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New York Times
January 19, 2008

U.S. Sees Stalling By North Korea On Nuclear Pact

By Helene Cooper

WASHINGTON — A debate is under way within the Bush administration over how long it can exercise patience with North Korea without jeopardizing the fulfillment of a nuclear agreement that President Bush has claimed as a foreign policy victory.

With North Korea sending signals that it may be trying to wait out Mr. Bush's time in office before making any more concessions, administration officials are grappling with how the United States should react.

The debate has fractured along familiar lines, with a handful of national security hawks in Vice President Dick Cheney's office and at the State Department arguing for a more confrontational approach with Pyongyang.

On the other side, Mr. Bush's lead North Korea nuclear negotiator, Christopher R. Hill, has argued that the United States should continue a more restrained approach, one that is widely credited with bringing about an agreement last year that is intended eventually to lead to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

While the restrained stance still appears to have support from Mr. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, it is coming under fire from conservative critics, both in and out of the administration.

In a public departure from administration policy, Jay Lefkowitz, a conservative lawyer who is Mr. Bush's envoy on North Korean human rights, said this week the North would likely "remain in its present nuclear status" when the next president took over in January 2009.

"North Korea is not serious about disarming in a timely manner," Mr. Lefkowitz told an audience at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank. "We should consider a new approach to North Korea."

At issue is a declaration that North Korea was supposed to make by the end of last year formally stating everything in its nuclear inventory. When the North missed that deadline, administration officials initially sought to minimize the significance of the lapse, but they have expressed increasing concern in the wake of a North Korean statement on Jan. 4, in which the North insisted that it had already disclosed everything that it needed to.

The North has cited a list of nuclear programs that it provided in November, but the United States has rejected the list as incomplete.

"Some people make the argument that we're just pursuing a policy of talks that go nowhere," said one administration official with knowledge of the debate within the administration.

John R. Bolton, the former United States ambassador to the United Nations, argued in a Wall Street Journal op-ed article last week that the Bush administration should dump the nuclear pact with North Korea because, he said, Pyongyang was not interested in giving up its nuclear program. "They're in the classic North Korean role of deception," Mr. Bolton said in an interview. "It's like groundhog day; we've lived through this before."

Mr. Bush said the two countries needed to resolve three sticking points: the number of warheads that North Korea has built; the amount of weapons-grade nuclear material produced by North Korea; and the need for North Korea to disclose that it has passed nuclear material to others.

The proliferation issue has taken on new importance after an Israeli strike in Syria in September, which American and Israeli officials said was conducted against a nuclear facility near the Euphrates River that was supplied with material from North Korea. Administration officials want North Korea to disclose what help it may have given Syria, although they also say that the help came before the North agreed to dismantle its nuclear reactor and disclose its nuclear programs.

Mr. Bolton and other critics of the agreement, including the officials in Mr. Cheney's office, never liked the pact to begin with, and advocates of the deal with North Korea say their second-guessing is expected.

They argue that the Bush administration's previous confrontational strategy with North Korea is part of what led to the North's detonation of a nuclear device in October 2006.

Besides the United States and North Korea, the other parties to the nuclear pact include China, South Korea, Japan and Russia.

"People lambaste the six-party process, and sure, it offers no refuge for those in need of instant gratification," Mr. Hill, the negotiator, said in an interview. "But when asked for alternatives" to the nuclear pact, Mr. Hill said, "even the noisiest critics fall silent."

Administration officials say that the North has remained true to one part of the October agreement: It has made great strides in disabling and dismantling its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon. "Bush can say, with credit, that he has achieved more than any other administration as far as dismantlement," said Gary Samore, a vice president at the Council on Foreign Relations who helped negotiate the Clinton administration's 1994 agreement with North Korea. "He can say that he managed to freeze further production, and handed the next administration a diplomatic process."

But Bush administration officials say that they want more than just dismantlement on their record, and insist that they have not written off their chances of getting North Korea to make a complete declaration of its nuclear programs before the end of the administration.

Bush officials say they will not ultimately be able to verify that North Korea has got rid of its nuclear weapons program unless they first know what is in the program.

"The issue of the declaration is important because that which they declare must later be abandoned," a senior administration official said.

The official, who asked that his name not be used because he was not authorized to speak publicly on the issue, said that the administration really wanted North Korea to provide an explanation for purchasing aluminum tubes that could be used to convert uranium gas into nuclear fuel.

In its Jan. 4 statement, North Korea accused the United States and the other countries in the six-party talks of renegeing on promises made under an October deal, including the shipment of one million tons of fuel and the removal of North Korea from the United States' list of states that sponsored terrorism.

So far, North Korea has received about 150,000 tons of fuel, and Bush administration officials say the removal of the North from the terrorism list will depend on whether it meets the requirements of the October deal.

North Korea agreed in October to dismantle its nuclear facilities and to disclose all of its past and present nuclear programs by the end of 2007 in return for 950,000 metric tons of fuel oil or its equivalent in economic aid. Last month, Mr. Bush reached out directly for the first time to the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il, holding out the prospect of normalized relations with the United States if North Korea fully disclosed all nuclear programs and got rid of its nuclear weapons.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/19/washington/19korea.html?ref=asia>

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Washington Times

January 19, 2008

U.S. Shuns Envoy's View Of Pyongyang's Actions

By Elizabeth Eldridge, Washington Times

The Bush administration yesterday rejected in-house criticism from its own special envoy on North Korea who suggested that Pyongyang is not serious about giving up its nuclear arsenal.

The remarks Thursday by Jay Lefkowitz, State Department special envoy for human rights issues with North Korea, came amid delicate regional talks to end the nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula. North Korea, he said, "is not serious about disarming in a timely manner."

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Mr. Lefkowitz's comments "certainly don't represent the views of the administration."

"We believe that the six-party talks provide a forum, a mechanism and an opportunity to realize the goal of denuclearized Korean Peninsula," Mr. McCormack said.

Asked whether Mr. Lefkowitz's remarks would complicate the negotiating process, Mr. McCormack responded, "It shouldn't if North Korea truly intends to follow through on all of its commitments."

Mr. Lefkowitz, in remarks to the Washington-based American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research (AEI), predicted that "North Korea will remain in its present nuclear status when the [Bush administration] leaves office in one year."

In the "six-party talks" involving the United States, the two Koreas, Russia, Japan and host China, Pyongyang has pledged to end its suspect nuclear programs in exchange for economic, security and other concessions.

Conservative critics are openly skeptical of the North's promises, and Pyongyang has already missed the deadline to supply a full accounting of its nuclear program.

Mr. McCormack characterized Mr. Lefkowitz as "a very bright, dedicated public servant who has taken on this responsibility on behalf of the secretary of state. He is not, however, somebody who speaks authoritatively about the six-party talks."

In his AEI address, Mr. Lefkowitz criticized U.S. reliance on China and South Korea in the talks, stating that the U.S. administration may have made the "misguided assumption" that "both countries shared our strong desire that North Korea not be permitted to possess a nuclear program and arsenal." The envoy said the primary concern for China and South Korea in the talks was regional stability.

Asked at the forum whether he was speaking for the U.S. government in his remarks, Mr. Lefkowitz replied that U.S. policies "are under review right now."

But White House spokesman Tony Fratto said the United States and its regional allies shared "a great deal of unanimity in dealing with North Korea."

Mr. Fratto said it was "unfortunate" that Pyongyang had missed the Dec. 31 deadline to produce a detailed accounting of its nuclear programs. But he insisted, "We do believe that the five parties of the six-party talks — who are encouraging North Korea to relinquish their nuclear program — stand together and are unified in that effort."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20080119/FOREIGN/328470259/1003/foreign>

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Washington Times

January 19, 2008

Iran

Russia Supplies More Nuke Fuel

TEHRAN — Iran has received a third shipment of nuclear fuel from Russia for use at its Bushehr nuclear power station, the state-run Islamic Republic News Agency said yesterday.

Russia delivered the first batch of about 80 tons of uranium fuel rods to Iran on Dec. 17 as part of international efforts to persuade Tehran to halt its uranium enrichment program. The second shipment took place on Dec. 28.

Iran says it will continue enriching uranium despite Moscow's nuclear fuel supplies for the \$1 billion Bushehr plant, which is being built by Russia. Russian nuclear fuel deliveries to the plant are to continue into next month.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080119/FOREIGN/78466686/1003&template=nextpage>

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Washington Post

January 19, 2008

Pg. 18

New Team In Poland Cool To U.S. Shield

Premier Conditions Support on More Aid

By Craig Whitlock, Washington Post Foreign Service

WARSAW -- Poland's new government is threatening to put the brakes on the Pentagon's drive to build a missile defense shield in Eastern Europe, insisting that the project cannot go forward unless the country receives a big increase in U.S. military aid and other commitments.

Responding to surveys showing a large majority of Poles opposed to the defense plan, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said this month that his country is now in "no hurry" to sign a pact that would anchor a critical part of the U.S. missile shield on Polish soil. Poland's previous government had stood firmly behind the project but was ousted by voters in October.

Poland's reluctance is the latest headache for the Pentagon in its effort to construct a global defense shield, which it says is needed to protect against a missile attack from Iran or other "rogue states."

Russia has blasted the proposal, arguing that it could threaten that country in the long run by giving the U.S. military a beachhead in Eastern Europe. Public misgivings also remain strong in the Czech Republic, where the United States wants to base a key radar installation, although officials in Prague have shown a greater willingness to come to terms.

This week, Polish Defense Minister Bogdan Klich met with top officials at the Pentagon and the State Department to inform them that Poland expects a commitment from Washington to help rebuild its air defense systems and provide other military assistance before it will agree to join the shield project. The Pentagon wants to place 10 missile interceptors in Poland that could shoot down a missile launched by Iran before it reaches Europe or the United States.

In an interview with reporters and editors at The Washington Post on Wednesday, Klich said that he had had "promising talks" with U.S. officials but that overall the negotiations remained "tough."

He said that Poland would be exposing itself to risks if it agreed to host part of the shield -- Russia has threatened to aim missiles at Poland in retaliation -- and that it wants more American help in exchange. In particular, Poland wants Patriot missiles to bolster its aging air defenses as well as help modernizing its 140,000-member military.

"We would be glad to see another American proposal on how to balance these benefits and costs," Klich said. "The Polish government at this time hasn't seen the right, correct balance."

Poland's objections have prompted a flurry of diplomatic activity on both sides of the Atlantic. On Wednesday, Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried met in Warsaw with Poland's foreign minister, Radoslaw Sikorski, and offered some soothing words. The two men also announced that Sikorski will visit Washington on Feb. 1 for further talks. Tusk, the prime minister, is expected to follow shortly afterward.

"We take Poland's considerations very much into account," Fried said. "Poland has made a sound case that the risk will increase, and we have to address this."

In a brief interview after his meeting with Fried, Sikorski reiterated Poland's stance that it was not in a rush to reach an agreement. "I'm glad there seems to be a greater sensitivity to our security needs," he said. "But it's a long-term project."

Poland also appears less willing to accept the Pentagon's primary rationale for the shield: that it will protect Europe, as well as the United States, from a potential Iranian attack.

After meeting with Czech officials in Prague on Wednesday, Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry A. Obering III, who oversees the shield program for the Pentagon, said Iran was rapidly developing long-range missiles that could reach Europe. "Currently, there's no protection in Europe against the intermediate-range or long-range weapons," he said.

But Polish officials said they don't consider Iran a risk to attack them. They also questioned the urgency of the project even from the Pentagon's perspective, citing a recent U.S. intelligence report's conclusion that Iran gave up its nuclear arms program in 2003. "We all agree that the threat from Iran is not imminent," Sikorski said.

Polish officials and analysts said part of the problem is that they feel taken for granted by the Bush administration. Warsaw is one of the United States' strongest European allies and has contributed thousands of troops to the U.S.-led military coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Poland's new government decided last month to withdraw its remaining 900 soldiers in Iraq by this October. But it has pledged to send 400 more troops to Afghanistan, boosting its forces there to 1,600.

Many Polish firms had assumed they would be on an inside track for reconstruction contracts in Iraq, but that largely failed to happen. And lawmakers had hoped the United States would reciprocate in other ways, such as letting Poles visit the United States without visas -- a privilege given to citizens of Western European countries.

"People expected here that there would be some gains and that we'd receive something tangible in exchange," said Slawomir Debski, director of the Polish Institute of International Affairs. He said Polish leaders will not be able to win parliamentary approval for the missile shield unless Washington sweetens the deal.

"That is the difference with our new government," Debski said. "They are ready to say no if there is no fair deal."

Another factor hindering talks is the U.S. presidential election. Some Poles said they are reluctant for the country to commit to the missile shield if there is a chance that the next administration in Washington will mothball the whole project. Officials here said they are seeking a separate treaty that would formalize greater military cooperation between the two countries, regardless of who occupies the White House next year.

But the biggest sticking point appears to be Poland's demand for U.S. aid to overhaul its own air defenses. Poland relies on Soviet-era hardware that officials say will become obsolete in several years, a major worry in a country that sees a resurgent Russia as its primary threat.

"Several years from now, we'll be left with no air defense," said Janusz Zemke, chairman of the national defense committee in the Polish Parliament. "This is not an invented problem. Without American assistance, we won't be able to deal with it."

Zemke said Pentagon officials have for years resisted Polish requests for help. "They say openly, 'If we start helping you, then we'll have to start helping the Hungarians and the Czechs and others,'" he said.

Geoff Morrell, a Pentagon spokesman, told reporters that the Bush administration was hopeful that it could smooth things over with Poland. He also said Poland was already "the biggest beneficiary within Europe of defense aid" from the administration.

But his comment irritated lawmakers in Warsaw, who said the Pentagon was including expenses it covers for Polish troops to fight in Iraq. Officials said Poland currently receives about \$28 million a year in U.S. military aid for projects at home.

Staff writers Ann Scott Tyson and Josh White in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/18/AR2008011803343.html>

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Washington Times

January 19, 2008

Prague Wants Missile Role

PRAGUE (AP) — The Czech Republic says it wants access to U.S. military research and a role in developing missile-defense technology as part of any deal allowing Washington to deploy a missile-defense system in the country.

In Warsaw, a senior U.S. diplomat sought to address concerns of Poland over the plan.

"One of our requirements is to be able to take part in development and research," Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek said in Prague. "We want to be among those countries that will be able to benefit from the results of the U.S. military industry and some of its technologies."

Mr. Topolánek met this week with Lt. Gen. Henry Obering, director of the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency, to discuss the proposed shield.

Gen. Obering said the United States intends to sign a contract with a consortium of Czech universities, the Academy of Sciences and other institutes, to study Czech industrial, research and technical capabilities in areas related to missile-defense technologies and industrial cooperation.

Washington wants to place 10 missile-defense interceptors in Poland and a radar system in the neighboring Czech Republic as part of a system it says is necessary to protect against attacks from Iran.

An increasingly assertive Russia, however, is incensed by the prospect of U.S. installations in a region that it controlled during the Cold War, and has threatened to attack the bases — causing deep anxiety in Poland.

Daniel Fried, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, reassured Poland on Thursday that Washington is taking steps to cooperate more with Russia and NATO on the plans.

"In the course of our discussions over the past many months, Poland has made some suggestions that we take seriously," Mr. Fried told reporters in Warsaw. "Poles have urged us to seek to work with Russia cooperatively on missile defense, and we have done so."

"Of course, Poland has never urged us to give Russia a veto over this program, but it is reasonable for Poland — as well as other European countries — to encourage us to seek to work with Russia," Mr. Fried said after two days of meetings with Polish leaders.

Mr. Fried added that Poland has encouraged Washington to "increase NATO's role in the mission, and that "we have done so."

Amid concerns over Russia, Poland has asked the United States to strengthen Poland's short-range and midrange air defenses — in the form of Patriot or THAAD missiles — as part of any deal.

"We did not interpret Polish suggestions as suggestions that Poland be paid off for missile defense but rather as serious suggestions from a serious ally to deepen military cooperation," Mr. Fried said.

There is some concern in both Central European countries about a strain in ties with Russia if they agree to the U.S. plan — only to see the next U.S. government scrap it after taking office next year.

Mr. Fried sought to reassure European leaders. "There is more bipartisanship on this issue than is commonly admitted publicly in Washington," he said. "I do not think it likely that the next administration would undo what is done here."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20080119/FOREIGN/899709649/1003/foreign>

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Chicago Tribune
January 18, 2008

A Towering Cloud Of Uncertainty

Candidates give nuclear issue little attention

By Catherine Collins

In the last presidential race, the only issue on which President Bush and Sen. John Kerry seemed to agree was that the most serious threat to national security was nuclear proliferation.

The threat of nuclear catastrophe has increased markedly in the four years since.

The CIA tells us that Iran has shelved its nuclear weapons effort, but has made substantial progress toward enriching uranium, which could still result in a bomb within the next couple of years. North Korea tested a nuclear device in 2006, and the relief was palpable when it turned out to be a dud. Pakistan moved perilously close to chaos with the imposition of martial law and the murder of Benazir Bhutto, raising questions about the security of its nuclear arsenal. And I haven't even mentioned the rising threat of nuclear terrorism.

Voters might expect to be hearing plenty about these dangers from the candidates running to replace Bush. Instead, less is being said. With the exception of one question posed during a Democratic debate in New Hampshire, the silence has been deafening.

So I tried to fill the void by soliciting responses on nuclear issues from the major candidates of both parties. I submitted six questions to each campaign and gave them a month to respond.

The Democrats replied, but, despite repeated telephone calls and e-mails, Gov. Mitt Romney was the only Republican who answered, and then only with a copy of a speech he gave last year. To avoid leaving the Republican half of this issue blank, I mined debate transcripts and speeches to get a sense of their positions.

The Democrats' take

The Democrats are generally in sync. Their responses indicate that all of them would insist that the United States live up to existing international treaties regulating nuclear technology. They are more apt to support broader disarmament and uniformly oppose developing new nuclear weapons, contradicting Bush's policy.

Former Sen. John Edwards reflects the sharpest departure from Bush's record. Promising to make reducing nuclear weapons stockpiles one of his top priorities, Edwards said, "This means opposing any plans to build new nuclear weapons and gradually reducing existing stockpiles in conjunction with other nations such as Russia."

The Democrats said they are open to direct negotiations with nuclear hot spots like Iran and North Korea. They all promised to pressure Pakistan to allow outsiders to interrogate A.Q. Khan, the Pakistani nuclear scientist who has been under house arrest for four years after confessing to selling nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya. "It is essential that international investigators ... have direct access to Dr. Khan, who has firsthand knowledge of matters that are vital to the security of the United States and many other countries around the world," said Sen.

Hillary Clinton.

Sen. Barack Obama, who was criticized last year for saying he would negotiate directly with Iranian leaders, stuck with his position. "I strongly support direct negotiations with Iran and North Korea, and I would be willing to lead those negotiations as president. We will be in a stronger position to put tough international sanctions in place if other nations see that the United States has gone the extra mile diplomatically," he said.

Pinning down the GOP

Discerning Republican positions is tougher, but outlines have emerged in public forums and voting records. The GOP candidates are more likely to equate nuclear issues with terrorism and they appear unwilling to talk to Iran under current circumstances.

The Republicans have largely avoided discussing whether to build a new generation of nuclear weapons, a program pushed by the Bush administration.

Proliferation concerns are most often expressed in terms of putting the burden on non-nuclear countries to stop the development of weapons without addressing the U.S. obligations to reduce and eventually eliminate its own stockpile. Romney set himself apart from others in both parties by proposing a new body of international law that would make trafficking in nuclear technology a "crime against humanity." He also outlined a five-point plan for dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions, extending the Bush policy by proposing tighter economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation.

While the Democrats share a similar outlook on proliferation, differences of degree emerged in the responses to a specific question about compliance with international treaties. All of them, including Rep. Dennis Kucinich, said they would push to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which would inhibit the development of atomic weapons by prohibiting all nuclear explosions. The U.S. signed the treaty, but the Senate has refused to ratify it. Clinton and Obama agreed that the U.S. should reduce the number of nuclear weapons gradually in concert with other nuclear powers, as required under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

Edwards seemed to go a small step further, saying Washington should take the lead in disarmament. "The U.S. will set the example for others to follow by making sure we abide by our own NPT commitments," he said.

On the Republican side, Sen. John McCain and former Sen. Fred Thompson are on record opposing the test ban treaty, which suggests that they also support developing new nuclear weapons down the road. McCain has called the treaty broken because it failed to stop the spread of nuclear technology. Romney and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee have opposed reducing the U.S. nuclear stockpile, as the treaty requires.

Rep. Ron Paul is the only Republican who advocates reducing the number of nuclear weapons in the U.S. arsenal. The four leading Democrats strongly oppose developing a new generation of nuclear weapons. "The Bush administration has dangerously put the cart before the horse, planning to rush ahead with new nuclear weapons without a considered assessment of what we need those weapons for and what the impact of building them would be on our effort to stop the spread of nuclear weapons around the world," Clinton said.

Mideast goals

Creating a nuclear-free zone in the Mideast is political dynamite because it would require Israel to officially admit the existence of its nuclear arsenal and abandon it. Edwards and Kucinich were the clearest on this, advocating both a nuclear-free Mideast and abolition of nuclear weapons altogether.

Clinton and Obama were more cautious, couching the prohibition of nuclear weapons in the Middle East in terms of dealing with Iran's atomic ambitions.

"The issue at hand today is preventing Iran -- a state sponsor of terrorism that openly threatens its neighbors -- from acquiring nuclear weapons," said Obama.

While the Bush administration has refused bilateral security talks with Iran and negotiated only reluctantly with North Korea, the Democrats said they would be willing to sit down at the negotiating table with both countries.

"We can best prevent Iran from threatening our interests through a 'smart power' strategy that will combine 'carrots' and 'sticks,' direct engagement, and international pressure to convince moderate Iranians that they cannot and must not pursue nuclear weapons," said Edwards.

As president ...

In July, Clinton described Obama as "irresponsible and frankly naive" for saying as president he would meet with the leaders of rogue nations. In responding to my question about negotiating with Iran and North Korea, Clinton said she supports direct talks, but did not indicate that she would be involved personally.

Only Kucinich ruled out the first use of nuclear weapons while the other Democrats were reluctant to be pinned down.

Clinton said she supported the vision of a world without nuclear weapons and taking steps toward that goal. But for now, she said, "nuclear weapons remain an essential means of deterring and defending the United States and our allies, and we must ensure the continued reliability and effectiveness of our nuclear forces."

The Democrats offer a dramatically different agenda on nuclear proliferation than the Bush administration. While the GOP voices are quiet, their positions seem much closer to current policy.

The world has become a more dangerous and unstable place since the last election. The world's nuclear powers have not lived up to their promise to eliminate nuclear weapons and more countries are trying to acquire them. The time for silence is long past and the candidates of both parties should raise the volume on the nuclear debate.

Catherine Collins is co-author of "The Nuclear Jihadist: The True Story of the Man Who Sold the World's Most Dangerous Secrets ... and How We Could Have Stopped Him."

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/chi-oped0118nuclearjan18.0.6960577.story>

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Boston Globe
January 20, 2008

General Endorses Nuclear Defense

MOSCOW - Russia's military chief of staff said yesterday that Moscow could use nuclear weapons in preventive strikes to protect itself and its allies. General Yuri Baluyevsky's comment, coming amid disputes with the West over security issues, may have been meant as a warning on Russia's nuclear might. (AP)

http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2008/01/20/polls_opening_for_crucial_vote/

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London Daily Telegraph
January 19, 2008

Israel Test-Launches Nuclear-Capable Missile

By Tim Butcher, in Jerusalem

Israel has carried out the successful test launch of a long-range, ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead, in what was intended as a clear show of strength to Iran.

While Iranian military chiefs carry out regular test firings of their own missiles, events that are often shown on state television, in Israel things are done with less fuss.

The lack of public awareness caused a flap when the contrail from the test firing was seen in the skies over Jerusalem causing many Israelis to call the emergency services fearing attack by Palestinian militants.

It was launched from the top-secret Palmachim air base south of Tel Aviv, home to a number of highly sensitive Israeli weapon systems including the Arrow anti-missile defence battery.

Israeli officials declined to comment publicly about the launching, but unnamed officials quoted in the Israeli press expressed satisfaction at both the launch and its impact across the region.

"There was great joy after the results of the test became clear," one security source said. "Whoever is watching what is happening in Israel will understand what he has to understand."

Regional defence experts said Israel has begun a programme to extend the range of its existing Jericho-2 ground attack missiles.

The Jericho-3 is planned to have a range of 2,500 miles which brings all of Iran within range.

Iran is currently under international sanctions for failing to comply with inspectors into its developing nuclear programme. America, Israel and much of the international community suspect Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons.

While Israel has never confirmed it has nuclear weapons, it is the worst kept secret in the Middle East that the Jewish State acquired them years ago.

A recent article in the Israeli newspaper Haaretz said American intelligence concluded as early as 1974 Israel had stockpiled nuclear weapons, and that the early Jericho ground-to-ground missile system was designed for nuclear warheads.

"Everybody can do the math and understand that the significance is that we can reach with a rocket engine to every point in the world," Isaac Ben-Israel, a retired army general and Tel Aviv University professor who is now an MP, said.

Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Iran's president, often hints at the destruction of Israel and in his latest speech, given before news of the test launch, he again attacked the Jewish state.

"The Zionist regime ... would not dare attack Iran," he said, "The Iranian response would make them regret it, and they know this."

The Israeli test was regarded as a technological breakthrough for Israel Aerospace Industries, manufacturers of the missile system, as it showed the missile could be fitted with a dual-stage engine.

One Israeli commentator suggested the launch was ordered by the government to detract worsening public criticism of its inability to stop rockets hitting Israel fired by Palestinian militants inside Gaza.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=PBKSDMF4LCLRVQFIQMGCFGGAVCBQUIV0?xml=/news/2008/01/18/wmid218.xml>

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Los Angeles Times

January 20, 2008

Iran Sanctions Ripple Past Those In Power

The people and small businesses are feeling the pinch. And the West is debating even tougher restrictions.

By Borzou Daragahi and Ramin Mostaghim, Special to The Times

TEHRAN — Sanctions weren't supposed to hurt Majid Taleghani. But the Iranian book publisher says they have forced him to increase prices and scale back the number of titles he issues.

"In the past few weeks, the price of South Korean paper has soared at least 25%," Taleghani complained, chain-smoking nervously. "Why? South Korean banks refuse to open letters of credit. They won't work with Iranian banks anymore."

President Bush's recent tour through the Middle East was meant in part to rally U.S. allies against Iran before talks Tuesday in Berlin by members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany over the possibility of imposing a third round of sanctions on Iran to pressure the government to halt its nuclear program.

A year after the Security Council first imposed sanctions, they clearly have begun to have an effect. But in an echo of the debate over sanctions against Iraq under Saddam Hussein in the 1990s, diplomats and economic analysts disagree sharply over whether such measures would pressure those in power to change their policies or merely hurt the Iranian people.

"They have an impact; they have a heavy impact on the economy," said a Western diplomat in Tehran who is among those who regularly brief officials in Washington about the situation in Iran. "But will this have an effect on policy? That is the question."

A report released Wednesday by the Government Accountability Office, an independent auditing group that answers to the U.S. Congress, says, "The overall impact of sanctions, and the extent to which these sanctions further U.S. objectives, is unclear," and that foreign firms continue to make deals in Iran's state-controlled energy sector.

But on the streets and in the shops of Tehran, the capital, sanctions have had a visible effect, diminishing the ability of merchants and consumers to buy goods from Europe, forcing them to opt for cheaper Asian imports.

Prices of most goods, including French perfumes and German printing plates, have increased 50% in the last four months, merchants say, a result of the extra cost of doing business through Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, instead of directly with foreign manufacturers and distributors. Many of those firms are wary of doing business with Iran lest they come under the scrutiny of the U.S. Treasury Department, which has begun aggressively targeting companies with ties to both the United States and Iran.

"Now, doing business with anywhere other than China or Russia is too much of a pain," said Ali-Reza Morshed Razam, owner of an eyeglasses shop on Palestine Street, in downtown Tehran.

Although some observers say Iran's elites will weather any sanctions short of an international ban on the purchase of Iranian oil and natural gas, others think economic restrictions will force the country's well-connected merchants to press the government to change its ways.

A European diplomat said he was heartened to hear that a group of Iranian entrepreneurs recently had approached Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei to complain that sanctions were hurting their bottom line.

"If you want to touch the people who have an interest in the regime, then sanctions are the way to do it," said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Small-business men should put pressure on the regime."

Iran's economy is heavily dependent on oil and characterized by massive amounts of public spending, especially to provide cheap gasoline, which the government imports and sells at heavily subsidized rates. Increasing the costs of doing business with the outside world forces Iran to spend more money, draining government resources.

By pouring more cash into the economy, the government also confronts the shrinking value of the Iranian rial, and increased inflation, which makes people poorer.

Economic sanctions imposed on Iran by the Security Council and countries such as the United States so far have had few concrete restrictions but have created an atmosphere that makes investors fearful, observers said.

"Sanctions are like icebergs," said Saeed Leylaz, an Iranian economist and journalist. "Only 10% of the effect is directly attributable to the Security Council. Ninety percent is fear of the U.S."

Some officials dread a repeat in Iran of the events in Iraq after the 1991 Persian Gulf War, when sanctions discouraged companies from doing business with Iraqis, whittling at livelihoods of the people while strengthening the hand of Hussein and his inner circle.

"Even if something is not on a list, a lot of companies will say, 'Dealing with Iran -- oh, I'd better not do it,' " said a European diplomat in Tehran. "It's becoming like 1990s Iraq, when companies used to refuse to sell papers and pencil to Iraq."

The Bush administration has also announced that it will sanction any company doing business with the Revolutionary Guard, the country's ideologically driven parallel military force. Those sanctions, advocates say, are meant to strike at Iran's leadership without weakening the economic status of middle-class Iranians who are likely to press for domestic change.

"The U.S. government proposal for new multilateral steps, be it at the U.N. or with the [European Union], is to step up pressure on Iran's leaders -- not to press Iran's people with broad economic sanctions," said Patrick Clawson, an Iran expert at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, whose views on Iran often reflect those of the White House.

But some Iran experts say the Bush administration's sanctions strategy reflects a misreading of Iranian political dynamics. One scholar likened the American and Western European thinking to that of Marxist and anarchist revolutionaries of Central Europe in the 1920s who believed that the people would rise up against capitalist elites if the economy worsened.

In fact, said the scholar, Iranian hard-liners will be strengthened by any economic crisis. "Extremists in Iran don't mind at all if sanctions get worse," he said. "They don't mind if the U.S. attacks Iran."

Foreign investment in Iran's once-bustling, Western-leaning private sector has flattened after dropping off two years ago with the election of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the beginning of major tensions over Iran's uranium-enrichment program, Western diplomats said.

Such pressures serve only to antagonize Iranians against the West, some say.

"What pressure does this put on the system?" fumed Mousa Ghaninejad, an Iranian economist who writes for the daily Donya-e-Eqtasad, or World of Economics. "Americans are making the people enemies. The important thing is to make the Iranian people their friends. They're doing the opposite."

Western diplomats in Tehran say they closely watch the effects of sanctions on prices and Iranian attitudes, and send their findings back to European capitals as well as to Washington, where diplomats say they are eagerly received by White House, State Department and Pentagon officials.

"Targeting the sanctions is the biggest battle we have among people who are discussing sanctions," said a European diplomat in Tehran. "Ultimately we want the regime to change its policies, without hurting ordinary people. So you've got to hit the decision-makers, and that is very, very difficult."

Daragahi is a Times staff writer, and Mostaghim is a special correspondent.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-sanctions20jan20,1,1328302.story>

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London Daily Telegraph

January 22, 2008

Nato 'Must Prepare To Launch Nuclear Attack'

Nato must prepare to launch pre-emptive nuclear attacks to ward off the use of weapons of mass destruction by its enemies, a group of former senior military officials has warned.

Calling for a major change to Nato's approach to defending its members and their interests, the authors of the report, which has been handed to Nato and Pentagon chiefs, said the first-strike use of nuclear weapons was a "indispensable instrument".

According to a report, the authors of the blueprint for reforming Nato include Lord Peter Inge, the former British chief of the defence staff and US General John Shalikashvili, the former Nato commander in Europe and chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff.

"The risk of further proliferation is imminent and, with it, the danger that nuclear war fighting, albeit limited in scope, might become possible," the report said.

"The first use of nuclear weapons must remain in the quiver of escalation as the ultimate instrument to prevent the use of weapons of mass destruction."

The document reportedly includes Lord Inge's comments on the controversy surrounding nuclear weapons policy:

"To tie our hands on first use or no first use removes a huge plank of deterrence."

The report called for a wholesale reform of Nato and a new pack between Nato, the US and the European union in order to tackle modern military and terrorist threats to the West.

It warned the spread of nuclear technology meant there was "simply no realistic prospect of a nuclear-free world". Terrorism, political fanaticism and religious fundamentalism were major threats to the West, and organised crime, climate change and migration on a mass scale posed dangers to the way of life of Nato members.

They also cited the weakening of global alliances, including the United Nations.

The authors have proposed major changes to the way Nato operates, including abandoning consensus decision making so fast action can be taken without the threat of vetoes and caveats imposed by some nations.

They also called for military action without ratification by the UN in cases where "immediate action is needed to protect large numbers of human beings".

The report was compiled after authors were briefed by senior serving military officials who are unable to speak publicly about their concerns with Nato's military strategy.

The document may be discussed at a Nato summit in Bucharest in April.

The other three authors are Klaus Naumann, a German former military commander, Henk van den Breemen, a former Dutch military official, and Jacques Lanxade, the former French admiral and chief of defence.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml;jsessionid=3QLVI0WA14NYZQFIQMGCFFGGAVCBQUIV0?xml=/news/2008/01/22/wnato122.xml>

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Washington Times

January 23, 2008

Pg. 6

N. Korea Talks Left Out Details

U.S. seeks nuke arsenal data

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

North Korea's recent discussions with the United States about a required declaration under the six-nation nuclear talks omitted key data on Pyongyang's current nuclear arsenal and its covert uranium enrichment program, U.S. officials say.

The failure to provide the information in a formal declaration, combined with North Korea's Jan. 4 public statement asserting it already made the declaration, left the four years of talks frozen amid newly disclosed intelligence showing North Korea at one time had equipment with traces of 90 percent enriched uranium, said officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

One official said North Korea some time ago provided the U.S. government with a sample of a specialty metal supposedly melted down from tubes the North Koreans claim were meant for non-nuclear purposes. Pyongyang had hoped the sample would dispel suspicions about the covert uranium enrichment program that North Korean officials have at different times both admitted and denied having.

Instead, ultrasensitive detectors found traces of the highly enriched uranium. "The North Koreans thought we would not be able to detect the traces," the official said.

A second official declined to comment on the uranium traces found on the sample, first reported in The Washington Post last month, because it involves sensitive intelligence.

However, this official, who has detailed knowledge of Asian affairs, said there is no change in the high level of confidence among U.S. intelligence agencies that North Korea sought to develop a enriched uranium for weapons at least since 2002. A slowdown in procurement activity led to change in the confidence level in 2006, but major concerns about the program remain.

"Uranium enrichment is a critical issue with North Korea," this official said. "Their efforts to acquire the fuel, the infrastructure necessary to enrich uranium has always been a critical issue in our discussions in the six-party talks, and it's still there. That's why with the declaration one would hope they'll be forthcoming on this issue."

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, the lead U.S. negotiator, recently spoke to a North Korean official about the declaration, and Mr. Hill thought the discussion was about what North Korea planned to put in a formal declaration due by Dec. 31.

But on Jan. 4 a North Korean government spokesman announced that the declaration was made. The U.S. official said that if it was the declaration, it is "very deficient" and lacked details of both the current North Korean nuclear weapons arsenal and the covert uranium enrichment program.

"It wasn't comprehensive by any means, and they were told so, and we said 'this is what we're looking for in the declaration; you need to be forthcoming on these points,'" said the official, describing what was disclosed as "totally off the mark."

The North Koreans were asked to "rework" the issue and come back with a comprehensive statement, the official said.

On uranium enrichment, "no, they have not admitted to any procurement that speaks to any intent to enrich uranium," the official said. "They have continued to deny making any acquisitions" for "acquiring the capability to enrich uranium."

The lack of detail on current nuclear arms was a surprise to U.S. officials because North Korea tested a nuclear device, with partial success, in October 2006. The official said there are no "indicators that they are planning any additional tests."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20080123/NATION/490233308/1002>

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Washington Post
January 23, 2008
Pg. 4

N. Korea May Be Taken Off Terrorism List

North Korea may soon be on its way to being the second country taken off the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism during the Bush administration's war on terrorism.

Dell Dailey, the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, told a group of reporters yesterday that North Korea appears to meet the criteria for removal. "Taking countries off of the designation list is pretty specific," Dailey said. "You go back six months, you see if there's been any visible support or material support. We don't see that with North Korea. You also ask them to give an affirmation that they will not do things in the future. . . . It appears that North Korea has complied with those criteria."

Getting off the U.S. list was until recently hard to accomplish. North Korea was added two decades ago, after the bombing of a Korean Air Lines flight in 1987.

But the Bush administration has used the list -- which exposes countries to sanctions -- as a prod for better behavior. Libya was removed in 2006 after it promised to give up its weapons-of-mass-destruction programs and to make payments to the families of victims of Pan Am Flight 103, which was blown up over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988. Tokyo has pressed Washington not to remove North Korea from the list until it provides a full account of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korean agents.

Ultimately, the decision on removal rests with President Bush, notwithstanding the legal criteria or diplomatic sensitivities.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/22/AR2008012203644.html>

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Washington Post
January 23, 2008
Pg. 12

Six Powers Back U.N. Draft On Iran

Tough Sanctions Are Watered Down

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States and five other major powers agreed yesterday on a new draft U.N. resolution on Iran, but the compromise incorporates weakened language that calls only for "vigilance" or "monitoring" of financial and military institutions without most of the tough economic sanctions sought by the Bush administration, according to European officials familiar with its text.

To break an eight-month deadlock, the Bush administration accepted a plan that includes largely voluntary monitoring of transactions involving two banks, and calls for restraints on export credits, cargo traffic and business involving individuals or institutions linked to proliferation. The toughest restriction is a travel ban on key officials, the European officials said.

The final talks in Berlin were dominated by intense negotiations between Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, according to U.S. and European officials. Announcing an agreement afterward, German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier acknowledged that the lengthy diplomacy to get a draft "was not always all that easy."

The U.N. Security Council passed two earlier resolutions, in December 2006 and March 2007, calling for Iran to suspend its enrichment of uranium, a process that can be used to produce peaceful energy as well as deadly weapons. It promised a third resolution if Iran did not comply in 60 days. Washington hoped that new sanctions would add more meaningful pressure.

But Russia and China, which do significant business with Iran, resisted earlier British and French drafts -- inspired by Washington -- that called for asset freezes on Iranian banks and parts of the military, including the elite Quds Force, as well as a ban on arms sales to Iran. All these measures were either dropped or watered down.

At this stage, the draft itself is the primary achievement, diplomats say. "This will come as a rude shock to the Iranians," departing Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns said in an interview. "They had been predicting that the Security Council was no longer unified enough to pass a third resolution, and they were wrong. The council will pass this resolution in several weeks, and it will add to the international pressure on Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment."

European envoys say the main impact of a new resolution may be the psychological effect on international financial transactions and institutions, which have already cut back their dealings with Iran. The new draft calls for U.N. member states to "monitor" financial activities with Bank Melli and Bank Saderat, two of Iran's biggest banks. It also calls for vigilance on export credits to Iran, a provision dropped from a previous resolution at China's insistence, diplomats say.

"It's going to be more difficult for Iran to do business," said a European diplomat. "It sends a useful political message that Iran is not off the hook and at a good time in the electoral cycle." Iran is set to hold parliamentary elections in March, usually a harbinger of what will happen in the next presidential election, due next year. The U.S. goal is to isolate the Tehran government in ways that would lead the population to turn against it at the polls. Britain, France and Germany will co-sponsor the resolution, which will be shared with the 10 nonpermanent Security Council members this week. It is not expected to be put to a vote until next month, after Libya's council presidency ends.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/22/AR2008012200329.html>

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(Editor's Note: Hyperlink for the referenced document and the National Response Framework Resource Center follows article.)

New York Times

January 23, 2008

U.S. Alters Its Approach to Disasters

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — In the first overhaul of the nation's emergency response system since Hurricane Katrina, government officials announced Tuesday that the Federal Emergency Management Agency would once again take the lead role in disaster response and that it would use an amendable, computer-driven doctrine to coordinate federal, state and local resources.

The doctrine is embodied in the National Response Framework, a 90-page electronic document that can be changed by local officials if they find kinks in its guidelines after responding to an emergency. The framework, announced by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, replaces the rigid, 427-page National Response Plan, which was focused on responding to terrorist attacks when Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit the Gulf Coast in 2005.

"Unlike past plans, the National Response Framework is always active, emphasizing and implementing lessons learned every single day," Mr. Chertoff said at a news conference in Washington. "This is a living document."

Elected officials who lobbied for changes in the government's disaster guidelines said that equally significant was who would take the lead in carrying out the new framework. At Mr. Chertoff's side at the news conference was R. David Paulison, the FEMA administrator, who will now serve as a primary adviser to President Bush on disaster response.

FEMA's advisory role was diminished after the agency was placed under the umbrella of the Homeland Security Department in the wake of the Sept. 11 attacks. After Hurricane Katrina nearly four years later, critics said the overlap had contributed to the government's paralysis in responding to the storm.

The framework still gives management responsibilities to officials of the Homeland Security Department if there is a disaster. But urgent decisions on where to shift federal resources will be FEMA's call.

In addition, a rule that required Homeland Security to identify a disaster as an incident of national significance before any sweeping federal response has now been discarded. That declaration took days after Hurricane Katrina. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/23/us/nationalspecial/23fema.html?_r=1&ref=washingtton&oref=slogin

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National Response Framework

The *National Response Framework* presents the guiding principles that enable all response partners to prepare for and provide a unified national response to disasters and emergencies – from the smallest incident to the largest catastrophe. The *Framework* establishes a comprehensive, national, all-hazards approach to domestic incident response. . . .

(For complete document, please click on link below.)

<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/nrf/nrf-core.pdf>

NRF Resource Center

<http://www.fema.gov/emergency/nrf/mainindex.htm>

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Washington Post

January 24, 2008

Pg. 19

Slowly, But Surely, Pyongyang Is Moving

By David Albright and Jacqueline Shire

The optimism with which the October agreement with North Korea was welcomed has faded amid accusations that the North again is not keeping its commitments. First came word that "disablement" of nuclear facilities was slowing. Then there was the missed Dec. 31 deadline for North Korea to declare the full scope of its nuclear program, including its plutonium stockpile and uranium enrichment activities. And earlier in the fall, North Korea was accused of helping Syria construct a nuclear facility in its desert, reportedly a reactor.

The finger-wagging, told-you-so naysayers in and out of the Bush administration should take a deep breath. There is no indication that North Korea is backing away from its commitments to disable key nuclear facilities and every reason to expect this process to unfold slowly, with North Korea taking small, incremental steps in return for corresponding steps from the United States and others in the six-party discussions.

Disablement of the five-megawatt reactor at Yongbyon slowed in part because the United States decided that unloading the irradiated fuel rods as fast as North Korea proposed could needlessly risk exposing the North Korean workers to excessive radiation. North Korea is unloading the rods and making steady progress on the other aspects of disablement at the Yongbyon site. Could it be happening faster? Probably, and North Korea would point out that promised shipments of heavy fuel oil are also slow in coming.

North Korea's nuclear declaration was to be received by Dec. 31. On Jan. 2, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said the United States was still "waiting to hear" from the North. Pyongyang responded that the United States had its declaration. After some tail-chasing, it emerged that North Korea had quietly shared an initial declaration with the United States in November. According to media reports, this declaration stated that North Korea had a separated plutonium stockpile of 30 kilograms and denied that it had a uranium enrichment program.

Does this quantity of separated plutonium make sense? Yes. In short, 30 kilograms is at the lower end of the range of plutonium that we have assessed North Korea could have separated. This estimate is based on what we know about how long its reactor operated to build up plutonium in the fuel rods and how much plutonium was chemically extracted from this fuel at the nearby reprocessing plant.

What about any enriched uranium? There is no question that North Korea has committed to providing the other nations in the six-party discussions with information about its uranium enrichment efforts and should be held to that commitment. But we should not lose sight of an uncomfortable fact -- that U.S. policymakers misread (at best) or hyped information that North Korea had a large-scale uranium enrichment program. There is ample evidence that

North Korea acquired components for a centrifuge-enrichment program, but few now believe the North produced highly enriched uranium or developed its enrichment capabilities in the manner once claimed by the United States. The success or failure of this latest agreement with North Korea must not hinge on the uranium issue. This is an interesting and relevant part of its nuclear program, but it is still a footnote in the context of its plutonium production.

Reports that North Korea has cooperated with Syria on a hidden nuclear program are troubling but must also be kept in context and, until additional information is available, should not be allowed to undermine the agreement. It is possible that North Korea was selling sensitive or dual-use equipment to Syria's nuclear program. The best argument for holding the deal together is that it brings North Korea into the fold, bit by bit, making it harder for it to slip back into the arena of illicit deals and keeping a bright light on its activities. As for the "box in the desert" that Israel bombed in September, it is gone now and whatever has replaced it is almost certainly not a reactor.

Accusations in the Israeli media that North Korea transferred plutonium to Syria, where it was to be placed into bombs, are baseless. The transfer of such material for weapons would be a *casus belli* with dire consequences for both countries, and this surely is understood by both Kim Jong Il and Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

North Korea is looking to the United States to keep its promises on delisting it as a terrorist state. Unfortunately, given the climate in Washington and the perception that North Korea is slow-rolling the declaration process, this is unlikely over the near term. Pyongyang should be realistic in its expectations.

For Washington, and the unfairly maligned advocates of the six-party process, the task is to maintain laser-like focus on taking the next step toward fulfillment of the October agreement, with the goal of moving to the disarmament phase, and not allowing these hard-won steps to be drowned out by the noise of detractors.

David Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector, is president of the Institute for Science and International Security. Jacqueline Shire is a senior analyst at ISIS and a former State Department foreign affairs officer.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/23/AR2008012303282.html>

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New York Times

January 24, 2008

Hiring of Soviet Scientists Has Strayed From Aim, Audit Says

By MATTHEW L. WALD

WASHINGTON — An American effort set up after the fall of the Soviet Union to hire its former weapons scientists to keep them from selling their skills to nations seeking nuclear, biological or chemical weapons is now paying people who were never weapons scientists and are too young to have worked in the old Soviet program, according to Congressional auditors.

In fact, some of the money is going to hire Russians to work on a civilian nuclear power initiative that Congress has been reluctant to finance.

Some members of Congress said Wednesday that the money might even be indirectly helping Russia supply Iran with nuclear technology, and that it might allow development in Russia of commercial products with which America would have to compete.

At a hearing of the investigations subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Representative John D. Dingell, Democrat of Michigan and chairman of the full committee, said that the Department of Energy program had begun with the best intentions but that there was "often a thin line between the noble and the naïve." The program, which has a budget this year of \$30 million, has spent about \$309 million since its inception in 1994. It was considered a success in keeping newly impoverished scientists from emigrating to wealthy countries hostile to the United States that were seeking their weapons expertise. But members of Congress have begun to worry that the program may have outlived its usefulness as Russia's circumstances have changed.

Members of the subcommittee pointed out that Russia was awash in oil revenue. The senior Republican member, Representative John Shimkus of Illinois, said that the United States had bought \$11 billion in oil and oil products from Russia from January 2005 through last October and that, unlike right after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was now running budget surpluses.

"Clearly, Russia can afford to participate," he said.

According to the Government Accountability Office, while the program's goal was to prevent technologies for weapons of mass destruction from leaving the Soviet Union, an analysis of 97 projects employing 6,450 scientists from former Soviet states found that more than half of them "never claimed to have W.M.D. experience." And nearly 1,000 of the scientists were born in 1970 or later. The Soviet Union was dissolved in December 1991.

Department of Energy officials at the hearing quibbled with the specifics of the findings, saying that more than half were weapons scientists but that less than 60 percent fell in that category. They defended the program by saying that all the scientists working under it were being kept from helping other countries with dangerous technologies.

Robert A. Robinson, a Government Accountability Office official, said: "It feels a little bit like mission creep. When problem X is solved, we move the program into problem Y, into infinity."

The subcommittee chairman, Representative Bart Stupak, Democrat of Michigan, said the program had become a "slush fund" for the Department of Energy's national laboratories, which are paid to oversee it.

Some of the money went to six research projects related to the Energy Department's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, a proposal that Congress has not embraced and that would recover plutonium and other materials from spent reactor fuel, for reuse in a new class of reactors.

Energy Department officials could not say if they were financing any scientists in Russian groups directly involved in supplying fuel to Iran. But a State Department official, Richard J. K. Stratford, acting deputy assistant secretary for nuclear nonproliferation policy, who was testifying about a program run by his department to finance science centers in the former Soviet Union, said, "You could argue if you give Russia a dollar for whatever purpose, it frees up a dollar that can then be spent elsewhere."

The State Department runs a program similar to the one at the Energy Department. It is based on institutes, not individual scientists, but has "graduated" some of the institutes as they have become self-sufficient. The State Department hopes to end the program by 2012. Several committee members called on the Energy Department to develop an "exit strategy."

Adam M. Scheinman, the Energy Department's assistant deputy administrator in the office of nonproliferation and international security, said scientists in the program had worked on projects involving land mine detectors, systems for needle-free injections, prosthetic limbs and radioisotopes for cancer treatments.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/24/washington/24nuke.html?_r=1&ref=washington&oref=slogin

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National Nuclear Security Administration

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 23, 2008

Israel Begins Radiation Detection Efforts at Haifa Port

Pilot Project Will Help To Detect Smuggled Nuclear Material

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC), and the Israel Port Company (IPC) announced today that initial operations of radiation detection equipment have commenced at Haifa Port, one of Israel's busiest seaports. The specialized equipment will help to detect smuggled or illicit shipments of nuclear and other radioactive materials that might move through this port.

"We are working closely with Israel to prevent nuclear terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction," said William Tobey, deputy administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation. "The success of this project also reflects the dedication and hard work of the Israelis in designing and installing the radiation detection equipment."

If a container is flagged by radiation detectors, Israeli-developed technology would then allow for quick identification of the radioisotope that is involved. This ongoing pilot project will provide both countries with information on the best way to detect nuclear or radiological material as they continue to expand and cooperate in this important area.

The IPC's Chairman of the Board, Major Gen. (Res.) Yiftach Ron-Tal added, "We see the installation of the radiation detection portals as a critical piece of the port security regime that will ease the efficient flow of trade and will foster Israel's continuing economic growth."

The equipment was installed under a cost-sharing arrangement with the IPC and the Haifa Port Company. Under the cost-sharing arrangement, IPC funded the design, installation, integration and long-term maintenance of the radiation detection equipment; the Haifa Port Company will operate the detection equipment; and the IAEC will assist with long-term training efforts and equipment maintenance. NNSA procured the radiation detection equipment, developed the communications system, and helped to train HPC officials on operation and maintenance of the system.

Under its Megaports Initiative, NNSA provides specialized equipment that enhances countries' ability to deter, detect and interdict illicit shipments of special nuclear and other radioactive materials at ports. Around the world, the Megaports Initiative is currently operational in twelve ports; and additional ports in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East are scheduled to be operational in 2008.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a semi-autonomous agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the U.S. and abroad.
http://www.nnsa.doe.gov/docs/newsreleases/2008/PR_2008-01-23_NA-08-05.htm

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International Atomic Energy Agency

IAEA Publishes Advisory Guide to Address Nuclear Terror Threat

Joint International Effort Produces First-of-its-Kind Document

Staff Report

22 January 2008

The IAEA today released a reference manual that details how to prevent, detect, and respond to an incidence of nuclear terrorism. *Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear and Other Radioactive Material* serves as a how-to booklet on several topics related to criminal acts involving nuclear and radioactive material. The 150+ page text is intended for a broad audience, including law enforcement agencies, legislators, customs and border patrol personnel, intelligence officials, emergency response teams and users of nuclear technology.

"In addition to providing recommendations on how to prevent, detect, and respond to a possible nuclear or radiological attack, this document is also a call for greater harmonization between agencies and governments who may be called upon to deal with such a threat," said Reza Abedin-Zadeh, IAEA Department of Nuclear Security Officer.

The manual is composed of four sections, containing:

- Discussion of the nature of the threat posed by illicit acts utilizing nuclear and radioactive material, along with an outline of policy and legal frameworks currently in place to hinder such an act;
- Review of international steps being taken to counter the threat;
- Primer on radioactive material, the public health risks associated with exposure to radiation, and information on current applications and transport issues involving radioactive material; and
- Advisory text on how countries can prevent, detect and confront a possible threat.

Tackling the unauthorized movement of nuclear and radioactive material poses a multifaceted challenge to countries and officials responsible for public security. In response to the threat of a possible radioactive terrorist attack, states and organizations have begun to synchronize their information-sharing capabilities on a wider scale. The release of this Illicit Trafficking handbook aims to further these efforts by providing a resource foundation to guide cooperative measures around policy, training and awareness.

Developed in cooperation with INTERPOL (International Police Organization), EUROPOL (European Police Organization), and the World Customs Organization, the handbook is the first to provide a comprehensive guide that addresses the multifaceted threat of a possible nuclear terror attack. Though the Agency has previously issued a series of technical publications to assist police, customs and law enforcement officers in anticipating or addressing criminal acts involving nuclear or radioactive material, this publication is intended for a wider, non-technical audience.

Background

The IAEA also maintains an information system on incidents of illicit trafficking and other criminal or unauthorized activities involving nuclear and radioactive materials. To date, the Illicit Trafficking Database (ITDB) has received reports from participating States on approximately 1250 incidents ranging from illegal possession, attempted sale and smuggling, to unauthorized disposal of these materials and recoveries of radioactive sources. Currently, 96 States participate in the ITDB Programme, which was established in 1995. In some cases, non-participating Member States have provided information to the ITDB.

<http://www.iaea.or.at/NewsCenter/News/2008/guideterrorthreat.html>

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International Atomic Energy Agency
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COMBATING ILLICIT TRAFFICKING IN NUCLEAR AND OTHER RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL

REFERENCE MANUAL

FOREWORD

In response to a resolution by the IAEA General Conference in September 2002, the IAEA adopted an integrated approach to protection against nuclear terrorism. This approach coordinates IAEA activities concerned with the physical protection of nuclear material and nuclear installations, nuclear material accountancy, detection of and response to trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material, the security of radioactive sources, security in the transport of nuclear and other radioactive material, emergency response and emergency preparedness measures in Member States and at the IAEA, and the promotion of adherence by States to relevant international instruments. The IAEA also helps to identify threats and vulnerabilities related to the security of nuclear and other radioactive material. However, it is the responsibility of States to provide for the physical protection of nuclear and other radioactive material and the associated facilities, to ensure the security of such material in transport, and to combat illicit trafficking and the inadvertent movement of radioactive material.

The IAEA has previously issued a number of publications on nuclear security, including three publications on combating illicit trafficking in nuclear and other radioactive material, jointly sponsored by Europol, the IAEA, Interpol and the WCO. Recently, the IAEA has also published — in the IAEA Nuclear Security Series — Technical and Functional Specifications for Border Monitoring Equipment (No. 1), Nuclear Forensics Support (No. 2), Monitoring for Radioactive Material in International Mail Transported by Public Postal Operators (No. 3), Engineering Safety Aspects of the Protection of Nuclear Power Plants against Sabotage (No. 4) and Identification of Radioactive Sources and Devices (No. 5). These publications provide information primarily for customs, police and other law enforcement bodies on the arrangements for effectively preventing, detecting and responding to inadvertent movements and illicit trafficking of nuclear or other radioactive material. However, it is also recognized that there is a need for a broader scope of knowledge, including historical developments and case studies, in such a form that it can easily be used as an information and training resource for law enforcement personnel, legislators, government officials, technical experts, emergency responders, lawyers, diplomats, users of nuclear technology, the media and the public.

The preparation of this publication has involved extensive consultations with Member States, including technical meetings for the review of this manual.

The draft was also circulated to Member States to solicit further comments and suggestions before publication. The contributions of the consultants and Member States to this endeavour are greatly acknowledged. The IAEA officers responsible for this publication were R. Abedin-Zadeh and S. Miaw of the Office of Nuclear Security, Department of Nuclear Safety and Security. . .

(For complete manual, please click on link below.)

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