficient to build a bomb."

When asked how the deal may affect the possibility of a military strike on Iran, Brom predicted that "the US and Israel will not strike Iran's nuclear facilities in the near future, but the military option is not completely off the table."

Brom said that while there was "good reason" not to trust the Iranians, he believed it was "important to give this a try and see if Obama's new attitude will work."

"Israel's policy should be waiting to see if this path works, while continuing to improve its intelligence on Iran," he concluded.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1256150026472&pagename=JPost%2FJPostArticle%2FShowFull>

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Al Jazeera. Net
October 22, 2009

Iranian Nuclear Official Denies Reports of Cairo Meeting

Iran has denied newspaper reports that its officials held secret talks recently with their Israeli counterparts to explore the possibility of declaring the Middle East a nuclear-free zone.

The Haaretz on Thursday reported that Meirav Zafary-Odiz, of the Israel Atomic Energy Commission, and Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), met several times on September 29 and 30 in Cairo, the Egyptian capital.

But Ali Shirzadia, the spokesman for the Islamic Republic's atomic energy organisation, said there was no truth in the claim.

"This lie is a kind of psychological operation designed to affect the constant success of Iran's dynamic diplomacy in the Geneva and Vienna meetings," Shirzadia was quoted by Iran state television's website on Thursday as saying.

The *Haaretz* report said that the talks in Cairo were the first direct meeting between official representatives of the two countries since the fall of the Shah in 1979.

The meetings were held behind closed doors, and all participants committed to complete secrecy to allow a full and frank discussion, the paper said.

Media leak

But it added that news of the talks was leaked by Australian sources to the Australian daily, *The Age*.

The reported meetings came amid controversy over Iran's nuclear programme. Western countries, notably the US, accuse Tehran of seeking to develop atomic weapons, but Iran insists its nuclear facilities are for non-military use.

Israel, which neither denies nor confirms possession of nuclear weapons, is said to have anywhere between 100 and 200 nuclear warheads, making it the sixth-largest nuclear power.

Iran is a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but Israel is not.

Haaretz reported the meetings were held at the Four Seasons Hotel under the auspices of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND).

They were also attended by representatives of the Arab League, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, along with European and American officials.

During the meetings, Zafary-Odiz explained the Israeli policy of being willing, in principle, to discuss the Middle East as a nuclear-free zone, according to *Haaretz*.

Strategic situation

The paper added that she detailed Israel's unique strategic situation, saying regional security must be strengthened, security arrangements agreed upon and a peace agreement sealed before Tel Aviv would feel at liberty to discuss nuclear disarmament.

The exchanges between the two officials took place within three panel sessions, the paper reported.

Each session dealt with one of the issues with which the ICNND is concerned - declaring the Middle East a nuclear-free zone, preventing nuclear proliferation in the region and matters of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Zafary-Odiz and Soltanieh did not meet or shake hands outside the sessions.

According to *Haaretz*, Soltanieh directly asked Zafary-Odiz in one of the sessions: "Do you or do you not have nuclear weapons?"

Zafary-Odiz smiled, but did not respond.

<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/10/200910227477253165.html>

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Sydney Morning Herald
October 23, 2009

Rudd Behind Secret Talks as Israel, Iran Discuss Nuclear Deal

CHARLY WEGMAN

JERUSALEM: Israel has confirmed its atomic expert met an Iranian official over the chances of declaring the Middle East a nuclear-free zone, in the first direct talks between the archfoes in 30 years, held under the auspices of an initiative of Kevin Rudd.

The spokeswoman for Israel's Atomic Energy Commission, Yael Doron, said yesterday its representative had held several meetings with an Iranian official "in a regional context" and under Australia's auspices.

Iran denied it had held any nuclear talks with Israel.

Fairfax media first reported last week that Australia had helped accomplish the seemingly impossible - bringing Israel and Iran into the same room to talk about nuclear issues. It said there were serious discussions at the gathering and that the idea of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East had been floated but no major breakthroughs were reported.

Ms Doron declined to give details of the meetings.

The newspaper *Haaretz* said the officials discussed the chances of declaring a nuclear-free zone during the talks held in September, the first between the two foes to be officially disclosed since the shah of Iran was deposed in 1979.

The commission's director of policy and arms control, Meirav Zafary-Odiz, and Iran's delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, met several times in Cairo.

Also at the meeting were representatives of the Arab League - Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Morocco, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia - as well as European and United States officials, the daily said.

It said the meeting was held under the auspices of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation set up at the initiative of the Australian Prime Minister.

Iran's state television website dismissed the reports. "This lie is a kind of psychological operation designed to affect the constant success of Iran's dynamic diplomacy in the Geneva and Vienna meetings," atomic organisation spokesman Ali Shirzadian was quoted as saying.

He was referring to talks in the two capitals in recent weeks between Iran and six world powers on the Islamic republic's controversial nuclear enrichment program.

The announcement of the Cairo meeting came after the UN atomic watchdog on Wednesday handed Iran and world powers a draft deal that could dramatically ease tensions over Tehran's nuclear program.

Tehran must today accept the agreement to export about 80 per cent of its low-enriched uranium or move a step closer to stronger sanctions against it.

The agreement was brokered after talks in Vienna between Iran, Russia, the US and France, according to the UN nuclear watchdog.

Diplomats said the document included demands that Iran ship out most of its stockpile of low-enriched uranium for further processing by another country, which could delay any production of a nuclear weapon by about a year, buying more time for the US President, Barack Obama, to search for a diplomatic solution to the nuclear stand-off.

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/rudd-behind-secret-talks-as-israel-iran-discuss-nuclear-deal-20091022-hbjs.html>

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New York Times
October 23, 2009

Iran Fails to Endorse U.N. Nuclear Deal

Reuters

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran declined on Friday to endorse proposals by the U.N. nuclear watchdog to help reduce Iran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium.

It said it was awaiting a "positive and constructive" response from world powers to its proposal on providing nuclear fuel for a Tehran reactor producing medical isotopes, state television reported.

"Now we are awaiting a positive and constructive response on Iran's proposal from the other party on providing nuclear fuel for Tehran's reactor," TV quoted a member of Iran's negotiating team, who attended the Vienna meeting on October 21, as saying.

"The other party is expected to avoid past mistakes in violating agreements ... and to gain Iran's trust," the unnamed official said.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog on Wednesday presented a draft deal to Iran and three world powers for approval within two days to reduce Tehran's stockpile of low-enriched uranium, seen by the West as a nuclear weapons risk.

The three powers -- Russia, the United States and France -- have all signaled approval of the draft.

Western diplomats said the plan would require Tehran to send 1.2 tons of its known 1.5-tonne reserve of low-enriched uranium (LEU) to Russia and France by the end of the year.

The material would be converted into fuel for the Tehran medical reactor.

<http://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2009/10/23/world/international-us-iran-nuclear-response.html>

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New York Times
October 21, 2009

Poland To Accept U.S. Offer On Shield

By Judy Dempsey

BERLIN — Poland, smarting after President Obama announced last month that he would scrap Bush-era plans to deploy an antiballistic missile system in Eastern Europe, will accept an offer to host parts of a new, more mobile, missile defense system, Polish officials said Tuesday.

The plan for so-called SM-3 missiles, first proposed in Washington last month, will be spelled out in more detail on Wednesday when Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. holds talks with leaders in Warsaw.

"The elements of this new missile defense system will be based in Poland," said Mariusz Handzlik, the chief foreign policy adviser to the Polish president, Lech Kaczynski, whom Mr. Biden is to meet Wednesday.

"This is very important for Poland, for NATO and the U.S. Above all, this is about the long-term strategic cooperation between the U.S. and Poland," Mr. Handzlik said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Handzlik also said that the United States would supply Poland with ground-to-air Patriot missiles, which the Obama administration had pledged to do per an agreement between the Bush administration and Poland.

That had been a longstanding demand by Poland, which wants the missiles as part of a plan to upgrade its air defense. Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski, who led the missile defense negotiations with the Bush team, has insisted that Washington abide by an accord signed in August 2008, under which the United States would supply Poland with the Patriot missiles in return for deploying the missile shield.

The SM-3 missile plan is seen by many analysts as a bid by the Obama administration to convince several Eastern European governments, including the Czech Republic, which also was affected when Washington dropped the old

missile defense plan, that it is not turning its back on the region as it tries to improve relations with Russia. The offer could go a long way toward repairing relations with Warsaw and Prague, whose governments have been among America's strongest allies in Europe but have increasingly felt snubbed by the administration.

"This is about the U.S. sweetening the bitter experience Eastern European leaders had when President Obama scrapped the missile defense plan," said Petr Drulak, director of the Institute of International Relations in Prague.

Mr. Biden is to hold talks with Romanian leaders on Thursday and Czech leaders on Friday. He plans to deliver a speech in Bucharest, Romania's capital, that will set out the administration's policies toward Eastern Europe, said Antony J. Blinken, Mr. Biden's national security adviser.

Moscow has been a staunch opponent of the shield, asserting that the antiballistic missiles were directed against Russia, a claim that the United States has strongly denied. The Bush and Obama administrations have said that any defense shield was meant to protect Europe against a possible attack from Iran; for Poland and the Czech Republic, it was about increasing security vis-à-vis Russia.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/21/world/europe/21biden.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

October 23, 2009

Biden Says New Missiles To Defend Europe

By Alina Wolfe Murray, Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania - Vice President Biden said yesterday that Europe was threatened by medium- and short-range missiles and that a new missile-defense system would help protect it.

Biden was presenting a revamped U.S. missile shield, replacing a scrapped Bush-era project that would have placed 10 interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar base in the Czech Republic to intercept long-range missiles from Iran. His one-day visit to Bucharest was part of a swing through Eastern Europe designed to reassure Poland, Romania, and the Czech Republic - all staunch U.S. allies - that America's commitment to the region remained strong.

The Obama plan would include SM-3 antiballistic missiles at a former air base in the Polish town of Redzikowo, the same site that was to host U.S. missile interceptors in underground silos under the Bush plan.

Moscow perceives the new plan as less threatening because it would not initially involve interceptors capable of shooting down Russia's intercontinental ballistic missiles, experts say.

Biden denied that the new approach was "to appease Russia" at the expense of Central European countries. He said the United States would never make a deal involving Central European states without consulting them. Biden traveled to the Czech Republic later yesterday.

Biden also called on the countries of Eastern Europe to use their experience to help former Soviet republics to build greater democracy, saying the United States would support their efforts.

Speaking to an audience of political leaders and students at Bucharest University, Biden paid tribute to the revolutions of 1989 that toppled communism in the former Soviet satellites.

"The example you set . . . inspired the world," he said. "You can help guide Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine . . . Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus. . . . Your leadership must be bold and your voices loud."

But he also warned about "a new season of challenges" facing the world today, naming the economic crisis, security threats, ethnic tensions, the uncertainties of energy, and water supplies

http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world_us/20091023_Biden_says_new_missiles_to_defend_Europe.html

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Washington Post

October 21, 2009

Gates: N.Korea Still Threat To International Peace

By LARA JAKES and HYUNG-JIN KIM
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea -- U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Thursday that North Korea continues to pose a grave threat to international peace and pledged to maintain a nuclear deterrent in the region.

Gates and his South Korean counterpart, Kim Tae-young, said their two nations would never accept North Korea as a nuclear weapons state. They accused the regime of undermining global security with atomic and missile threats, and said recent overtures from Pyongyang do not diminish the serious atomic threat.

Ballistic missile and nuclear weapons tests conducted in April and May "clearly violate" U.N. Security Council resolutions and international disarmament agreements, they said in a joint statement following their talks.

The violations "undermine the global nonproliferation regime and constitute direct and grave threats to peace and stability" not only for South Korea and the region but also for the broader international community, they said.

Earlier, Gates reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to defending ally South Korea.

"I want to reaffirm the unwavering commitment of the United States to the alliance and to the defense of the Republic of Korea," he said before going into talks with Kim. "The United States will continue to provide extended deterrence, using the full range of military capabilities, including the nuclear umbrella" to ensure South Korea's security.

North Korea sees Washington's nuclear deterrent as a key threat to its survival and long has maintained that it needs its own atomic program to defend itself against the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

Gates and Kim said they agreed to cooperate closely on implementing two U.N. Security Council resolutions that seek to stop North Korea from engaging in ballistic missile activity and in working toward bringing North Korea back to disarmament talks that involve Russia, Japan, China, the U.S. and the two Koreas.

The strong stance from the top defense officials comes amid some signs of possible softening by North Korea after months of tension over Pyongyang's nuclear and missile programs.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Il said earlier this month that his country could rejoin six-party nuclear talks, depending on the status of direct talks with the U.S.

North Korea's No. 2 nuclear negotiator, Ri Gun, was on his way to the U.S., where he is scheduled to attend a security forum next week in California and a seminar in New York. Ri also reportedly is expected to meet with the chief U.S. nuclear negotiator, Sung Kim, to set up bilateral talks.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/10/21/AR2009102100348.html>

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Atlanta Journal-Constitution
October 21, 2009

Gates says US Won't Accept Nuclear North Korea

By LARA JAKES
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — Top American defense officials maintained a tough stand Wednesday against North Korea, calling its threat more lethal than ever even as an envoy from the communist regime was headed to the United States to discuss nuclear programs.

U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates accused North Korea of attempting widespread nuclear proliferation.

"Everything they make they seem to be willing to sell," Gates told a group of American and South Korean troops at the U.S. military headquarters in central Seoul.

"We do not today — nor will we ever — accept a North Korea with nuclear weapons," he said.

Pyongyang's peril "has become even more lethal and destabilizing," Gates said.

In a separate interview in Seoul, the chief of the U.S. Pacific Command that oversees the region's military mission said North Korea "needs to be watched very closely." But Adm. Robert F. Willard also stressed diplomacy's role.

The comments came amid some signs of possible softening by North Korea after years of nuclear tests and a barrage of ballistic missile test-fires, most recently last week.

The reclusive regime in recent months has reached out to Seoul and Washington, freeing detained American and South Korean citizens. North Korean leader Kim Jong Il said earlier this month that his country could rejoin six-party nuclear talks, depending on the status of direct talks with the U.S.

North Korea's No. 2 nuclear negotiator, Ri Gun, was in Beijing on Wednesday on his way to the U.S., where he is scheduled to attend a security forum next week in California and a seminar in New York. Ri also is reportedly expected to meet with the chief U.S. nuclear negotiator, Sung Kim, to set up bilateral talks.

The North is believed to have enough weapons-grade plutonium for at least half a dozen atomic bombs, and has sought to advance its long-range missile capabilities.

Efforts to end its nuclear programs have often stalled because Pyongyang has backtracked on disarmament pacts. North Korea pulled out of six-nation nuclear disarmament talks in April before conducting an atomic test blast in May and a series of ballistic missile tests.

Some analysts say Pyongyang has no intention of giving up nuclear programs and could seek recognition as a nuclear state, like India. Analyst Koh Yu-hwan at Seoul's Dongguk University said the North's mixed moods of conciliation and some provocations are aimed at bolstering its negotiating position ahead of direct talks with the U.S., with a warning that it could again raise tensions at any time.

North Korea has long sought direct negotiations with the U.S. In turn, the U.S. has said it will engage in direct talks if assured that Pyongyang ends its boycott of six-nation disarmament discussions involving the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the U.S.

About 28,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea to help defend against the North. Gates said the U.S. is firmly committed to help South Korea deter the North's threats "with the full range of military might, from the nuclear umbrella to conventional strike and missile defense capabilities."

Gates was in Seoul for two days of talks with South Korean officials after a stop in Tokyo. He was accompanied by Willard, who took command just two days earlier.

"A nuclear-armed North Korea, and a North Korea that chooses to provoke, and a North Korea that may be on the brink of succession — all of those things make North Korea certainly worthy of our attention," Willard said.

<http://www.ajc.com/news/nation-world/gates-says-us-won-167938.html>

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Reuters

October, 22, 2009

Gates Pledges Nuclear Umbrella to Counter North Korea

By Phil Stewart

SEOUL (Reuters) - U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on Thursday that North Korea poses a threat to Washington's allies in North Asia and promised to protect them under the U.S. nuclear umbrella.

Gates, on a visit to Seoul, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Washington, said a day earlier the United States would never tolerate a nuclear-armed North Korea, as Pyongyang in recent weeks has indicated it could return to stalled disarmament discussions.

"The United States will continue to provide extended deterrence using the full range of military capabilities including the nuclear umbrella to ensure ROK security," Gates said in a meeting with the South's defense chief. South Korea's official name is the Republic of Korea.

Clinton laid down a hard line as Washington weighs whether to hold bilateral talks with North Korea, a step it hopes will bring Pyongyang back to wider, six-party talks on ending its nuclear programs in exchange for aid and better global standing.

North Korea began reaching out to foes South Korea and the United States after it was hit by fresh U.N. sanctions for its nuclear test in May. The sanctions targeted the North's overseas arms sales, which provide vital cash for the destitute state.

Gates said the North's threat from its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction remained real and imminent and said Washington would continue to work with regional powers to negotiate an end to Pyongyang's nuclear program.

"In addition to the traditional military threat, North Korea's ballistic missiles and emerging nuclear programs have a destabilizing effect both regionally and internationally," Gates told a news conference after meeting South Korea's defense chief.

"We will stand together with the Republic of Korea (South Korea) and our other allies and partners toward achieving the complete, verifiable denuclearization of North Korea."

South Korean Defence Minister Kim Tae-young said it was too early to say whether reclusive North Korea was ready to engage seriously in nuclear diplomacy.

"Although, on the surface, there are signs of some change from North Korea, including its recent willingness to talk, in reality the unstable situation such as the nuclear program and the military-first policy continues unchanged," Kim said.

Gates and Kim agreed that recent North Korean missile tests were in violation of Security Council resolutions, a joint statement said.

(Additional reporting by Jack Kim; Writing by Jon Herskovitz; Editing by Dean Yates)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSTRE59L0HT20091022>

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Wall Street Journal
October 22, 2009

China Expands Cyberspying In U.S., Report Says

By Siobhan Gorman

WASHINGTON -- The Chinese government is ratcheting up its cyberspying operations against the U.S., a congressional advisory panel found, citing an example of a carefully orchestrated campaign against one U.S. company that appears to have been sponsored by Beijing.

The unnamed company was just one of several successfully penetrated by a campaign of cyberespionage, according to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission report to be released Thursday. Chinese espionage operations are "straining the U.S. capacity to respond," the report concludes.

The bipartisan commission, formed by Congress in 2000 to investigate the security implications of growing trade with China, is made up largely of former U.S. government officials in the national security field.

The commission contracted analysts at defense giant Northrop Grumman Corp. to write the report. The analysts wouldn't name the company described in the case study, describing it only as "a firm involved in high-technology development."

The report didn't provide a damage assessment and didn't say specifically who was behind the attack against the U.S. company. But it said the company's internal analysis indicated the attack originated in or came through China.

The report concluded the attack was likely supported, if not orchestrated, by the Chinese government, because of the "professional quality" of the operation and the technical nature of the stolen information, which is not easily sold by rival companies or criminal groups. The operation also targeted specific data and processed "extremely large volumes" of stolen information, the report said.

"The case study is absolutely clearly controlled and directed with a specific purpose to get at defense technology in a related group of companies," said Larry Wortzel, vice chairman of the commission and a former U.S. Army attaché in China. "There's no doubt that that's state-controlled."

Attacks like that cited in the report hew closely to a blueprint frequently used by Chinese cyberspies, who in total steal \$40 billion to \$50 billion in intellectual property from U.S. organizations each year, according to U.S. intelligence agency estimates provided by a person familiar with them.

"Modern-day espionage doesn't involve cloak and dagger anymore," said Tom Kellermann, a vice president at Core Security Technologies, a cybersecurity company. "It's all electronic."

China is among more than 100 countries that have the capability to conduct cyberspying operations.

The bulk of the report describes the growing ambitions of the Chinese military in cyberspace and its efforts to develop the capability to destroy adversary networks with physical and cyberattacks in the event of a crisis.

Wang Baodong, a spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, criticized the commission as "a product of Cold War mentality" that was "put in place to pick China to pieces." He added: "Accusations of China conducting, or 'likely conducting' as the commission's report indicates, cyberspace attacks or espionage against the U.S. are unfounded and unwarranted."

In the highly organized cyberspy scheme that drained valuable research and development information from a U.S. company, the report said, the hackers "operated at times using a communication channel between a host with an [Internet] address located in the People's Republic of China and a server on the company's internal network."

In the months leading up to the 2007 operation, cyberspies did extensive reconnaissance, identifying which employee computer accounts they wanted to hijack and which files they wanted to steal. They obtained credentials for dozens of employee accounts, which they accessed nearly 150 times.

The cyberspies then reached into the company's networks using the same type of program help-desk administrators use to remotely access computers.

The hackers copied and transferred files to seven servers hosting the company's email system, which were capable of processing large amounts of data quickly. Once they moved the data to the email servers, the intruders renamed the stolen files to blend in with the other files on the system and compressed and encrypted the files for export.

Before exporting the data, the collection team used employee accounts to take over four desktop computers to direct the final stage of the operation.

They selected at least eight U.S. computers outside the company, including two at unidentified universities, as a drop point for the stolen data before sending it overseas. The high Internet traffic volume on university networks provides excellent cover.

The spies activated the operation on all seven servers almost simultaneously, which suggested a plan to export the data as quickly as possible. The company's computer-security team eventually detected the outflow of data, but "not before significant amounts of the company's data left the network," according to the report.

The report highlights several departments of China's military, the People's Liberation Army, responsible for components of cyberspying. Together these divisions oversee electronic spying and attack efforts, as well as research and development.

The PLA has also been creating a number of cyberwarfare militia units, which draw on civilians in the telecommunications and technology sectors, as well as academia, the report found.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125616872684400273.html>

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Jacksonville Observer – Jacksonville, FL
October 21, 2009

Bioterror Failures Criticized in New Report

Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON – The Obama administration is working hard to curb nuclear threats but failing to address the more urgent and immediate threat of biological terrorism, a bipartisan commission created by Congress is reporting today.

The report obtained by USA TODAY cites failures on biosecurity policy by the White House, which the Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction says has left the country vulnerable. The commission, created last year to address concerns raised by post-9/11 investigations, warns that anthrax spores released by a crop-duster could "kill more Americans than died in World War II" and the economic impact could exceed \$1.8 trillion in clean-up and other costs.

The government's efforts "have not kept pace with the increasing capabilities and agility of those who would do harm to the United States," the report says. "The consequences of ignoring these warnings could be dire." Says commission Chairman Bob Graham, a Democratic former senator from Florida: "The clock is ticking."

White House spokesman Nick Shapiro said protecting the nation from deadly weapons is among President Obama's "top national security priorities."

Among the commission's criticisms:

President Obama's National Security Council has no senior political appointees with a biodefense background. "That was not the case in the Clinton and Bush administrations," the report says.

Programs created after the 9/11 attacks to develop and buy vaccines and drugs to prevent and respond to a biological attack are not being funded properly. Although the report is critical of the White House on this topic, Congress has the power of the purse. The report cites a funding shortage for a program to ensure there are enough drugs to respond to a bioterrorist attack.

The Obama administration asked for \$305 million in its fiscal 2010 budget request. "Insufficient by a factor of 10," the report says.

Disease surveillance programs fall short.

The government needs to invest in rapid diagnostic tests to "improve the nation's ability to treat people by providing a more timely and accurate diagnosis" – something that can be critical to treating the victim of a biological attack.

Shapiro says the government is spending \$3.5 billion to protect the public from the H1N1 flu and is "carefully evaluating" broader "all-hazards" spending.

Commission Vice Chairman Jim Talent, a Republican former senator from Missouri, says: "The fact is, it is only getting easier and cheaper to develop and use biological weapons. . . . It is essential that the U.S. government move more aggressively."

<http://www.jaxobserver.com/2009/10/21/bioterror-failures-criticized-in-new-report/>

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Wall Street Journal

OPINION

October 21, 2009

Why We Need To Test Nuclear Weapons

By Jon Kyl

President Barack Obama made history last month when he presided over the nuclear nonproliferation summit at the United Nations Security Council. Since nuclear proliferation is among the most pressing threats facing the world, one would have thought that the president would use the Sept. 24 summit to condemn the newly discovered uranium enrichment facility in Qom, Iran.

He did not. Instead he asked the Security Council to pass a nonbinding resolution stressing the urgency of global disarmament and arms-control treaties among the five permanent Security Council members. The resolution never mentioned Iran or North Korea.

Mr. Obama also said, on behalf of the U.S., that "We will move forward with the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty" (CTBT). This is a profound mistake, as a ban on testing nuclear weapons would jeopardize American national security. Ten years ago this month the U.S. Senate rejected the treaty, and the reasons for doing so are even stronger today.

The CTBT then, as now, does not define what it purports to ban, which is nuclear-weapons testing. This ambiguity leaves countries free to interpret the treaty (and act) as they see fit. Thus, if the U.S. ratified the treaty, it would be held to a different standard than other nations.

Another concern in 1999 was that clandestine nuclear tests could not be verified. That, too, is still the case. While the treaty has not entered into force, the world still uses the treaty's monitoring system (the CTBT Organizations International Monitoring System) to detect nuclear-weapons tests. But even when Pyongyang declared that it would conduct a nuclear-weapons test and announced where and when it would occur, this monitoring system failed to collect necessary radioactive gases and particulates to prove that a test had occurred.

The CTBT relies on 30 of 51 nations on its executive council—most of whom are not friendly to the U.S.—to agree that an illegal test has been conducted, and then to agree to inspect the facilities of the offending country (which can still be declared off-limits by that country). This enforcement mechanism is obviously unworkable.

But there's another defect in the CTBT. There were concerns a decade ago that the U.S. might be unable to safely and reliably maintain its own nuclear deterrent—and the nuclear umbrella that protects our allies such as Japan, Australia and South Korea—if it forever surrendered the right to test its weapons. Those concerns over aging and reliability have only grown. Last year, Paul Robinson, chairman emeritus of Sandia National Laboratory, testified before Congress that the reliability of U.S. nuclear weapons still cannot be guaranteed without testing them, despite more than a decade of investments in technological advancements.

Treaty proponents, nevertheless, believe the prospective benefit of ratification outweighs its risks and problems. And what, exactly, is the benefit of ratification?

Mr. Obama has said that if the U.S. ratifies the test ban treaty the world would finally get serious about the problem of proliferation, in other words, the nuclear-weapons programs of Iran and North Korea. As Secretary of State Hillary Clinton put it at the Sept. 24 nuclear nonproliferation summit at the U.N., "CTBT ratification would also encourage the international community to move forward with other essential nonproliferation steps."

There is some evidence to test that claim. Iran and North Korea are already in violation of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which requires that they do not develop nuclear weapons. Yet for years the world has been unable to agree that these nations' NPT obligations must be enforced. If the world can't or won't enforce the NPT there is no reason to believe it would be any more effective in enforcing the CTBT.

Our allies have the same incentive to prevent Iran from going nuclear today as they would if the U.S. ratified the CTBT. There is nothing in the test ban treaty that enhances their incentive to stop Iran.

There's a related theory, which is that the U.S. has to ratify the CTBT if it wants to have any credibility or leadership on nonproliferation. Assistant Secretary of State Rose Gottemoeller spoke for many in the arms-control community when she said at a nonproliferation conference in Virginia in August, "There is no step that we could take that would more effectively restore our moral leadership."

Aside from the fact that countries will act in their best interest whether or not the U.S. "leads" them, no one can legitimately question U.S. commitment on proliferation issues. No nation has worked harder than the U.S. to pressure North Korea and Iran, and there is no evidence that Russia and China would suddenly help us if we ratified the test-ban treaty.

Moreover, unlike other nations, the U.S. has not conducted a nuclear-weapons test since 1992; it has not designed a new warhead since the 1980s or built one since the 1990s. It has reduced its nuclear-weapons stockpile by 75% since the end of the Cold War and 90% since the height of the Cold War. Meanwhile, the U.S. has spent more than \$7 billion on the Nunn-Lugar program, which deals with the "loose nukes" threat, and it will spend more than \$2 billion on nonproliferation measures such as securing loose nuclear material this year alone. There is again no evidence one more symbolic gesture is going to change anything.

The immediate challenge we face is the threat posed by nuclear proliferation in the hands of rogue regimes. That, and not a flawed, irrelevant test ban treaty, is what the administration should focus on.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704500604574483224117732120.html>

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OPINION

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What's With Iran?

By MARK MEDISH

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

As a former U.S. national security official, I have been straining — along with many fellow Americans — to understand the Iranian nuclear puzzle. What is really going on with Iran? While it is difficult to know exactly what or whom to believe, we can try to connect the dots of recent news reports and put forth several hypotheses.

1. The Pittsburgh Gambit. President Obama's press conference with French President Nicolas Sarkozy and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown at the G-20 summit raised the stakes by revealing a new enrichment facility at Qum and then calling for tougher sanctions if Iran still fails to abide by its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

This was a rhetorical shift for Mr. Obama, who has been experimenting with unconditional engagement. To be sure, he has also been talking about a mix of "bigger sticks and bigger carrots."

The real question is whether it was a purely tactical move to increase pressure, or whether Mr. Obama and his colleagues actually have a more comprehensive game plan. The latter could be based either on some special knowledge — the expectation of a landmark understanding with Tehran, for example, or confidence that new sanctions would be both agreed and effective.

If not, the Western leaders could be setting themselves up for a further loss of credibility when deadlines again pass without results.

2. Qum. What is it? The Iranians hurriedly informed the International Atomic Energy Agency that something was indeed afoot at Qum. Most experts I have spoken with suspect that it was originally designed as a rocket site and is being converted into a "survival enrichment facility" in case Natanz and other nuclear-program sites are hit. There is probably no fissile material at Qum.

The United States claims to have known about Qum since 2007. Yet there is still no satisfactory explanation why Qum was outed now by both the Iranians and Mr. Obama.

3. The Geneva and Vienna Talks. Iran's talks with the so-called P5+1 (the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany) have been at least superficially productive. Tehran promised to allow inspectors to visit the Qum facility and to send a substantial amount of low-enriched uranium (LEU) to Russia and France for processing.

These steps could represent some progress — or at least "the beginning of the beginning" as one analyst put it — giving Mr. Obama's engagement strategy a hint of early success. A more skeptical interpretation, prevalent among some veteran Western security analysts, is that the Iranian regime simply did the bare minimum to buy time.

In any case, the promises to allow inspectors as required by the NPT and to shift LEU will be tested soon enough.

4. The Missing Nuclear Scientist. The recent disclosure of the disappearance three months ago of the top Iranian nuclear expert, Dr. Shahrhan Amiri — coinciding with the June crackdown and before the Qum disclosure — is interesting, particularly interesting in view of the report that Iran's supply of LEU is running low and riddled with serious impurities that could cause centrifuge failure. Whether he defected or was kidnapped is unclear.

Critics of the Geneva talks immediately noted that these technical problems would explain why Tehran is now eager to transfer LEU to Russia in exchange for new fuel. But this picture also cuts against the notion that the Qum disclosure reveals a more imminent nuclear threat.

5. Moscow's Swing Vote. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went to Moscow last week to keep pushing the "reset button." The main purpose was to advance the nuclear arms-reduction treaty talks. A new treaty, which is widely expected, would show that the United States and Russia are committed to the NPT's long-term objective of a nuclear-free world.

A related purpose of Mrs. Clinton's visit was Iran. The Kremlin cannot deliver a deal with the ayatollahs, but it can constrict their options. President Dmitri Medvedev praised the Geneva-Vienna talks and noted that "sanctions are not appropriate at this time."

The Russians oppose sanctions primarily because they fear what could happen if sanctions fail. They understand that sanctions are not an end in themselves.

If Russia — or China — supported sanctions, they would have been on the dais with Mr. Obama, Mr. Sarkozy and Mr. Brown at the G-20.

But Mr. Medvedev's final qualifier — "at this time" — was new and significant. Tehran certainly noticed the nuance. The Russians most likely told Mrs. Clinton that they would pressure Tehran to fulfill its renewed NPT commitments.

As a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and NPT co-architect, Moscow prefers a non-nuclear Iran. But Moscow also probably prefers the status quo — an isolated Iran with nuclear ambitions that vex the West — to an Iranian détente or rapprochement.

Yet Moscow would certainly accept the latter scenario if it could avoid a regionally destabilizing military strike by the U.S. or Israel. Hence, Russia's half-hearted, incremental cooperation with the West.

6. The Tricky Endgame. Just as in the Afghanistan case, where serious analysts are now floating the once radical idea of withdrawal and containment, new paradigms are starting to surface for Iran.

There are only three theoretical options — a pre-emptive strike, acquiescence and deterrence, or a negotiated framework.

The first is basically untenable if not unfeasible. The second is feasible but undesirable. The last is the best workable scenario.

The most encouraging theory is that the Iranians are not really so close to nuclear testing capacity and, further, that their strategy is in fact to remain in roughly this position.

On this view, Tehran might intend to develop all the needed infrastructure but to remain “18 months away” from testing. This posture could comply with the NPT and was essentially the shah's strategy in the 1970s.

Several dozen countries, foremost among them Japan, Brazil and South Africa, are in this position today. Refraining from testing is critical — this is where non-proliferation failed miserably with India and Pakistan.

If Tehran is interested in what is sometimes called the “Japan option” — maintaining an ability to produce a nuclear weapon on short notice, but not actually testing one — this could present a reasonable opportunity for a negotiated framework of inspections, surveillance and early warning. Iran would need to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

To achieve such a framework would require at least minimal trust between Iran and the West, and also Russia, Israel and the Arab states. A good context would be engaging Iran across a wider frontier of regional security issues.

The trouble is that trust is awfully low between the United States and Iran. Who will move first?

Due to serious domestic fissures, the Iranians may not have the confidence to move in this direction. In a sense, no Iranian leader wants to be a Gorbachev, presiding over regime collapse. All want to be a Putin presiding over consolidation.

7. The Israeli Wild Card. If trust between the United States and Iran is near zero, trust between Israel and Iran is sub-zero.

What is most worrisome is that some Israelis are privately calling Mr. Obama weak and implying they can no longer trust the U.S. on Iran. A new rumor is circulating that Israel intends to strike Iran in the near term.

Israel can start a war against Iran, but it is doubtful Israel could finish such a war. Even if a surgical strike were feasible, it would almost certainly lead to an asymmetrical reply and a wider war in the Middle East.

If the strike scenario cannot work, why do Israelis keep making so much noise? Perhaps noise is the main part of their strategy. Before previous pre-emptive strikes, on Iraqi and Syrian sites, Israel was silent.

But then threatening Israeli noise could also be counterproductive, impelling the Iranians to move faster than they otherwise would.

* * *

A top European official said to me, “There is a serious risk that our policy will be failed talk followed by failed sanctions followed by failed war.” Then he added: “Better to be smart and diplomatic — and to know when there does seem to be an opening.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/22/opinion/22iht-edmedish.html>

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