USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER

CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 624, 18 April 2008

Articles & Other Documents:

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.

Boston Globe
April 15, 2008

Troubling Questions About Missile Defense

By Theodore A. Postol

THE HOUSE Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs will hold a long-overdue oversight hearing tomorrow on the prospects for national missile defense. The most basic question that needs to be addressed is the inability of the national missile defense to tell the difference between simple warheads and decoys. A second issue that should be explored is whether intelligence and scientific findings about flaws in the national missile defense have been concealed from Congress and from the public.

The issue of the effectiveness of decoys against the missile defense is easy to understand. The national missile defense is designed to destroy warheads by hitting them with infrared homing Kill Vehicles while the warheads are in the near vacuum of space. Since there is no air-drag in space, a warhead weighing thousands of pounds and a balloon weighing almost nothing will travel together. Warheads could be placed inside balloons, and many balloons could be deployed along with the warheads. Adversaries could also make balloons of different sizes and with different surface coatings. The surface coatings would change the temperature of each balloon by changing the amount of sunlight that is absorbed, reflected and radiated, modifying the appearance of each balloon to the Kill Vehicle. Since there would be no way for the Kill Vehicle to know which balloons contain warheads, the chances of actually hitting a warhead would be minuscule.

In 1999, the US intelligence community predicted that this countermeasure, and others that would defeat both the current and upgraded national missile defense system, would be available to any state that has the technology to build ICBMs. But the finding disappeared from all subsequent intelligence estimates after the Bush administration took office. Its disappearance should be the focus of further congressional investigations.

Another issue that should be investigated by Congress is allegations of tampering with scientific findings by the Missile Defense Agency, and by organizations like MIT Lincoln Laboratory that were created by Congress to provide the nation with accurate technical information on these matters.

In June 1997 and January 1998, the Missile Defense Agency conducted two proof-of-concept missile defense tests aimed at demonstrating that missile defense Kill Vehicles could tell the difference between warheads and decoys. The test was simply aimed at determining if the objects could be observed with enough precision to match what was expected to what was observed. One of the flight tests took no usable data, and the other could not have succeeded because certain decoys accurately mimicked the appearance of the warhead.

I believe the Missile Defense Agency made false statements to Congress that the tests were a success, and it modified all its follow-up flight tests so they would never encounter the simple and effective decoys used in the earlier proof-of-concept tests. All the flight tests to date have become increasingly simplified to avoid dealing with the fundamental unsolvable problem of telling decoys from warheads. The last two flight tests, hailed as successes by the Missile Defense Agency, were the simplest of all, not even having objects that should have been clearly distinguishable from the warhead.

Making matters worse, I also think the MIT Corporation was involved in concealing evidence of scientific fraud from Congress that would have revealed that the Missile Defense Agency had lied about the success of the first two missile defense tests. In concealing this information, MIT may have impeded a federally mandated investigation by claiming that information was classified when it was not.

Also, I believe MIT researchers from Lincoln Laboratory misled the Senate Armed Services Committee when it said a proof-of-concept missile defense experiment was a success when the experiment had in fact failed.

If Congress vigorously pursues these matters of alleged scientific fraud in the missile defense program, it may not only find that the promise of missile defense is a pipe dream, but that major institutions charged with protecting US security have failed in their duties.

Theodore A. Postol is professor of science, technology, and national security policy at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/04/15/troubling_questions_about_missile_defense/

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

GovExec.com

NRC to expand radioactive materials tracking system

By Katherine McIntire Peters *kpeters@govexec.com*

April 14, 2008

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission wants to significantly expand the number and type of radioactive materials the agency will track in a Web-based system under development.

The National Source Tracking System, which is to be fully implemented by Jan. 31, 2009, originally was conceived in late 2006 to account for the actions of 1,350 radioactive materials licensees who possess some of the most dangerous material from a security standpoint. Those are considered Category 1 and Category 2 sources, as determined by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and are typically used in medicine and manufacturing.

NRC's proposed rule, which the agency published Friday in the Federal Register, would require another 3,500 licensees and 17,000 additional radioactive sources to be subject to the tracking system. Affected licensees would have to report information on the manufacture, transfer, receipt, disassembly and disposal of radioactive materials, and manufacturers would have to assign a unique serial number to each source.

The rule would expand the tracking system to Category 3 sources along with some Category 4 sources, such as certain industrial gauges, well-logging and radiography devices.

"Expanding the [tracking system] will guard against the possibility that a small number of Category 3 or 4 radioactive sources could be collected to form a Category 2 amount of radioactive material," NRC noted in a written statement.

The possibility that an individual could amass enough radioactive material to build a dirty bomb was highlighted in 2007 when undercover investigators with the Government Accountability Office set up a fake company and acquired a radioactive materials license from NRC, which they then altered, using popular software, to obtain equipment containing sealed radioactive materials from U.S. suppliers.

The devices GAO attempted to obtain in the sting operation were moisture density gauges, which are commonly used in construction. They contain sealed quantities of americium, a radioactive material. While the devices alone or in small quantities would be difficult to render harmful, investigators determined they could relatively easily get suppliers to send them quantities of gauges that together contained enough radioactive material to build what's known as a dirty bomb -- a conventional explosive tainted with radioactive material -- assuming a potential bomb-maker could extract the sealed sources without harming himself or herself in the process.
"The NRC believes the additional cost to the agency and licensees of an expanded [tracking system] is reasonable given the additional improvement in accountability and control of radioactive sources," the agency said.
Agency staff compiled detailed cost information in an analysis of the proposed rule submitted to the commissioners on March 6.
The agency will accept public comments on the proposed rule for 75 days. Comments can be e-mailed to SECY@nrc.gov and submissions should be labeled RIN 3150-AI29.
http://govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=39773&dcn=todaysnews

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Honolulu Advertiser
April 15, 2008

Army Begins Destruction Of 71 Chemical Weapons

Detonation of hazardous munitions will take place in two-story, 110-ton setup

By William Cole, Advertiser Military Writer

SCHOFIELD BARRACKS — Over the next three weeks, the Army will destroy 71 old chemical weapons here — the largest concentration of unexploded, or "dud" chemical rounds ever found in the United States.
"I don't have an explanation yet in terms of why we saw 71 here and lesser quantities at (other locations)," said Tad Davis, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for the environment, safety and occupational health.
Army officials said an explanation for the high number of chemical weapon malfunctions may have been lost over time.
The phosgene and chloropicrin rounds, manufactured from World War I on, were stockpiled through World War II, the Army said.
The Army discovered the unexploded liquid-filled rounds from 2004 to 2006 during ordnance cleanup of an old range for a Stryker brigade "battle area complex."
The chemical weapons, which include several-foot-tall 155 mm artillery shells, will be destroyed one at a time beginning today in a Transportable Detonation Chamber as part of a $7 million cleanup effort.
The media yesterday were given a tour of the 110-ton setup, which is being used for the first time in the United States for chemical weapons destruction after being tested in the United Kingdom.
A smaller device has been used to destroy smaller quantities of old chemical rounds found at firing ranges in the U.S., but it takes longer to process munitions, officials said.
"(The Transportable Detonation Chamber) provides us the capability to do 10, 20, 30 items a day," said Dale A. Ormond, deputy assistant secretary of the Army for the elimination of chemical weapons. "So this is the first opportunity where we found enough munitions where this process becomes economically feasible."
The chamber is a two-story-tall serpentine path of armored boxes, ducts, heaters, drums and sensors contained within a large tentlike structure in which the air is changed four times per hour.
The Army, which is leasing the chamber from company CH2M Hill, transported the setup by barge from the Mainland.
The chemical rounds will be destroyed one by one with up to 15 pounds of explosives in a freight elevator-size chamber with 1 inch of armor plating backed by 10 inches of sand and then more steel plate.
"Safety is our A-No. 1 goal," said David Hoffman, the Transportable Detonation Chamber program manager.
The fireball created by the explosion, with some steam added, destroys the chemical agent, and a series of over-pressure tanks treat and contain the exhaust.
The operation will take place at a remote "firing point" backing up to the Wai'anae Range at Schofield.
The rounds with chloropicrin and phosgene — both choking agents — were part of a haul of 250 "liquid-fill" unexploded munitions unearthed by the Army.
Most were determined not to be chemical weapons. Seven chemical rounds were deemed too dangerous to handle and were destroyed in place.
Of the 71 rounds to be destroyed, 70 have phosgene and one contains chloropicrin, the Army said.
Two other rounds with an unknown "liquid fill" remain on the firing range because an environmental lawsuit and court order halted unexploded ordnance cleanup, officials said.

The chemical weapons effort is one of several ordnance cleanups the U.S. government is working on in Hawai'i, whose strategic forward position in the Pacific has resulted in more than a century of military buildup.
A report on the health risks of both the chemical weapons and discovery of depleted uranium on O'ahu and the Big Island from a 1960s weapon system will be released in coming months.
Davis, the deputy assistant secretary of the Army, will meet tomorrow with Wai'anae Coast officials at 7 p.m. at Wai'anae District Park to discuss ordnance dumped in near-shore waters more than 60 years ago.
A $1.1 million study is expected to look at shellfish and limu health in the area, officials said.
A second study, expected to cost about $3 million, will include a "demonstration project" examining the advantages and disadvantages of removing old ordnance, some of which has become part of coral growth.
http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2008804150360

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Washington Times
April 16, 2008
Pg. 12

Ruling Coalition Split On Nuclear Deal

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times
India's ruling coalition faces severe internal disagreements over a far-reaching nuclear deal with the United States, and forcing a vote too soon could prove a "gesture in futility," a top spokesman for the Indian government's leading party said yesterday.
The U.S. government is pushing hard to clinch the deal before President Bush leaves office in January, but Abhishek Singhvi, spokesman for India's Congress party, said on a visit to Washington that a premature vote could bring down the government of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.
"We are even willing to stake the survival of the government on a matter of principle," Mr. Singhvi said at the end of a three-day visit to Washington.
"But if you sacrifice the government and still do not get the deal, what you have is death without martyrdom," he said. "It would be a gesture in futility."
Communist parties that vote with the government are staunchly opposed to the nuclear deal, saying it infringes on India's sovereignty. Mr. Singh has so far declined to press for a final vote for fear his government will collapse.
President Bush hailed the August 2007 accord as a major opportunity for U.S. exporters and an opening to build a much broader strategic and political alliance with one of the world's rising powers.
At its core, the deal would give New Delhi access to now-forbidden U.S. nuclear fuel and technology in return for allowing international oversight and inspection of India's civilian nuclear industry. India's military nuclear programs would not be covered by the deal.
Many U.S. critics saw the deal as highly favorable to India, but the accord has been unexpectedly caught up in a fierce political debate in New Delhi.
In addition to approval by India's Parliament, parts of the package still must be endorsed by the board of the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and by the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group.
Both houses of the U.S. Congress must then ratify the final language. Many on Capitol Hill say the completed agreement must reach Capitol Hill by June to have a realistic chance of action before Congress adjourns for the elections this fall.
Richard Boucher, assistant secretary of state for South Asia, said last month the ratification schedule had gone into "overtime," though the department notes the U.S.-India pact can still be taken up by the new Congress elected in November.
But delay into 2009 and beyond would deprive Mr. Bush of a major foreign-policy victory and introduce new uncertainties over how the deal will be seen if there is a big shift in political power this fall.
All three presidential hopefuls — Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona and Democratic Sens. Barack Obama of Illinois and Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York — voted for the preliminary nuclear accord last year. But Mr. Obama co-sponsored one amendment, placing practical limits on the amount of nuclear fuel to be sold to India.
Mr. Singhvi said yesterday acknowledged there was concern in New Delhi about the prospects for the deal after Mr. Bush leaves office, especially if a Democrat captures the White House.
"Certainly, that is the perception in India," he said.
http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080416/FOREIGN/254299127/1003

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Washington Post
April 16, 2008
Pg. B4

Risk Of Nuclear Attack On Rise

More Emergency Prep Could Be Done, Experts Tell Senate

By Mary Beth Sheridan, Washington Post Staff Writer

Concerned that not enough attention is being paid to the risk of a nuclear attack, a Senate committee yesterday looked at the consequences of such a terrorist strike in Washington -- and said that more could be done to save lives.

A hearing, called by the Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs, featured charts showing the horrific effects of a small nuclear device detonating near the White House. It was the panel's third session in recent months on the threat of a nuclear explosion.

"The scenarios we discuss today are so hard for us to contemplate and so emotionally traumatic that it is tempting to push them aside," said Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (I-Conn.), the panel's chairman. "However, now is the time to have this difficult conversation, to ask the tough questions, then to get answers."

The committee summoned witnesses yesterday who said the risk of such an attack on U.S. cities has grown in the past five years because of the spread of nuclear technology and the growth of a global terrorist movement.

"I definitely conclude the threat is greater and is increasing every year with the march of technology," said Cham E. Dallas, director of the Institute for Health Management and Mass Destruction Defense at the University of Georgia.

Yet the experts agreed that even such a disaster didn't constitute the doomsday scenario imagined during the Cold War. Most District residents would survive. And "much could be done to save lives" if the government made the right preparations in advance, said Ashton B. Carter, co-director of the Preventive Defense Project at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

At the committee's request, Dallas prepared a report on the effects of a small nuclear device exploding near the White House. A 1-kiloton device, which could fit into a suitcase, could kill about 25,000 people, he said. A 10-kiloton explosive, which could be hidden in a van, could kill about 100,000, Dallas said.

The 10-kiloton blast would release fatal doses of radiation in the immediate area and destroy almost all buildings within a half-mile radius, he said. The intense heat would burn people for many blocks and spark fires. Windows would shatter for miles, Dallas testified, gesturing to a color-coded map that showed damage as far out as Union Station.

The danger wouldn't be limited to those in the blast area. A radioactive plume would start drifting from the blast point, subjecting those in its path to lethal levels of radiation, Dallas said. The plume's direction would be determined by weather conditions.

Dallas's model envisions a 10-block-wide "death plume" moving east, the direction the wind typically blows in Washington. It billows down Constitution Avenue, reaching Benning Road NE in 30 to 60 minutes.

"With proper communication, people can flee from the plume area," Dallas said, noting that they can walk or run from what will likely be a narrow band of high danger. But, he added, authorities need to "put more effort" into testing their ability to swiftly alert those in danger.

Most people outside the blast zone or the path of the plume should stay in their homes for at least the first few days after an attack, and will probably suffer limited health problems, the experts said.

Dallas predicted that the local medical system would be overwhelmed, but said that authorities could save lives with better preparation. For example, Dallas suggested training medical professionals such as pharmacists and veterinarians to provide burn care and other assistance. Community volunteers living near Howard University Hospital, which would be outside the blast zone, could be organized in advance to clean wounds and help in other ways, he said.

"Burn care is a nightmare. And we're completely unprepared," Dallas said, noting that the entire country only has specialized burn facilities for 1,500 patients. "Ninety-five percent of burn victims will not receive care. And most of them will die."

Asked for comment, emergency-response officials in the region said they had made great strides in preparing for a catastrophic event.

Chris Geldart, who oversees the National Capital Region office at the Department of Homeland Security, said local hazmat teams can quickly run data to predict the path of a radiological or chemical cloud. Homeland Security recently held an exercise with the governors of Maryland and Virginia, as well as D.C. Mayor Adrian M. Fenty (D), on how to inform the public about a dangerous plume.

As for casualties from a nuclear device, "the amount of burn victims that you're going to have would stress any system," Geldart said. The National Disaster Medical System would be activated to whisk patients to other states for treatment, he said. "There's been a lot of planning that has happened within this region, especially at the federal level, for the 10-kiloton."

Darrell Darnell, head of the city's homeland security office, said in a statement, "We are confident that the District is prepared to respond to a catastrophic incident."
He said that the city's emergency communication tools include a reverse-911 calling system, text alerts, city Web sites and the Emergency Alert System, which sends messages over radio and television.
Geldart disagreed with an idea raised by Carter at the hearing: having the federal government assume control after a nuclear explosion. "The federal government is not going to wrest control from a state, as long as state and local governments are capable of responding," Geldart said.
Staff researcher Meg Smith contributed to this report.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/15/AR2008041502969.html

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Washington Times

Nuclear attack on D.C. a hypothetical disaster

By Gary Emerling
April 16, 2008
A nuclear device detonated near the White House would kill roughly 100,000 people and flatten downtown federal buildings, while the radioactive plume from the explosion would likely spread toward the Capitol and into Southeast D.C., contaminating thousands more.
The blast from the 10-kiloton bomb — similar to the bomb dropped over Hiroshima during World War II — would kill up to one in 10 tourists visiting the Washington Monument and send shards of glass flying the length of the National Mall, in a scenario that has become increasingly likely to occur in a major U.S. city in recent years, panel members told a Senate committee yesterday.
"It's inevitable," said Cham E. Dallas, director of the Institute for Health Management and Mass Destruction Defense at the University of Georgia, who has charted the potential explosion's effect in the District and testified before a hearing of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs. "I think it's wistful to think that it won't happen by 20 years."
The Senate committee has convened a series of hearings to examine the threat and effects of a terrorist nuclear attack on a U.S. city, as well as the needed response.
Yesterday's panel stressed the importance of state and local cooperation with federal authorities in the wake of an attack, assistance from the private business sector to aid recovery and the dire need to boost the capabilities of area hospitals.
They recommended expanding emergency personnel by training physicians like pharmacists and dentists to aid in all-hazards care, monitoring the exposure of first responders to radiation and clearly disseminating information to the public.
"The scenarios we discuss today are very hard for us to contemplate, and so emotionally traumatic and unsettling that it is tempting to push them aside," said Sen. Joe Lieberman, Connecticut independent and committee chairman. "However, now is the time to have this difficult conversation, to ask the tough questions, and then to get answers as best we can and take preparatory and preventive action."
Ashton B. Carter, co-director of the Preventive Defense Project at Harvard University, said the likelihood of a nuclear attack on U.S. soil is undetermined, but it has increased with the proliferation of weapons by Iran and North Korea and the failure to secure Russia's nuclear arsenal following the Cold War.
"For while the probability of a nuclear weapon one day going off in a U.S. city cannot be calculated, it is almost surely larger than it was five years ago," Mr. Carter said.
Mr. Carter described a more destructive blast effect. He said the ground-based detonation of a 10-kiloton bomb would result in near-total devastation within a circle about two miles in diameter, or the length of the Mall.
The zone of destruction is projected to be less than that of Hiroshima, where the bomb was dropped from an airplane and detonated above the city.
A similar blast in a more densely populated city than the District, such as Chicago or New York, would result in an injury toll up to eight times higher. A plume a few miles long could also dole out lethal doses of radiation, Mr. Carter said.
However, the experts emphasized that the explosion would not impact most of a major city and that in many cases, residents could remain safe by not evacuating immediately and clogging area roadways.
"It is also expected that, due to lack of information getting to the public, many people will try to flee by car or on foot, often in the wrong direction, again exposing themselves to high levels of radiation, as vehicles provide virtually no protection," Mr. Carter said.

Mr. Dallas said a major problem facing most cities is a lack of available hospital beds for victims of burns that would result from a nuclear blast. He said up to 95 percent of such victims would not receive potentially life-saving care.
"We're completely underprepared," he said. "Most of them will die."
Mr. Dallas said the District also faces a unique challenge because of the way the city is configured geographically: A wind blowing west to east would gradually spread radiation from the explosion into the low-income neighborhoods of Southeast, where there are limited health care options available and only one hospital.
Area officials have spent millions of dollars in recent years to develop evacuation plans and stockpile emergency supplies after a 2006 study by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said local preparation for a disaster was "not sufficient."
Darrell L. Darnell, director of the District's Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, said the city is continuing to develop its "emergency preparedness capabilities" and has numerous methods of informing residents of actions they should take, including through text messages, voice alerts and Web sites like www.dc.gov and http://72hours.dc.gov.
"We are confident that the District is prepared to respond to a catastrophic incident affecting the District," Mr. Darnell said.
Still, Mr. Dallas said the majority of victims in a nuclear explosion will likely have to fend for themselves in the first hours after an attack.
"These people are going to be on their own," he said after the hearing. "There's no white horse to ride to the rescue."
http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080416/METRO/556828862/1001

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

USA Today
April 16, 2008

Doubts voiced about U.S. anti-missile plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of prominent scientists who have been critical of missile defense plans told lawmakers Wednesday that a system being built by the United States cannot protect the country.
They also questioned whether the Defense Department has misled the public and European allies about the system's capabilities.
"The program offers no prospect of defending the United States from a real-world missile attack and undermines efforts to eliminate the real nuclear threats to the United States," Lisbeth Gronlund, a senior scientist at the Union of Concerned Scientists, told lawmakers at a House oversight hearing on the missile defense program, according to prepared testimony. Gronlund's group has long expressed skepticism about missile defense.
The hearing was called by the panel's chairman, Rep. John Tierney, D-Mass., who has sought to step up oversight of the missile defense program since the Democrats took control of the House last year. Missile defense traditionally has drawn more support from Republicans.
Tierney said the testimony from the witnesses raises questions about current missile defense spending levels. He pointed to congressional projections of $213 billion to $277 billion for the program between now and 2025.
"We need to all ask ourselves, whether you're a conservative Republican or a liberal Democrat, are we wisely spending the taxpayer's money here?" Tierney said.
The Bush administration has sought to deploy a working missile defense system while it is testing the parts, arguing that there is an urgent threat from hostile countries developing intercontinental missiles, such as Iran and North Korea.
The program has been a major source of rising tension with Russia, which opposes U.S. plans to build part of the system in Poland and the Czech Republic.
Jeff Kueter, the president of the George C. Marshall Institute in Washington and a Republican witness at the hearing, told the panel the program is making progress and already has limited abilities to counter ballistic missiles.
"Even in their current form, the elements of the U.S. missile defense system offer options heretofore unavailable," he said. "With further research, development and testing, the accuracies and capabilities of these systems will only improve."
The other witnesses said that recent tests of the system, to take out long range missiles in mid-flight with ground-based interceptors, have been unrealistic. They said the defenses can be easily overcome by countermeasures, such as decoys deployed along with warheads on the missiles.
http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2008-04-16-missile-plan_N.htm

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Washington Post
April 17, 2008
Pg. 3

Directors Say National Labs Are Underfunded

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

The directors of the nation's three national nuclear weapons laboratories say that budget cuts by Congress and the Bush administration have reduced their ability to carry out scientific research needed to ensure the reliability of the nation's nuclear arsenal in future years.

Citing growing financial demands, George H. Miller, director of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, said that "science is being squeezed out" during a meeting yesterday with Washington Post editors and reporters. He said the labs in total had experienced a shortfall of several hundred million dollars in needed funds.

Miller, Los Alamos National Laboratory Director Michael R. Anastasio and Sandia National Laboratories Director Thomas O. Hunter also jointly conveyed that warning at a Senate Appropriations subcommittee hearing yesterday.

The Bush administration is already pursuing a costly restructuring of the U.S. nuclear complex, including many buildings that date from the Manhattan Project of the 1940s. It is also funding the refurbishment of a reduced number of the Cold War-era warheads and bombs and buying costly equipment that can ensure that the weapons work without underground testing.

But the administration has been unable to gain congressional approval to develop a new generation of warheads under the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program, using old, tested nuclear components. A bipartisan congressional group said the executive branch should decide the number of warheads necessary through 2030 before the program can be approved.

Miller said there is a risk of "confidence eroding in the current stockpile" over the next few years if a decision is not made to proceed with the RRW program, which will determine the size of a future weapons complex. The directors also said that Livermore and Los Alamos have lost about 2,000 employees each since 2006, including scientists they wanted to retain.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/16/AR2008041603123.html?sub=AR

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

New York Times
April 18, 2008
Pg. 6

Past Deals By N. Korea May Face Less Study

By Helene Cooper

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration appears to be preparing to back away from a demand that North Korea fully disclose all of its past nuclear weapons activities, in an attempt to preserve a nuclear agreement requiring it to disclose and dismantle the bulk of its nuclear weapons program.

As described by administration officials on Thursday, the step would relax a demand for North Korea to admit fully that it supplied Syria with nuclear technology. The United States would also agree to postpone its demand that North Korea provide an immediate and full accounting of its fledgling uranium program.

The new stance is intended to help complete a denuclearization deal that would focus instead on North Korea’s more extensive plutonium program, which has been at the heart of its nuclear weapons development and was the source of raw material for the device it tested in October 2006.

The State Department spokesman, Sean D. McCormack, said the emerging agreement would not represent a concession. He said that even if North Korea did not fully account for its uranium efforts, the deal would allow inspectors access to all of North Korea’s nuclear facilities in order to verify that it had stopped its weapons programs.

“There is nothing inevitable about this process, and we are reserving judgment about this declaration until we see it,” Mr. McCormack said. “Every aspect will be subject to verification, and if we detect that they have misled or attempted to mislead, there will be diplomatic consequences.”

The new approach has been endorsed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her chief North Korea negotiator, Christopher R. Hill, an assistant secretary of state, who have argued that getting the plutonium program shut down was better than getting nothing at all, an administration official said. But it is being opposed by conservatives within the administration, including aides to Vice President Dick Cheney, officials said.

“A lot of people will say this falls short of the full confession,” a senior administration official said of what the new approach would demand of North Korea. “They want them to appear in Town Hall and acknowledge that they have sinned. But they weren’t willing to go that far.”

The administration had previously sought full disclosure of North Korea’s role in the Syria program, which a senior administration official said was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike in Syria last September.

Under the new approach, the United States and North Korea have settled on fudging the issue, administration officials said. North Korea will “acknowledge” that the United States is concerned about the nuclear proliferation to Syria but will not publicly admit to it. North Korea will also promise not to engage in any more nuclear proliferation, a senior administration official said.

In return, the United States would take North Korea off the list of state sponsors of terrorism and the list of countries noted in the Trading With the Enemy Act.

State Department officials, preparing for a storm of protest from conservatives who complain that such an agreement would be too soft on North Korea, hastened to say on Thursday that the United States would continue to keep a host of economic sanctions against North Korea, including prohibitions on most foreign aid and limitations on trade.

The administration officials who described the new American approach agreed to speak only on condition of anonymity, because North Korea had not yet agreed to the deal. Asked on Thursday whether the United States was scaling back its demands, Ms. Rice responded only obliquely.

“We’re going to have to judge whether North Korea has carried out its obligations,” Ms. Rice said during a news conference. “But I will say this: we have a long way to go in terms of all the various statutory sanctions and multilateral and bilateral sanctions that would remain even if the United States were to take the steps that you outlined.”

President Bush appears to be supporting Ms. Rice and Mr. Hill, to the dismay of those who say that the administration, after six years of acting tough on North Korea, is backing down. Defenders of the emerging agreement counter that it would be a mistake to continue a strategy that has yet to produce a lasting deal, and instead allowed North Korea to build up its plutonium stockpile and detonate a nuclear device in 2006.

Part of the problem for Mr. Bush is that the proposed deal, which many foreign policy experts say may be the best the United States can hope for at this point, is being judged by standards set up by Mr. Bush himself.

The White House now finds itself charting a similar course to the one taken by the Clinton administration in striking a deal with North Korea in 1994. That agreement collapsed in 2002 after the Bush White House accused North Korea of secretly continuing work on a nuclear weapon.

Under the new deal, North Korea has agreed to dismantle Yongbyon, as part of an agreement that, like the Clinton deal, envisions that North Korea would ultimately give up all of its nuclear material.

John R. Bolton, the former United States ambassador to the United Nations and the most outspoken critic of the accord now taking shape, wrote an op-ed column this week in The Wall Street Journal that compared Mr. Bush unfavorably with Ronald Reagan. “His policy regarding North Korea’s nuclear weapons program looks more like something out of Bill Clinton’s or Jimmy Carter’s playbook,” Mr. Bolton wrote.

The administration is sending a negotiating team next week to try to work with the North Koreans on the details of what exactly North Korea would have to disclose about its plutonium program — and how, under such an agreement.

“We can’t play ‘trust me’ with plutonium,” one senior administration official said. Nuclear experts at the State Department and other agencies are working on a way to make sure that North Korea discloses its entire plutonium program and capacity.

In addition, American officials are pressing North Korea to take steps to alleviate concerns held by Japan, which wants questions resolved about North Korea’s abductions of Japanese citizens.

The issue is scheduled to come up over the weekend when Mr. Bush meets with President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea. White House officials say they do not plan to take North Korea at its word.

“No one has let them off the hook,” said Dennis Wilder, special assistant to the president and senior director for East Asian affairs.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/18/washington/18diplo.html?ref=world

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Los Angeles Times
April 18, 2008

President Bush, Britain's Gordon Brown Denounce Iran

In Washington, the two leaders say Tehran can't be trusted with nuclear technology. They express near unanimity on many global issues.

By James Gerstenzang, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
WASHINGTON — President Bush and British Prime Minister Gordon Brown offered equally stern warnings Thursday about the potential dangers of Iran's nuclear program, and the Briton held out the prospect of extended European sanctions to block outside investment.
On a day when the head of the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency said Tehran was making only slow progress toward production of material suitable for nuclear weapons, Bush and Brown joined in denouncing the Iranian government. "They have proven themselves to be untrustworthy," Bush said. Added Brown, "Iran has not told the truth to the international community about what its plans are."
Iran contends that its nuclear enrichment efforts are part of a civilian energy program, but Western powers suspect that Tehran is trying to develop an atomic bomb.
Although the two leaders lack the tested friendship Bush developed with Tony Blair, Brown's predecessor, their banter at a news conference suggested an easy relationship.
On eight occasions they invoked the "special relationship" U.S. and British leaders have cherished since the days of Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt. For Brown, that relationship will be transferred to a new White House occupant next year. Partly in preparation, Brown met with Democrats Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton and Republican John McCain earlier Thursday.
During a 32-minute meeting with reporters in the sun-soaked White House Rose Garden, Bush and Brown ticked through global trouble spots. On Iraq, Afghanistan, aid for Africa, the parallel economic woes in Britain and the United States, and their joint interest in a new world trade agreement, the two expressed near unanimity of thought.
On Iran, Brown said he was working with other European leaders to extend sanctions by blocking outside investment in an Iranian liquefied natural gas operation. Doing so would signal to Tehran "that what is happening is unacceptable."
Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said in Berlin that Iran's effort at enriching uranium was moving slowly and that the centrifuges it had added to its nuclear fuel production facility had been older models, Reuters news agency reported. ElBaradei urged Iran not to speed up its program.
A U.S. National Intelligence Estimate last year concluded that Iran had abandoned a clandestine nuclear weapons program in 2003. Nonetheless, Bush said Thursday that if the Islamic Republic learned how to enrich uranium, the knowledge "can be used to develop a nuclear weapon."
The two leaders also announced a renewed commitment to improve healthcare in Africa, with a focus on Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique and Zambia.
Ties between Bush and Brown appeared to have survived British troop reductions in Iraq, although recent violence in Basra put the relationship to a new test.
Nonetheless, Bush answered emphatically when asked whether his relationship with Brown was a little less special than with Blair.
"False," Bush said.
And the president evinced a chummy air as he held out the prospect of dinner with his guest. "Look, if there wasn't a personal relationship, I wouldn't be inviting the man to a nice hamburger -- well done, I might add," Bush said.
The actual menu was a bit different: ossetra caviar, roasted rib-eye and early spring vegetable fricassee, according to the White House menu.
http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-usbritain18apr18,1,4272844.story

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Los Angeles Times
April 18, 2008

Scientists Urge Cutbacks In U.S. Nuclear Arsenal

Saying that the existing weapons program undermines national security, the group of 95 also wants the government to renounce first use of the bombs.

By a Times Staff Writer
A proposal to sharply cut the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile and renounce first use of the bombs was offered Thursday by 95 members of the National Academy of Sciences.
The group, mostly physicists at major U.S. universities who have collectively won 23 Nobel Prizes, said that the existing U.S. weapons program was undermining the nation's security.
Organized by the Union of Concerned Scientists, the group called for the U.S. to reduce its weapons inventory to 1,000 bombs, from about 4,500 to 6,000 currently, and to cease its capability to launch missiles in minutes.
Richard Garwin, designer of the first hydrogen bomb, is among the scientists -- dominated by California academics -- who signed the statement.

http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-nukes18apr18,1,3573729.story

(Return to Articles and Documents List)

Washington Post
April 18, 2008
Pg. 27

Deterring The Undeterrable

By Charles Krauthammer

The era of nonproliferation is over. During the first half-century of the nuclear age, safety lay in restricting the weaponry to major powers and keeping it out of the hands of rogue states. This strategy was inevitably going to break down. The inevitable has arrived.

The six-party talks on North Korea have failed miserably. They did not prevent Pyongyang from testing a nuclear weapon and entering the club. Now North Korea has broken yet again its agreement to reveal all its nuclear facilities.

The other test case was Iran. The EU-3 negotiations (Britain, France and Germany) went nowhere. Each U.N. Security Council resolution enacting what passed for sanctions was more useless than the last. Uranium enrichment continues.

When Iran's latest announcement that it was tripling its number of centrifuges to 9,000 elicited no discernible response from the Bush administration, the game was over. Everyone says Iran must be prevented from going nuclear. No one will bell the cat.

The "international community" is prepared to do nothing of consequence to halt nuclear proliferation. No one wants to admit that. Nor does anyone want to contemplate the prospect of nuclear weapons in the hands of one, two, many rogue states.

We must. The day is coming, and quickly. We must face reality and begin thinking how we live with the unthinkable.

There are four ways to deal with rogue states going nuclear: preemption, deterrence, missile defense and regime change.

Preemption works but, as a remedy, it is spent. Iraq was defanged by the 1981 Israeli airstrike, by the 1991 Persian Gulf War (which uncovered Saddam Hussein's clandestine nuclear programs) and finally by the 2003 invasion, which ended the Hussein dynasty, père et deux fils.

A collateral effect of the Iraq war was Libya's nuclear disarmament. Seeing Hussein's fate, Moammar Gaddafi declared and dismantled his nuclear program. And if November's National Intelligence Estimate is to be believed, the Iraq invasion even induced Iran to temporarily suspend weaponization and enrichment.

But the cost of preemption is simply too high. No one is going to renew the Korean War with an attack on Pyongyang. And the prospects of an attack on Iran's facilities are now vanishingly small. What to do?

Deterrence. It worked in the two-player Cold War. Will it work against multiple rogues? It seems quite suitable for North Korea, whose regime, far from being suicidal, is obsessed with survival.

Iran is a different proposition. With its current millenarian leadership, deterrence is indeed a feeble gamble, as I wrote in 2006 in making the case for considering preemption. But if preemption is off the table, deterrence is all you've got. Our task is to make deterrence in this context less feeble.

Two ways: Begin by making the retaliatory threat in response to Iranian nuclear aggression so unmistakable and so overwhelming that the non-millenarians in leadership would stay the hand or even remove those taking their country to the point of extinction.

But there is an adjunct to deterrence: missile defense. Against a huge Soviet arsenal, this was useless. Against small powers with small arsenals, i.e., North Korea and Iran, it becomes extremely effective in conjunction with deterrence.

For the sake of argument, imagine a two-layered anti-missile system in which each layer is imperfect, with, say, a 90 percent shoot-down accuracy. That means one in 100 missiles gets through both layers. That infinitely strengthens deterrence by radically degrading the possibility of a successful first strike. Even Mahmoud Ahmadinejad might refrain from launching an arsenal of, say, 20 nukes if his scientific advisers showed him that there was only an 18.2 percent chance of *any* getting through-- and a 100 percent chance that a retaliatory counterattack of hundreds of Israeli (and/or American) nukes would reduce the world's first Islamic republic to a cinder.

Of course, one can get around missile defense by using terrorists. But anything short of a hermetically secret, perfectly executed, multiple-site attack *would* cause terrible, but not existential, destruction. The retaliatory destruction, on the other hand, would be existential.

We are, of course, dealing here with probabilities. Total safety comes only from regime change. During the Cold War, we worried about Soviet nukes, but never French or British nukes. Weapons don't kill people; people kill people. Regime change will surely come to both North Korea and Iran. That is the ultimate salvation.
But between now and then lies danger. How to safely navigate the interval? Deterrence plus missile defense renders a first strike so unlikely to succeed and yet so certain to bring on self-destruction that it might -- just might -- get us through from the day the rogues go nuclear to the day they are deposed.
We have entered the post-nonproliferation age. It's time to take our heads out of the sand and deal with it.
http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/04/17/AR2008041703165.html

(Return to Articles and Documents List)