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Articles & Other Documents:

[Probe Raises Concerns About Safety Of U.S. Nuke Program](#)

[Aiming To Ease Tensions, Without U.S.-Russia Pact](#)

[Iran Turns Down EU On Nuclear Program](#)

[Inspectors Warned Hill AFB](#)

[N. Korea's Loud Talk May Signal Progress On Weapons](#)

[Iran tests advanced centrifuge](#)

[Man sickened by ricin seen as acting alone](#)

[Russia wants military officers at U.S. missile sites](#)

[Iran Claims To Install New, Faster Centrifuges](#)

[U.S. gets mixed news on nukes](#)

[Nuclear Smuggling Chains](#)

[Organized Crime, Terrorism and Nuclear Trafficking](#)

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Salt Lake Tribune

April 5, 2008

Probe Raises Concerns About Safety Of U.S. Nuke Program

House committee told missile fuses sent to Taiwan were shipped in mislabeled containers

By Matthew D. LaPlante, The Salt Lake Tribune

An emergency inventory of hundreds of pieces of military hardware sparked by the mistaken shipment of ballistic-missile fuses to Taiwan has been completed and no other parts appear to be missing.

But two weeks into an investigation on how the parts went unaccounted for more than three years after arriving at Hill Air Force Base in 2004, dual questions are emerging: Is the military able to secure its nuclear arsenal, and is there sufficient oversight for private contractors who handle such material?

Members of the House Armed Services Committee who have been briefed on the inquiry say initial reports indicate the shipping containers holding the fuses were mislabeled. But defense officials assured the members the error rate for parts handled through the military's complex distribution system is less than 1 part per 100,000.

That might be an acceptable level of error for the shipment of helicopter batteries, like those that Taiwan actually ordered, "but in the nuclear arena, you need zero errors," said Rep. Joe Sestak, a Pennsylvania Democrat who attended the classified briefing. Sestak said that although the missile parts that wound up in Taiwan contained no fissionable materials, the mistake heightened concerns about the security of the national's nuclear missiles -

particularly as reports of the incident followed, by less than a year, the unauthorized and unmonitored flight of a bomber carrying several nuclear missiles from North Dakota to Louisiana.

Accountability "used to be first and foremost in the nuclear weapons business," said Sestak, a retired U.S. Navy admiral. "Things were so stringent that you never would find something like this would occur."

Defense expert John Pike, who runs the Web site [Globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org), said the repeated problems - he cited another incident in which a detailed photo of a nuclear submarine wound up on the Internet - spoke poorly of U.S. efforts to keep a tight lid on its nuclear program.

"We're supposed to do this stuff right," Pike said. "If the Americans are this sloppy, what does that say for everyone else?"

While the investigation into the Taiwan missile case has yet to assign blame, the matter has increased concern about whether the military is keeping a close enough watch on its contractors.

Pike said the increased privatization of military duties under the Clinton and Bush administrations isn't necessarily bad - "but the degree of accountability and supervision . . . has turned out to be inadequate."

EG&G Inc., which won a contract to manage the storage and distribution of missile and aircraft parts at Hill in 2002, oversaw the transfer of more than 1.4 million items last year, according to officials at the Defense Logistics Agency, which has oversight of the company's operations at the northern Utah base. The company runs similar operations at DLA depots in Texas, Georgia and California.

EG&G received more than \$63 million during the past five years for the Hill operation. Content with that performance, Air Force officials late last year approved a contract for the next five years - potentially worth \$51 million or more.

Rep. Rob Bishop, who represents northern Utah, including Hill, said he had empathy for those trying to keep such a complex operation afloat with minimal error while using computerized tracking systems that are in some cases decades old.

"I can't be too critical. Around here in Congress we look at a million dollars as a rounding error," he joked.

But Bishop joined Sestak in expressing concern that standards of accountability may lapse when duties previously handled by military personnel are privatized. "We want to make sure that equal responsibility is maintained on the contractor side of it as the military side," he said. "I am worried about it."

Bishop said he would be watching closely as the investigation, ordered by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, continues. A public update on the case is scheduled for April 15.

Several of Utah's other members of Congress may be paying attention for another reason: They're among scores of politicians who have received donations from a political action committee run by EG&G's parent company, URS Corp.

According to Federal Elections Commission reports, URS's Washington Group International has donated nearly \$400,000 to federal candidates in the past two years, including \$5,000 to Sen. Bob Bennett, \$3,500 for Rep. Jim Matheson and \$1,000 for Rep. Chris Cannon.

Sen. Orrin Hatch has also benefited from URS, receiving \$8,000 from the company's PAC in 2005 and 2006.

Bishop's name doesn't appear on the Washington Group's donor list.

http://www.sltrib.com/ci_8819788?IADID=Search-www.sltrib.com-www.sltrib.com

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

Washington Post

April 6, 2008

Pg. 20

Aiming To Ease Tensions, Without U.S.-Russia Pact

By Peter Baker, Washington Post Staff Writer

SOCHI, Russia, April 5 -- President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin will not reach a deal on missile defense during weekend talks that opened Saturday, officials said, but they hope to put the turbulent U.S.-Russian relationship back on a friendlier footing for their successors.

Although the two sides were putting the finishing touches on a "strategic framework" intended to set a tone of cooperation on a range of issues, U.S. and Russian officials said they remained too far apart to sign a concrete pact on Bush's plan to build a missile shield in Eastern Europe. The White House said negotiations were moving in "the right direction" and expressed hope they would later yield an accord.

Bush and Putin put on a show of camaraderie as they got together at the presidential getaway in this Black Sea resort, pushing past the tensions of recent months that at times have evoked some of the harshest moments of the Cold War. Putin showed Bush a model of facilities he is building for the Winter Olympics here in 2014, then took

him for a walk by the sea. They shared a casual, no-ties dinner of veal loin and red caviar as a Cossack chorus sang, and at one point the two men even jumped onstage and joined in the folk dancing.

"I would describe the atmosphere as warm, collegial, very comfortable, easygoing," said White House press secretary Dana Perino, who attended the dinner. "I would describe it as a sign of the deep relationship that President Bush has worked very hard along with President Putin to establish."

The easy bonhomie papered over deep differences not just on missile defense but also NATO expansion, Iran, Kosovo and other issues. With both men in the fading light of their presidencies, they hastily arranged this meeting following a NATO summit to make a final stab at breaking through logjams or at least easing any animosity during the coming transitions.

The visit was put together so quickly that the U.S. side had trouble finding a photocopier here in Sochi, and negotiators scrambled to put together a document the two presidents could sign to exhibit progress. From the way officials on both sides describe it, the strategic framework sounds like a fairly standard paper pledging to work together on familiar issues such as counterterrorism, nuclear nonproliferation, trade and energy.

The more substantive matter on the table is Bush's plan to build radar and interceptor-rocket-launching facilities in the Czech Republic and Poland, respectively, aimed at knocking down any ballistic missiles from the Middle East. Bush recently made concessions in a letter to Putin and in other talks between the two sides, offering Russia extensive rights to monitor the system and promising not to activate it without a demonstrated risk.

The positive Russian response encouraged the U.S. side into thinking a deal might be possible. Asked a week ago as Bush was flying to Europe whether he and Putin might resolve their differences on missile defense at Sochi, national security adviser Stephen J. Hadley said, "We may. We're hopeful." Sochi, he added, "is an opportunity to reach an agreement on missile defense. But hey, if we don't have it by Sochi, we'll keep working on it. There's no deadline here."

Bush's position was bolstered when NATO endorsed the system Thursday and urged Russia to join it. By Saturday, though, White House officials were no longer hopeful of a deal here. An agreement on missile defense "would be premature," Perino said. "We'll have some more work to do afterwards. But we think the dialogue is headed in the right direction and that this meeting will be able to push that along even further."

Bush arrived in Sochi uncertain about the future leadership of Russia. Under the Russian constitution, Putin is stepping down when his second term ends May 7, but he installed his protege, Dmitry Medvedev, in an election that kept any serious opposition off the ballot. Putin plans to become Medvedev's prime minister, and even Bush has wondered aloud who will really be in charge.

Although aides said Bush has met Medvedev before, he left such a faint impression that the president did not remember it at a recent news conference. Medvedev joined the two presidents for dinner Saturday night, and he will have a half-hour meeting with Bush on Sunday, their first real opportunity to evaluate each other as peers.

With Bush leaving office in January, some wondered how meaningful any agreement here could be. "The substance is commendable, but why are we signing this document with a lame-duck president?" asked Michael McFaul, a Russia scholar at Stanford University's Hoover Institution who advises Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.), a candidate for president. "We should be engaging Medvedev after May, not Putin in April."

Bush started his day in Zagreb, the Croatian capital, where he celebrated NATO's decision to admit Croatia and Albania. "Henceforth, should any danger threaten your people, America and the NATO alliance will stand with you and no one will be able to take your freedom away," he told a crowd of 5,000 gathered in St. Mark's Square, where rockets hit in 1991 as Croatia declared independence.

It was a transcendent moment for a part of the world consumed by ethnic hatred and warfare a decade ago. Although parliaments in the 26 member states must now formally ratify the accession, Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader exulted over the latest step in European integration for his small country of 4.5 million with the fabled Dalmatian coast. "Croatia is going where it belongs," Sanader said. "Croatia is going back home."

Bush included Macedonian President Branko Crvenkovski in the ceremonies even though his tiny country was blackballed by Greece, which objects to its name. "As soon as this issue is resolved, Macedonia will be extended an invitation to join the alliance," Bush said. "America's position is clear: Macedonia should take its place in NATO as soon as possible."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/05/AR2008040501132.html>

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

Baltimore Sun
April 6, 2008

Iran Turns Down EU On Nuclear Program

TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran rejected recent European overtures to halt its uranium enrichment program in return for incentives and vowed yesterday to continue to expand its nuclear program. Government spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham said Iran will still talk to Europe about its nuclear program. The European Union said last month that it was open for further talks with Iran despite U.N. approval of a third round of sanctions. Six key nations also pledged to enhance a 2006 package of political, security and economic incentives for Iran to halt uranium enrichment.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nation/bal-te.briefs06apr06,0,1965011.story>

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

Salt Lake City Deseret Morning News
April 6, 2008
Pg. 1

Inspectors Warned Hill AFB

By Lee Davidson and Steve Fidel, Deseret Morning News

After finding alarm-raising shortcomings with computer inventories of ballistic missile parts at Hill Air Force Base, inspectors warned a year ago that poor record-keeping could allow "inadvertent technology transfers" or "unintentional use by hostile parties."

That now seems prophetic, in a way.

The Pentagon recently acknowledged that nuclear missile parts had been sent to Taiwan in a shipment that was supposed to contain helicopter batteries. Initial blame points to a Defense Logistics Agency warehouse operation at Hill and EG&G, a contractor there.

The just-discovered warning is in a May 30, 2007, Air Force Audit Agency report, obtained by the Deseret Morning News through the Freedom of Information Act. The report also shows that officials at Hill promised some fixes to the system that were likely implemented before the Taiwan incident made international headlines.

However, the erroneous shipment to Taiwan occurred in 2006, a year before the inspection at Hill. It took the Pentagon two years, while Taiwan was complaining that it never received the batteries it ordered, to realize last month that sensitive missile parts had been sent instead, and to retrieve them.

The foul-up led President Bush to apologize to China, which considers Taiwan a renegade province and fears weapons transfers there. Defense Secretary Robert Gates also ordered Navy Adm. Kirkland H. Donald to investigate how the erroneous Taiwan shipment occurred and to look at inventory control processes. His initial assessment is due April 15.

Hill has been forwarding all media questions related to the Taiwan shipment to the Pentagon and did not return Deseret Morning News calls about the audit. Maj. Stewart Upton, spokesman for the secretary of Defense, said only that the secretary has directed a "comprehensive review and physical inventory by serial number of all nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons-related materials" and that it would be inappropriate to respond during an ongoing investigation.

The report obtained by the Morning News shows that last year inspectors looked at whether contractors at Hill had recorded all the government assets stored at the facility, in a computerized inventory system (called G009). That included looking at older but still-sensitive parts for Peacekeeper and Minuteman intercontinental ballistic missiles stored at Hill awaiting disposal or destruction.

Inspectors sampled 21 line items among such missile parts stored by the contractor to see if they were in that inventory. Almost none were.

"Specifically, 20 (95 percent) of 21 sampled line items were not properly accounted for within G009 or another accounting system," the report says.

"Additionally, management did not adequately reconcile assets to maintain reasonable internal controls" by conducting physical inventories to match computer inventories, inspectors added.

Inspectors wrote that improved controls over such sensitive equipment was needed, which "may prevent inadvertent technology transfers, unintentional use by hostile parties and reduce the risk for fraud, waste and abuse."

Inspectors said they found that contractors conducted reconciliation at that time only for "high-dollar value end items with frequent movement" among the 1.1 million items they were contracted to store. Value of the items is estimated at \$404.9 million.

Inspectors wrote that Hill officials told them that contracts with the contractors also allowed them to exclude from the G009 inventory system any obsolete and excess items considered not to have a future demand. But inspectors wrote, "Sensitive material should be periodically inventoried and reconciled with accounting records to maintain asset control until demilitarization and disposal."

Inspectors recommended that Hill and its contractor conduct "a current and complete physical inventory of government-owned material and reconcile the inventory." It also called for such physical inventories to be conducted at least annually, and for any discrepancies to be investigated.

The report said the commander of the 526th Intercontinental Ballistic Missile Systems Wing accepted those recommendations. The report said he would ask the contractor to complete such a physical inventory and reconcile it with computer inventories by the end of May last year. "Any observed discrepancies will be investigated," it said. The Pentagon has said that the shipment of electrical fuses used in Minuteman missiles was mistakenly sent to Taiwan in the fall of 2006 — before the Air Force Audit Agency performed its inspection at Hill.

It said Defense officials did not realize the parts were missing, despite inventory checks. That realization occurred only when Taiwan complained it never received the helicopter batteries it had ordered. After months of talks, officials finally realized last month that the missile parts had been sent instead.

A copy of the Air Force Audit Agency report obtained by the Morning News is available online at [deseretnews.com](http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,5143,695267943,00.html).
<http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,5143,695267943,00.html>

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

Miami Herald

April 8, 2008

Pg. 11

N. Korea's Loud Talk May Signal Progress On Weapons

With North Korea shouting more and more, there is hope that Pyongyang may be ready to make concessions on dismantling its nuclear weapons program.

By Tim Johnson, McClatchy News Service

BEIJING -- North Korea's huffing and puffing has grown louder in recent weeks, and in the strange world of Pyongyang diplomacy, that might be a good sign.

The bigger the fit North Korea throws, the more it's possible that a concession is near, experts said.

In recent days, North Korea has fired short-range missiles into the sea, threatened to reduce South Korea to "ashes" and railed that Washington is lying about Pyongyang's alleged transfers of nuclear technology to Syria.

On Tuesday, U.S. nuclear envoy Christopher Hill will meet his North Korea counterpart, Kim Kye-gwan, in Singapore for the latest talks on dismantling Pyongyang's nuclear-weapons program. North Korea has delayed delivering a declaration of all its nuclear activities, defying a December deadline and dimming prospects for the talks.

Experts said it was a common tactic for North Korea to increase the bluster, even escalating tensions into full-blown crises, just before making concessions in talks.

"One past pattern in North Korean negotiating behavior has involved an increase in public rhetoric or criticism of other parties as a way of masking a concession to internal audiences," said Scott Snyder, a senior associate at the Asia Foundation, which works to promote law and good governance in Asia.

The current squabble between is over North Korea's declaration of its nuclear activities. Washington demands a thorough declaration that accounts for programs involving highly enriched uranium. Pyongyang says it submitted a complete list to Washington last November.

Hill and Kim came close to a deal at a meeting last month in Geneva, but North Korea "changed its mind at the last minute," South Korea's quasi-official Yonhap news agency reported Sunday. "We are really running out of time," Hill said last week in Seoul.

Observers in Seoul said the scheduling of the Singapore meeting signaled that the two sides might have quietly made progress.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/world/story/487009.html>

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

Yahoo! News

Iran tests advanced centrifuge

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI, Associated Press Writer

TEHRAN, Iran - President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced major progress in Iran's push for nuclear power, saying Tuesday that his nation was installing thousands of new uranium-enriching centrifuges and testing a much faster version of the device.

Ahmadinejad said scientists were putting 6,000 new centrifuges into place, about twice the current number, and testing a new type that works five times faster.

That would represent a major expansion of uranium enrichment — a process that can produce either fuel for a nuclear reactor or material for a warhead. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice cautioned, however, that the claim could not be immediately substantiated.

Diplomats close to the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency say Iran has exaggerated its progress and seen problems operating the 3,000 centrifuges already in place. One diplomat said Ahmadinejad's claims of a more advanced centrifuge appeared to allude to a type known as the IR-2, which the agency and Iran said months ago that Iran had begun testing.

While expressing concern that Iran continued to defy a U.N. Security Council ban on enrichment, a diplomat said that Ahmadinejad's announcement "seems to be little more than a publicity stunt." He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment publicly.

Permanent members of the Security Council, which has already imposed three sets of sanctions against Iran for its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment, were divided in their response to the announcement.

The United States and Britain quickly condemned it, and France warned Iran could face more sanctions. But Russia, an ally of Iran, dismissed the need for that, saying negotiators were preparing a new package of incentives aimed at persuading Iran to freeze uranium enrichment.

Iran rejected a standing package of incentives endorsed by the five Security Council members plus Germany last week. Tehran says its nuclear program is intended only to produce energy, not develop weapons as the U.S. and many of its allies fear.

Iran has about 3,000 centrifuges operating at its underground nuclear facility in Natanz — the commonly accepted figure for a nuclear enrichment program that is past the experimental stage and can be used as a platform for a full industrial-scale program that could churn out enough enriched material for dozens of nuclear weapons over time. During a tour of the Natanz facility in ceremonies marking the second anniversary of Iran's first enrichment of uranium, Ahmadinejad announced the start of work on installing the 6,000 new centrifuges. Later in a nationally televised speech, he announced the testing of the new, more effective device.

Ahmadinejad said a "new machine was put to test" that is smaller but five times more efficient than the P-1 centrifuges that are currently in operation at Natanz. He provided no further details on the new device or on how many Iran had.

He called the development a "breakthrough" and the "beginning of a speedy trend to eliminate the big powers' dominance in nuclear energy."

The U.N. has passed three sets of sanctions against Iran for its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said there was no need for new sanctions. Instead, he told Ekho Moskvyy radio that diplomats from the U.S., Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany, would offer Iran new economic, energy and security incentives to halt uranium enrichment.

But Rice urged Iran to accept a deal and halt enrichment.

"Iran faces continued isolation in the international community because it will not take a reasonable offer from the international community to have another way," she said in Washington.

In the enrichment process, uranium gas is pumped into series of centrifuges called "cascades." The gas is spun at supersonic speeds to remove impurities. Enriching at a low level produces nuclear fuel, but at a higher level it can produce the material for a warhead.

The workhorse of Iran's enrichment program is the P-1, which is run in cascades of 164 machines. Iranian officials confirmed in February that they had started using the IR-2, which can churn out enriched uranium at more than double the rate.

It was not clear if Ahmadinejad was referring to the IR-2 Tuesday. Iranian state television, which carried his speech live, didn't provide details.

Iran has said it plans to move toward large-scale uranium enrichment that ultimately will involve 54,000 centrifuges. http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080408/ap_on_re_mi_ea/iran_nuclear;_ylt=ApgimphWdGi78LJmujkU5bJvaA8F

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

Denver Post

Man sickened by ricin seen as acting alone

By The Associated Press

Article Last Updated: 04/04/2008 03:24:27 AM MDT

SALT LAKE CITY — Authorities believe a man sickened by the deadly toxin ricin was a "lone wolf" who manufactured the substance intending to do some kind of harm, an FBI agent said Thursday.

Investigators believe Roger Bergendorff manufactured the ricin in the Salt Lake City area, but they haven't been able to turn up any evidence of the location, agent Juan Becerra said.

"This could be somebody mad about taxes or the fact that the transit bus didn't come — whatever the situation may be," said Becerra, an FBI spokesman in Salt Lake City. "All of a sudden you've got a potential full-blown public-safety hazard."

Bergendorff is a target of the investigation but hasn't been charged, said Tim Fuhrman, another FBI agent. It could not be immediately determined if Bergendorff had a lawyer.

On Wednesday, Bergen dorff's cousin was indicted by a federal grand jury for failing to report that the substance was being illegally produced. Thomas Tholen, 54, was charged with misprision of felony — having knowledge of a crime but failing to report it.

Bergendorff was hospitalized in Las Vegas on Feb. 14. He spent almost four weeks in a coma and has been treated for kidney failure

http://www.denverpost.com/headlines/ci_8805053

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

USA Today
April 9, 2008

Russia wants military officers at U.S. missile sites

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia wants its military officers to be present at all times at planned U.S. missile defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic to make sure Russia is not a target, the Russian foreign minister said Tuesday. Sergey Lavrov warned that if Poland and the Czech Republic resist, that could "devaluate" the latest U.S. proposals intended to assuage Russia's concerns about the missile shield.

"We are mostly interested in two things: permanent presence of our officers and reliable means of technical control" to make sure that a battery of 10 U.S. missile interceptors in Poland and a radar in the Czech Republic are not directed at Russia, Lavrov said.

He said Polish and Czech officials had indicated they "don't even want to hear about a permanent Russian presence." Lavrov said the U.S. had suggested that Russian officers could be deployed at Russian Embassies in Poland and the Czech Republic and visit the sites occasionally on the basis of reciprocity. He said that would not be enough to ease Russia's concerns and scoffed at a push to visit Russian sites in response.

"What kind of reciprocity they are talking about? We aren't planning to deploy any kind of missile defense system near the United States, Poland and the Czech Republic," Lavrov said.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President George W. Bush failed to overcome differences over the system during their weekend meeting at the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi.

Lavrov warned Tuesday that the U.S. failure to respond to Moscow's concerns on missile defense would prompt Russia to deploy weapons capable of piercing the missile shield in order to protect its security.

Lavrov spoke Tuesday after the latest round of Russian-Polish missile defense consultations in Moscow failed to narrow differences.

Russia's demands for its military inspectors to be permanently stationed on anti-missile shield sites in Poland and the Czech Republic are "too far-fetched", Poland's top missile defense negotiator Witold Waszczykowski told the PAP news agency Tuesday in Moscow following a round of talks with Russian diplomats.

Waszczykowski said that "the installation could be accessible to visitors or inspectors, but we don't think there is any need for a permanent presence of Russian inspectors there."

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2008-04-08-russia-us_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip

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

Washington Post
April 9, 2008
Pg. 8

Iran Claims To Install New, Faster Centrifuges

Machines to Go Online In a Few Months, After Testing, President Says

By Thomas Erdbrink, Washington Post Foreign Service

TEHRAN, April 8 -- Iran is installing a new generation of nuclear centrifuges capable of enriching uranium five times more rapidly than the country's existing technology, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad announced Tuesday.

He said 6,000 of the machines would be put into production "after two to three more months of testing," and vowed in a speech laden with bombast that "the nuclear victory of Iran is the start of the ever-increasing destruction of the imperialistic state."

Iran currently has 3,000 older centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium to a level that provides fuel for nuclear energy, Iranian leaders say. A February report by the International Atomic Energy Agency mentions the existence of new centrifuges but not in such large numbers.

The Bush administration said that it could not substantiate Ahmadinejad's claims but that the basics of Iran's capabilities have not changed.

"There are always multiple claims coming out of Iran about progress on this or progress on that. I don't think that the underlining situation has changed, which is that Iran faces three separate Security Council resolutions," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told reporters Tuesday.

The United States and some other Western countries suspect that Iran is trying to build a nuclear weapon, but a U.S. National Intelligence Estimate released in November concluded that Iran stopped working on an atomic bomb in 2003.

Since 2006, the U.N. Security Council has authorized three sets of sanctions against Iran, demanding a stop to all enrichment activities.

Rice urged Iranian officials to reconsider a long-standing offer put forward by the world's major powers under which the country would stop enriching uranium in exchange for major economic and diplomatic incentives, including talks with the United States and the European Union. Iran restarted its enrichment efforts in 2005 after a two-year voluntary suspension.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov of Russia, which is building Iran's first nuclear power plant, told Ekho Moskvyy radio on Tuesday that "new positive proposals" should be put to Iran, without specifying what they might be. The February report by the IAEA largely cleared Iran of suspicions raised earlier by the agency about the nature of the country's nuclear ambitions, but questions based on U.S. intelligence provided recently to the U.N. agency remained unresolved.

During a televised speech Tuesday evening, the Iranian president marked the country's "national nuclear day" and told an auditorium in Tehran filled with Iranian dignitaries and foreign ambassadors that "all political and economical movements in the world are connected with Iran's nuclear program, which belongs to all humanity." After briefly explaining the advantages of the newer, faster and simpler centrifuges, he focused on the "coming destruction of the imperialistic state," meaning the West.

Speaking from a platform decorated with flowers, he described a world governed by "the victors of the Second World War," who use international institutions as tools to oppress and extort.

"The great, God-believing nation of Iran does not allow its future to be tied to the benefits of big countries. We do not play by the plan of the great powers," the president said. Powerful nations believe that they have monopolized the nuclear energy and can trample upon the rights of other states, he continued.

He also questioned the circumstances of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, asserting that the names of the victims "were never given out." The attacks were a pretext, Ahmadinejad said, "to send the largest armada to our region to attack the poor people of Afghanistan and the pure Iraqis."

"Lies have become the basis of speeches, and looting [has become] state policy," he said. "We don't want to control other nations but long for peace and justice in the world."

Staff writer Robin Wright in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/08/AR2008040803033.html>

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

Washington Times

U.S. gets mixed news on nukes

April 9, 2008

By Nicholas Kravov - Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice received mixed news yesterday on nuclear proliferation: a tentative agreement with North Korea that could break an impasse in negotiations and an Iranian claim that the country was expanding its nuclear capabilities.

After meeting with North Korea's envoy, chief U.S. negotiator Christopher Hill sent word that a three-month impasse might be broken soon if Pyongyang's leaders sign off on an agreement reached in Singapore on a North Korean nuclear declaration.

Mr. Hill indicated that progress had been made during his meeting with the envoy, Kim Kye-gwan.

"I think, depending on what we hear back from the capitals by tomorrow, there will be some further announcements very soon," he told reporters. "If all goes well, I hope we can have some further statements in Beijing tomorrow,

which would involve some follow-on activities."

Mr. Kim was more upbeat, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

"Differences have been narrowed a lot," he was quoted as saying. "I would say the talks were successful."

The state has disabled its main nuclear plant at Yongbyon, but has resisted submitting a full declaration of its past and present nuclear programs and materials, as required by an October deal reached in six-nation negotiations.

Washington has particular concerns about a suspected uranium-enrichment program in the North as well as nuclear-related transfers to Syria. To help the North Koreans save face, the Americans have suggested that those efforts be addressed in a document separate from the main declaration, which will include only the plutonium program.

Iran continued to edge closer to nuclear-weapons-making capability by beginning the installation of 6,000 centrifuges to enrich uranium.

"As a result of the resistance of the Iranian people, the country has reached a major goal, which is to become a nuclear state," President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said during a visit to the plant in Natanz, according to the official Islamic Republic News Agency.

The announcement prompted criticism from the West and a threat of new U.N. sanctions, which Russia said it would oppose. The U.N. Security Council has imposed three rounds of sanctions because of Iran's refusal to suspend uranium enrichment.

"I fear that we will have to continue on the path of sanctions if we do not receive a response from the Iranians,"

French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner said in Paris.

In London, the British Foreign Office said: "Iran has not only failed to suspend enrichment, but has chosen to ignore the will of the international community by announcing the installation of new centrifuges."

Miss Rice told reporters at the State Department that she could not "substantiate the claims" regarding the centrifuges, but that "the underlying situation" had not changed.

"Iran faces the continued isolation in the international community because it will not take a reasonable offer," she said.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told Ekho Moskvyy radio yesterday that "new positive proposals" should be presented to Iran, but he was not specific.

The five permanent Security Council members and Germany will discuss the Iran matter, including repackaging an incentives offer initially made in 2006, at a meeting in Shanghai next week, officials said.

• *This article is based in part on wire service reports.*

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080409/FOREIGN/656189754/1003>

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

Nuclear Smuggling Chains

Suppliers, Intermediaries, and End-Users

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This article analyzes the supply and demand sides in nuclear smuggling, as well as intermediaries between them, based on the 700 illicit trafficking incidents collected by the Stanford Database on Nuclear Smuggling, Theft, and Orphan Radiation Sources (DSTO) for the period 1991 to 2002. The supply side consists of people with access to nuclear and other radioactive material. It can be subdivided into civilian employees at source facilities, ranging from technicians to top managers; military personnel; and security guards. Intermediaries—traffickers and middlemen—can be categorized as amateurs, opportunist businessmen and firms, and organized crime groups. The demand side is represented by proliferating nation states, terrorist organizations, religious sects, separatist movements, and criminal groups or individuals interested in using nuclear and other radioactive material for malevolent purposes, such as murder, deliberate exposure, blackmail, and extortion. . .

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

Organized Crime, Terrorism and Nuclear Trafficking

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by Lyudmila Zaitseva

Introduction

The merging of international terrorist organizations with transnational organized crime is one of the most serious threats that our society faces today. The debate about these emerging alliances has been ongoing for some time now.[1] Experts agree that there are clear overlaps between international terrorist and organized crime networks. In her Congressional Testimony delivered in September 2005, Glenn E. Schweitzer stated that organized crime had 'entered a new phase of complicity' with terrorist networks:

Terrorist and criminal organizations rely on the same global transportation, communication, and financial infrastructures for illegal ploys. They take advantage of the same breakdowns in authority and enforcement in states under siege. They both seek increasing shares of the fortunes generated from narco-trafficking and other crimes.[2]

The most obvious example of such linkages is narcotics smuggling operations in Central and South America and Asia, where drug proceeds are used to finance terrorist activities. The overlap between drug industry and terrorism, widely known as narcoterrorism, is most pronounced in Colombia, where two major terrorist groups—the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the United Self-Defence Groups of Colombia (AUC)—receive more than half of their operational funding through cocaine production, taxation and distribution.[3] The former Taleban regime in Afghanistan, which was providing sanctuary to al-Qaeda, had also profited from the local opium and heroin trade. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in Central Asia and the Abu Sayyaf Group in the Philippines have both been involved in drug trafficking.[4] Weapons smuggling, kidnappings and financial crime have also been widely used by these and other terrorist groups to raise proceeds for their activities.

The links between organized crime and terrorist networks will not be the focus of this paper. Neither will the paper discuss whether terrorist groups are capable of building a crude nuclear device or a radiological dispersal device—an issue addressed at length by many experts.[5] Instead, it will concentrate on the existing evidence of the interest displayed by organized crime, drug trafficking networks and terrorist groups in acquiring, smuggling, selling, buying and using nuclear and other radioactive materials based on the open source information collected in the Database on Nuclear Smuggling, Theft, and Orphan Radiation Sources (DSTO) operated by the University of Salzburg in Austria.[6] The paper will first provide the historical background and recent trends in nuclear trafficking and will then discuss the existing evidence from the last five years—January 2001 to December 2005—of the possible nexus between organized criminal networks and terrorist groups seeking nuclear fissile material and radioactive substances. . .

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