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Articles & Other Documents:

[U.S. Top Brass: Nuclear Iran is Existential Threat to Israel](#)

[U.S. Wants Proof of North Korean Intentions before Direct Talks](#)

[Iran may Reject Plans to Ship Out Uranium](#)

[Obama Will Send Top Diplomat To North Korea For Direct Talks](#)

['Iran to Announce Final Decision on Nuclear Proposal after Talks with IAEA'](#)

[Germans Press For Removal Of US Nuclear Weapons In Europe](#)

[Medvedev Says Russia May Back Sanctions on Iran if Deal Falls Apart](#)

[U.S., Pakistan Negotiate Deal on Nuke Security: Report](#)

[Iran Turns Down IAEA New Offer](#)

[Pakistan Rejects Report Questioning Nuclear Weapons' Safety](#)

[A Q Khan Backs Iran's Right to Develop Nukes](#)

[No Intention Of Seizing Pak Nuclear Weapons: US](#)

[Iran may Call for a Nuclear Fuel Swap, Iranian TV Reports](#)

[Pakistan "Fully Capable" of Securing Nuclear Arms](#)

[Iranian Negotiator: Teheran 'Still Welcomes' Negotiations with West](#)

[Nuke Myth Blows Up: The West must Stop Pretending that Iran might Compromise](#)

[US Offers Iran to Keep Uranium Stockpile with Russia](#)

[Bilateral Dialogue Unlikely to Solve Problems](#)

[Iran Said to Ignore Effort to Salvage Nuclear Deal](#)

[U.S. Officials Optimistic About New Nuclear Treaty With Russia](#)

[Hopes Rise for New U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Deal](#)

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Ha'aretz – Israel
8 November 2009

U.S. Top Brass: Nuclear Iran is Existential Threat to Israel

By Amir Oren, Haaretz Correspondent

The chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Michael Mullen, said last week in Washington that a nuclear Iran would pose an existential threat to Israel.

Mullen said he would prefer that the U.S. work diplomatically to keep the country from acquiring nuclear weapons, but hinted that should such efforts fail, the U.S. air force and navy could be put into action as well.

Ahead of Defense Minister Ehud Barak's visit to the Pentagon this week, Israeli military sources said they were satisfied with the progress in talks with their American counterparts over acquiring F-35 fighter jets. Israel will pay \$135 million per jet if it buys 25, and \$100 million if it buys 75.

Meanwhile, Washington has retracted its opposition to installing Israeli-made systems on the jets. However, a disagreement over Israel's request for complete access to the planes' computer systems is yet to be resolved.

At a conference at the National Press Club, Mullen said he has spent a significant amount of time with his Israeli counterpart, IDF Chief of Staff Gabi Ashkenazi, and that "it's very clear to me that a nuclear weapon in Iran is an existential threat to Israel," according to a transcript released by his office.

"There is no doubt in my mind that's how the Israelis feel," he said, adding, "Given that view, [and] their sense of both focus and urgency ... it is up front. It is at the top of their list."

Mullen has held frequent talks with Ashkenazi over the past two years. The most recent was last month in Normandy, France.

Ashkenazi, his deputy Maj. Gen. Benny Gantz, and Brig. Gen. Yossi Baidatz (head of the Military Intelligence research division), met last week with Adm. James Stavridis, the commander of U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and NATO supreme allied commander of Europe, while Stavridis visited Israel with several of his top officers.

Israel is within EUCOM's area of responsibility, but lately ties have grown tighter between Israel and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), which is responsible for Iran.

Hinting at differences in perceptions between the administrations in Washington and Jerusalem, Mullen said Iran's nuclear program appears "to be the No. 1 priority for Israel, and certainly it's a very high priority for us."

Mullen added that a nuclear Iran would undermine the stability of a region that is already highly unstable, and that he supports U.S. President Barack Obama's view that "the goal is to make sure that they don't get a nuclear weapon. At the same time, a strike on Iran, getting into a conflict with Iran, I think would also be incredibly destabilizing."

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1126580.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Guardian – U.K.
8 November 2009

Iran may Reject Plans to Ship Out Uranium

Peter Beaumont
The Observer,

A senior Iranian official has ruled out a proposal that would see it ship uranium abroad for enrichment, intensifying pressure on Tehran to reject the UN-backed plan altogether.

A prominent conservative member of the Iranian parliament, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, said Iran would under no circumstances ship low-enriched uranium abroad, even in several shipments, a compromise suggested by some government officials. "Nothing will be given of the 1,200 kilograms [of low-enriched uranium] ... to the other side in exchange for 20% enriched fuel. It is out of the question," the semi-official ISNA news agency quoted Boroujerdi as saying.

The UN-brokered plan required Iran to send the uranium – about 70% of its stockpile – to Russia by the end of the year, easing concerns that the material would be used for a bomb.

France would then convert the enriched uranium into fuel rods to be returned to Iran for use in a reactor that produces medical isotopes. Fuel rods cannot be further enriched into weapons-grade material

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/08/iran-nuclear-enrichment-russia-proposal>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Tehran Times – Iran
November 8, 2009

‘Iran to Announce Final Decision on Nuclear Proposal after Talks with IAEA’

Tehran Times Political Desk

TEHRAN -- Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Chairman Alaeddin Boroujerdi has said that Iran will announce its final decision about the nuclear proposal after the talks between its ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, and IAEA officials.

The issue is being closely examined to see what can be done but no decision has been made yet, Boroujerdi told ISNA on Saturday.

Commenting on the remarks by some Western officials, who said that Iran should announce its final decision on Monday, he stated, "The Westerner's cannot set any deadline for us."

The nuclear fuel talks between Iran, Russia, the United States, and France in Vienna concluded on October 21 without a final agreement, but IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei presented a proposal for the four countries to study and said he hoped that all parties would give a firm response to his draft deal by October 23.

Under the draft deal, a large consignment of Iran's enriched uranium would be shipped out of the country for processing into fuel rods with a purity of 20 percent, which would be used by a research reactor in Tehran that manufactures medical radioisotopes.

On October 23, diplomats from Russia, France, and the United States submitted their formal approvals of the deal to process Iran's nuclear fuel abroad.

Several senior Iranian officials, including Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, have strongly criticized the deal, saying it is neither logical nor legal.

Iran does not trust the West

MP Ahmad Avaii of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee stated that Iran does not trust the West so Western countries should try to gain Iran's confidence.

"Just as Western countries are always saying that Iran should build confidence and 'we' (Westerners) do not have confidence in Iran, we (Iranians) have also had bitter experiences in relations with the West and do not trust the West," he told ISNA on Saturday.

Avaii said he believes the West wants to deceive Iran and has thus proposed a plan whose practical result would be the suspension of nuclear activities.

The MP also stated that Iran is a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and should have the same rights as all the other NPT signatory states.

But Iran's membership in the NPT has provided no advantages so far, he said.

No guarantee that West will fulfill promises

MP Seyyed Hossein Naqavi has said that there is no guarantee that the Westerners will fulfill their commitments in the talks and Iran is right to distrust them.

There is no guarantee, and thus the proposal for a fuel exchange is out of the question, he told ISNA on Saturday.

The MP explained that Iran first intended to accept the deal to acquire the fuel rods with a purity of 20 percent but the Westerners did not build confidence in this regard and Iran could not trust them.

Iran does not trust the countries that made the proposal to provide Iran the enriched uranium because they reneged on their previous commitments, he noted

http://www.tehrantimes.com/Index_view.asp?code=207393

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 8, 2009

Medvedev Says Russia May Back Sanctions on Iran if Deal Falls Apart

By ELLEN BARRY

MOSCOW — President Dmitri A. Medvedev said Russia might back sanctions against Iran if the Iranians did not take a “constructive position” on an international plan to temporarily diminish their stockpile of enriched uranium.

The statement, made in an interview with Der Spiegel and released by the Kremlin, resembles one Mr. Medvedev made in September after meeting with President Obama in New York. But it takes on added significance now because Iran has equivocated on the international agreement. That deal would require Iran to ship its low-enriched uranium out of the country for processing, easing fears that the fuel would be used for nuclear bombs.

“If agreements are reached on the programs linked to uranium enrichment and its use for peaceful purposes in Iran, we will with pleasure take part in these programs,” Mr. Medvedev said. “If the Iranian leadership takes a less constructive position, then anything is possible, in theory.

“We would not want this to end in imposing sanctions under international law, because sanctions, as a rule, are a complex and dangerous path,” he continued. “But if there is no forward movement, no one can rule out this scenario.”

Russia has traditionally opposed sanctions against Iran, which it considers an important regional ally. In September, Mr. Medvedev signaled a policy shift after meeting with Mr. Obama, but Moscow remained reluctant; as recently as last month, Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov called sanctions “counterproductive.” Still, Moscow may be left with no choice if Iran rejects the uranium enrichment plan, which Russia helped draft under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

During meetings with his British counterpart last week, Mr. Lavrov said he expected the plan “to be approved by all sides without exception, including Iran.”

“In a sense, I think this is a red line,” said Vladimir Sotnikov, an Iran analyst at the Center for International Security in Moscow. “What I think is that probably Russia will try again to postpone this red line as much as possible. But Iran is not giving Russia a choice.”

News of the accord — supported by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad — led to a political uproar in Iran, where his critics said the country was giving up too much to the West. Tehran then began backing away from the deal, saying it would not abide by the original terms but that it had alternative proposals.

On Saturday, a senior Iranian lawmaker kept up the pressure on the government to reject the deal. The lawmaker, Alaeddin Boroujerdi, told the semiofficial news agency ISNA that the deal was “called off,” although he also said that Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran’s ambassador to the I.A.E.A., was “in talks” to try to find alternatives to the deal.

Mr. Boroujerdi rejected the notion that there was a deadline for responding to the deal.

Under the original plan, the country would have been required to send about three-quarters of its current known stockpile of low-enriched uranium to Russia for conversion into a form it could use only in a peaceful nuclear

reactor. If Iran's stated estimate of its stockpile of fuel is accurate, the deal would leave the country with too little fuel to make a weapon until the stockpile was replenished.

American officials said they thought that the accord would give them a year or so to seek a broader nuclear agreement with Iran while defusing the possibility that Israel might try to attack Iran's nuclear installations.

Mr. Medvedev's latest comments on sanctions came in a wide-ranging interview with Der Spiegel, just ahead of a visit to Germany for the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Among the topics he discussed was the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty; he said that Washington and Moscow "have every chance" to complete a renegotiation "and sign a legally binding document by the end of this year."

Mr. Medvedev also suggested — as he does regularly — that his views on Soviet history differed from those of his predecessor, Prime Minister Vladimir V. Putin, who is widely considered the de facto leader of the country. Asked if he agreed with Mr. Putin's oft-quoted statement that the collapse of the Soviet Union was "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century," Mr. Medvedev called the collapse "a very serious, dramatic event" that divided the Soviet people.

But his answer seemed to be no. "I think the Second World War is no less serious a catastrophe in the 20th century, and if you consider its consequences, a much more serious tragedy," he said. "And the revolution of 1917 in our country was accompanied by a civil war, in which relatives fought against each other, and friends shot each other. Wasn't that a catastrophe?"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/08/world/middleeast/08iran.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Xinhua News – China
8 November 2009

Iran Turns Down IAEA New Offer

- Iran again turned down an offer by IAEA to ship its enriched uranium to neighboring Turkey.
- IAEA head ElBaradei has offered Turkey as a third country after Iran refused the West's proposal.
- The draft agreement called for shipping most of Iran's existing enriched uranium to Russia, France.

TEHRAN, Nov. 8 (Xinhua) -- Iran again turned down an offer by the UN nuclear watchdog requiring the country to ship its enriched uranium to neighboring Turkey, the satellite Press TV reported on Sunday.

Tehran said such an offer had already been made by the chief of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and was rejected by Iran then.

"This proposal which was made by the chief of IAEA long time ago was rejected by Iranian authorities at the time," the report quoted an unnamed source as saying.

"It seems the IAEA chief is trying to take advantage of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's (forthcoming) visit to Turkey to gain media coverage on a closed issue," the source said on condition of anonymity.

In his new offer, the IAEA head Mohamed ElBaradei said Saturday that Iran's enriched uranium could be transferred to Turkey until Russia supplies Tehran with high-enriched uranium.

He has offered Turkey as a third country after Iran refused the West's proposal that the uranium be enriched in Russia; "It should work," ElBaradei said during a television interview.

A senior member of Iranian parliament said Saturday that Iran will not exchange its own enriched uranium for fuel to supply a research reactor in Tehran, local ISNA news agency reported.

The draft agreement, presented earlier by IAEA chief, called for shipping most of Iran's existing low-grade enriched uranium to Russia and France, where it would be processed into fuel rods with a purity of 20 percent.

The United States, Russia and France have approved the draft deal, but Iran said it wanted amendments and more talks on the issue.

http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/08/content_12412352.htm

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

IBNLive.com – India
November 9, 2009

A Q Khan Backs Iran's Right to Develop Nukes

Press Trust Of India

Islamabad: Disgraced Pakistani nuclear scientist A Q Khan has backed Iran's right to develop nuclear energy and said a propaganda campaign had been launched against that country's atomic programme.

The West is biased against the nuclear programmes of all Islamic countries, including Iran, Khan claimed in an interview to the Iranian state-run Irna news agency.

"If Iran fires a missile then it is wrong, but if Israel does it then it is right," said Khan, who was placed under house arrest after he confessed in early 2004 that he had provided nuclear secrets to several countries, including Iran.

Khan claimed every action of the Muslim world is considered wrong by the West. He also claimed a majority of Muslim countries had "surrendered before the power of the West, which is unfortunate".

Replying to a question about the proposal to send 70 per cent of Tehran's enriched uranium out of the country for further enrichment, Khan said Iran is an independent state and will make a decision on this issue while keeping in view its interests.

"However, the international scenario is such that the West is against Iran, and Muslims countries are so weak that they cannot help Iran," he claimed.

Khan said he believed there is no harm if Iran sends its uranium to other countries for further enrichment.

"At least, Iran could achieve nuclear capability which cannot be taken away and in future, Iran could use this capability according to its desires," Khan said.

Iran has faced three sets of UN Security Council sanctions over its refusal to freeze its uranium enrichment activities.

The country, a leading oil producer, denies it is seeking nuclear weapons and says it aim is to provide energy for its growing population when its reserves of fossil fuels run out.

Asked about restrictions imposed on his movement, Khan claimed the Lahore High Court had ordered authorities to remove these restrictions.

"I can go anywhere at my own choice," he claimed.

"I would be provided with security according to my needs and soon my lawyer will hold a meeting with the authorities concerned on the issue," he said.

The Islamabad High Court recently declared Khan a "free man" and authorities have eased some of the restrictions imposed on him following a secret understanding between the scientist and the government.

However, Pakistan has ruled out the possibility of foreign investigators being granted access to Khan.

<http://ibnlive.in.com/news/a-q-khan-backs-irans-right-to-develop-nukes/104863-2.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Los Angeles Times
November 9, 2009

Iran may Call for a Nuclear Fuel Swap, Iranian TV Reports

By Borzou Daragahi
Reporting from Doha, Qatar

A state-owned Iranian television station quoted unnamed diplomats Sunday as saying Iran, in a possible compromise to a U.N.-backed proposal, is willing to send about 1,800 pounds of its enriched uranium abroad to be exchanged for fuel for a medical reactor.

The original proposal, backed by the Obama administration, had called for Iran to send abroad about 2,600 pounds, or 70% of its nuclear material supply, by year's end, temporarily lowering Iran's capacity to build a nuclear bomb and creating the diplomatic breathing room for a possible broader deal. Although Iran maintains that its nuclear

development program is for civilian purposes only, Western nations believe the Islamic Republic is seeking to build nuclear weapons.

Diplomats looking for a way out of a years-long impasse over the nuclear program weeks ago proposed a deal in which Iran would give up the bulk of its refined uranium to be further refined in Russia and France for the Tehran medical reactor.

The report Sunday on the Press TV website said Iran instead sought a "two-staged, simultaneous exchange" of about 1,800 pounds of its enriched uranium for 265 pounds of medical reactor uranium plates.

No other source confirmed such an Iranian counteroffer.

Iran has yet to formally reply to the United Nations-backed export proposal.

Some Iranian officials said they did not trust Russia and France to follow through on the offer to enrich the fissile material for use in the medical reactor.

On Saturday, the head of the Iranian parliament's national security and foreign affairs committee said Iran would refuse to send any of its low-enriched uranium abroad. But diplomats and arms-control authorities have yet to give up on the proposal.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov paid a surprise visit to Tehran on Sunday to meet with Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Saeed Jalili. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev told the German weekly Der Spiegel that Moscow may back further sanctions if ongoing negotiations fail. French officials say Washington has asked European allies to hold off until the end of the year before raising the possibility of new sanctions on Iran.

Iran already has more than enough low-enriched uranium to fuel a single nuclear bomb if it were to further refine its supply, a move that would break its treaty obligations.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran-nuclear9-2009nov09,0,4185327.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Jerusalem Post – Israel
November 9, 2009

Iranian Negotiator: Teheran 'Still Welcomes' Negotiations with West

BY JPOST.COM STAFF

Iran wants negotiations with the six world powers to be completed "as quickly as possible," the country's chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili was quoted by Reuters as saying Sunday night.

"Teheran still welcomes the negotiations (with the six powers) on the basis of its package of proposals," Jalili said, according to an Iranian media report.

Talks with the US, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China have been focused around a UN-brokered plan which would require Iran to send 1.2 tons (1,100 kilograms) of low-enriched uranium - around 70 percent of its stockpile - to Russia in one batch by the end of the year, easing concerns the material would be used for a bomb.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1257455213602&pagename=JPost%2FJPostArticle%2FShowFull>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Times of India
November 9, 2009

US Offers Iran to Keep Uranium Stockpile with Russia

WASHINGTON: Broadening its offer, the US has said it would allow Iran to keep its stock of enriched nuclear fuel with several nations, including Turkey, for temporary safekeeping, official sources said.

With Iran yet to agree to earlier offer from western powers asking it to keep its uranium stockpiles with Russia, the US has now proposed to send Iranian uranium to Turkey, the New York Times reported today saying this had been confirmed by the IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei.

Citing unnamed administration officials, the report said that the overtures to store uranium with Russia have been ignored. Instead, Tehran has revived an old counterproposal that calls for international arms inspectors to take custody of much of their fuel, but keep it on Kish, a Persian Gulf resort island that is a part of Iran.

An offer rejected by Washington fearing a repeat of 2003 when North Korea had converted its fuel into the material for several nuclear weapons.

A senior Obama administration official said that Iran's proposal had been rejected because leaving the nuclear material on Iranian territory would allow for the possibility that the Iranians could evict the international inspectors at any moment, the paper said.

The official also said that they had now all but lost hope that Iran would follow through with an agreement reached in Geneva on October 1 to send its fuel out of the country temporarily.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/middle-east/US-offers-Iran-to-keep-uranium-stockpile-with-Russia/articleshow/5211341.cms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 9, 2009

Iran Said to Ignore Effort to Salvage Nuclear Deal

By DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON — The Obama administration, attempting to salvage a faltering nuclear deal with Iran, has told Iran's leaders in back-channel messages that it is willing to allow the country to send its stockpile of enriched uranium to any of several nations, including Turkey, for temporary safekeeping, according to administration officials and diplomats involved in the exchanges.

But the overtures, made through the International Atomic Energy Agency over the past two weeks, have all been ignored, the officials said. Instead, they said, the Iranians have revived an old counterproposal: that international arms inspectors take custody of much of Iran's fuel, but keep it on Kish, a Persian Gulf resort island that is part of Iran.

A senior Obama administration official said that proposal had been rejected because leaving the nuclear material on Iranian territory would allow for the possibility that the Iranians could evict the international inspectors at any moment. That happened in North Korea in 2003, and within months the country had converted its fuel into the material for several nuclear weapons.

The intermediary in the exchanges between Washington and Tehran has been Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the energy agency. He confirmed some of the proposals — including one to send Iran's fuel to Turkey, which has nurtured close relations with Iran — in interviews in New York late last week.

But members of the Obama administration, in interviews over the weekend, said that they had now all but lost hope that Iran would follow through with an agreement reached in Geneva on Oct. 1 to send its fuel out of the country temporarily — buying some time for negotiations over its nuclear program.

“If you listen to what the Iranians have said publicly and privately over the past week,” one senior administration official said Sunday, “it's evident that they simply cannot bring themselves to do the deal.” The administration officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were speaking about delicate diplomatic exchanges.

Iranian officials told the energy agency on Oct. 29 that they could not agree to the deal that their own negotiators had reached, but they never explained why. Iran has never publicly rejected the deal, but its official reaction has been ambiguous at best.

Dr. ElBaradei insisted he still had hope, but he conceded that the chances were receding.

“I have been saying to the Iranian leadership, privately and publicly, ‘Make use of that opportunity. Reciprocate.’ ” Dr. ElBaradei said last week. But he said that it now appeared that “the foreign policy apparatus in Iran has frozen,” partly because of the country's own domestic turmoil.

So far, President Obama has said nothing about the stalemate threatening his first, and potentially most important, effort at diplomatic engagement with a hostile foreign government. When the first meeting in Geneva ended Oct. 1,

Iranian and American officials said they would meet again later in the month to discuss the nuclear program and the potential for a broader relationship. That meeting never occurred, and none is scheduled.

Mr. Obama's aides say he is still willing to wait until year's end before concluding that Iran is rejecting his offers of diplomatic engagement. What happens after that is unclear: Mr. Obama has suggested he would then turn to much more severe sanctions than the United Nations has already imposed against Iran, though it is unclear whether Russia and China would go along.

Officials in Israel, which feels the most threatened by Iran, have hinted that if Iran does not accept the Geneva deal they will revive their consideration of a military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities. Mr. Obama's own aides say they cannot determine whether the Israelis are bluffing.

Iran's backpedaling from the Geneva deal — which would require Iran to ship 2,600 pounds of low-enriched uranium to Russia by Jan. 15 for processing into fuel rods for a reactor in Tehran used for medical purposes — will almost certainly be discussed when Mr. Obama meets the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, at the White House on Monday evening.

In public, Mr. Netanyahu expressed support for the deal after it was announced. Privately, Israeli officials here said they expected it to fall apart because they doubted the Iranian government would part, even temporarily, with the fuel it had spent years accumulating.

Administration officials say they had been working closely with Russia each step of the way, and were pleased over the weekend that the Russian president, Dmitri A. Medvedev, had raised anew the prospect of economic sanctions if Iran rebuffed the offer. Russia has an economic interest in the deal: it would reap considerable revenue for converting Iran's fuel — a step that Turkey would not be able to perform — and Russian officials appear to still be pressing the Iranians to take the deal.

"Russian efforts may well prompt Iran to accept," an administration official said Sunday. "There is still time for Iran to make the right choice" before the board of the I.A.E.A. meets later this month.

But few other American or European officials interviewed in recent days seem to believe that the Iranians will agree to send the fuel to Russia, Turkey or any other nation. Officials would not say which other nations would possibly accept the fuel.

Officials say they believe that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, who first suggested the country might be willing to export its uranium temporarily, may have never expected that suggestion to be considered seriously. Some officials speculate Mr. Ahmadinejad's offer may have been overruled by other Iranian authorities.

The idea of offering to help Iran use its stockpile to fuel the medical reactor attracted Mr. Obama because it would buy him time. Iran has generated enough fuel to make between one and two weapons — if it were further enriched — and it would take Iran roughly a year to replace the fuel it sent out of the country. That would take the pressure off some of the negotiations.

For that reason, it touched off a nationalistic backlash in Iran, and Mr. Ahmadinejad was criticized by both reformers and hard-liners. "The countries which were proposed to receive our 5 percent uranium were not countries that the Islamic republic trusts to trade with," Hosein Naghavi-Hosseini, a member of Iran's Majlis Security Council, said over the weekend, according to Iran's state-run press, "because in the past, these countries have not held up their side of trade agreements."

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, used the 30th anniversary of the takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran last week to warn Iranians against Mr. Obama's offers of diplomatic engagement.

Mr. Obama is reported to have sent Ayatollah Khamenei two private letters this year, but he received only one response, mostly a litany of past grievances.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/09/world/middleeast/09iran.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post
November 8, 2009

U.S. Officials Optimistic About New Nuclear Treaty With Russia

By Mary Beth Sheridan and Walter Pincus

After months of negotiations with Russia, Obama administration officials are hopeful about a breakthrough -- possibly this week -- that would enable the two sides to sign a successor to their most extensive nuclear weapons treaty before it expires Dec. 5.

The optimism stems from a trip to Moscow in late October by national security adviser James L. Jones, who gave his Kremlin counterpart a package of proposals for the new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, according to U.S. and Russian officials. Moscow has not yet formally responded, but high-level Russian officials have reacted positively, senior U.S. officials said.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said in remarks released Saturday that both sides "have every chance to agree on a new treaty, determine new [weapons] levels and control measures and sign a legally binding document [by] the end of the year." With U.S. policymakers and the Pentagon united behind Jones's proposals, Kremlin policymakers have gone back to the Russian military to get its approval or perhaps recommendations for counterproposals.

Securing a replacement for the 1991 treaty is a critical first step in President Obama's ambitious global arms-control agenda. Analysts and lawmakers have watched nervously as the agreement's deadline approaches, fearing a lapse in the complex verification procedures that are credited with providing stability between the nuclear giants. Both sides have discussed leaving those procedures in place until a new pact goes into effect.

U.S. officials' optimism contrasted with concerns expressed recently by American and Russian analysts that the talks have not produced final agreement on key issues: limits on nuclear-capable launchers; verification procedures; U.S. proposals to put conventional warheads on strategic land- and submarine-based ballistic missiles; and missile defense systems. The United States remains reluctant to give much ground on a Russian request for strong language linking disarmament to missile defense.

The new START agreement will contain relatively modest cuts in the 1,700 to 2,200 deployed warheads allowed to each side under a June 2002 agreement between President George W. Bush and then-Russian President Vladimir Putin. At a summit in July, Obama and Medvedev agreed on a new ceiling of 1,500 to 1,675 for each side.

A more contentious issue has been reducing the number of nuclear-capable bombers and land- or submarine-based missiles, with the Russians pressing for deeper cuts than the U.S. side. The Russians have proposed that the current limit of 1,600 each be slashed to 500; U.S. negotiators have suggested 1,100. Jones's proposal was a "judicious compromise," a U.S. official said, without disclosing a figure. Outside speculation has put the number at about 700.

The Russians still want that total to include any strategic missile launchers that carry conventional rather than nuclear warheads, a position the U.S. negotiators may accept.

Another debate focuses on verification programs. The Russians have talked of halting U.S. inspections of their missile factories because they have no equal role in the United States, which is no longer building strategic intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Although a new accord seems within reach by Dec. 5, it is still not likely to win ratification in the U.S. Senate for months. With that in mind, Sen. Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.) introduced a bill Thursday that would allow Obama to temporarily extend, on a reciprocal basis, privileges to Russian arms inspection teams that travel to the United States.

"Allowing a break in verification activities is not in the interest of the United States or Russia," Lugar said on the Senate floor.

Senior U.S. officials told The Washington Post that they also want to put in place a "bridge mechanism" when the treaty expires to allow for the continuation of inspections, exchanges of data, and notification about the testing and movement of weapons and other changes. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the talks.

The United States and Russia control more than 90 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, and both sides have said they hope that shrinking their stockpiles will inspire other nations to support tougher measures to prevent the spread of the deadly weapons to countries such as Iran.

A Russian response to Jones's proposals is expected soon, perhaps when both sides return to the negotiating table in Geneva on Monday.

"We hope that this will be the last round and that by December 5 we will have agreed on a new accord," Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko told the Interfax news agency, according to Agence France-Presse.

Ellen O. Tauscher, the undersecretary of state who oversees arms control and who accompanied Jones to Moscow, said, "There are issues that we have to work through, but there is also a path forward."

Even if a new treaty is signed soon, there is no chance it will be sent to the Senate for ratification before next year. Administration officials recognize that they have to prepare extensive backup material based on questions already raised by key Republicans, including Sen. Jon Kyl (Ariz.), who has been monitoring the talks.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/07/AR2009110702001.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Global Security Newswire
Nov. 9, 2009

Hopes Rise for New U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Control Deal

Officials in Washington have grown increasingly optimistic that Russia and the United States will agree on a deal to replace the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty before the 1991 pact expires next month, the *Washington Post* reported yesterday (see *GSN*, Nov. 6).

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and U.S. President Barack Obama agreed in July to cut their nations' respective deployed strategic nuclear arsenals to between 1,500 and 1,675 warheads under a START successor, down from the 2,200-warhead limit the states are required to meet by 2012 under another treaty.

The sides could be close to overcoming a division over how many strategic delivery vehicles each nation should be allowed to maintain under the new agreement, the *Post* reported. Moscow wanted a limit of around 500 delivery systems for each country while Washington pushed for a number closer to 1,100.

Late last month, U.S. national security adviser Gen. James Jones put forward what one U.S. official called a "judicious compromise" to the dispute, proposing a limit that outside analysts placed around 700 (see *GSN*, Nov. 5).

In a possible concession to Russia, the Obama administration might also allow strategic delivery systems armed with non-nuclear warheads to count toward that limit.

Moscow could give its formal response to the proposals at negotiations expected to resume today in Geneva, Switzerland.

Russia has called for an end to U.S. scrutiny of its ICBM manufacturing sites, arguing that the United States no longer operates equivalent facilities.

Even if the two states reach an agreement in coming weeks, it would take months for the U.S. Senate to ratify the deal. U.S. Senator Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) has offered legislation that would maintain the START verification regime for six months. The United States is also seeking a "bridge mechanism" to temporarily extend inspections, data sharing and other verification measures established under the treaty, according to high-level U.S. officials (see *GSN*, Oct. 20).

"There are issues that we have to work through, but there is also a path forward," said Undersecretary of State Ellen Tauscher (Sheridan/Pincus, *Washington Post*, Nov. 8).

"We have every chance to agree on a new treaty, determine new (weapons) levels and control measures and sign a legally binding document in the end of the year," Medvedev told *Der Spiegel* in comments published Saturday.

Worldwide nuclear disarmament, though, is unlikely to be achieved in the near future, he said.

"A nuclear-free world is our shared ideal for which we must aspire, but a road to that is difficult. It takes not just the United States and Russia renouncing nuclear weapons, but other countries as well," the Associated Press quoted him as saying (Vladimir Isachenkov, Associated Press/Google News, Nov. 7).

Still, Medvedev argued that disarmament is an important goal to pursue, according to Interfax.

"Who will do this if we don't? If we do not care about this, there will be no disarmament. We have gained some momentum of late indeed. I must admit that the new (U.S.) administration treats this issue as its priority. The previous one did not," he said.

"The nuclear threshold countries display even less understanding, not to mention those who are trying to acquire nuclear technology illegally. And besides that, while there are countries that do not admit possession of nuclear

weapons, they do not deny this, either. We need to think how we can convince everybody to abandon nuclear weapons," he added (Interfax I, Nov. 7).

Verification mechanisms in the new treaty do not need to be as stringent as those in the 1991 pact, which was negotiated amid Cold War-era tensions, said former Russian nuclear missile chief Viktor Yesin.

"The START I treaty was being forged in an era of tight confrontation between the Soviet Union and the United States. The level of trust was low between the two countries. Hence excessive control rooted in mutual suspicion. The current relationship between Russia and the United States is radically different. At least, Moscow and Washington no longer see each other as adversaries prepared for a surprise nuclear attack. Given this, the system of control over strategic arms should be adapted to the new environment," Yesin told Interfax.

"A new Russian-American strategic arms reduction treaty must spell out a transparent verification system. But it is also clear, that this system must be simpler and, for that matter, less costly than that envisioned in the START I treaty," he said.

The number of verification audits allowed under the 1991 agreement might no longer be necessary, Yesin contended.

"The treaty says that the sides, alongside conducting comprehensive information and notification exchanges, which state exactly how many strategic missiles or heavy bombers of each type are located exactly where, must carry out 13 types of inspections," he said.

"Moreover, the U.S. exercises regular control over the Votkinsk plant manufacturing ballistic missiles. By contrast, Russia curtailed similar inspections of the plant in Magna, Utah, in 2001," Yesin noted (Interfax II, Nov. 6).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20091109_1534.php

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Global Security Newswire
Nov. 9, 2009

U.S. Wants Proof of North Korean Intentions before Direct Talks

The Obama administration again indicated Friday that it was prepared to send an envoy to North Korea for direct talks, but said it wants hard evidence that Pyongyang is serious about returning to multilateral denuclearization negotiations (see *GSN*, Nov. 6).

After months of requesting bilateral discussions with Washington, the North ratcheted up pressure last week with the announcement that it had finished reprocessing 8,000 spent nuclear fuel rods, Agence France-Presse reported. Analysts have speculated that the move would produce enough plutonium for another nuclear weapon.

National Security Council official Jeff Bader said Washington wanted concrete evidence that the North was resolved to renew nuclear talks with China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the United States.

"If we see that, then there is no problem with bilateral contacts either in Pyongyang or elsewhere," Bader said. He added: "We're less interested in process than we are in outcome."

The talks stalled late last year after Pyongyang made some moves toward denuclearization, including partial disablement of the plutonium-producing Yongbyon complex. The process appeared to collapse last spring amid the North's second nuclear test and other provocations.

Sources told South Korea's *Hankyoreh* newspaper and Japan's *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper last week that U.S. envoy for North Korea Stephen Bosworth intended to travel to Pyongyang at the end of November.

According to Bader, no such agreement has been reached (Agence France-Presse I/Spacewar.com, Nov. 6).

"The bilateral meeting appears most likely to be held after the Thanksgiving holiday, which falls on Nov. 25-29," a South Korean government official told the Yonhap News Agency.

Reports have circulated that the U.S. State Department could release information on bilateral negotiation specifics as early as today or tomorrow (Xinhua News Agency, Nov. 9).

Meanwhile, France's special diplomat to the North, Jack Lang, today began a five-day fact-finding mission in the country that is believed to include discussions about Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program, AFP reported.

Lang declined to say whether a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il is on the agenda. French sources have said that it has not yet been decided whether the two would meet.

The envoy said that he was traveling to the North "with a willingness to start a dialogue ... one that is as wide-ranging as possible ... with the top leaders."

Lang previously discussed the North's nuclear program with Japanese, South Korean and U.S. officials. He also traveled to China to talk with government officials there about his trip to the North (Agence France Presse II/Yahoo!News, Nov. 9).

http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20091109_6265.php

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post
November 10, 2009

Obama Will Send Top Diplomat To North Korea For Direct Talks

By Scott Wilson

President Obama has agreed to send a senior U.S. diplomat to North Korea for the first direct talks with the government there in more than a year, hoping the mission will lead to the renewal of multi-nation negotiations designed to end its nuclear program.

Senior administration officials said Monday that Obama decided last week to dispatch Stephen W. Bosworth, his special representative for North Korea, to Pyongyang after months of "intensive" discussions with U.S. allies in East Asia over how to reengage North Korea on its nuclear program. Although a date has not been set for the visit, senior administration officials say it probably will occur before the end of the year.

Bosworth's mission will follow Obama's first presidential visit to Asia, and conclude a year during which North Korean leader Kim Jong Il tested the new U.S. administration with a series of missile practice firings and the detonation of a nuclear device in May.

Following those tests last spring, Obama helped push through the U.N. Security Council new sanctions against North Korea. Senior administration officials said Monday that an increasingly isolated North Korean government sought the direct talks based on the administration's specific conditions.

The administration officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because the decision to send Bosworth to Pyongyang has not been formally announced, said the visit will focus solely on resuming the six-nation talks to end North Korea's nuclear program, using an agreement reached by the nations in 2005 as the basis for the discussions.

North Korea also is interested in talking about resuming the search for missing U.S. servicemen and in sending the state symphony orchestra to the United States, but U.S. officials said those items will not be on the agenda.

"We have received the assurances that we sought from the North that they understood that this was the purpose," one senior administration official said, referring to resuming the talks based on the 2005 document. "I think we are realistic about what may come out of it. In the best of circumstances, they will simply agree to get back on the path they were on before the most recent provocations. But I don't think we are under any illusions that this will necessarily happen."

Then-Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill made the most recent official U.S. visit to North Korea, in September 2008. The last six-nation talks to end Pyongyang's nuclear program -- involving the United States, China, Japan, Russia, South Korea and North Korea -- were held in December 2008.

Administration officials said former president Bill Clinton's unofficial mission to Pyongyang in August to free two American journalists being detained there for allegedly entering the country illegally was "the first visible positive sign" that the North Korean government wanted to improve relations. But the officials said that North Korean diplomats have been sending private signals for some time that they want to resume diplomatic contact.

The officials said that Obama met at the Group of 20 summit in September with the leaders of Japan, Russia, South Korea and China to discuss sending Bosworth to North Korea, and that since then he has sought to maintain a united diplomatic effort to encourage Kim to return to the six-nation talks. Administration officials said that, while it is difficult to interpret what is happening inside the notoriously closed nation, the North Korean government appears to be pinched financially by the sanctions and isolated by the diplomatic effort against it.

China, in particular, has asked the Obama administration to speak directly to the North Koreans at a time when Obama is seeking China's help in pressuring Iran to give up its nuclear-enrichment program.

Last month, Wen Jiabao became the first Chinese premier to visit North Korea in 18 years, delivering a \$20 million aid package to highlight Chinese-North Korean economic ties. But the administration officials said Wen also spoke with Kim about returning to the negotiating table.

"The Chinese believe it would be useful for us to have direct contacts with the North Koreans," one senior administration official said. "It's very clear that, although the Chinese encouraged us to have direct contacts, they were not encouraging us to have a bilateral negotiation. The Chinese, like the others, believe the right path is through the six-party talks."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/09/AR2009110902989.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

London Guardian – U.K.
Friday, November 6, 2009

Germans Press For Removal Of US Nuclear Weapons In Europe

By Julian Borger, Diplomatic editor

Pressure is growing within Nato for the removal of the remaining US nuclear weapons on European soil, and for a new doctrine for the alliance that would depend less on nuclear deterrence.

The initiative is being driven by the new German government coalition, which has called for the removal of American nuclear weapons on its territory as part of a Nato strategic rethink.

The German foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle, the driving force behind the new policy, raised the issue during talks in Washington yesterday with the US secretary of state, Hillary Clinton.

Earlier this week, Westerwelle assured the Nato secretary general, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, that Germany would consult its allies on the removal of the estimated 20 nuclear weapons left on its soil.

The Germans have backing from the Belgians and Dutch. The new Norwegian government also called for a debate within Nato, as it revises its basic doctrine, known as the strategic concept, due to be completed in the first half of next year.

Des Browne, a former British defence minister now chairing a cross-party parliamentary group on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, argued: "These moves bring out into the open a topic which for too long has been discussed by diplomats and technocrats only. [It] makes possible a genuine debate between allies about the role of nuclear weapons in Nato strategy, as set out in the strategic concept which guides alliance generals."

The current Nato concept, written in 1999, says: "Nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to Nato provide an essential political and military link between the European and the North American members of the alliance. The alliance will therefore maintain adequate nuclear forces in Europe."

There are an estimated 200 US weapons – mostly tactical – left in Europe, deployed in Turkey, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

Their future is also being debated within the Obama administration as it prepares a new "nuclear posture review" due early next year. Barack Obama made a speech in April committing the US to the eventual goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/nov/06/germany-removal-us-nuclear-weapons>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Montreal Gazette – Canada
November 8, 2009

U.S., Pakistan Negotiate Deal on Nuke Security: Report

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

WASHINGTON -- The United States has been negotiating highly sensitive understandings with the Pakistani military about the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh reported in the latest issue of The New Yorker magazine.

The journalist wrote that during meetings with current and former officials in Washington and Pakistan, he was told that the agreements would allow specially trained American units to provide added security for the Pakistani arsenal in case of a crisis.

At the same time, the Pakistani military would be given money to equip and train Pakistani soldiers and to improve their housing and facilities, the report says.

The principal fear was that extremists inside the Pakistani military might stage a coup, take control of some nuclear assets, or even divert a warhead, Hersh notes.

The Pakistani nuclear doctrine calls for the warheads and their triggers to be stored separately from each other, and from their delivery devices.

The arrangement serves as a safeguard in case of a quickly escalating confrontation with India but also makes the weapons vulnerable during shipment and reassembly, the report points out.

"We give comfort to each other, and the comfort level is good, because everybody respects everybody's integrity," Hersh quoted Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari as telling him in an interview about the security relationship with Washington.

"Our Army officers are not crazy, like the Taliban," Zardari went on to say. "A mutiny would never happen in Pakistan. It's a fear being spread by the few who seek to scare the many."

Meanwhile, former Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf acknowledged that his government had given U.S. State Department nonproliferation experts insight into the command and control of the Pakistani arsenal and its on-site safety and security procedures, the report said.

In Islamabad, U.S. Embassy spokesman Larry Schwartz did not confirm or deny the report, but noted that U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had recently stated that the United States had confidence in the ability of the Pakistani government to protect its nuclear programs and materials.

"The United States has no intention to seize Pakistani nuclear weapons or material," Schwartz said. "Pakistan is a key ally in our common effort to fight violent extremists and foster regional security. We work co-operatively with Pakistan on a wide range of security assistance initiatives."

<http://www.montrealgazette.com/news/Pakistan+negotiate+deal+nuke+security+report/2199165/story.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Hindustan Times – India
November 08, 2009

Pakistan Rejects Report Questioning Nuclear Weapons' Safety

Agence France-Presse (AFP)
Islamabad,

Pakistan on Sunday angrily rejected a media report that raised fears of a militant takeover of the Taliban-hit nation's nuclear weapons and suggested that the US had a hand in protecting the arsenal.

In the latest issue of The New Yorker magazine, investigative journalist Seymour Hersh wrote that US officials had negotiated pacts with Pakistan to provide security for the nuclear arsenal in extreme circumstances.

It also raised the possibility that the threat to the security of the nuclear programme might come not from Taliban rebels battling the government, but from a "mutiny" by fundamentalist elements within the powerful military.

In response, Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement saying that the nation's nuclear materials "are completely safe and secure.

"Pakistan therefore does not require any foreign assistance in this regard," the statement said.

"Nor will Pakistan, as a sovereign state, ever allow any country to have direct or indirect access to its nuclear and strategic facilities. Any suggestion to this effect is simply reposterous."

Pakistan's government is fiercely protective and proud of its nuclear weapons programme, seen as a much-needed deterrent and defence against its arch-foe India, which also has nuclear capabilities.

But soaring attacks by Taliban insurgents -- who struck at the heart of the military establishment in a raid and hostage drama at army headquarters last month -- have raised jitters over the weapons' safety.

Hersh wrote in the *The New Yorker* that officials in Washington and Islamabad told him that agreements would allow specially trained American units to provide added security for the Pakistani arsenal in case of a crisis.

It also quoted unnamed Pakistan officials as expressing fear that the governments of either Pakistan's ally the United States or their arch-rival India might try to take control of the weapons -- a claim denied by the US.

In response, Larry Schwartz, a spokesman at the US embassy in Islamabad, told AFP that "the United States has no intention to seize Pakistani nuclear weapons or material.

"Pakistan is a key ally in our common effort to fight violent extremists and foster regional security."

The United States is regarded with deep suspicion in Pakistan, with missile strikes by unmanned US drone aircraft against Taliban and Al-Qaeda targets in the northwest tribal belt seen as an infringement of Pakistan's sovereignty.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/Pakistan-rejects-report-questioning-nuclear-weapons-safety/H1-Article1-474196.aspx>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Times of India
IANS November 10, 2009

No Intention Of Seizing Pak Nuclear Weapons: US

WASHINGTON: The US has assured Pakistan it has no intention of seizing Pakistan's nuclear weapons or material, saying it has confidence in Islamabad's ability to provide adequate security to its nuclear programmes.

"The US has no intention of seizing Pakistani nuclear weapons or material," State Department spokesman Ian Kelly told reporters on Monday when asked to comment on a US magazine report that the Obama administration wants Pakistan to let Washington help secure its weapons in a crisis with an added goal of reassuring India.

"We see Pakistan as a key ally in our common effort to fight violent extremists and to foster regional stability," he said. "We're working very closely with Pakistan on a number of important initiatives regarding regional security.

"And as the Secretary (of State Hillary Clinton) has said, we have confidence in the ability of the Pakistani government to provide adequate security for their nuclear programmes and materials."

An article published online and in the Nov 16 issue of *The New Yorker* states that Washington has serious fears about Pakistan's arsenal and has a covert team ready to fly to Pakistan at short notice.

The article, written by veteran investigative journalist Seymour Hersh, reports that the Obama administration has been working on "highly sensitive understandings" with Pakistan's military that would let the US military to provide "added security for the Pakistani arsenal in case of a crisis".

One goal of the proposed agreements would be to reassure India, Hersh said. US officials, he said, hope securing Pakistani bombs will convince India to pull troops off the Pakistani frontier, allowing Pakistan to turn more of its military's attention toward battling Al-Qaida and Taliban fighters along its northwestern border with Afghanistan -- where US troops have been battling the Taliban since 2001.

"It's all part of the broad strategic scheme," Hersh said. But the plan has had unintended consequences in Pakistan, "one of which is they hate our guts", he said.

Pakistan remains mistrustful of the US, fearing its nuclear secrets will fall into Indian hands, and "there's an enormous discrepancy between what they say and what they agree to do", Hersh said.

The *New Yorker* also reported that a "highly classified" emergency response team was activated within the past few months in response to a report that a Pakistani nuclear component had "gone astray".

The team was already in Dubai by the time the report turned out to be a false alarm, Hersh's article states, citing an unnamed Pentagon consultant.

In November 2001, another of his articles on Pakistan's nuclear programme stirred a similar controversy, CNN said.

Hersh reported at that time that the US was making plans to seize or disable Pakistani nuclear weapons to prevent them from falling into the hands of Islamic extremists. That report was met with widespread denials as well.

But Hersh said Sunday there is an "enormous difference" between what the Obama administration is trying to do and what was being considered before.

"They're now saying, 'We're going to help you'," he told CNN. In addition, he said, the current US plans focus not on removing warheads, but on separating them from the trigger mechanisms used to set them off.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/us/No-intention-of-seizing-Pak-nuclear-weapons-US/articleshow/5215245.cms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

The Malaysian Insider – Malaysia

November 10, 2009

Pakistan “Fully Capable” of Securing Nuclear Arms

ISLAMABAD, Nov 10 - Pakistan is capable of ensuring the security of its nuclear arsenal and a report it is negotiating “understandings” for US units to augment the weapons’ safety was “absurd”, a top Pakistani commander said.

The security of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons and facilities has been brought into question by an increasingly violent Islamist insurgency, though the United States has repeatedly said it has confidence in Pakistan’s ability to protect them.

The New Yorker magazine reported in its latest issue Pakistan and the United States were negotiating “highly sensitive understandings” that would allow specially trained US units to augment security for the Pakistani weapons “in case of a crisis”.

The Pakistani military’s Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee chairman, General Tariq Majid, rejected the report as “absurd and plain mischievous”.

“There is absolutely no question of sharing or allowing any foreign individual, entity or a state, any access to sensitive information about our nuclear assets,” Majid said in a statement issued late yesterday.

Quoting an unidentified former senior US intelligence official, the New Yorker said Pakistanis had given Washington “a virtual look at the number of warheads, some of their locations, and their command-and-control system”.

But Majid, describing himself as “overall custodian of the development of our strategic programme”, said the United States knew only as “much as they can guess and nothing more”.

Analysts say Pakistan’s nuclear installations are so well guarded militants would find it very hard to storm them.

But the sophistication of recent attacks, including one on the army’s headquarters in Rawalpindi last month, and their proximity to Pakistan’s nuclear infrastructure suggested the risk, while low, remained a cause for worry.

The New Yorker said the consultations had been kept secret because of growing antipathy towards the United States in Pakistan, where many people believe the United States wants to confiscate the nuclear weapons.

“US ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson also rejected the New Yorker report.

“These allegations are completely false. The United States has no intention to seize Pakistani nuclear weapons or material,” she said in a statement.

The Pentagon said the United States was providing some training and equipment to Pakistan to improve its nuclear security but denied any intension to seize its nuclear arsenal.

“The United States has confidence in the ability of the Pakistani government to protect its nuclear programmes and materials,” Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said in Washington.

“We work with Pakistan on a wide range of security assistance initiatives focused on strengthening counter-insurgency capabilities to foster stability,” he said.

The Pentagon declined to comment on any contingency plan that might exist to seize the weapons in the event of an emergency.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons and installations are protected by heavy guarding, a blanket of secrecy, deliberate deception, the separation of warheads from missiles, and security practices adopted from the United States.

The nightmare scenario would be of militants launching a raid with collusion and information from inside.

But the military has long been aware of the need to keep militant sympathisers away from the nuclear programme, a concern frequently cited given close links in the past between the army and various militant groups.

Retired Lieutenant-General Khalid Kidwai, head of the army's Strategic Plans Division which runs the nuclear programme, conducts intensive personnel vetting modelled on US personality profiling.

"We have operationalised a very effective nuclear security regime, which incorporates very stringent custodial and access controls," Majid said.

"We do not need to negotiate with any other country to physically augment our security forces." ? Reuters

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/index.php/world/42932-pakistan-fully-capable-of-securing-nuclear-arms>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Daily News

EDITORIAL

November 9th, 2009

Nuke Myth Blows Up: The West must Stop Pretending that Iran might Compromise

The single greatest threat to peace and stability in the world is Iran's headlong rush to gain nuclear weapons.

The regime of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei wants nukes so they can cow their Mideast neighbors, export Shiite fundamentalism and obliterate Israel.

Yet somehow, in the bizarro world of international relations, Iran's leaders, who sit on an ocean of oil, continue with a straight face to insist that all they want is civilian nuclear power. And diplomats continue with a straight face to nod back.

Yes, and Hitler: All he really wanted was peace. A little piece of Poland, a little piece of Russia, a little piece of France. ...

But now there is more fresh evidence that the Iranian regime wants the worst weapons in the worst way. It comes from the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the IAEA's famously cautious director, Mohamed ElBaradei.

A just-revealed IAEA dossier says Iranian scientists may have tested a sophisticated design for a "two-point implosion" device. This is the technology that allows for production of smaller, simpler nuclear warheads that can be fit on missiles.

In other words, nukes that could hit Tel Aviv.

Iran has admitted to testing technologies for multiple high-explosive detonations that are synchronized to within a microsecond. Its leaders insist there is a civilian application for such tests. But no civilian application is known.

Now, a European adviser on nuclear issues has described Iran's two-point implosion research as "breathtaking." For millions who live within striking distance, that could take on literal meaning.

The world has dithered over Tehran's nuke ambitions for years. Now on the table is a deal that would remove most of Iran's uranium stockpile for a year and replace it with nuclear fuel rods.

Such an arrangement would merely buy time. But Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami, subbing for Khamenei, rejected it in no uncertain terms:

"Nobody will make a deal on national nuclear rights; neither will anybody turn a blind eye to the legal right of the nation. If Westerners wish to play on us and refuse to deliver fuel to the Tehran research reactor, Iranian nuclear scientists will step forward and provide the fuel, too."

At what point will the world take "no" for an answer? The Obama administration has gone through the motions of extending a hand to the terrorists of Tehran. Turns out, that's all the back-and-forth was ever to be: motions. Because the Islamic Republic is obsessed with acquiring nuclear weapons and well on its way toward that goal.

There's no fooling ourselves any longer.

http://www.nydailynews.com/opinions/2009/11/09/2009-11-09_nuke_myth_blows_up.html

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Daily NK – South Korea

ANALYSIS

November 10, 2009

Bilateral Dialogue Unlikely to Solve Problems

By Kim So Yeol

With the U.S. expected to officially announce the upcoming itinerary of U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth, some kind of change to the relationship between the U.S. and North Korea is anticipated. However, even if dialogue is resumed, reaching agreement on the North's return to the Six-Party Talks and other matters will not be easy.

Jeffrey Bader, the senior director for Asian affairs at the White House National Security Council (NSC), said in an interview with the Wall Street Journal on the 8th that Kim Jong Il has missed an opportunity to take advantage of U.S. President Barack Obama's early openness to meeting directly with the U.S.' adversaries. Nevertheless, he said that Washington is prepared to send Bosworth to North Korea, but only if the North understands that such contact must set the stage for the scrapping of its nuclear program.

Previously, on the 5th, Bosworth told a press conference that the position of the U.S. government regarding U.S.-DPRK bilateral dialogue would soon be decided. He explained that President Barack Obama would make a decision about the timeframe shortly after his return from state visits to the region.

President Obama is planning to visit China, Japan and South Korea starting on the 13th, and to participate in an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) meeting in Singapore. During his visit, there are expected to be discussions on the North Korean nuclear issue, including U.S.-DPRK dialogue.

On a related note, South Korea's Minister of Foreign Affairs Yu Myung Hwan introduced a possible timeframe for U.S.-North Korea talks, "The dialogue will most likely take place at the end of the year or the beginning of next year. What is important is for the U.S. to not rush into things."

However, even if dialogue is resumed, the possibility is high that tension between the two sides will predominate once the framework and agenda for negotiations are opened for discussion, so prospects seem rather grim.

First of all, there has been no shift in the U.S.' position that its dialogue with North Korea should be the precursor to restoring the North to the Six-Party Talks. James Steinberg, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, emphasized at a recent event sponsored by the Center for American Progress (CAP) that the U.S. was prepared to hold bilateral talks with North Korea, but, these discussions would not be negotiations surrounding issues. In other words, actual discussions must be held only when the North returns to the Six-Party Talks.

Regarding this, Nihon Keizai Shimbun (Japan Economic Times) cited several sources on U.S.-North Korea relations on the 8th, noting that North Korea, during behind the scenes contacts with the U.S., has demanded four or five high-level bilateral meetings as its condition for returning to the Talks. In turn, the U.S. said it would negotiate when the North returns to the Talks and commits to adhering to the joint declaration of the 2005 Six-Party Talks, which specifies denuclearization.

The general belief of the South Korean government and North Korea experts is that, even if dialogue is resumed, due to the divergent interests of both sides in bilateral talks between the U.S. and North Korea, the prospect of the North returning to the Six-Party Talks is not so bright.

Minister Yu recently predicted that, even in the case of the resumption of dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea, the North's return to the Six-Party Talks will not go smoothly, noting, "When the dialogue between the U.S. and North Korea resumes, China will convene the Six-Party Talks after a while. Since both sides are in a dubious position, China needs to intervene."

Namgung Young, a professor at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Seoul, evaluated the situation in a phone conversation with The Daily NK, saying, "The U.S.' decision to engage in dialogue with North Korea is based on its dual-track approach of dialogue and sanctions. If the conditions for dialogue are right then dialogue is inevitable."

However, he forecasted, "When looking at the strict U.S. stance, the future does not look so bright. It [the dialogue] will serve as an opportunity for the international community, including the U.S., to set the direction for its response regarding the nuclear weapons issue."

Lee Sang Hyun, a Senior Researcher at the Sejong Institute, said, "The U.S. has made several compromises, such as deciding to engage in one-on-one dialogue before the Six-Party Talks, but has continued to issue the basic message that the North must return to the Six-Party Talks. There has been no change in the U.S.' position that it will not engage in talks for the sake of having talks."

He added, "On the other hand, North Korea, while saving face by meeting with the U.S., will most likely propose complex conditions. Such a demand by the North is not too different from its past negotiating pattern of making gains through 'push and pull.'"

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[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)