



# **USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER**

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Washington Post  
12 December 2009

## ***Russia, U.S. To Extend Talks On Nuclear Arms Pact***

Reuters

MOSCOW (Reuters) - The presidents of Russia and the United States agreed on Saturday to extend talks to secure a new pact to cut vast arsenals of nuclear weapons, the Kremlin said.

President Barack Obama and his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, agreed by telephone to continue work on finding a successor to the Cold War-era START-1 treaty after "intensive and purposeful" talks between their delegations in Geneva.

"The heads of state agreed to give the order to continue active work and not to reduce the high level and tempo of cooperation, with the aim of securing decisive agreements on all issues," the Kremlin said in a statement.

An Obama administration official said the two leaders spoke on Saturday to discuss the ongoing START negotiations, but the official had no further details.

Washington and Moscow say finding a replacement for the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the biggest agreed nuclear weapons cut in history, would help "reset" relations after rows in recent years.

The countries failed to reach agreement on a successor to START-1 before this month's deadline, although the treaty will remain in force indefinitely pending agreement on a successor.

No reasons have been given for the delay. Diplomats are now talking about finding a deal by the end of the year, although it is unclear when the two presidents will sign such a pact. The Kremlin made no reference to a date in its Saturday statement.

Negotiations had been proceeding in Switzerland under unusually tight secrecy. Both parties had been committed to a news blackout on the talks, and even senior embassy staff were not fully briefed.

The START-1 treaty, signed by then-U.S. President George H.W. Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, took nearly a decade to achieve. Under the deal, Russia more than halved its nuclear arsenal, the Foreign Ministry has said.

A new deal would cut the number of deployed nuclear weapons and the submarines, bombers and missiles used to launch them. But the United States and Russia would still have enough firepower to destroy the world several times over.

(Reporting by Robin Paxton; Additional reporting by Steve Holland in Washington; Editing by Jon Hemming and Peter Cooney)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/12/AR2009121202310.html>

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London Daily Telegraph  
11 December 2009

## ***Iran Seeks Nuclear Parts Through Taiwan***

*UN officials are investigating claims that Iran has established a new smuggling network using companies based in Taiwan to acquire specialised equipment that could be used to make nuclear weapons.*

By Con Coughlin

Tehran is reported to have intensified its efforts to import sophisticated technology in response to the mounting international pressure it is facing to freeze its uranium enrichment programme, which many Western governments believe is aimed at building nuclear weapons.

Recent intelligence reports have revealed that officials from Iran's Ministry of Defence have held a series of meetings with companies based in Taiwan to buy hundreds of pressure transducers, which can be used to produce weapons-grade uranium.

Iran has been desperately trying to acquire the equipment for more than a year, but has been frustrated by the refusal of European and American companies to sell it material that might be used for its nuclear programme.

Even China, which in the past has been prepared to sell its specialist technology, is proving reluctant to do business after Beijing supported a censure motion passed by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna last month following the revelation that Iran was building a second uranium enrichment facility at Qom.

Western intelligence officials say Iran has responded by concentrating its efforts on Taiwan, and has already managed to acquire a 100 transducers which have been secretly shipped to Tehran. The transducers were originally manufactured in Europe and then sold to a company in Taiwan, which then sold them on to Iran's defence ministry.

UN officials are now investigating whether the European companies are undertaking proper checks of end-user certificates for their equipment.

According to the intelligence reports, Iranian officials are now trying to negotiate further shipments of the highly restricted equipment from Taiwan.

Iran is banned from buying the equipment on the open market by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the international body set up to reduce nuclear proliferation by controlling the export of materials that can be used for building nuclear weapons.

"This is a serious loophole, as it enables Iran to acquire sophisticated equipment that can help it develop its nuclear programme," said a UN source. "Pressure needs to be applied to the companies involved to stop doing business with Tehran while it is still refusing to co-operate with the UN."

Earlier this year a Canadian of Iranian descent was arrested for trying to illegally ship a number of pressure transducers to Iran, which he had originally purchased in the US.

The Iranian government, which has consistently denied that it is trying to develop nuclear weapons, recently announced its intention to build another ten uranium enrichment plants, and to start work on enriching its uranium stockpiles to a higher level that has previously been achieved. The UN is considering imposing a new round of sanctions against Iran for its continued defiance over its nuclear programme.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/6780229/Iran-seeks-nuclear-parts-through-Taiwan.html>

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Miami Herald  
12 December 2009

## ***Taiwan Checking Report Of Iran Nuke Equipment Sale***

By PETER ENAV

Taiwan's government is investigating a report that local companies helped supply equipment to Iran that can be used to produce weapons-grade nuclear material.

An official in the Bureau of Foreign Trade said the investigation would also examine whether there are loopholes in Taiwanese trade regulatory procedures.

His comments Friday followed a report in the London Daily Telegraph that unidentified Taiwanese companies supplied Iran's Ministry of Defense with 100 pressure transducers, which can be used in the production of weapons-grade uranium.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to make public statements to the media.

The Daily Telegraph report, which cited unspecified Western intelligence sources, said Iranian officials have held meetings with Taiwan-based companies to buy hundreds of pressure transducers, and that 100 had already been shipped to Iran.

It said the transducers were manufactured in Europe, acquired by the Taiwanese companies, and then sent to Iran in an effort to foil a growing international effort to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

Pressure transducers convert pressure into analog electrical signals. They have many commercial uses, but also are a vital component in the production of weapons-grade uranium because of the need for precise measurements.

Iran is banned from buying them on the open market by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, an international body established to limit nuclear proliferation by controlling the export of materials that can be used in building atomic weapons.

The U.S. and its allies accuse Iran of trying to develop nuclear weapons secretly under the guise of a civilian atomic energy program, but Tehran insists its efforts are aimed only at generating electricity.

The Bureau of Foreign Trade official did not say why the investigation into the Daily Telegraph report had been launched. However, a Taipei-based foreign diplomat said it had been ordered by National Security Council chief Su Chi.

The diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the information.

Presidential Office spokesman Wang Yu-chi declined to comment on the matter, saying it was not being handled by his office. Su Chi works directly for President Ma Ying-jeou.

Despite shifting its diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, the United States remains Taiwan's most important foreign partner, supplying the island with the vast majority of its imported weapons systems.

Confirmation that Taiwanese companies sold nuclear-weapons-related equipment to Iran would almost certainly provoke a strongly negative American reaction, and could undermine long-standing trust between the sides.

A spokesman for the American Institute in Taiwan - the de facto U.S. embassy on the island - declined to say whether American diplomats had approached their Taiwanese counterparts to discuss the report.

Earlier this year, a Canadian citizen of Iranian descent was arrested on charges he tried to procure and export pressure transducers to his native country.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/world/AP/story/1378433.html>

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New York Times  
12 December 2009

## ***Gates Expects New Sanctions On Iran***

By Elisabeth Bumiller

ERBIL, Iraq — Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Friday that he expected the United States and its allies to impose more stringent sanctions against Iran, which has been increasingly defiant in recent weeks of the West's demands to limit its nuclear program.

"I think you're going to see some significant additional sanctions imposed by the international community, assuming that the Iranians don't change course and agree to do the things that they signed up to do at the beginning of October," Mr. Gates said during a question-and-answer session with American troops in Kirkuk, north of Baghdad.

In October, Iran reached a preliminary agreement that it would temporarily send much of its nuclear fuel abroad, but it has since backed off. Iran also not only rejected demands by the United Nations nuclear watchdog agency to immediately freeze operations at a once secret uranium enrichment plant, but also said it would build more plants.

Under a deadline imposed by President Obama, Iran has until the end of this year to show progress in engaging with the West to limit its nuclear ambitions, before the United States will seek new sanctions. Mr. Gates's comments were among the first from a senior member of the Obama administration to say that tougher sanctions were now likely.

Despite the seemingly promising outcome of the talks in October, Mr. Obama struck a careful tone at the time and warned Iran that he was ready to move quickly to more stringent sanctions if it did not do as it said it would. Mr. Gates's comments on Friday appeared to be an update to tell Tehran that time had essentially run out.

It remains unclear if the United States will be able to convince other countries to go along with punishing measures. Russia and China have long been reluctant to do so, but the Obama administration has been hopeful that Iran's recent intransigence would convince Moscow and Beijing to take a harsher stance.

Iran contends that its nuclear program is for peaceful energy generation, but many countries in the West doubt that.

Mr. Gates, as he has before, discounted the idea of a military strike against Iran. "You never take any options off the table, but the reality is that any military action would only buy some time, maybe two or three years," he said.

The defense secretary also spoke about America's involvement in Iraq, saying that the administration expects that some United States forces might remain in an advisory capacity in Iraq after 2011, the deadline for all American troops to withdraw from the country. "I wouldn't be surprised to see agreements between ourselves and the Iraqis that continue a 'train, equip and advise' role beyond the end of 2011," Mr. Gates said.

He added, "I suspect as we get on through 2010 and begin approaching 2011, the Iraqis themselves will probably have an interest in this."

Mr. Gates later went to Erbil, the capital of the semiautonomous region of Iraqi Kurdistan, to meet with Massoud Barzani, the regional government president, ahead of elections scheduled for March. Defense officials said that Mr. Gates urged Mr. Barzani to move forward and settle differences with the government of Iraq over oil rights and political boundaries, particularly near the contested city of Kirkuk.

"This is perhaps the most worrisome issue here in Iraq as far as we're concerned," Mr. Gates told the troops. Nonetheless, he cited progress in recent months between the Kurds and the central government.

Mr. Gates told Mr. Barzani that "we will not abandon you" and that the United States remained committed to Iraqi Kurdistan's autonomy within a unified Iraq, according to defense officials.

Earlier on Friday, Mr. Gates met in Baghdad with Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki.

The officials said that Mr. Gates had told Mr. Maliki that Iraq needed to move quickly to form a unified government after the March elections, and that the country should not have a repeat of 2005, when it took five months to form a central government after the elections that year.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/12/world/middleeast/12gates.html>

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Boston Globe  
12 December 2009

## **Iran Puts Conditions On Nuclear Fuel Swap**

By Barbara Surk, Associated Press Writer

MANAMA, Bahrain --After weeks of conflicting responses, Iran abruptly said Saturday that it is ready to exchange uranium for nuclear fuel -- the key demand of a U.N.-sponsored initiative to defuse global fears over its nuclear program.

The conditions laid out in comments from Iran's foreign minister, however, are unlikely to satisfy the U.S. and its allies as they prepare to discuss new sanctions against Tehran at a meeting that could take place in the coming week.

Iran's stockpile of uranium is at the heart of international concerns because it offers Iran a possible pathway to nuclear weapons production if it is enriched to higher levels. Tehran insists it only wants to use the material to produce fuel for power plants and for other peaceful purposes.

Under a U.N. plan proposed in October and being pushed by Washington and five other world powers, Iran would ship most of its uranium -- up to 2,600 pounds (1,200 kilograms) of it -- abroad. It would then be enriched to higher levels in Russia, turned into fuel rods in France and returned to power a research reactor in Tehran that produces medical isotopes.

The material in the fuel rods cannot be enriched to higher levels, denying Iran the ability to use it to make weapons.

"We accepted the proposal in principle," Foreign Minister Manochehr Mottaki told reporters at a regional security conference in Bahrain.

In what is almost certain to be a deal breaker, however, he spoke of exchanging the material in phases rather than all at once as is called for in the U.N. plan. He said Iran had offered to make a first shipment of 880 pounds (400 kilograms) of enriched uranium.

Carrying it out in slow stages would leave Iran in control of enough uranium to make a bomb.

A senior Obama administration official said Mottaki's remarks appeared to fall short of demands.

"Iran's proposal today does not appear to be consistent with the fair and balanced draft agreement proposed by the IAEA in consultation with the United States, Russia, and France," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the U.S. has yet to formulate an official response to the development.

Officials at the U.N. nuclear agency could not be reached for comment Saturday.

In another change to the plan, Iran wants to receive the fuel rods immediately in simultaneous exchanges for its uranium because it says it is worried that France or Russia could renege on the deal.

Another unanswered question is whether the uranium Iran is offering to exchange would actually be shipped out of the country or just left -- perhaps under observation -- inside its borders in what would present another departure from the U.N. plan.

Mottaki suggested the exchanges take place on Iran's Kish island, in the Persian Gulf, but he did not clarify whether the uranium would leave Iranian soil.

"We gave a clear answer and we responded, and our answer was we accepted in principle but there were differences in the mechanism," he said Saturday, speaking through a translator.

Further confusing matters, as of a few days ago, the U.N.'s nuclear agency had yet to receive a concrete Iranian counterproposal -- or a response of any kind -- to its initiative.

Mottaki's remarks, in which he insisted a response had been sent, were part of a string of conflicting Iranian statements that began with initial word in October that the country would accept the proposal as is. Several Iranian lawmakers later rejected the plan outright.

Some 33 to 66 pounds (15 to 30 kilograms) of uranium enriched to levels above 90 percent would be needed to produce a nuclear bomb. Iran has about 3,300 pounds (1,500 kilograms) of 3.5 percent, or low-enriched uranium -- enough to produce highly enriched material for two such weapons.

Last month, the 35-nation board of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency endorsed a resolution from the six powers -- the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany -- criticizing Iran for defying a U.N. Security Council ban on uranium enrichment and continuing to expand its operations.

It also censured Iran for secretly building a second enrichment facility and demanded that it immediately suspend further construction on it.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said last month that the U.N. offer has been "comprehensively rejected" by Iran. A diplomat from one of the six powers said Wednesday that America's Western allies were waiting for Washington to formally declare the wait for an Iranian response over, probably by the end of this month.

The six countries are expected to meet next week to discuss what action to take over Iran.

EU leaders said they would support further U.N. sanctions unless Tehran starts cooperating over its nuclear program.

Associated Press Writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/12/12/iran\\_agrees\\_to\\_nuclear\\_fuel\\_swap\\_with\\_caveats/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2009/12/12/iran_agrees_to_nuclear_fuel_swap_with_caveats/)  
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London Daily Telegraph  
12 December 2009

## ***Iranian Scientist Who Vanished 'Gave Nuclear Secrets' To UN Inspectors Sent To Qom Site***

***An Iranian scientist who vanished six months ago has revealed secrets of his country's nuclear programme with international weapons inspectors, The Sunday Telegraph has learned.***

By Philip Sherwell in New York and Peter Allen in Paris

Shahram Amiri briefed United Nations nuclear monitors in a clandestine meeting at Frankfurt airport just hours before they flew to Iran to inspect a hidden uranium enrichment plant, according to French intelligence sources.

An award-winning atomic physicist, Mr Amiri had worked at the heavily-guarded underground site at Qom. He was attached to a Tehran university named by the EU last year as part of the regime's nuclear-proliferation operations.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was told of the existence of the Qom facility by the US and its European allies in September. But the meeting with Mr Amiri in October would have provided inspectors with key insider knowledge before they made the sensitive trip.

The scientist is the focus of an extraordinary international row stretching from the Gulf to Washington after Iran last week accused Saudi Arabia and the US of "terrorist behaviour" for allegedly colluding in his abduction.

The nuclear scientist, who is in his 30s, disappeared after arriving in Saudi Arabia for a pilgrimage in late May, leaving behind his wife and extended family. The Saudi authorities say they do not know where he is.

But contrary to Iranian claims, Mr Amiri actually defected after an elaborate international cloak-and-dagger co-ordinated by the CIA, according to a well-connected French intelligence analysis website.

"The agency made contact with the scientist last year when Amiri visited Frankfurt in connection with his research work," Intelligence Online reported. "A German businessman acted as go-between. A final contact was made in Vienna when Amiri travelled to Austria to assist the Iranian representative at the IAEA. Shortly afterwards, the scientist went on pilgrimage to Mecca and hasn't been seen since."

The vanishing act was reminiscent of Cold War days between the Soviet Union and the West when spies - often scientists and diplomats - were spirited away in plots just as outlandish as any John le Carré thriller.

Heads have rolled at Iran's nuclear counter-espionage agency since his loss, and the foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, raised his case in a private meeting with the UN secretary-general Ban Ki-Moon.

The Islamic republic has now linked the fate of three American hikers detained in Iran since July with a list of Iranian citizens, including Mr Amiri, who Tehran alleges are being held by the US. It appears to be proposing some form of trade in talks with Swiss intermediaries.

Officially, the US says it has no information on Mr Amiri's whereabouts, but the scientist is now believed to be in Europe, protected by a Western intelligence agency, in a CIA-led operation. He will be debriefed intensively by experts - who will also want to ensure that he is not an Iranian plant.

Four months after Mr Amiri disappeared, President Barack Obama, flanked by Gordon Brown and the French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, disclosed that Iran had built the buried uranium enrichment plant near the holy city of Qom.

Western intelligence had developed information about the site over three years.

But Mr Amiri's intelligence about its inner workings - and especially security procedures - proved "extremely useful", a source close to France's overseas secret service, the DGSE (Direction Générale de la Sécurité Extérieure), told *The Sunday Telegraph*.

"Amiri has first hand knowledge of the site and this would have been the main subject of discussion," the source said. "The meeting was so secret that the inspectors who met Amiri were unlikely to have even known his name, let alone his background. He was just presented as a bona fide contact in the know about how Qom works."

French agents party to details of the Frankfurt meeting paint a picture of Amiri as one of the brightest young nuclear physicists of his generation, westernised and a good English-speaker.

"He would be an obvious conduit of information," said a source. "Why would the Iranians show four UN inspectors everything unless they knew what to ask for?"

The CIA launched a secret programme, dubbed "the Brain Drain", in 2005 designed to undermine Iran's nuclear programme by persuading key officials to defect. In the biggest previous coup, Revolutionary Guards general Ali Reza Asgari, the deputy defence minister, vanished on a trip to Turkey in 2007.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/6797860/Iranian-scientist-who-vanished-gave-nuclear-secrets-to-UN-inspectors-sent-to-Oom-site.html>  
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Jerusalem Post – Israel  
12 December 2009

## ***US Unhappy With Iranian Nuke Proposal***

BY ASSOCIATED PRESS

A senior Obama administration official on Saturday said the White House was unhappy with remarks by Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki's remarks, who said Iran accepted the West's nuclear fuel proposal, but according to its own timetable.

"Iran's proposal today does not appear to be consistent with the fair and balanced draft agreement proposed by the IAEA in consultation with the United States, Russia, and France," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the US has yet to formulate an official response to the development.

In Bahrain on Saturday, Mottaki said that Iran is ready to exchange the bulk of its stockpile of enriched uranium for nuclear fuel rods - as proposed by the UN - but according to its own mechanisms and timetable.

Mottaki also said that another round of Western sanctions against his country would "have no influence," and would also be illegal and in contravention of the UN's charter.

Officials at the UN nuclear agency could not be reached for comment Saturday.

The minister's remarks come just days before an expected meeting between the US and allies to discuss new sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program. The offer, however, falls far short of the conditions set by the international community.

Speaking to reporters at a regional security conference in Bahrain, Mottaki said Iran agreed with a UN deal proposed in October in which up to 1,200 kilograms of its uranium would be exchanged for fuel rods to power its research reactor.

"We accepted the proposal in principle," he said through a translator. "We suggested in the first phase we give you 400 kilograms of 3.5 percent enriched uranium and you give us the equivalent in 20 percent uranium."

Iran has about 1,500 kilograms of low-enriched uranium and needs to refine to 20 percent to operate a research reactor that produces medical isotopes.

Uranium enriched at low levels can be used as fuel for nuclear energy, but when enriched to 90 percent and above, it can be used as material for a weapon. The United States and five other world powers have been trying to win Iran's acceptance of a deal under which Teheran would ship most of its low-enriched uranium stockpile abroad to be processed into fuel rods, which can't be enriched further.

The deal would leave Iran - at least temporarily - without enough enriched uranium to produce a bomb. However, after signaling in October that it would accept the proposal, Iran has since balked, giving mixed signals over the deal, including several statements from lawmakers rejecting it outright.

Mottaki maintained, however, that a clear proposal had been given involving the simultaneous exchange of uranium for fuel rods in stages.

"We gave a clear answer and we responded and our answer was we accepted in principle but there were differences in the mechanism," he said, suggesting the exchange take place on Iran's Kish island, in the Persian Gulf.

It is not clear, however, if the low-enriched uranium would then remain on the island or could be shipped out of the country - a necessary condition to any deal from the standpoint of the international community.

The world powers are also unlikely to accept a long drawn out exchange in stages, as it would allow Iran to maintain enough enriched uranium inside the country to possibly build a weapon.



Iran, meanwhile, wants to receive the fuel rods immediately in exchange for its uranium for fear that France or Russia could renege deal.

Last month, the 35-nation board of the International Atomic Energy Agency endorsed a resolution from the six powers - the US, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany - criticizing Iran for defying a UN Security Council ban on uranium enrichment and continuing to expand its operations.

It also censured Iran for secretly building a second facility and demanded that it immediately suspend further construction.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown said last month that the UN offer has been "comprehensively rejected" by Iran. A diplomat from one of the six powers said Wednesday that America's Western allies were waiting for Washington to formally declare the wait for an Iranian response over, probably by the end of this month.

The six countries are expected to meet next week to discuss what action to take over Iran.

EU leaders said they would support further UN sanctions unless Teheran starts cooperating over its nuclear program.

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1260447420080&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>  
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London Times  
14 December 2009

## ***Leaked Memo Identifies Man At Head Of Iran's Nuclear Programme***

Catherine Philp, Diplomatic Correspondent

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is the man everyone would like to reach to learn the secrets of Iran's nuclear programme. No one outside Iran has succeeded so far. *The Times* has seen a memo signed by Mr Fakhrizadeh, identifying him for the first time as the chairman of the Field for the Expansion of Deployment of Advance Technology (Fedat).

Intelligence sources say that this is the most recent cover name for the organisation running Iran's nuclear weapons programme.

The United Nations' atomic watchdog has long believed him to be the head of Iran's clandestine nuclear weapons programme, but Tehran, which jealously guards his secrets, has repeatedly rejected attempts to interview him.

Mr Fakhrizadeh, a physics professor and a former officer in the elite Revolutionary Guard, is no longer able to leave Iran because the UN Security Council imposed travel sanctions and an assets freeze on him. However, he is regarded as one of the regime's most loyal servants.

The memo from Mr Fakhrizadeh, dated December 29, 2005, is addressed to the heads of 12 different departments that make up Fedat. Experts say that the grouping together of all these disciplines under a single military command points to nothing other than a weapons programme.

The Iranian Government denies the existence of any military nuclear programme, insisting that the only nuclear activities in the country are under the civilian control of Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation, which purports to be developing a nuclear power programme.

Western diplomats believe it to be little more than a front for a clandestine military programme, justifying the production of nuclear fuel despite the absence of a single home-grown nuclear power plant. The memo bears a close resemblance to documents presented at an extraordinary board meeting at the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna at the beginning of last year. Those documents included letters — to the same department heads as mentioned in the memo seen by *The Times* — that chastised staff for using the real names of military scientists. *The Times's* document, which comes later, uses only their titles.

Fedat's obsession with secrecy is evident in *The Times's* other key document, an internal report from 2007 that was drawn up within the Centre for Preparedness at the Institute of Applied Physics, one of the organisation's 12 departments, and lays out a four-year plan for the testing of a neutron initiator, which is a key component in a nuclear weapon. It also offers an insight into the structure of a programme that ensures as few people as possible gain a complete overview of it.

In one section, it discusses the outsourcing of some work to military-affiliated university departments. "In view of Iran's situation . . . we consider that for the moment the work should be carried out at other research centres," the report says.

Some work is apparently too secret to be farmed out. "Work cannot usually be defined and performed by other research centres, so usually needs to be carried out by trustworthy personnel within the organisation," the authors note. "The most appropriate way of obtaining the required personnel is to employ individuals who were involved in the relevant calculation projects in the past."

That remark is just one in a string of references to previous experiments, suggesting a resumption of weapons work halted in 2003. One expresses concerns over whether sites previously used for experiments should be used again, presumably out of fear of external detection. "Decisions must be taken regarding the locations where such experiments used to be conducted," it warns.

Fedat is the latest incarnation of an Iranian nuclear weapons programme that has gone through at least two transformations since 1990. Western intelligence agencies are in broad agreement that Iran's nuclear programme turned from civilian to a military direction after the end of the devastating Iran-Iraq war in 1988 and the death of Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989.

The project began in direct response to the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's early efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

Fedat's first incarnation was the Physics Research Centre, an entity that has been at the centre of IAEA investigations over the alleged procurement of sensitive nuclear technology. In 1999 it became the Organisation for Planning of Special Supply. Its organisational structure was different but it retained all the same scientific staff and disciplines. Mr Fakhrizadeh is believed to have taken up his post around 2000.

In 2002 an Iranian opposition group revealed the existence of a uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, the first evidence of a clandestine Iranian nuclear programme. The American-led invasion of Iraq the following year spooked Tehran into suspending its weapons work and allowing in United Nations inspectors.

Iran's failure to address compelling evidence of past weapons work or to allow inspectors access to individuals like Mr Fakhrizadeh led to the Security Council imposing sanctions and ordering Iran to stop enriching uranium while they investigated.

Intelligence sources say that the desire to conceal the programme further led to its second overhaul in 2003 when it became Fedat. In a recently leaked, internal confidential report, IAEA inspectors said they believed that by this point, Iran had already acquired all the know-how to build a nuclear bomb.

With Fedat, Tehran preserved that expertise and all its scientific personnel for future use while building a nuclear fuel stockpile and the focus swung to uranium enrichment, which could be carried out, at least partly, under the guise of civilian energy production. Intelligence sources say that this may be one of the reasons why evidence of weapon work since 2003 has been so hard to pin down.

"But the document you obtained, which appears to take the work back towards explicit work on nuclear weapons, is very hard to reconcile with the US National Intelligence Estimate that weaponisation work has not restarted," said David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security.

[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle\\_east/article6955236.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6955236.ece)

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London Times  
14 December 2009

### ***Secret Document Exposes Iran's Nuclear Trigger***

Catherine Philp in Washington

Confidential intelligence documents obtained by *The Times* show that Iran is working on testing a key final component of a nuclear bomb.

The notes, from Iran's most sensitive military nuclear project, describe a four-year plan to test a neutron initiator, the component of a nuclear bomb that triggers an explosion. Foreign intelligence agencies date them to early 2007, four years after Iran was thought to have suspended its weapons programme.

An Asian intelligence source last week confirmed to *The Times* that his country also believed that weapons work was being carried out as recently as 2007 — specifically, work on a neutron initiator.

The technical document describes the use of a neutron source, uranium deuteride, which independent experts confirm has no possible civilian or military use other than in a nuclear weapon. Uranium deuteride is the material used in Pakistan's bomb, from where Iran obtained its blueprint.

“Although Iran might claim that this work is for civil purposes, there is no civil application,” said David Albright, a physicist and president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington, which has analysed hundreds of pages of documents related to the Iranian programme. “This is a very strong indicator of weapons work.”

The documents have been seen by intelligence agencies from several Western countries, including Britain. A senior source at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirmed that they had been passed to the UN's nuclear watchdog.

A Foreign and Commonwealth Office spokeswoman said yesterday: “We do not comment on intelligence, but our concerns about Iran's nuclear programme are clear. Obviously this document, if authentic, raises serious questions about Iran's intentions.”

Responding to *The Times'* findings, an Israeli government spokesperson said: “Israel is increasingly concerned about the state of the Iranian nuclear programme and the real intentions that may lie behind it.”

The revelation coincides with growing international concern about Iran's nuclear programme. Tehran insists that it wants to build a civilian nuclear industry to generate power, but critics suspect that the regime is intent on diverting the technology to build an atomic bomb.

In September, Iran was forced to admit that it was constructing a secret uranium enrichment facility near the city of Qom. President Ahmadinejad then claimed that he wanted to build ten such sites. Over the weekend Manouchehr Mottaki, the Iranian Foreign Minister, said that Iran needed up to 15 nuclear power plants to meet its energy needs, despite the country's huge oil and gas reserves.

Publication of the nuclear documents will increase pressure for tougher UN sanctions against Iran, which are due to be discussed this week. But the latest leaks in a long series of allegations against Iran will also be seized on by hawks in Israel and the US, who support a pre-emptive strike against Iranian nuclear facilities before the country can build its first warhead.

Mark Fitzpatrick, senior fellow for non-proliferation at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, said: “The most shattering conclusion is that, if this was an effort that began in 2007, it could be a *casus belli*. If Iran is working on weapons, it means there is no diplomatic solution.”

*The Times* had the documents, which were originally written in Farsi, translated into English and had the translation separately verified by two Farsi speakers. While much of the language is technical, it is clear that the Iranians are intent on concealing their nuclear military work behind legitimate civilian research.

The fallout could be explosive, especially in Washington, where it is likely to invite questions about President Obama's groundbreaking outreach to Iran. The papers provide the first evidence which suggests that Iran has pursued weapons studies after 2003 and may actively be doing so today — if the four-year plan continued as envisaged.

A 2007 US National Intelligence Estimate concluded that weapons work was suspended in 2003 and officials said with “moderate confidence” that it had not resumed by mid-2007. Britain, Germany and France, however, believe that weapons work had already resumed by then.

Western intelligence sources say that by 2003 Iran had already assembled the technical know-how it needed to build a bomb, but had yet to complete the necessary testing to be sure such a device would work. Iran also lacked sufficient fissile material to fuel a bomb and still does — although it is technically capable of producing weapons-grade uranium should its leaders take the political decision to do so.

The documents detail a plan for tests to determine whether the device works — without detonating an explosion leaving traces of uranium detectable by the outside world. If such traces were found, they would be taken as irreversible evidence of Iran's intention to become a nuclear-armed power.

Experts say that, if the 2007 date is correct, the documents are the strongest indicator yet of a continuing nuclear weapons programme in Iran. Iran has long denied a military dimension to its nuclear programme, claiming its nuclear activities are solely focused on the production of energy for civilian use.

Mr Fitzpatrick said: "Is this the smoking gun? That's the question people should be asking. It looks like the smoking gun. This is smoking uranium."

[http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle\\_east/article6955351.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article6955351.ece)

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Wall Street Journal

14 December 2009

## ***West Decries Iran's Latest Nuclear Offer***

By Chip Cummins

MANAMA, Bahrain -- Western officials said the Iranian foreign minister's weekend comments that Tehran would be willing to make a uranium trade in small batches, and on Iranian soil, fell well short of their demands.

A proposed deal hammered out in October between U.S., French, Russian and International Atomic Energy Agency negotiators and their Iranian counterparts had called for Iran to ship the bulk of its low-enriched uranium outside the country to be further enriched, and then shipped back to Iran for use in a medical-research reactor.

Senior Iranian officials, however, have refused to endorse the proposal, instead offering a series of sometimes-contradictory counteroffers and demands for major changes, in public comments.

Western officials have said they won't consider a major reworking of the deal, insisting on a clear yes or no from Iran on the IAEA-brokered proposal.

Speaking at a high-profile security conference here on Saturday, Manouchehr Mottaki, Iran's foreign minister, said Tehran has offered to exchange the previously agreed amount of fuel, 1,200 kilograms, or 2,640 pounds, of uranium -- but in three batches of 400 kilograms each. The fuel, he said, would be exchanged for the equivalent of higher-enriched uranium on Kish Island, an Iranian island in the Persian Gulf that serves as a kind of free-trade zone.

"We will bring 400 [kilograms] to Kish, and you bring the equivalent" in higher-enriched uranium for exchange, Mr. Mottaki said during a question-and-answer session at the conference, attended by senior Western officials, including top U.S. diplomats and American military officials.

Mr. Mottaki said Iran had agreed in principle to the original fuel-swap proposal, but was wary of being duped by the West in any exchange. He said Iran had long been the victim of the West backing out of nuclear deals.

"Once bitten, twice shy," he told conference delegates, through a translator. "And we have been bitten too many times."

U.S. officials said Sunday that Mr. Mottaki's comments didn't alter the Obama administration's plan to impose tough new economic sanctions on Iran at the end of the year.

"Nothing's changed in our calculation," said State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley.

An IAEA spokesman declined to comment on Mr. Mottaki's statement. A diplomat familiar with the negotiations with Iran said Iran has never formally shut the door on a deal, and that the Kish Island proposal isn't new.

A senior White House official provided a statement of the administration's position on Mr. Mottaki's offer: "Iran's proposal does not appear to be consistent with the fair and balanced draft agreement. ...The draft agreement reflects an extensive effort...to respond positively to Iran's request for fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor, which produces medical isotopes. It also offers an opportunity for Iran to begin to build confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear program. We urge Iran not to squander this opportunity."

On Friday, the European Council of the European Union adopted a declaration expressing "grave concern that Iran has so far done nothing to rebuild confidence of the international community in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear program."

The declaration said the EU would "support action by the United Nations Security Council" if Iran doesn't begin to cooperate with the international community over its nuclear program.

An EU spokesman on Sunday declined to comment on the declaration.

A spokeswoman for the German foreign ministry said Germany "expects Iran to seek cooperation" to resolve open issues surrounding its nuclear program.

On Sunday, meanwhile, students at Tehran University renewed antigovernment protests, accusing authorities of fabricating images of demonstrators burning photos of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic's founder, the Associated Press reported.

—*Jay Solomon, Elizabeth Williamson and David Crawford contributed to this article.*

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB126061515682588947.html>

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Washington Post  
15 December 2009

## ***Evidence Of Iran's Nuclear Arms Expertise Mounts***

By Joby Warrick

Long denied access to foreign technology because of sanctions, Iran has nevertheless learned how to make virtually every bolt and switch in a nuclear weapon, according to assessments by U.N. nuclear officials in internal documents, as well as Western and Middle Eastern intelligence analysts and weapons experts.

Iran's growing technical prowess has been highlighted by a secret memo, leaked to a British newspaper over the weekend, that purportedly shows Iranian scientists conducting tests on a neutron initiator, one of the final technical hurdles in making a nuclear warhead, weapons analysts said Monday.

There was no way to establish the authenticity or original source of the document, which is being assessed by officials at Western intelligence agencies and the U.N. nuclear watchdog. Even so, former intelligence officials and arms-control experts said that if it is a genuine Iranian government document, it is a worrisome indication of an ongoing, clandestine effort to acquire nuclear weapons capability. Iran has steadfastly denied seeking nuclear arms.

The accumulating evidence of Iran's nuclear momentum emerges as Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton conceded Monday that the White House has little to show for nearly a year of diplomatic engagement with Iran over its nuclear ambitions. "I don't think anyone can doubt that our outreach has produced very little in terms of any kind of a positive response from the Iranians," Clinton told reporters.

The internal documents and expert analysis point to a growing Iranian mastery of disciplines including uranium metallurgy, heavy-water production and the high-precision explosives used to trigger a nuclear detonation. Although U.S. spy agencies have thought that Iran's leaders halted research on nuclear warheads in 2003, European and Middle Eastern analysts point to evidence that Iran has continued to hone its skills, as recently as 2007.

"They're slowly weaning themselves off a reliance on importing critical technologies, in favor of being able to manufacture critical components themselves," said Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, a retired CIA officer and former Energy Department intelligence director. "Achieving an indigenous production capacity is right up there with mastering uranium enrichment."

Iranian scientists must still rely on outsiders for certain components and materials, such as high-strength metals used in making advanced centrifuges and longer-range missiles. But the remaining technical gaps are shrinking, according to an internal memo drafted by top Iran analysts at the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog. Excerpts from the never-published draft were leaked to a nonprofit group in October.

"Iran has sufficient information to be able to design and produce a workable implosion nuclear device," the memo states.

Iran insists that it opposes nuclear weapons, and points out that the technologies that have raised suspicions in the West have peaceful uses. But Iranian officials do not conceal their pride in their ability to develop advanced technology in spite of U.N. sanctions. Ali Soltanieh, Iran's representative to the IAEA in Vienna, said in an interview with The Washington Post this fall that as Iranian engineers conquer the nuclear sciences, they will "jump hundreds of meters up in a short time," pulling even with their counterparts from the West.

"We should thank the Americans for sanctions, because they have united our country," he said.

The newly leaked Iranian memo, first published by the Times of London, purports to show a four-year plan by Iran to develop and test a neutron initiator of a type that weapons experts say has no known civilian use. The document is neither signed nor dated, but the Times, citing unnamed foreign intelligence officials, said it was written in 2007, four years after U.S. intelligence officials think Iran halted research on nuclear warheads.

The creased, two-page document in Farsi script asserts that Iran's capabilities in the field of neutron initiators already "are reasonably good." It calls on scientific teams to build on previous secret research while also maintaining a high degree of security.

While the document makes no mention of nuclear warheads, it describes work in highly specialized fields closely associated with atomic bombs, said David Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector who reviewed the memo and other documents.

"They are eliminating bottlenecks in the process of creating a reliable nuclear warhead," said Albright, president of the D.C.-based Institute for Science and International Security. "I have no evidence of an Iranian decision to build them. On the other hand, doing the kind of work described in this document is a far cry from the common belief that Iran stopped work on nuclear weapons in 2003 and has not restarted."

A U.S. intelligence official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, acknowledged there have been "serious concerns for some time about where Iran may be headed with its nuclear activities."

The leaked memo follows the disclosure in September that Iran had secretly built a small uranium plant in a mountain north of the ancient holy city of Qom.

In late October, IAEA inspectors who visited Iran for a first look at the secret plant also made a surprise discovery of 600 barrels of heavy water, a toxic liquid used in making plutonium, during a routine visit to one of Iran's lesser-known nuclear facilities near the city of Isfahan.

A recent IAEA report called on Iran to "provide information on the origin" of the heavy water.

"It was a complete surprise," said a European diplomat who agreed to talk about the internal debate on the condition of anonymity. "We assumed that the Iranians had purchased it from elsewhere, but no one really knew. No one believes they could have made it at the existing plant" -- a small facility at Khonab that has been mostly idle since it opened three years ago.

In a closed-door session of the IAEA governing board on Thanksgiving, the head of one of the Northern European delegations asked the chief Iranian nuclear official, Ali Akbar Salehi, to explain how Iran had acquired such a quantity of heavy water.

"We made it," Salehi reportedly shot back, according to two diplomats in the room.

Whether Iran's ruling clerics have decided to make a bomb is unclear. In 2003, after Iran's first uranium-enrichment plant was exposed by the National Council for Resistance in Iran, a dissident group, the country's top leaders ordered their scientists to halt research on nuclear warheads.

That command, intercepted by Western spies, appears to have applied only to teams working on the technical challenges of building a warhead and fitting it to one of Iran's longer-range missiles. The harder task of creating the uranium fuel for bomb continued and slowly accelerated; Iran now manufactures four types of centrifuges, machines that spin at supersonic speeds to create the uranium fuel used in both power plants and nuclear weapons.

There are signs suggesting to some intelligence analysts that bomb-building research resumed after 2005, the year Mahmoud Ahmadinejad assumed the Iranian presidency. In a case cited by German government officials, Iran in 2007 bought several highly specialized devices linked to nuclear weapons testing. One was a \$40,000, Russian-made camera used to record high-speed events in a laboratory. In nuclear weapons research, such cameras help calibrate the accuracy of precision-timed explosions used to trigger a nuclear chain reaction.

High-speed cameras have other industrial uses. But according to an analysis by the Institute for Science and International Security, the model of camera bought by Iran was developed by a commercial offshoot of the All-Russia Research Institute of Experimental Physics, the premier nuclear weapons laboratory of the former Soviet Union. The spinoff company, Bifo, has co-authored research papers on explosive shock waves used in nuclear detonations.

Notably, Russian scientists with expertise in detonators have visited Iran at least as recently as 2003 to provide technical training and instructions on building triggering devices for nuclear bombs, according to Western and Middle Eastern intelligence analysts briefed on the visits.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/12/14/AR2009121403729.html>

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Global Security Newswire

15 December 2009

### ***U.S. To Simulate Missile Attack By Iran In Shield Test***

The United States next month intends to assess its defenses against a possible long-range Iranian missile strike in a test expected to cost \$150 million, Reuters reported (see *GSN*, Dec. 14).

U.S. Missile Defense Agency chief Lt. Gen. Patrick O'Reilly, speaking at a defense summit in Washington, said the missile drill would differ from past tests of the nation's missile defenses that have focused on a possible North Korean attack.

O'Reilly said the U.S. Ground-based Midcourse Defense would face a heightened challenge as the drill would test the system's ability to counter a simulated Iranian missile traveling at greater speed and more directly at the United States than a missile posited to be fired from North Korea.

"Previously, we have been testing the GMD system against a North Korean-type scenario," O'Reilly said.

"This next test ... is more of a head-on shot like you would use defending against an Iranian shot into the United States," he added.

In the exercise, a missile interceptor would be launched from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California to intercept a missile fired from the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean. The aim is to eliminate the simulated threat above the north central Pacific Ocean, where the two projectiles would collide at a total velocity of greater than 17,000 miles an hour.

"Whenever we have a situation where we're taking on a missile more head-on than from the side, that increases the challenges," O'Reilly said (Stewart/Wolf, Reuters, Dec. 14).

Meanwhile, Iranian Defense Minister Brig. Gen. Ahmad Vahidi told local media on Sunday that Tehran would soon test some of its missile systems, the Xinhua News Agency reported.

In recent years, Tehran has achieved significant success in manufacturing missiles, according to Xinhua. The country's two-stage Sajjil missile is believed to have a range of about 1,243 miles and its Shahab 3 ballistic missile can travel between 808 miles and 1,243 miles (Xinhua News Agency, Dec. 13).

[http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw\\_20091215\\_6123.php](http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20091215_6123.php)

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel

15 December 2009

### ***MI Chief: Iran Has Enough Nuclear Material For Bomb***

By Ha'aretz Service

Military Intelligence Chief Amos Yadlin said Tuesday that Iran has over the last year accumulated enough materials to create a nuclear bomb and warned: "The technological clock has almost finished winding."

Speaking at The Institute for National Security Studies, Yadin said that Iran had embarked on a "measured and sophisticated strategy for a solid nuclear infrastructure, by spreading out in facilities both overt and covert, while simultaneously developing a military capability that would allow a breakthrough when it so decides."

According to Yadin, there are three clocks now ticking with regard to Iran's contentious nuclear program ? those of technology, diplomacy, and of the stability of the Islamic regime. Technologically, said Yadin, time was almost up.

The Times of London reported Monday that Iran is set to test a key component aimed at developing a nuclear weapon. The report cited secret intelligence documents related to Tehran's controversial nuclear program, which foreign intelligence agencies date to early 2007, Tehran had planned to test a neutron initiator, the component which triggers the explosion in a nuclear weapon.

The document revealed in The Times report described the use of a neutron source, uranium deuteride, which experts said had no possible use other than in a nuclear weapon.

Experts also mentioned to the British newspaper that Uranium deuteride is the material used in Pakistan's nuclear weaponry bomb, from where Iran obtained its blueprint.

"Although Iran might claim that this work is for civil purposes, there is no civil application," David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington, told The Times, adding that the document was "a very strong indicator of weapons work."

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1135228.html>

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Xinhua News – China  
15 December 2009

### ***Iran Denies Report Of Working On Testing Nuclear Bomb Component***

TEHRAN, Dec. 15 (Xinhua) -- Iran on Tuesday dismissed a recent report alleging that Tehran is working on testing a key final component of a nuclear bomb, saying such allegation was "wrong" and "not worthy of attention."

"Some Western countries repeated such wrong statements in order to threaten Iran and impose psychological pressure on the country," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ramin Mehmanparast told a weekly press conference.

"These countries are angry that Iranian people defend their nuclear rights and make progress in the field," Mehmanparast said. "They create such scenarios to pressure us."

"These remarks are not worthy of attention," he added.

Mehmanparast made the comments in response to a report on Monday in the British newspaper The Times which said confidential intelligence documents obtained by it show that Iran is working on testing a key final component of a nuclear bomb.

The notes, from Iran's most sensitive military nuclear project, describe a four-year plan to test a neutron initiator, the component of a nuclear bomb that triggers an explosion, The Times reported.

It added that foreign intelligence agencies date them to early 2007, four years after Iran was thought to have suspended its weapons program.

The United States and other Western powers suspect Iran's nuclear program is aimed at producing nuclear-weapon materials, but Tehran contends that the program has no military component and is for peaceful purposes.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/15/content\\_12651455.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/15/content_12651455.htm)

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London Daily Telegraph

## ***North Korea Hints At New Talks***

*North Korea has agreed to "narrow its differences" with the US over its nuclear arsenal, raising hopes that it could return to stalled nuclear disarmament talks early next year.*

By Peter Foster in Beijing  
11 December 2009

The positive remarks followed talks in Pyongyang between North Korean negotiators and a US special envoy, the first such contact since UN-sanctions were imposed in June after Pyongyang conducted a second nuclear bomb test.

"Through working and frank discussion the two sides deepened the mutual understanding, narrowed their differences and found not a few common points," said the statement issued by North's official Korean Central News Agency.

"They also reached a series of common understandings of the need to resume the six-party talks and the importance of implementing the September 19 joint statement," it said.

In September 2005 the North promised in a six-party joint statement to scrap its nuclear weaponry in exchange for aid, but the talks ran into sand over verifying whether Pyongyang was actually decommissioning its nuclear programme.

Stephen Bosworth, the US special envoy returned from North Korea on Friday describing the talks as "very useful" but repeating US demands that any future deal with Pyongyang was predicated on "complete denuclearisation".

"As President Obama has made clear, the United States is prepared to work with our allies and partners in the region to offer North Korea a different future," Mr Bosworth said.

"The path for North Korea to realise this future is to choose the door of dialogue in the six-party talks and to take irreversible steps to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula."

Hillary Clinton, the US Secretary of State, described the meetings as "quite positive" but explained the new US approach as one of "strategic patience".

Over the next three days Mr Bosworth will travel to Seoul, Beijing, Tokyo and Moscow to brief the other parties to the six-party talks as diplomatic momentum appears to be building towards a possible resumption in talks early next year.

However the core "differences" between Washington and Pyongyang are substantial and analysts caution against expecting a major break-through in the North Korean problem.

Since taking office, the Obama administration has made it clear that it has little appetite for unproductive dialogue and is not interested in a repeat of negotiations where Pyongyang extracts concessions and then fails to deliver on decommissioning.

There is widespread scepticism among all parties that Pyongyang's military leadership is serious giving up the nuclear weapons that are its sole bargaining chip on the international stage.

Lee Sang-hyun of the Sejong Institute, a think tank outside Seoul, predicted a "tug of war" over when North Korea should rejoin the talks, as Pyongyang tries to extract concessions for its bankrupt economy.

"North Korea will only return to the talks after the U.S. offers it a face-saving move or substantial rewards," he said.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/northkorea/6787915/North-Korea-hints-at-new-nuclear-talks.html>  
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Yonhap News – South Korea  
12 December 2009

## ***Patience Needed To Bring N. Korea Back To Nuclear Talks: U.S. Envoy***

BEIJING, Dec. 12 (Yonhap) -- The U.S. envoy who visited North Korea earlier this week called on Saturday for patience in bringing the communist state back to six-nation talks aimed at denuclearizing it.

The talks, which also include South Korea, Russia, Japan and China, were abandoned by North Korea earlier this year over U.N. condemnation of its long-range rocket launch.

Following the three-day visit by Stephen Bosworth, the U.S. special envoy on North Korea, Pyongyang announced it would try to narrow differences in efforts to revive the talks.

"This may be a time to exercise a bit of strategic patience," Bosworth told reporters in Beijing after briefing Chinese officials on his trip to Pyongyang. Bosworth, who was echoing comments by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, said the talks he had with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok-ju were "very useful" and that the members of the nuclear talks need to "sit still (and) quietly for a bit, and decide where we might go next."

But he noted that the timing for the resumption of the six-nation talks is still unclear.

"How and when we resume the six-party talks remains to be resolved," he said. Bosworth arrived in Beijing on Friday, when the North hinted it could return to the talks that China hosts.

North Korea has conducted two nuclear tests since 2006, including one in May this year.

Bosworth will fly to Tokyo after he ends his Chinese trip.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2009/12/12/34/0401000000AEN20091212001800315F.HTML>  
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New York Times  
13 December 2009

## ***Thais Seize Plane With Weapons From North Korea***

By Thomas Fuller and David E. Sanger

BANGKOK — A cargo aircraft flying from North Korea and carrying tons of weapons has been seized by Thai authorities during a refueling stop in Bangkok, Thai officials said.

A senior Obama administration official said the United States — which fears North Korea will sell some of its nuclear technology — had tipped off the Thai authorities that the plane, which landed here Friday, might be carrying weapons.

"From our visual inspection there seem to be several types of weapons, components and materials: long tubes, shoulder-fired missiles, certain types of rocket propelled grenades," Panitan Wattanayagorn, a government spokesman, said in an interview Sunday.

Mr. Panitan said many crates removed from the aircraft had not yet been opened. The full payload was brought to an air force base in central Thailand and will be inspected Tuesday, he said.

The United States official said that beyond wanting to know what the plane was carrying, the administration was also signaling North Korea that it intended to keep the pressure up even as it pursued talks with its leaders about possibly restarting nuclear negotiations. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The aircraft was on its way to Sri Lanka for another refueling stop but its final destination was unknown, Mr. Panitan said. The five-man crew included one man holding a Belarus passport and four men with Kazakhstan passports. They will be charged in a Thai court Monday with offenses related to the illegal possession of weapons, Mr. Panitan said.

Transporting heavy weaponry to or from North Korea is banned under United Nations Resolution 1874, which was passed after North Korea conducted a nuclear test this year. "Under that resolution we had to seize the weapons," said Thani Thongphakdi, a spokesman for the Thai Foreign Ministry.

The resolution calls on countries to "inspect and destroy" certain categories of weapons bound to or from North Korea, including large-caliber artillery, missiles and missile spare parts.

No major seizures of weapons have been made public since the passage of the resolution. This summer, the United States Navy tracked a North Korean freighter suspected of carrying banned cargo for about three weeks, and the ship eventually turned back to its home port without incident.

Thai news media reported that the aircraft seized at Don Muang Airport on the outskirts of Bangkok was an Ilyushin 76. That aircraft has a carrying capacity of about 48 tons, according to the Web site [globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org).

*Thomas Fuller reported from Bangkok, and David E. Sanger from Washington.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/13/world/asia/13thai.html>

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Pak Tribune – Pakistan

12 December 2009

## ***CIA Asked Blackwater To Take Out AQ Khan***

***Blackwater chief Erik Prince admits to running secret missions***

LAHORE: The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had asked private security contractor Blackwater Worldwide to kill Dr AQ Khan, the Pakistani scientist “who shared nuclear know-how with Iran, Libya, and North Korea”, agency’s founder Erik Prince admitted in an interview with Vanity Fair.

According to a source who spoke to the magazine, the authorities in Washington “chose not to pull the trigger”, however, adding “Dr Khan’s inclusion on the target list would suggest that the assassination effort was broader than has previously been acknowledged”.

Admission: The New York Times (NYT) reported that Prince also admitted to participating in some of the CIA’s most sensitive operations, including raids on suspected militants in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now known as Xe Services, “Blackwater’s role in both wars changed sharply when its guards began providing security for CIA operatives in the field”.

Raids on suspected insurgents in Iraq, known as ‘snatch and grab’ operations, began happening almost nightly during the worst years of the war between 2004 and 2006.

The paper quoted several former Blackwater guards as saying operations to capture and kill militants in Iraq and Afghanistan became so routine that Blackwater personnel sometimes became partners in the missions rather than simply providing the security for the CIA officers.

The Washington Post’s sources reported that the actions taken by the agency’s personnel “went beyond the protective role specified in a classified Blackwater contract with the CIA” and included active participation in raids overseen by the CIA or special forces personnel.

Mark Corallo, a spokesman for Xe Services, was quoted as saying that Blackwater was never under contract to participate in covert raids with CIA or Special Forces troops “in Iraq, Afghanistan or anywhere else”. “Any allegation to the contrary by any news organisation would be false,” he said.

Several former CIA counterterrorism officials told WP that CIA headquarters was not aware of such actions and did not authorise them. Separately, the NYT quoted former Blackwater employees as saying they helped provide security on some CIA flights transporting detainees in the years after the 2001 terror attacks in the US.

George Little, a CIA spokesman, would not comment on Blackwater’s ties to the agency. But he said the CIA employs contractors to “enhance the skills of our own work force, just as American law permits”.

Intelligence officials deny that the agency has ever used Blackwater to fly high-value detainees in and out of secret CIA prisons that were shut down earlier this year. The Blackwater spokesman said company personnel were never involved in CIA “rendition flights,” which transferred terrorism suspects to other countries for interrogation.

Courtesy: [www.dailytimes.com.pk](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk)

<http://paktribune.com/news/index.shtml?222258>

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Thaindian News – Thailand  
13 December 2009

## ***India Successfully Tests Nuclear-Capable Missile Dhanush***

Balasore (Orissa), Dec 13 (IANS) India Sunday successfully tested a nuclear-capable ballistic missile Dhanush from a warship in the Bay of Bengal, an official said.

Dhanush, the naval version of the Prithvi missile, was launched from INS Subhadra that was anchored about 35 nautical miles offshore from the test range of Chandipur in Balasore district, 230 km from Bhubaneswar.

The missile, which has a range of 350 km and carries a nuclear warhead of about 500 kg, was fired at 11.31 a.m. All the operations for the launch were carried out by Naval personnel.

“It has met all the mission objectives. All the events occurred as expected and were monitored by the range sensors. It was a text book launch and a fantastic mission accomplished,” the official said.

V.K. Saraswat, scientific advisor to the defence minister, and director general and secretary, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), was on-board the ship during the mission.

Prithvi is part of India’s ambitious integrated guided missile development programme launched over 20 years ago.

Dhanush (meaning bow), which was tested several times in the past, is designed and built by India’s Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

It was first test-fired on April 11, 2000 from the Chandipur range.

[http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/india-successfully-tests-nuclear-capable-missile-dhanush-lead\\_100288576.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/india-successfully-tests-nuclear-capable-missile-dhanush-lead_100288576.html)

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Zinhua News – China  
15 December 2009

## ***India Capable In Terms Of Nuclear Deterrence: Research Organization***

NEW DELHI, Dec. 15 (Xinhua) -- Trying to put an end to all doubts about India's nuclear capability, the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) of India Tuesday said that India is self-sufficient and capable in terms of deterrence.

"In terms of deterrence, India has the capability, which it needs to have. Any deterrence is the function of what is the threat against which you are creating it and in that particular aspect, we are totally self-sufficient. India's deterrence capabilities are fully safe and all the infrastructure required is also in place," DRDO chief V.K. Saraswat told media in the national capital.

"In terms of capability, what matters is the efficacy of your deterrence and not the numbers I can assure you that in terms of efficacy, we are at par with whatever adversaries we are looking at," he said in response to questions about the doubts raised by the country's two nuclear scientists K. Santhanam and P.K. Iyengar.

Santhanam, who coordinated the Pokhran II tests, in August claimed that the only thermonuclear device tested was a "fizzle" that is it failed to meet the desired yield. Iyengar had supported his claims.

[http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/15/content\\_12651696.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-12/15/content_12651696.htm)

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Newsweek  
12 December 2009

## ***Bye-Bye Bomber?***

By John Barry/Newsweek

From the magazine issue dated December 21, 2009

For the first time in almost 40 years, the nuclear arsenals of the U.S. and Russia are unregulated by a mutual treaty: START—the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty—expired earlier this month. Envoys from both countries are

working on an interim deal to extend START—then the goal will be to craft a new treaty. Negotiating that accord will take at least the remainder of President Obama's term. But already the Air Force worries how a new pact might affect the fate of its storied B-52H and B-2 bombers.

For half a century, America has deployed a "nuclear triad": warheads aboard land-based intercontinental missiles; aboard a fleet of Trident submarines; and aboard the B-52H and B-2 as bombs and cruise missiles. But with Obama and his counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev, committed to negotiating further cuts in their nations' stockpiles, the multibillion-dollar question is whether the triad ought to become a dyad or even a monad, with nuclear weapons mounted on only one or two platforms.

Remarkably, a study just published by the Air Force's main lobbying organization, the Air Force Association, concludes that the nation "should gradually shift to a dyad" of submarines and missiles, phasing out bombers. The reasoning: the nation's bomber fleet is largely antiquated, and the latest-generation plane, the bat-winged B-2 (also known as the stealth bomber), costs about \$2 billion apiece. Defense Secretary Robert Gates and other Pentagon officials have indicated that such expensive piloted bombers may no longer be affordable. Rebecca Grant, director of the association's research arm, acknowledges that "the Air Force may find [that argument] hard to accept. Air Force officials haven't wavered from their commitment to the nuclear-bomber force."

The study's conclusions echo what Pentagon sources say are options emerging from two big defense studies underway in the Obama administration. One of those, the *Quadrennial Defense Review*, is looking for big projects to ax, say three sources familiar with the process who didn't want to be named discussing internal debates. Those preparing the other, the *Nuclear Posture Review*, are under administration pressure to lower estimates of the minimum nuclear force that Washington could accept, the sources say. Gates, meanwhile, canceled research on a future bomber in April, saying he wanted "a better understanding of the need, the requirement, and the technology." One alternative: bomber drones. Gates told Congress recently he wonders if any future bomber "needs to have a pilot in it."

<http://www.newsweek.com/id/226494>

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Sydney Morning Herald – Australia  
14 December 2009

## ***Report Seeks Big Cut In Nuke Stockpile***

SANDRA O'MALLEY

A landmark report calls for a massive cut in atomic warheads but stops short of setting a deadline for their abolition, which Prime Minister Kevin Rudd says is a critical challenge for this century.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), initiated by Mr Rudd last year, wants the global arsenal cut from 23,000 to 2,000 by 2025 but doesn't set a timeframe to get rid of all nuclear weapons.

The targets would see Russia reducing its stockpile from 13,000 to 500, with the United States slashing its arsenal from 9,000 to 500 over the next 15 years.

"Twenty years after the end of the Cold War there are at least 23,000 nuclear warheads still in existence, with a combined blast capacity equivalent to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs," says the report, released in Tokyo on Tuesday.

The ICNND wants nuclear-armed states to commit to a "no first use" policy by 2025, coupled with changes to the alter status of weapons, ensuring "nuclear forces are not instantly usable".

Anti-nuclear groups have welcomed the initiative but have criticised the ICNND for continuing to promote nuclear power and squibbing on a deadline for getting rid of all atomic weapons.

The commission recognises the growing use of nuclear power - which will increase as the globe battles climate change - will present "some additional proliferation and security risks".

David Noonan, from the Australian Conservation Foundation, said the ICNND was irresponsible to support the spread of nuclear reactors, technology and materials across the world.

"Any expanded civil nuclear industry means a linked and increased risk of nuclear weapons proliferation," he said.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) believes the report falls short on eliminating the nuclear threat.

ICAN Australia chair Tilman Ruff said there needed to be a clear roadmap to eliminating and outlawing nuclear weapons.

"ICAN, along with many other civil society organisations around the world, advocates a Nuclear Weapons Convention, a comprehensive global treaty to get the world to zero nuclear weapons," Professor Ruff said.

While it was "ambitious and realistic" to set a 2025 deadline to cut nuclear weapons by 90 per cent, ICNND co-commissioner and former Australian foreign affairs minister Gareth Evans told AAP it wasn't appropriate to set a date to move from minimisation to zero.

"(It is) premised on fundamental changes to the geopolitical environment, neighbourhood squabbles in the Middle East and south Asia, psychological problems countries are going to have in giving up their security blanket."

There would be issues with verification and enforcement, too.

"All of those things are not insurmountable, but they are very difficult and they make it lack credibility to pluck a particular figure out of the air," Mr Evans said.

Mr Evans told ABC TV he didn't have any problem with the use of nuclear energy for power generation.

"Getting upset about nuclear energy as such is an absolute dead end," he said.

Mr Rudd, who was in Tokyo for a whistle-stop visit en route to Copenhagen, believes the report will help guide debate ahead of two key nuclear conferences next year - US President Barack Obama's April meeting and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) review meeting in May.

"(This is a) critical challenge for us all in the century which lies before us," he said at the launch.

"This report ... represents an important framework for discussions and debate on non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament in what will be a critical year in 2010."

<http://news.smh.com.au/breaking-news-national/report-seeks-big-cut-in-nuke-stockpile-20091215-kshz.html>

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Los Angeles Times - OPINION

14 December 2009

### ***Hit Iran Where It Hurts***

By Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Behind closed doors, the Iranian regime probably cannot conceal its surprise and delight at what it has gotten away with. For more than 10 years, Tehran has succeeded in deceiving foreign governments, thwarting nuclear inspectors and keeping sanctions weak and feckless. During that time, Iran has not broken stride in expanding its nuclear program, and it has now announced plans for 10 new enrichment facilities.

Tehran's greatest feat has been its success in lulling global leaders -- including many in the U.S. administration and Congress -- into complacency, based on the belief that the threat posed by Iran's nuclear weapons program can be negotiated away through engagement and concessions by the West. This approach also largely ignores the totality of Iran's multifaceted threat.

The range and accuracy of Tehran's ballistic missiles continue to improve, with U.S. forces and allies in the Middle East and Europe now within striking distance. Iran is also quickly accumulating an array of advanced conventional weapons in its effort to dominate the Persian Gulf and the world's oil supply.

Iran is designated by the U.S. as the leading state sponsor of terrorism, and it is supporting extremist organizations throughout the Middle East and beyond, reaching even into Latin America. Iran has also assumed a major role in fueling the insurgency in Iraq and is backing Taliban militants in Afghanistan.

Many U.S. officials and congressional leaders seem content to engage in vague and open-ended talks with Iran, acting as though we have a reservoir of time to work with before the Iranian threat reaches critical mass. Yet, in June, the International Atomic Energy Agency, or IAEA, estimated that Iran had already amassed a stockpile of nearly 1,400 kilograms of enriched uranium, which it could use in a "dirty bomb" or pass along to extremist groups or other rogue states.

Just last month, the IAEA made the startling revelation that Iranian scientists may have tested advanced components of nuclear warheads. Nuclear experts note that such technology, once mastered, would allow for the production of smaller and simpler nuclear bombs, and would make it easier for Iran to put a nuclear warhead on a missile. This represents a step that few in the West believed possible.

The IAEA also issued a report last month containing urgent new findings. One was that yet another camouflaged nuclear facility, this time at the recently disclosed Qom site, was at "an advanced state of construction." With additional installations widely suspected, who knows what will be uncovered next.

The IAEA should immediately cease all technical assistance to Iran and should suspend Iran's membership privileges in the organization. Until such actions are taken, the U.S. should not send one more penny of taxpayer funds to the IAEA that benefit Iran's nuclear program.

The regime in Tehran knows only hardball, and nothing less than overwhelming and crippling sanctions could produce a reversal of its threatening programs and policies.

That is why the United States must be prepared to act alone, if necessary, and with every weapon in its political and economic arsenal. The Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act is one such tool. This legislation, which I coauthored, has the support of more than 300 members of the House, and it is urgent that this bill reaches the president's desk before the end of the year. It targets one of Iran's major weaknesses -- namely, its dependency on foreign gasoline and other refined petroleum products. By placing financial sanctions on U.S. and foreign companies providing these crucial resources, Iran's economic lifeline would be severed and its already weak economy would crumble.

But these sanctions must be coupled with action on all fronts. The U.S. must also specifically reject Iran's claim to an inalienable right to produce nuclear fuel. We must strengthen existing laws to prevent the transfer of prohibited materials and technology to Iran. Responsible nations should impose a ban on travel by senior Iranian regime officials and their families to Europe and the U.S. We should strengthen bilateral and multilateral efforts to shut down accounts of those doing business with the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps or its affiliated entities; deny Tehran access to euros and U.S. dollars; and freeze the assets of those who violate U.N. sanctions on Iran. Concurrently, we should offer our full support to the Iranian people and increase funding for Iran democracy programs.

The weakness of recent actions has been daunting. The IAEA mustered only a weak censure of Iran; the U.N. Security Council has said that it was disappointed; the White House has maintained its wait-and-see approach; and the Iran Refined Petroleum Sanctions Act continues to languish because many remain true believers in the mirage of engagement. However, the threat is immediate, and the time to act has arrived.

*Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) is the ranking Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.*

<http://www.latimes.com/news/opinion/commentary/la-oe-ros14-2009dec14,0,427799.story>

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