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**Articles & Other Documents:**

[Bush Renews Support For Europe Missile Defense](#)

[Tehran Pushes To Join Central Asian Alliance](#)

[China discloses Iran's nuclear plans](#)

[Jihadist posts anthrax-making instructions](#)

[Intelligence officers call al Qaeda nuclear threat real](#)

[NATO backs Bush plan for missile shield](#)

[Missile Defense Endorsed By NATO](#)

[NATO Endorses Europe Missile Shield](#)

[Nuclear deal](#)

[Intelligence Officials Downplay Iran Report](#)

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Seattle Times  
April 2, 2008

## **Bush Renews Support For Europe Missile Defense**

By Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania — President Bush today said he remains committed to building a missile-defense system in Europe and will press outgoing Russian President Vladimir Putin to drop his objections to the project.

Bush said he was willing to cooperate with Putin on the plans and that he say as much to the Russian leader when the two meet this week. He says the system is needed to counter potential threats from the Mideast.

He also renewed urgent calls for NATO to start the admission process for Ukraine and Georgia despite a split among alliance members and fierce Russian objections.

The president said the two former Soviet states are ready for membership and that NATO leaders at a summit this week must make clear that membership will remain open to all European nations, no matter what Moscow thinks.

"We must make clear that NATO welcomes the aspirations of Georgia and Ukraine for membership in NATO and offers them a clear path forward toward that goal," Bush said in a speech ahead of a summit of alliance leaders in Bucharest.

"So my country's position is clear: NATO should welcome Georgia and Ukraine into the Membership Action Plan. And NATO membership must remain open to all of Europe's democracies that seek it, and are ready to share in the responsibilities of NATO membership."

He also called for NATO members to step up troop contributions in Afghanistan, citing Osama bin Laden's latest threats to Europe.

Bush says that if the alliance does press the offense in Afghanistan, Taliban and al-Qaida extremists will use the country to launch more attacks on the West.

[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2004321529\\_bush02.html?syndication=rss](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/politics/2004321529_bush02.html?syndication=rss)

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

Washington Times

April 2, 2008

Pg. 11

## **Tehran Pushes To Join Central Asian Alliance**

*Russia seen receptive to idea to blunt NATO expansion*

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times

Seeking to break out of its diplomatic isolation, Iran has applied for full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, an alliance dominated by China and Russia and seen as challenging U.S. security interests in Central Asia.

Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki revealed on a visit to Tajikistan late last month that Tehran had applied for full membership in the six-nation SCO, which last expanded when Uzbekistan was invited to join in 2001.

With Iran at loggerheads with the United States and leading European powers over its suspected nuclear programs and its support for militant Islamic groups in the Middle East, SCO members had been seen as reluctant to provoke the West by taking up Tehran's application. But that may be changing, according to Ariel Cohen, a security specialist at the Heritage Foundation.

Mr. Cohen said Russia may be more willing to consider the Iranian bid to counter U.S. moves to expand NATO into Eastern Europe and to back the independence bid of Kosovo from Serbia, a close Moscow ally.

Iran's SCO application "is becoming more likely than people may think," he said. "Russia is seriously concerned about issues like NATO and Kosovo and could see this as a strong countermeasure."

Formed originally as an anti-terrorism grouping, the SCO currently includes Russia, China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Iran since 2006 has been an SCO "observer state," along with Pakistan, India and Mongolia. Top officials from Afghanistan have also participated in SCO summits.

Pushed strongly by Moscow and Beijing, the growing alliance has unnerved U.S. officials, who fear it could be used to blunt American influence in the region.

A 2005 SCO summit in Kazakhstan called for the U.S. military to set a timetable for closing its bases in Central Asia. Last year's summit highlighted the SCO as an emerging "energy cooperation club," with Russia and the Central Asian states controlling a large chunk of the world's oil and natural-gas reserves outside the Middle East. The six SCO states last year staged a major joint military exercise in Russia.

Iran, the target of a U.S.-led economic-sanctions campaign over its nuclear programs, has pushed hard for a bigger SCO role. The next SCO summit is scheduled for Dushanbe, Tajikistan, this summer.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attended the 2007 SCO summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Mr. Mottaki announced the formal application for membership last month even though there has been an informal moratorium on taking new members.

Iranian diplomats have been touting the country's huge energy reserves and its influence in Central Asia and Afghanistan as reasons it belongs in the alliance.

China and Russia have been noncommittal on the Iranian offer, and both capitals are believed to be reluctant to bring in Iran when its relations with the United States are so hostile. Moscow has sided with the Bush administration in pressuring Iran to renounce any plans for nuclear weapons.

"China and Russia will try to prevent the SCO from becoming an active anti-Western and anti-American organization," Turaj Atabaki, a historian on Central Asia at Leiden University in the Netherlands, said in a recent interview on Radio Farda, a U.S.-financed Persian broadcaster.

Beijing stopped well short of an endorsement when noting the Iranian SCO membership request.

"We welcome [Iran's] aspiration to enhance cooperation with the SCO in various fields," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Qin Gang said last week.

But with Russia's relations with the West deteriorating and both China and Russia concerned about long-term U.S. intentions in Central Asia, Iran's SCO hopes can no longer be dismissed out of hand, according to the Heritage Foundation's Mr. Cohen.

"This is something the United States should be trying to prevent by all means possible," he said.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080402/FOREIGN/408033658/1003>

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

Washington Times

## China discloses Iran's nuclear plans

By George Jahn

April 2, 2008

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — China has recently given the International Atomic Energy Agency intelligence about Iran's nuclear program despite Beijing's opposition to harsh U.N. Security Council sanctions on Tehran, according to diplomats familiar with the matter.

China and Russia have acted as a brake within the Security Council, consistently watering down a U.S.-led push to impose severe penalties on Tehran for its nuclear defiance since the first set of sanctions was passed in late 2006.

A Chinese decision to provide information for use in the agency's attempts to probe Iran's alleged nuclear weapons program would appear to reflect growing international unease about how honest the Islamic republic has been in denying it ever tried to make such arms.

The new development was revealed to the Associated Press by two senior diplomats who closely follow the IAEA probe of Iran's nuclear program.

The IAEA declined comment and no one answered the phone today at either the Chinese or Iranian missions to the IAEA.

The diplomats said Beijing was the most surprising entry in a substantial list of nations that have recently forwarded information that could be relevant in attempts to probe past or present nuclear weapons research by Iran.

The diplomats — who demanded anonymity because their information was confidential — attributed a generally increased flow of information to the U.N. nuclear watchdog to concern sparked by a February multimedia presentation by the agency to its 35 IAEA board members, which described intelligence previously forwarded by member states on Iran's alleged clandestine nuclear arms program.

One of the diplomats said the agency was on the lookout for misleading information provided it, either inadvertently or in attempts to falsely implicate Iran. One example, he said was a document showing experiments with implosion technology that can be used to detonate a nuclear device.

While the document appeared genuine, it was unclear whether it originated from Iran, said the diplomat.

Suspected weapons-related work outlined in the February presentation and IAEA reports preceding it include:

— Uranium conversion linked to high explosives testing and designs of a missile re-entry vehicle, all apparently interconnected through involvement of officials and institutions

— Procurement of so-called "dual use" equipment and experiments that also could be used in both civilian and military nuclear programs, and

— Iran's possession of a 15-page document outlining how to form uranium metal into the shape of a warhead.

A U.S. intelligence estimate late last year said Tehran worked on nuclear weapons programs until 2003, while Israel and other nations say such work continued past that date.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080402/FOREIGN/435685415/1003>

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

USA Today

April 2, 2008

## Experts to testify of 'growing' nuke threat to U.S.

By Mimi Hall, USA Today

WASHINGTON — The government must act to reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism in a major U.S. city, senior government officials and top terrorism experts are scheduled to tell the Senate today.

Testifying as part of a months-long Senate investigation into the government's ability to prevent a nuclear attack, the experts will paint a chilling picture of a post-nuclear America: hundreds of thousands dead, \$1 trillion in damage and panic nationwide.

"The prospect of terrorists detonating a nuclear device on American soil sometime within the next quarter-century is real and growing," according to prepared testimony from Gary Ackerman, research director of the Homeland Security Department-funded National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. "Such a calamitous attack would represent a game-changing event far exceeding the impact of 9/11 on the nation."

Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, director of the Department of Energy's Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, outlined several steps the government has taken to mitigate the threat. Among them are working with other governments to try to eliminate and secure nuclear stockpiles.

"Today, al-Qaeda's nuclear intent remains clear," his testimony says. The near-monthly reports of people trying to smuggle "real or purported" nuclear materials means "that we collectively have not done enough to suppress trafficking and ensure the security of all nuclear materials worldwide," according to his testimony.

The Senate homeland security committee is conducting the government's first investigation into nuclear terrorism and the needs and plans for responding.

Committee Chairman Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., said Tuesday that the hearing "is not to encourage unnecessary fear but to confront the threatening realities so that we can then deal with them in defense of our country and people."

Charles Allen, intelligence chief at the Homeland Security Department, said, "One of our gravest concerns is the entry of a nuclear device or materials into the U.S."

In testimony, Allen said he does not believe that any terrorist group has a nuclear device in hand, but "the terrorist threat is dynamic and constantly evolving."

Among the steps taken to address the threat since 9/11:

- The Energy Department has stepped up efforts to secure nuclear stockpiles worldwide and stop illegal trafficking. It also has beefed up teams capable of disarming a nuclear device.
- Myriad government agencies are developing a national registry to identify and track nuclear materials in the USA.
- Homeland Security is testing radiation-detection equipment and working at overseas ports to screen cargo containers before they are loaded onto ships headed to the USA.

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2008-04-01-nukes\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2008-04-01-nukes_N.htm)

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

WorldTribune.com

## **Jihadist posts anthrax-making instructions**

Monday, March 31, 2008

In a chilling sign that Islamist terrorists continue seeking weapons of mass destruction, a jihadist website recently posted instructions on making deadly anthrax for biological weapons.

The website disclosed the illustrated instructions March 17 and included additional links, and promised to provide information on a delivery system in the future, a Cessna airplane.

Jihadist posts anthrax-making instructions

In a chilling sign that Islamist terrorists continue seeking weapons of mass destruction, a jihadist website recently posted instructions on making deadly anthrax for biological weapons. The website disclosed the illustrated instructions March 17 and included additional links, and promised to provide information on a delivery system in the future, a Cessna airplane.

"The wait has been long, but the time has arrived, God willing. It is the glad tidings of being able to use biological weapons against the enemies of God. So, allow me to present to you a simple recipe for making anthrax, God willing," the web site stated.

"Anthrax is an effective and lethal weapon," the report said. "It is cheap and easy to make. One kilogram of anthrax may be produced in a small test tube with a spore sample that is kept in a special incubator for just 96 hours."

"Sprinkling 50 kilograms of powder containing anthrax spores along a distance of 2 kilometers will form a lethal cloud that could travel with the wind a distance of more than 20 kilometers, reaching people inside their homes — even with sealed doors and windows."

To produce a kilo of spores costs about \$50 and a lethal doze is no more than one-millionth of gram, or no bigger than a speck of dust.

The posting includes the text of one of the anthrax letters sent to U.S. officials in 2001.

The instructions include using Petri dishes to multiply samples of anthrax, and then adding powder that will allow it to float in the air.

The writer appears to be Saudi as he mentions the cost of several items in Saudi riyals. "I would be happy if you used biological weapons against the enemies of God," the poster stated.

As for delivery systems, the report said he would post instructions on how to make a Cessna 182 aircraft from parts obtained separately.

[http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2008/me\\_terror0008\\_03\\_31.html](http://www.worldtribune.com/worldtribune/WTARC/2008/me_terror0008_03_31.html)

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

GovExec.com

## Intelligence officers call al Qaeda nuclear threat real

By Michael Posner *CongressDaily* April 2, 2008

Two high-level government intelligence experts testified Wednesday that al Qaeda is intent on attacking the United States with a nuclear weapon but has not developed a nuclear device.

In a hearing, Charles Allen, chief intelligence officer for the Homeland Security Department, said there is no doubt that al Qaeda wants a nuclear weapon. But, he told the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, "I do not believe that any terrorist organization currently has developed a nuclear device." He said, however, that this capability "could change drastically" with the recruitment of people with knowledge of nuclear materials and design.

His testimony was buttressed by Rolf Mowatt-Larssen, director of the office of intelligence and counterintelligence of the Energy Department. Before Sept. 11, 2001, he said, many in the intelligence community believed it was too hard for terrorists to develop a nuclear bomb.

"We should not, however, assume that the technology of a nuclear weapon is beyond the capability of a terrorist group," Mowatt-Larssen said. "A terrorist group needs only to produce a nuclear yield once to change history." Both experts plan to testify before the committee later Wednesday to discuss classified material. "We do not yet know when and where they intend to strike us next," Mowatt-Larssen testified, "but past experience strongly suggests that they are seeking an attack more spectacular than 9/11."

Mowatt-Larssen said a global effort must be undertaken to get nuclear materials off the black market and stop global trafficking in them. Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Chairman Joseph Lieberman, I-Conn., summed up the testimony of both men as sobering.

Matthew Bunn, a nuclear expert at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University, said that nuclear stockpile security in Russia "has improved dramatically in the past 15 years" but called for more global nuclear security. He too warned of the threat from a terrorist group.

"This is a real danger," he said. Homeland Security Department's Allen said any terrorist nuclear bomb would lack the sophistication of one developed by a country and be of unknown yield. But, he warned, "A nuclear device of any yield could produce thousands of casualties, significant damage to the infrastructure and render large areas uninhabitable."

Similarly, Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs ranking member Susan Collins of Maine supported that assessment, saying that a 10-kiloton nuclear device in Manhattan's Times Square at noon would result immediately in the loss of half a million lives.

[http://govexec.com/story\\_page.cfm?articleid=39686&dcn=todaysnews](http://govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=39686&dcn=todaysnews)

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

Los Angeles Times

## NATO backs Bush plan for missile shield

From the Associated Press

9:38 AM PDT, April 3, 2008

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA -- President Bush won NATO's endorsement today for his plan to build a missile defense system in Europe over Russian objections. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called it a "breakthrough agreement" for the military alliance.

"Now it is clearly understood in the alliance that the challenges of the 21st century, the threats of the 21st century, make it necessary to have missile defense that can defend the countries of Europe," Rice told reporters at the NATO summit.

Progress on missile defense represented perhaps the biggest boon to Bush from the NATO summit. Russia has fiercely opposed it.

Rice also noted that NATO has "also asked Russia to stop its criticism of the alliance effort and to join in the cooperative efforts that have been offered to it by the United States."

A NATO statement calls on the alliance to explore ways in which the planned U.S. project, to be based in Poland and the Czech Republic, can be linked with future missile shields elsewhere. It says leaders should come up with recommendations to be considered at their next meeting in 2009.

The U.S. plan calls for 10 interceptor missiles based in Poland and a tracking radar site in the Czech Republic.

At a news conference in Bucharest on the sidelines of the NATO summit, Czech Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg announced that negotiations with the Americans have been successfully completed and that a deal would be signed in early May.

The Poles have yet to agree to the plan, but in Warsaw today, talks picked up between Polish and U.S. officials

about it.

The backing from NATO and the announcement with the Czechs provides Bush with a powerful leg up in his negotiations with Moscow over the issue.

Bush is seeing Russian President Vladimir Putin twice this week -- during the NATO summit and in one-on-one meetings planned for this weekend in Sochi, Russia. White House officials have talked optimistically in recent days that the weekend meeting could break the missile defense logjam.

Rice said she was hopeful that Bush and Putin would agree on a broad framework for cooperation between the countries, but it was still unclear whether they would reach a deal on missile defense. The administration has worked to allay Russian leaders' fears that the system is a threat to them.

"We hope that we can move beyond that to an understanding that we will all have an interest in cooperation on missile defense," Rice said. "But we will see."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-bush4apr04,1,3166768.story>

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

Washington Post

April 4, 2008

Pg. 1

## Missile Defense Endorsed By NATO

*A Victory for Bush; Czechs Set Deal to Host Radar Facility*

By Peter Baker, Washington Post Staff Writer

BUCHAREST, Romania, April 3 -- President Bush advanced his plans Thursday to build a controversial missile defense shield in Eastern Europe by winning the unanimous backing of NATO allies and sealing a deal with the Czech Republic to build a radar facility for the system on its soil.

Bush's success in winning over once-skeptical European governments bolsters his position heading into talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has denounced the shield as the start of a new arms race. The alliance said the system should be expanded, with participation of NATO countries and Russia, to protect all of Europe.

The unified support took some of the sting out of NATO's rejection of Bush's other priority here, the offering of road maps to membership for Ukraine and Georgia, two former Soviet republics seeking to escape Moscow's orbit. Two of Bush's best new friends in Europe, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, led the charge against him on that issue at the NATO summit here, the last of Bush's presidency.

Yet the deferment of Ukrainian and Georgian applications may help clear the way for a deal on missile defense with Putin, who arrived here Thursday and said through his spokesman that the membership issue was a "red line" for him. Putin joins NATO leaders in a meeting Friday morning and then will host Bush at his vacation home in the Black Sea resort of Sochi over the weekend.

The United States hopes that moving beyond discord about the two countries' membership will lead "to an understanding that we will all have an interest in cooperation on missile defense," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told reporters.

The summit was unusually fluid, giving the president mixed results on other fronts as well. He lined up additional NATO troops for Afghanistan, though not as many as officials say are needed. And he presided over the membership invitation to Albania and Croatia, but not a third country he wanted, Macedonia, which was blackballed by Greece in a dispute over its name.

With Bush's support, NATO leaders agreed to open preliminary discussions about eventual membership with two other former Yugoslav republics, Bosnia and Montenegro, a process called "intensified dialogue" that represents an early stage in the long admission process.

In its final communique, NATO also encouraged Serbia to consider joining, nine years after the alliance led a 78-day bombing campaign against it to push Serb troops out of the province of Kosovo, which has now declared independence.

Missile defense represented Bush's biggest achievement at the three-day summit and a striking turnabout from the ambivalence Europeans harbored not long ago. Bush wants to build a sophisticated radar facility in the Czech Republic and station 10 interceptor missiles in Poland as a hedge against Iran, which is developing ballistic missiles and enriching uranium that Western officials worry could be eventually be used to build nuclear weapons.

The Bush administration says the eastern location of Poland and the Czech Republic is ideal to allow early radar sighting of enemy missiles coming in from the Middle East and the launching of interceptors. Other analysts see politics also playing a role in the two countries' selection -- the new, former communist members are more supportive of the project than their Western neighbors and would be further anchored to the alliance by hosting the missile facilities.

After years of negotiations, Bush and Czech leaders announced Thursday that they have reached agreement on permitting the radar facility to be built. The administration is still negotiating with Poland, but hopes to wrap up a deal with it before Bush leaves office next year.

The NATO communique declared that ballistic missile development "poses an increasing threat" to Europe and said "missile defense forms a part of a broader response to counter this threat." The allies said they want to link the proposed U.S.-built system with NATO efforts to create a shield that would cover all of Europe and they urged Russia to drop its opposition and join an integrated anti-missile structure.

But the debate about NATO expansion dominated the summit, which officially wraps up Friday. While the United States, Canada and nine Eastern European nations supported putting Ukraine and Georgia on the path to membership, Germany, France, Italy and other Western European nations resisted, arguing that the two were still too unstable and expressing concern about poking Russia in the eye.

Although Sarkozy said "we're not afraid of Putin," he maintained it was premature for the former Soviet republics to be put on the waiting list for membership. "These two countries are destined to join NATO," Sarkozy said. "But there must be agreement at least to discuss the date and terms and conditions."

Bush aides said a majority of the members supported his position but because the alliance operates on consensus, Ukraine and Georgia were denied the membership action plans they sought. "We must give other nations seeking membership a full and fair hearing," Bush told the other leaders. "As we invite new members today, we're also clear that the progress of enlargement will continue."

As a concession to Bush, NATO instructed its foreign ministers to revisit the issue at a December conference and authorized them to accord at that time the status that the two countries seek, if merited. That would give Bush what he wants just before he leaves office. "We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO" someday, the communique said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/03/AR2008040300741.html>

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

New York Times

April 4, 2008

## **NATO Endorses Europe Missile Shield**

By Steven Erlanger and Steven Lee Myers

BUCHAREST, Romania — NATO leaders agreed Thursday to endorse a United States missile defense system based in Europe and to provide more troops for Afghanistan, but they refused to back President Bush's proposal to bring Ukraine and Georgia closer to NATO membership.

Washington's failure to win over Germany, France, Italy, Spain and other crucial European countries to its view on Ukraine and Georgia was considered by some countries of Central and Eastern Europe to have sent a message of alliance weakness to Moscow, a day before the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, makes his first visit to a NATO summit meeting.

But Mr. Bush could claim success in persuading NATO to endorse his missile-defense plan in the face of Russian objections, and on Thursday signed an agreement with the Czech Republic to build radar for the system.

"There has been, over 10 years, a real debate as to whether there is a ballistic missile threat," said Mr. Bush's national security adviser, Stephen J. Hadley. "And I think that debate ended today." Mr. Bush also succeeded in getting NATO to agree to increase troop numbers in Afghanistan, a Washington priority.

Mr. Putin has objected strongly to building parts of the missile defense system in former Soviet bloc states, despite Washington's assurances that the system is a response to threats from Iran, not from Russia. Mr. Putin, saying the system would fuel a new arms race, has even threatened to aim Russian missiles at the system, while also offering the use of a substitute system in Azerbaijan.

NATO's final statement invited Russia to cooperate with the United States and Europe on developing defenses jointly.

Konstantin Kosachev, chairman of the international affairs committee of the Russian Parliament, said that missile defense would be high on the agenda for the meeting between Mr. Bush and Mr. Putin in Sochi, a Russian resort, scheduled after the NATO conference, which Mr. Putin is to attend Friday.

Mr. Kosachev said Russia doubted Washington's motives. "We still do not have a proper explanation of this project," he said. "It is not about the number of interceptors. It's about undermining mutual confidence and trust."

The main contributor to more troops in Afghanistan was France. President Nicolas Sarkozy said Paris would send another battalion — some 700 troops — to eastern Afghanistan, freeing up more American soldiers to deploy in support of Canadian forces in the south, where the fighting against the Taliban is heaviest.

Mr. Sarkozy, in a joint press conference with the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, repeated that France intended to reintegrate fully into NATO once a separate European defense pillar became a reality. "Let Europe's defense pole advance, and we will continue to advance toward NATO," he said. "I repeat, these are two things that go together, not one or the other, so let's wait for the summit" in 2009, he said.

He praised Mr. Bush for comments "on the need for European defenses that would complement the alliance, which was, in my opinion, a historic turning point in U.S. policy," Mr. Sarkozy said. "It was a gesture we have been waiting for, that has been noticed. It's a gesture that shows understanding for what is happening in Europe."

A senior American official said Mr. Bush praised Mr. Sarkozy, too, saying his trip to the United States last fall had an impact "like the latest incarnation of Elvis."

Mr. Bush traveled to Ukraine on the eve of the summit meeting here and strongly endorsed its eventual membership. But the alliance decided not to offer Ukraine and Georgia entry into its Membership Action Plan, or MAP, a set of requirements and reforms necessary to achieving full alliance membership.

It was a remarkable rejection of American policy in an alliance normally dominated by Washington, and it sent a confusing signal to Russia, one that some countries considered close to appeasement of Moscow.

American officials focused on NATO's agreement that the alliance's foreign ministers would reconsider Ukraine and Georgia when they met again in December, before President Bush left office, though few Europeans expected a different result. The Europeans suggested that invitations to the MAP might come in a year, at the next summit meeting, to be jointly held by Germany and France, or in 2010.

Mr. Hadley, the national security adviser, said that most of the former Communist states that had joined NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union had supported the American position. He and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice emphasized NATO's final statement declaring that Georgia and Ukraine would become members someday, as would any other aspiring democracy in Europe.

German and British officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly, criticized the Bush administration for not coming to grips soon enough with the Ukraine and Georgia problem. They suggested that Mr. Bush's failure to try to work through the issue with Russia in advance created doubts among crucial allies like Germany and France, who also felt that Georgia's leadership was unstable and that Ukraine, with a divided population and a new government, was not yet ready to enter the MAP.

Boris I. Tarasyuk, a former Ukrainian foreign minister and close ally of President Viktor A. Yushchenko on NATO membership, said in an interview: "Moscow will be very satisfied with the outcome. But I'd like to say to them that this is not the end of the story. Sooner or later it will happen."

Georgia's foreign minister, David Bakradze, said a "no" for Georgia would validate "those people in the Kremlin who think that by a policy of blackmail, by arrogance and aggression" they can influence NATO's decisions.

NATO did extend full invitations to join the alliance to two significant countries of the Western Balkans, Croatia and Albania. But in an embarrassment for NATO, which runs by consensus, Greece insisted on vetoing the membership invitation of tiny Macedonia. Athens insists that the country must have a name different from Greece's northern province to avoid any sense of territorial claim and "instability," objections that NATO officials regard as ludicrous.

"This is a huge disappointment," said the Macedonian government's negotiator, Nikola Dimitrov. "It goes against the values that stand behind NATO. It's very much against stability in the Balkans."

Mr. Bush, addressing his NATO colleagues, praised changes that Macedonia had put in place and said that the "name issue needs to be resolved quickly, so that Macedonia can be welcomed into NATO as soon as possible."

He did not mention Greece. Nor did Mr. Bush mention Ukraine and Georgia.

*Judy Dempsey contributed reporting.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/04/world/europe/04nato.html?ref=world>

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

Washington Times

April 4, 2008

Pg. 6

**Inside The Ring**

By Bill Gertz

## **Nuclear deal**

The Bush administration is set to conclude a nuclear agreement with Russia to be unveiled Sunday during President Bush's meeting with outgoing Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Russian resort city of Sochi.



Some in Congress are raising questions about whether Moscow should be rewarded with the "123 agreement" on nuclear materials, so called after a section of the Atomic Energy Act requiring it, because of Russia's role in boosting Iran's nuclear program with technology and weapons transfers over the past decade.

If negotiations go well, the agreement will be signed and the administration will submit it to Congress next week, said U.S. officials familiar with the deal. Under the law, Congress then has 90 days to block the agreement or it enters into force.

An administration official said the nuclear materials deal probably will not be signed unless a broader "strategic framework declaration" is reached this weekend on several issues. The framework will seek to map current and future U.S.-Russia ties and address issues such as missile defense, energy cooperation, further nuclear weapons cuts and economic issues.

It is hoped the Russians will agree to disagree with a planned U.S. missile defense site in central Europe but not disrupt ties over it.

The 123 agreement is required before the United States can cooperate with Moscow on nuclear materials, such as storing or reprocessing spent fuel, or providing technology related to advanced reactors.

"The Russians really want this because it is a seal of approval for their peaceful nuclear program," said one U.S. official.

Republicans and Democrats in Congress are questioning the wisdom of the deal, which appears to be a concession to Moscow aimed at getting the Kremlin to go along with U.S. plans for a third missile defense interceptor site in Poland and the Czech Republic, something officials say is unlikely to happen.

Word of the 123 agreement comes as Congress is debating legislation that would require a presidential certification before any nuclear cooperation with countries involved in supplying nuclear fuel to Iran's nuclear program, or missiles and advanced conventional arms, which Moscow supplied to Tehran for more than a decade.

That legislation has a good chance of passing both houses of Congress because it was drafted, in part, to honor the memory of the late Rep. Tom Lantos, California Democrat.

The legislation is likely to be opposed by the Bush administration, which views such measures as undermining diplomacy.

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

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Pg. 1

## **Intelligence Officials Downplay Iran Report**

*2003 estimate seen as flawed*

By Rowan Scarborough

The contested U.S. intelligence conclusion that Iran stopped work on its nuclear weapons program in 2003 is now being downplayed by the same officials who wrote the much-publicized report in November.

"Why would the Iranians be willing to pay the international tariff they appear to be willing to pay for what they are doing now if they did not have, at a minimum, at a minimum, they did not have a desire to keep the option open to develop a nuclear weapon and perhaps even more so that they have already decided to do that?" CIA Director Michael V. Hayden said Sunday.

The four-star Air Force general said it was "hard for me to explain" the intelligence community's conclusion that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003 and probably had not restarted it as of the middle of last year. And his boss, Director of National Intelligence Michael McConnell, said the report was so quickly declassified and poorly focused that it confused people.

"If I had it to do over again, I would be very specific in how I described what was canceled and what continued," Mr. McConnell told a Senate panel of his community's National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iran.

Most news coverage of the assessment focused on the first sentence in its summary of key judgments: "We judge with high confidence that in fall 2003, Tehran halted its nuclear weapons program."

But, the officials now say that sentence referred only to work on a nuclear warhead.

Mr. McConnell and Mr. Hayden now are emphasizing that Iran continues work on the enrichment of uranium, which could be used to make a weapon, and on ballistic missiles, which could be used to deliver a nuclear warhead. The publicly released NIE described Iran's highly public enrichment efforts but did not mention the missile program, which already gives Iran the capacity to strike targets in Europe.

"The other aspects of the Iranian nuclear effort, beyond the weaponization, the development of fissile material, the development of delivery systems, all continue apace," Mr. Hayden said this week.

Last month, Mr. Hayden agreed with Mr. McConnell's characterization.

Mr. Hayden told editors and reporters of The Washington Times on March 11 that at the time the NIE was released in December he insisted there are three key elements of a nuclear weapons program: fissile material, weaponization and delivery systems.

"What came out in a lot of coverage was 'Iran stops nuclear program,' " Mr. Hayden said. "The only thing we claimed had been halted in '03 was the weaponization. The development of fissile material, and the development of delivery systems continued. And one can make the case the development of delivery systems make no sense with just conventional warheads on top of them."

The declassified NIE key judgments, however, made no mention of delivery systems and focused extensively on the halted program.

Steven Aftergood, an intelligence expert at the Federation of American Scientists, said the shift in tone from the intelligence chieftains has created some uncertainty about Iran's program.

"There have been mixed signals coming from senior intelligence officials regarding Iran," Mr. Aftergood said. "But that's not necessarily a bad thing. It helps to remind us that intelligence officials are not omniscient, that they can be mistaken, and that sometimes they change their minds.

"Those are realities that are worth keeping in mind. For my part, I would rather have mixed signals and a vigorous discussion than a blank wall of secrecy."

Perhaps no single intelligence document has come under as much criticism since the CIA and other agencies issued the 2002 NIE that said Iraq still maintained an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction — when it did not.

Conservative national security analysts roundly condemn the Iran NIE. Among the criticisms: The CIA knows little about the inner workings of Tehran's hard-line Islamic government and does not know for sure that Iran has or has not resumed work on a warhead.

Critics also say the NIE delivered a public relations victory to Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, while embarrassing President Bush and eliminating his most powerful option — air strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities. Since the NIE's declassification, intelligence officials, while not abandoning it, have complained that the news media oversimplified its findings by writing that Iran ended its nuclear weapons research, which it has not. In public comments, Mr. McConnell emphasizes that a closer reading reveals the NIE said Iran stopped work on only one project — designing the nuclear bomb itself.

He told the Senate Armed Services Committee in February, "I think the press mischaracterized" the NIE, which reversed an earlier finding.

Mr. McConnell heads the committee of 16 intelligence agencies, including the CIA, which wrote and approved the NIE. He not only blamed the press, but he also criticized himself.

"If I had had the foresight to know I was going to be forced to do unclassified key judgments, because of the circumstances, I would have caused the key judgments to be very clear about what was stopped and what continued," he told the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. "I'll take responsibility. That's an error in judgment on my part. I wasn't clairvoyant or smart."

Mr. McConnell then added more complexity to the debate, saying Iran could have restarted work on a nuclear warhead without U.S. intelligence agencies being aware of it.

"If Iran's nuclear weapons design program ... has already been reactivated or will be reactivated, it will be a closely guarded state secret," he testified.

Mr. Hayden said on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday that "it's a very difficult judgment. It's a complex judgment, too, and it's one that, unfortunately, tends to get oversimplified in public discourse."

Asked about Mr. Hayden's NIE explanation, a senior intelligence official said, "Weaponizing a device is just one aspect of developing a nuclear weapon. The hard part is producing the highly enriched uranium, and that continues apace, as does the testing of delivery systems."

James Phillips, a Heritage Foundation expert on the Middle East who has criticized the NIE, said Mr. McConnell and Mr. Hayden are "backpedaling."

"They realize how misleading its conclusions were, especially when taken out of context," Mr. Phillips said. "There is a growing consensus that the NIE accorded too much weight to the reported halt in weaponization research, which is relatively easy to accomplish, and too little weight to Iran's acceleration of its uranium enrichment effort, which is a much more difficult hurdle that must be overcome to build a nuclear weapon. Also, the NIE failed to account for Iran's missile program, which makes little sense."

Meanwhile, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations' nuclear counterproliferation arm, reported last month that Iran has refused to stop enriching uranium, as demanded by a U.N. resolution.

IAEA officials met in January with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The agency said he stated, "the country's nuclear program had always been exclusively for peaceful purposes and that there had never been a nuclear weapons development program."

The new NIE rebuts that statement, saying Iran was working on nuclear warhead designs until 2003, when it secretly stopped because of international pressure.

*Bill Gertz contributed to this report.*

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