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Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

Established in 1998, the USAF/CPC provides education and research to present and future leaders of the Air Force, as well as to members of other branches of the armed services and Department of Defense. Our purpose is to help those agencies better prepare to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Please feel free to visit our web site at <http://cpc.au.af.mil/> for in-depth information and specific points of contact. Please direct any questions or comments on CPC Outreach Journal to Jo Ann Eddy, CPC Outreach Editor, at (334) 953-7538 or DSN 493-7538. To subscribe, change e-mail address, or unsubscribe to this journal or to request inclusion on the mailing list for CPC publications, please contact Mrs. Eddy, joann.eddy.ctr@maxwell.af.mil.

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WTOP Radio

America's Enemies Working on WMD: 'No Doubt in My Mind'

March 14, 2008 - 6:09am

J.J. Green, WTOP Radio

WASHINGTON - The outbox in Joseph Billy, Jr.'s office is empty. The polished mahogany shelves are bare. A 3-foot-tall paper bag and half packed boxes are spread out in one corner of the office. Billy is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's top operational counterterrorism official and he's leaving Friday.

He's done after 30 years of service. But before walking out of the J. Edgar Hoover building in downtown

Washington, and before leaving the secret facility in Northern Virginia only known as LX ONE for the last time, he had something to say.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the people who would like to do us harm, would very much like to use a weapon of mass destruction of some type, whether it be chemical, biological or the worst being some type of nuclear explosive," said Billy, in an interview with WTOP.

"Terrorism can no longer be viewed as one nation's issue over the other. We try to look at this as there are no borders -- literally -- in the world of international terrorism, meaning that operatives can originate from any country, including our own, and work to plan operations targeting whether it be our homeland or some place else around the world."

Leaning forward in his chair, with his elbows resting on his knees and his hands clasped, the salt-and-pepper-haired veteran of the war on terror dispelled the common misperception that al Qaida is made up of hot-headed, Islamic radicals with limited education who can only make and use crude weapons.

Billy, who offers no time table or intelligence to suggest an attack is imminent, warns that al Qaida's membership consists of people with technical expertise that could be used in the development of weapons of mass destruction. "When you look at the most recent attacks in the United Kingdom, in Scotland, you had individuals who were licensed physicians who had medical degrees who very much believed in their cause, who had set forth and were determined to carry out acts of terrorism. As long as individuals with expertise are willing to ascribe themselves to a cause, then you always have the potential for something like that," says Billy.

Potential, that experts say grows in the shadows every day.

When the U.S. military decimated al Qaida, in late 2001 and the months that followed, U.S. government intelligence reports indicate the organization was splintered. Billy says, however, at any given time any of those parts can reunite and launch devastating attacks on their chosen target using sophisticated planning, deceptive skill and precise execution. A case in point is the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001.

The planes that killed more than 3,000 people in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania were piloted by terrorists, some with college degrees. In fact, the mastermind of the attacks, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, attended Chowan College, a small Baptist school in Murfreesboro, N.C., for a few years (beginning in 1983) before transferring to the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University and completing a degree in mechanical engineering in 1986. From top to bottom, all seemed to possess a deep desire to carry out their mission to the end.

The FBI, like the rest of the agencies that make up the U.S. intelligence and security communities, shares in the blame that was spread around after the attacks. Nine-11 Commission Co-Chair Thomas Kean said that both Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush had been "not well served" by the FBI and CIA. But Billy says changes have been made since then.

"The FBI's strength has always been to fact-find, but there is the continuing need to develop information that could help us to understand the intelligence side of the world that we live in. I think the FBI has moved greatly in the direction to become more of a balanced intelligence service."

But the agency is still facing intense criticism for some of its counter-terrorism methodology. The Justice Department's Inspector General said in a report on Thursday that the FBI continued to improperly obtain personal information about Americans for terrorism investigations during 2006. Corrective actions are underway.

"It is too early to tell whether these measures will eliminate fully the problems," Inspector General Glenn A. Fine said.

As Billy takes attendance at his last meeting, turns out the light, closes the door behind him and leaves the job where he's spent half his life, he walks out recognized by the FBI as "a pioneer in fight against international terrorism." He also leaves with the knowledge that the U.S. has not been physically attacked since Sept 11, 2001 -- thanks in part to him. But like a good soldier he says the credit goes not to one man, but to the sum of America's parts.

"I feel we're building. I think we've done well. I think there's a lot of work to do and a lot of attention that still needs to be paid, because there is a lot of danger out there and our country with all of our goodness and all of our diversity, that still will be our shining light."

<http://www.wtopnews.com/index.php?nid=251&sid=1364763>

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Christian Science Monitor

March 17, 2008

High-level talks keep North Korea nuclear deal alive

Last week's meeting generated talk of a secret side deal to end an 11-week impasse.

By Donald Kirk | Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

SEOUL, South Korea

Separate agreements – one open, the other secret – may be critical to bringing the US and North Korea to terms on the disclosure of the North's nuclear program, after two days of what US envoy Christopher Hill says were "substantive" talks in Geneva with his North Korean counterpart, Kim Kye Gwan.

Although no deal was reached, the meetings were the most detailed since the nuclear process reached an impasse in December. In a sign of the North's eagerness to talk, Mr. Kim asked to see Mr. Hill in Geneva after failing to meet him as expected in Beijing the weekend after the New York Philharmonic's performance in Pyongyang on Feb. 25. Mr. Hill said he and Mr. Kim covered just about every possible aspect of the nuclear issue, notably the crucial question of the North's efforts to develop nuclear warheads with uranium at their core.

Kim, however, is sticking to denials of the existence of the program and of charges that the North has exported nuclear aid and material to Syria, Iran, or any other client state.

Mid-level US diplomats remained in Geneva after talks before the weekend that Hill says were "very substantive discussions on format and actual substance that has divided us for 10 weeks" – since the end of last year when North Korea was to have come up with a full declaration of everything in its nuclear inventory.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice says discussions are under way with the four others in the six-party talks: China, the host country, as well as Russia, Japan, and South Korea, on moving the process ahead, but advised not to "expect anything immediate." Hill said "we need to move faster" to fulfill terms of the agreement under which North Korea is to disable all its nuclear facilities and then dismantle them in return for a huge infusion of aid.

Against this background, sources here and in Washington hint at a formula for North Korea to detail its nuclear program yet sidestep the critical issue of highly enriched uranium.

"I'm quite optimistic they will be able to make two agreements," says Suh Jae Jean, director of North Korean studies at the Korea Institute of National Unification in Seoul. "One will be open, the other secret. A secret agreement is the only solution." Mr. Suh, whose institute is affiliated with the unification ministry, believes a secret agreement "will enable North Korea to save face and prevent backlash from within the US."

Under such an agreement, the North could acknowledge initial research and development of enriched uranium while publicly citing the import of centrifuges only for industrial purposes.

A meeting of minds on the wording of whatever deals emerge, some analysts say, may provide a face-saving way out of an impasse in which North Korea has not only missed the deadline for listing its nuclear inventory but also slowed disablement of its nuclear facilities at its Yongbyon complex.

Hill has said he doubts "we can have a secret agreement secretly arrived at" but believes "we have some ideas that may be workable."

Moon Jung In, a political scientist at Yonsei University, believes "the stakes are too high" for North Korea and the US to fail to arrive at a viable understanding. A breakthrough deal, he says, will be "maybe half-secret, half-open." The US and South Korea have been intensifying pressure for North Korea to fulfill its promise in six-nation talks to produce a list of all its nuclear inventory. The US promises to reciprocate by dropping the North from the State Department's list of nations sponsoring terrorism and withdrawing sanctions on trade.

"They have not done everything they promised," says the US ambassador to South Korea, Alexander Vershbow.

"The issue is convincing the North Koreans to provide the necessary level of transparency."

North Korea may be waiting to see what approach is adopted by South Korea's new president, Lee Myung Bak, who has promised to take a tougher stance on dealings with the North than his predecessors did.

Regardless, "I don't expect complete collapse of the six-party talks," says Choi Jin Wook, a senior fellow at the Korea Institute of National Unification. "I don't know what can be secret, what can be hidden," he says. "It can work if the US accepts a partial declaration."

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0317/p04s01-woap.html>

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New York Times

March 18, 2008

Pg. 6

Bush Sends Putin Missile Defense Offer

By Thom Shanker

MOSCOW — President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia on Monday endorsed portions of a private proposal from President Bush that could lead to a new strategic framework between their nations, including progress on troubling issues like missile defense, nuclear arms control and nonproliferation.

Mr. Putin said that a letter from Mr. Bush, which had not previously been disclosed, was "a very serious document." Even so, Mr. Putin and his protégé, Dmitri A. Medvedev, the president-elect, warned that significant differences remained.

The tone of the opening talks here with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates was far more cordial than when the two cabinet members journeyed to Moscow in October for negotiations on missile defense.

And the breadth of issues that two presidents agreed to discuss over two days of talks was evidence that, before he leaves office, President Bush is making a final push to cement a calmer relationship with the Kremlin, after angering it with proposals for American missile defenses in Eastern Europe.

“We believe that in some of these issues we can probably dot the i’s and reach final agreement,” Mr. Putin said, referring to topics raised in the Bush letter as he sat down in an ornate Kremlin office to meet with the two American secretaries.

At a late-night news conference, Ms. Rice said that Mr. Bush had sent the letter to Mr. Putin within the past five days, and that it was an effort by the American president to gauge the Kremlin’s interest in formalizing cooperation on issues where agreement had been found or was near, while pressing for a deal on the more contentious policies. “And we talked to them about the potential to look at all of the different issues that the United States and Russia have — some of them cooperative, some of them in which we have disagreements — and to try to put this on a firm footing going forward,” she said. Ms. Rice said she and Mr. Gates were in Moscow “discussing ways to give a clear signal that there is a foundation for all of these issues.”

She declined to label the Bush letter a formal “strategic framework” to guide Washington-Moscow relations into the future, a concept advocated by a number of Russian analysts and scholars who have been troubled by the caustic tone of the relationship. The details of the letter were not released by either government.

On American proposals to place missile defense bases in two formerly Communist nations of Eastern Europe, Mr. Gates was asked if he thought a deal was possible with Moscow by the end of the Bush administration.

“I think the answer is yes,” he said. “The environment in our meetings was positive today.” But, he cautioned, “whether that leads to a positive conclusion remains to be seen.”

The two cabinet members listed a number of areas in which Russia and the United States were operating in close cooperation or could reach agreement, mostly in counterterrorism, nuclear nonproliferation and trade.

Mr. Gates said the United States was also moving to allay Moscow’s concerns on a nuclear weapons accord to succeed the Start II agreement when it expires in 2009. Moscow wants a formal treaty, while the Bush administration has been pressing for less formal limits. Mr. Gates said the United States would accept a binding agreement, but only if it was not as lengthy in pages or negotiations as Start.

Mr. Putin, in discussing the letter from Mr. Bush, said, “If we can reach agreement on its most important provisions, then we will be able to state that our dialogue is proceeding successfully.” But he, too, warned, “There are still a lot of outstanding problems that need to be discussed.”

Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon press secretary, said the Bush letter had been the catalyst for the return trip to Moscow by Ms. Rice and Mr. Gates. He said it laid out an agenda for the talks on Monday and Tuesday, and proposed a path toward agreements that would survive the two current presidents.

“As they go through a transition, and as we go through a transition, there is a need to focus on areas of agreement so neither side loses precious time,” Mr. Morrell said.

Mr. Medvedev, in a separate meeting, expressed concerns about American plans for the Eastern European missile-defense sites. But he, too, vowed that Russia was “determined to go ahead” with talks on a range of issues with the United States.

For Mr. Medvedev, the meeting was the first time since he was elected to succeed Mr. Putin earlier this month that he had participated in high-level security talks with the Americans.

“We need to provide for continuity in the Russian-U.S. relationship,” Mr. Medvedev told Ms. Rice and Mr. Gates.

Mr. Gates entered the Kremlin with his right arm in a sling; he fractured it slipping on ice at his home in Washington a month ago. “With a broken arm, I won’t be nearly as difficult a negotiator,” Mr. Gates told Mr. Medvedev, who replied, “We’ll see.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/18/world/europe/18missile.html?ref=world>

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New York Times

March 18, 2008

Pg. 1

U.S. Adapts Cold-War Idea To Fight Terrorists

By Eric Schmitt and Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON — In the days immediately after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, members of President Bush’s war cabinet declared that it would be impossible to deter the most fervent extremists from carrying out even more deadly terrorist missions with biological, chemical or nuclear weapons.

Since then, however, administration, military and intelligence officials assigned to counterterrorism have begun to change their view. After piecing together a more nuanced portrait of terrorist organizations, they say there is reason to believe that a combination of efforts could in fact establish something akin to the posture of deterrence, the strategy that helped protect the United States from a Soviet nuclear attack during the cold war.

Interviews with more than two dozen senior officials involved in the effort provided the outlines of previously unreported missions to mute Al Qaeda's message, turn the jihadi movement's own weaknesses against it and illuminate Al Qaeda's errors whenever possible.

A primary focus has become cyberspace, which is the global safe haven of terrorist networks. To counter efforts by terrorists to plot attacks, raise money and recruit new members on the Internet, the government has mounted a secret campaign to plant bogus e-mail messages and Web site postings, with the intent to sow confusion, dissent and distrust among militant organizations, officials confirm.

At the same time, American diplomats are quietly working behind the scenes with Middle Eastern partners to amplify the speeches and writings of prominent Islamic clerics who are renouncing terrorist violence.

At the local level, the authorities are experimenting with new ways to keep potential terrorists off guard.

In New York City, as many as 100 police officers in squad cars from every precinct converge twice daily at randomly selected times and at randomly selected sites, like Times Square or the financial district, to rehearse their response to a terrorist attack. City police officials say the operations are believed to be a crucial tactic to keep extremists guessing as to when and where a large police presence may materialize at any hour. "What we've developed since 9/11, in six or seven years, is a better understanding of the support that is necessary for terrorists, the network which provides that support, whether it's financial or material or expertise," said Michael E. Leiter, acting director of the National Counterterrorism Center.

"We've now begun to develop more sophisticated thoughts about deterrence looking at each one of those individually," Mr. Leiter said in an interview. "Terrorists don't operate in a vacuum."

In some ways, government officials acknowledge, the effort represents a second-best solution. Their preferred way to combat terrorism remains to capture or kill extremists, and the new emphasis on deterrence in some ways amounts to attaching a new label to old tools.

"There is one key question that no one can answer: How much disruption does it take to give you the effect of deterrence?" said Michael Levi, a fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of a new study, "On Nuclear Terrorism."

The New Deterrence

The emerging belief that terrorists may be subject to a new form of deterrence is reflected in two of the nation's central strategy documents.

The 2002 National Security Strategy, signed by the president one year after the Sept. 11 attacks, stated flatly that "traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents."

Four years later, however, the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism concluded: "A new deterrence calculus combines the need to deter terrorists and supporters from contemplating a W.M.D. attack and, failing that, to dissuade them from actually conducting an attack."

For obvious reasons, it is harder to deter terrorists than it was to deter a Soviet attack.

Terrorists hold no obvious targets for American retaliation as Soviet cities, factories, military bases and silos were under the cold-war deterrence doctrine. And it is far harder to pinpoint the location of a terrorist group's leaders than it was to identify the Kremlin offices of the Politburo bosses, making it all but impossible to deter attacks by credibly threatening a retaliatory attack.

But over the six and a half years since the Sept. 11 attacks, many terrorist leaders, including Osama bin Laden and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahri, have successfully evaded capture, and American officials say they now recognize that threats to kill terrorist leaders may never be enough to keep America safe.

So American officials have spent the last several years trying to identify other types of "territory" that extremists hold dear, and they say they believe that one important aspect may be the terrorists' reputation and credibility with Muslims.

Under this theory, if the seeds of doubt can be planted in the mind of Al Qaeda's strategic leadership that an attack would be viewed as a shameful murder of innocents — or, even more effectively, that it would be an embarrassing failure — then the order may not be given, according to this new analysis.

Senior officials acknowledge that it is difficult to prove what role these new tactics and strategies have played in thwarting plots or deterring Al Qaeda from attacking. Senior officials say there have been several successes using the new approaches, but many involve highly classified technical programs, including the cyberoperations, that they declined to detail.

They did point to some older and now publicized examples that suggest that their efforts are moving in the right direction.

George J. Tenet, the former director of the Central Intelligence Agency, wrote in his autobiography that the authorities were concerned that Qaeda operatives had made plans in 2003 to attack the New York City subway using cyanide devices.

Mr. Zawahri reportedly called off the plot because he feared that it “was not sufficiently inspiring to serve Al Qaeda’s ambitions,” and would be viewed as a pale, even humiliating, follow-up to the 9/11 attacks. And in 2002, Iyman Faris, a naturalized American citizen from Kashmir, began casing the Brooklyn Bridge to plan an attack and communicated with Qaeda leaders in Pakistan via coded messages about using a blowtorch to sever the suspension cables.

But by early 2003, Mr. Faris sent a message to his confederates saying that “the weather is too hot.” American officials said that meant Mr. Faris feared that the plot was unlikely to succeed — apparently because of increased security.

“We made a very visible presence there and that may have contributed to it,” said Paul J. Browne, the New York City Police Department’s chief spokesman. “Deterrence is part and parcel of our entire effort.”

Disrupting Cyberprojects

Terrorists hold little or no terrain, except on the Web. “Al Qaeda and other terrorists’ center of gravity lies in the information domain, and it is there that we must engage it,” said Dell L. Dailey, the State Department’s counterterrorism chief.

Some of the government’s most secretive counterterrorism efforts involve disrupting terrorists’ cyberoperations. In Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, specially trained teams have recovered computer hard drives used by terrorists and are turning the terrorists’ tools against them.

“If you can learn something about whatever is on those hard drives, whatever that information might be, you could instill doubt on their part by just countermessaging whatever it is they said they wanted to do or planned to do,” said Brig. Gen. Mark O. Schissler, director of cyberoperations for the Air Force and a former deputy director of the antiterrorism office for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Since terrorists feel safe using the Internet to spread ideology and gather recruits, General Schissler added, “you may be able to interfere with some of that, interrupt some of that.”

“You can also post messages to the opposite of that,” he added.

Other American efforts are aimed at discrediting Qaeda operations, including the decision to release seized videotapes showing members of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, a largely Iraqi group with some foreign leaders, training children to kidnap and kill, as well as a lengthy letter said to have been written by another terrorist leader that describes the organization as weak and plagued by poor morale.

Dissuading Militants

Even as security and intelligence forces seek to disrupt terrorist operations, counterterrorism specialists are examining ways to dissuade insurgents from even considering an attack with unconventional weapons. They are looking at aspects of the militants’ culture, families or religion, to undermine the rhetoric of terrorist leaders.

For example, the government is seeking ways to amplify the voices of respected religious leaders who warn that suicide bombers will not enjoy the heavenly delights promised by terrorist literature, and that their families will be dishonored by such attacks. Those efforts are aimed at undermining a terrorist’s will.

“I’ve got to figure out what does dissuade you,” said Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, the Joint Chiefs’ director of strategic plans and policy. “What is your center of gravity that we can go at? The goal you set won’t be achieved, or you will be discredited and lose face with the rest of the Muslim world or radical extremism that you signed up for.”

Efforts are also under way to persuade Muslims not to support terrorists. It is a delicate campaign that American officials are trying to promote and amplify — but without leaving telltale American fingerprints that could undermine the effort in the Muslim world. Senior Bush administration officials point to several promising developments.

Saudi Arabia’s top cleric, Grand Mufti Sheik Abdul Aziz al-Asheik, gave a speech last October warning Saudis not to join unauthorized jihadist activities, a statement directed mainly at those considering going to Iraq to fight the American-led forces.

And Abdul-Aziz el-Sherif, a top leader of the armed Egyptian movement Islamic Jihad and a longtime associate of Mr. Zawahri, the second-ranking Qaeda official, has just completed a book that renounces violent jihad on legal and religious grounds.

Such dissents are serving to widen rifts between Qaeda leaders and some former loyal backers, Western and Middle Eastern diplomats say.

“Many terrorists value the perception of popular or theological legitimacy for their actions,” said Stephen J. Hadley, Mr. Bush’s national security adviser. “By encouraging debate about the moral legitimacy of using weapons of mass destruction, we can try to affect the strategic calculus of the terrorists.”

Denying Support

As the top Pentagon policy maker for special operations, Michael G. Vickers creates strategies for combating terrorism with specialized military forces, as well as for countering the proliferation of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons.

Much of his planning is old school: how should the military's most elite combat teams capture and kill terrorists? But with each passing day, more of his time is spent in the new world of terrorist deterrence theory, trying to figure out how to prevent attacks by persuading terrorist support networks — those who enable terrorists to operate — to refuse any kind of assistance to stateless agents of extremism.

"Obviously, hard-core terrorists will be the hardest to deter," Mr. Vickers said. "But if we can deter the support network — recruiters, financial supporters, local security providers and states who provide sanctuary — then we can start achieving a deterrent effect on the whole terrorist network and constrain terrorists' ability to operate.

"We have not deterred terrorists from their intention to do us great harm," Mr. Vickers said, "but by constraining their means and taking away various tools, we approach the overall deterrent effect we want."

Much effort is being spent on perfecting technical systems that can identify the source of unconventional weapons or their components regardless of where they are found — and letting nations around the world know the United States has this ability.

President Bush has declared that the United States will hold "fully accountable" any nation that shares nuclear weapons with another state or terrorists.

Rear Adm. William P. Loeffler, deputy director of the Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction at the military's Strategic Command, said Mr. Bush's declaration meant that those who might supply arms or components to terrorists were just as accountable as those who ordered and carried out an attack.

It is, the admiral said, a system of "attribution as deterrence."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/18/washington/18terror.html?em&ex=1205985600&en=7be6b623a943dff6&ei=5087%0A>

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Washington Times

March 18, 2008

Pg. 1

Incentives Package Prepared For Iran

By Nicholas Kravev, The Washington Times

The United States and four other veto-wielding states on the U.N. Security Council are preparing a package of incentives aimed at Iran's newly elected parliament in hopes of ending the country's uranium-enrichment program — the main impediment to improved ties between Iran and the West.

The proposal includes economic, technological and security benefits, spare parts for Iran's aging fleet of Boeing aircraft and help developing a civilian nuclear energy program, U.S. and European officials said yesterday.

The effort resembles a 2006 offer that Tehran rejected, prompting a series of U.N. sanctions.

This time, officials said, they will be more specific about the timing of the incentives. They also expressed hope it will persuade new members of parliament after elections Friday.

"It's not clear that the Iranian regime has transmitted to the Iranian people the details of the very generous and substantial offer that we made to them in 2006. In fact, it seems as though they have deliberately suppressed it," a British official said.

"So we are very keen on finding ways to ensure that the Iranian people know what is on offer to them, which is what their regime is denying them by their intransigence," he said.

A senior French official said the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China — as well as Germany, "will try to be more precise about the timing and the advantages the Iranians could gain."

In the 2006 proposal, the six countries offered to provide Iran with nuclear energy, including a light-water reactor, partial ownership of a Russian enrichment facility and a five-year "buffer stock" of enriched uranium stored under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

They also said that, if Iran suspended enrichment, they would support its accession to the World Trade Organization and help modernize Iran's telecommunications infrastructure.

In addition, the Western powers plus China proposed "a new conference to promote dialogue and cooperation on regional security issues."

The 2006 proposal marked a reversal for U.S. policy, which until then opposed all Iranian efforts to develop nuclear energy, including a nuclear power plant that Russians were building in Bushehr.

The United States also offered to sell Iran spare parts for civilian aircraft and promised to begin reversing nearly three decades of unilateral sanctions and participate in negotiations with Tehran if it halted its uranium enrichment efforts.

The Iranian government rejected the package, and the Security Council has passed three sanctions resolutions since then.

Even though most reformist candidates who advocate ties to the West were not allowed to run in Friday's parliamentary elections, some of the new members are said to be unhappy with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The five nuclear powers plus Germany hope new lawmakers will be intrigued by the latest package of incentives.

"It could be very interesting to students to have technology cooperation between their country and Western countries," the French official said.

"It's a country where students can work on the Internet and are very well-informed about what's going on around the world. So let's try to use those channels to see how we can get the message through," he said.

U.S. and European officials said they are at the early stages of rethinking the proposal and referred to it as "repackaging" the 2006 offer.

Jon Wolfsthal, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that what the Iranians are most likely to look for in the proposal is "full and active U.S. participation."

"Last time, the Europeans pulled the U.S. in, but it was only interested in participating as a way to get the [permanent Security Council members] to agree to sanctions," he said. "They should make it as difficult as possible for Ahmadinejad to argue that the United States doesn't want a deal."

In a separate development, U.S. officials criticized a deal signed yesterday for Iran to supply Switzerland with natural gas. Details were not disclosed, but Iran reportedly will supply 5.5 billion cubic meters of gas annually beginning in 2011.

"We are disappointed, and will continue our discussions with the Swiss regarding the need to maintain pressure on Iran to meet its international obligations," the U.S. Embassy in Bern said.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080318/FOREIGN/589530246/1003>

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New York Times

March 19, 2008

Pg. 7

Progress In U.S.-Russia Talks

By Thom Shanker

MOSCOW — The United States and Russia said Tuesday that they had agreed to negotiate a "strategic framework" document that would formally put in writing the basic elements of their relationship, but the two nations failed to end the deep division over American plans to base missile defenses in Europe.

Conciliation was the tone set by the American secretaries of state and defense and their Russian counterparts at the end of two days of negotiations here. Tangible results remained elusive as both sides agreed mostly that it would be important to keep talking into the next administrations in both countries as President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia leaves office, followed by President Bush.

"We have agreed that there should be a joint strategic framework document for the presidents to be able to record all of the elements of the U.S.-Russian relationship as we go forward," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced. She said the negotiations had brought consensus on which aspects of the relationship would be in the document; the dozen or so issues include trade, counterterrorism and nuclear proliferation.

Her counterpart, Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov, said the talks also covered "some contentious issues where we have not reached agreement as of now," in particular, missile defense and the exact legal form of a future bilateral limit on nuclear weapons.

Mr. Lavrov acknowledged that Ms. Rice and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates had made a significant effort in the talks to "try to allay our concerns" over American plans to put a tracking radar in the Czech Republic and 10 missile interceptors in Poland.

The Americans have said the system is intended to thwart missile attacks launched from Iran. Russia has argued that the system could threaten its own missiles as well. Mr. Gates said the system would not pose any threat to the Russian arsenal.

"We had the opportunity today to elaborate on a number of confidence-building measures and measures for transparency, to provide assurance to the Russians that our missile sites and radars do not constitute a threat to Russia," Mr. Gates said.

Among the offers, he added, was one to allow Russian inspectors into American missile defense sites, though that access would require approval from the Czech and Polish governments as well.

"I think both President Putin and our Russian colleagues today found these ideas useful and important," Mr. Gates said. "They will be studying them further."

A senior American official, speaking on traditional diplomatic ground rules of anonymity to describe the closed-door negotiations, said the Russian government had come to the realization that the United States had no intention of dropping its plans for missile defense bases in Eastern Europe.

"The Russians are beginning to see that this is going to happen," the official said. The question facing the Russian government now, the official said, is how to respond in a way that does not immediately and publicly validate the American position while striving to defend principles of Moscow's foreign and military policy.

Acknowledging that some of the Bush administration's proposals on missile defense had not been clearly stated or perhaps had been misunderstood by the Russians, senior American officials agreed to work through Tuesday night putting the entire set of ideas into writing for study by Moscow. That effort is in part a repeat of what was done when Ms. Rice and Mr. Gates visited Moscow in October to discuss missile defense.

The most negative assessment of the impasse on missile defense issues came from the Russian defense minister, Anatoly E. Serdyukov, who said, "In principle, our positions have not changed."

The two sides also failed to reach a deal — but agreed to continue talks — on what sort of pact might set limits on their nuclear arsenals after current treaties expire.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/19/world/europe/19missile.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

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Washington Post

March 19, 2008

Pg. 12

U.S., Russia Politely Dug In Over Missile Defense

By Peter Finn, Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, March 18 -- The United States and Russia failed again Tuesday to bridge their differences over U.S. plans to build a missile defense system in Eastern Europe to guard against potential attacks from Iran. But in two days of talks here, both sides adopted a strikingly moderate tone after a long period of rancor between the two countries.

The Americans "agreed that their project fuels our concerns and offered proposals aimed at lifting or easing these concerns," said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov after meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates.

Gates told reporters after the talks that his side would submit written proposals seeking to temper Russian fears about the missile system. Russian military inspectors would have access to sites in Poland and the Czech Republic, and the system would not be activated until there was demonstrable evidence that Iran had tested missiles capable of reaching the United States or its allies in Western Europe, U.S. officials said.

Russian officials have argued that placing a defense system on Russia's borders is not necessary because Iran is many years away from developing such long-range missiles. They also say they fear that any radar system placed in Eastern Europe would be used to peer into Russian airspace and undermine the country's strategic forces.

"We've leaned very far forward in this in an effort to provide reassurance," Gates told reporters. He added, however, that the United States would not be dissuaded from going forward with the system.

Lavrov described the U.S. proposals as "important and useful for the minimization of our concerns." But Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov, who also took part in the talks, cautioned that "the positions of our two sides have not changed."

Gates said the Bush administration expects an answer "reasonably quickly" after it submits its written offer, but some news reports here suggested that Moscow might be playing for time, knowing that a new administration in Washington could take a different position on the necessity of missile defense.

The newspaper Vedomosti wrote Tuesday that "if the Democrats win the U.S. presidential election, they could review the missile defense program."

It could also be that with the end of Russia's election season and the recent victory of President Vladimir Putin's handpicked successor, Dmitry Medvedev, the Kremlin sees no further domestic advantage in upbraiding the Bush administration and wants to reverse the deterioration in relations.

When Rice and Gates visited Moscow in October, they were subjected to some public finger-wagging by Putin as the cameras rolled. This time Putin did not even mention missile defense when he first met the two Monday at a short session in front of the news media.

"I would say they listened very carefully," Gates told reporters Tuesday. "President Putin took extensive notes last night, and there was a lot done during the day today. That said, the full range of what we are now prepared to offer to discuss with the Russians is really just now after the day's talks being put down on paper."

In October, the Russians complained that U.S.-written proposals failed to live up to earlier oral offers from Rice and Gates. In particular, the Russians expressed concern about the adequacy of access to the sites slated for Eastern Europe.

The October statement may have stemmed from opposition in Poland and the Czech Republic to giving Russian military observers access to the facilities -- and particularly to the idea that they might be permanently stationed there. Both countries have bitter memories of the Soviet troops who were posted within their borders during the Cold War.

Poland's new prime minister, Donald Tusk, struck a conciliatory note Tuesday about the possibility of Russian inspectors.

"From our side there is a readiness to talk seriously about what this monitoring -- that would give our neighbors a sense of security -- could look like," said Tusk, who said he had spoken both to Putin and President Bush about the possibility.

Rice and Gates, who also carried a letter from Bush to Putin, said the two countries had agreed to negotiate a "joint strategic framework document" that would build on existing cooperation in areas such as preventing the spreading of nuclear weapons and fighting terrorism.

Rice said the document could "lay the foundation for the future" after Bush and Putin leave office. But she provided few details.

Medvedev, who also met with Rice and Gates, will succeed Putin in May, but he has said that Putin will become his prime minister, a power-sharing arrangement whose parameters remain unclear.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/18/AR2008031803052.html>

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Los Angeles Times

March 19, 2008

U.S. Tries New Tack With Russia

Officials hope that combining more than a dozen issues in one document will breathe life into talks.

By Peter Spiegel, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

MOSCOW — In an effort to repair its strained relationship with the Kremlin, the Bush administration announced Tuesday that it had combined more than a dozen bilateral issues into a single document that it hopes will breathe new life into intractable negotiations between the governments.

But U.S. officials acknowledged that they had made little progress on the most difficult issue blocking such a grand bargain: a new missile defense system the administration plans to build in Eastern Europe, which Russia believes will threaten its security.

The new arrangement, unveiled by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during two days of talks here, includes no new initiatives and, in some cases, simply restates existing agreements, such as those the countries have reached on nuclear terrorism.

But a senior U.S. official involved in the negotiations said the administration thought bilateral security talks needed to be restructured because both sides had become overwhelmed by the fierce disagreement on a few disputes.

"It was our judgment, looking at the whole of the U.S.-Russia relationship, that there was a dominant theme, on both sides, that things were slipping in a negative direction," said the official, speaking on the condition of anonymity when discussing internal decision-making. "That was becoming conventional wisdom, and there was obviously a basis for it."

The document brought by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Rice included areas of agreement and dispute as diverse as the missile defense system, Russia's bid for membership in the World Trade Organization and nuclear proliferation. The goal was to use progress on some issues as a starting point for talks that would help focus attention on the tougher questions.

Despite the new effort, daylong talks held by Rice and Gates with their Russian counterparts that focused on the missile defense system produced few results.

Russian officials said their objections to placing the system in Eastern Europe remained and asked that the U.S. officials put their proposals in writing yet again for consideration by Russian experts.

"In principle, our positions have not changed," Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said at a news conference attended by all four ministers. "Today, we have heard a number of measures, and we hope they will be presented to us in writing.

"Our experts then will have an opportunity to discuss them and understand what stands behind them."

The U.S. officials came to Moscow with no new proposals to assuage Russian concerns that the system, to be built in the former communist bloc countries of Poland and the Czech Republic, would be a threat to Russian rockets. The U.S. says the system is aimed at intercepting a possible missile strike by Iran.

But Gates said he was able to clarify the Russians' misunderstandings of proposals offered to the Kremlin six months ago, which include offers to allow Moscow to link to the U.S.-built system and to delay turning the system on until it has been established that Iran has tested a long-range missile capable of reaching Europe.

Still, Gates, who had suggested before the meetings that Moscow may be stalling and said it was time for the Russians to reciprocate to U.S. proposals, appeared frustrated that the Kremlin had not taken more concrete action. "Now they feel the need to study them in greater detail," Gates said at the news conference. "I would expect and hope we would hear back reasonably quickly."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-usrussia19mar19.1.3351891.story>

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Washington Times

March 19, 2008

Pg. 1

N. Korea Told Not To Delay Deal

By Nicholas Kravev, The Washington Times

U.S. Democrats, uneasy at the prospect of inheriting a dicey nuclear faceoff with North Korea, have urged Pyongyang to strike a deal with the Bush administration rather than delay it in hopes of a better offer from the next president.

The chief U.S. negotiator with the North, Christopher R. Hill, said yesterday that the message was delivered directly to the North Koreans by William Perry, defense secretary in the Clinton administration, during his visit to Pyongyang last month.

"The various Democrats they have talked to have made very clear to them that the Democrats want them to strike a deal with this administration," Mr. Hill told editors and reporters at The Washington Times.

"I briefed Bill Perry [before [JUMP]his trip] and he made very clear what he was going to tell them — and I understand that he did tell them that — don't expect a better deal from the Democrats," Mr. Hill said.

Mr. Perry has no formal role in the presidential campaigns of Democratic Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton or Barack Obama, but he has long-standing ties with officials in both campaigns.

Sources close to the campaigns said yesterday that Mr. Perry had conveyed the right message, pointing out that it "will get tougher" politically for a Democratic president to cut a deal.

North Korea has shut down and almost disabled its main nuclear complex at Yongbyon. But it is refusing U.S. demands to disclose all past programs in a declaration required under an October agreement reached at six-nation talks aimed at ending the North's nuclear programs.

Kim Kye-gwan, the chief North Korean negotiator, complained to Mr. Perry that Washington's inflexibility on the disclosure was delaying progress on the overall goal of the six-party process, sources said.

The United States insists on a "complete and correct declaration" because it is concerned about what it says was a secret North Korean effort to enrich uranium — Pyongyang has assured Washington that it does not currently have such a program — as well as evidence of "long-standing" nuclear cooperation between North Korea and Syria.

Mr. Perry was on a cruise ship in the Pacific yesterday and could not be reached for comment. But Evans Revere, president of the Korea Society in New York, who accompanied him on his trip to Pyongyang for the concert of the New York Philharmonic in late February, confirmed Mr. Hill's remarks.

"We told the North Koreans that the stars may never be better aligned than they are now, and that the deal might actually get worse for them [after the November election] if there is no progress" between now and then, Mr. Revere said.

"They took it all on board," he said.

In an attempt to find a "creative" way to persuade the North to disclose its past programs and proliferation activities, the United States and China proposed different "formats" for the declaration in the past few weeks.

They suggested that the uranium-enrichment and Syria issues be addressed in a document separate from the main declaration, which would only cover the well-known plutonium program. The question is how far the North Koreans are willing to go with their disclosure.

The United States has assured them that whatever information they provide will not be used to punish them or for any other negative actions.

Submitting the declaration would complete the second phase of the denuclearization process. In the next stage, the North must begin dismantling its programs. The benefits it would receive include diplomatic relations with the United States, a permanent peace treaty on the Korean Peninsula and economic aid.

Washington is already supplying the North with heavy fuel oil.

The North also demands that it be taken off the U.S. blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism before or at the same time as its declaration.

Mr. Hill has been vague about the exact timing of the removal from the list, but yesterday he was more committal than usual. Asked whether the administration was reluctant to do it as part of the second phase, he said:

"No, we'll do it, [but] we'd like to see the North Koreans take the Japanese issues seriously," a reference to the abductions of Japanese citizens by North Koreans in the 1970s and 1980s.

"We don't want a situation where we improve things [with North Korea] at the expense of Japan, so we have to manage that," Mr. Hill said.

He also said internal political wranglings in North Korea are making progress on denuclearization more difficult, adding that "there is a nuclear industry there that is going to resist some of this."

"How Kim Jong-il manages all this is hard to say, but you have the impression that he's not going to move on something unless he gets a consensus position on it," Mr. Hill said, referring to the reclusive North Korean leader.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080319/FOREIGN/834801732/1001>

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