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Washington Post

May 30, 2008

Pg. 10

N. Korea Taking Tougher Stance, Ex-Envoy Warns

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

Senior North Korean officials recently said that the United States should get used to a nuclear-armed North Korea, and they refused to acknowledge the validity of U.S. concerns about Pyongyang's interest in uranium enrichment or its nuclear collaboration with Syria, according to Charles "Jack" Pritchard, a former top U.S. negotiator with North Korea.

Pritchard's report, based on extensive talks in the North Korean capital, appears to undermine the Bush administration's assertions of progress with the nation and suggests that the nuclear issue will fall squarely in the hands of the next U.S. administration. North Korea, he said, made it clear that it expects the United States to build a new nuclear reactor for the reclusive government in the next three years.

Pritchard, who is now president of the Korea Economic Institute in Washington, is a well-known specialist on North Korea who held senior posts in the Clinton and Bush administrations. He resigned from the State Department in 2003 because, after endless battles with administration hard-liners, he thought the Bush administration was not serious about ending the impasse over North Korea's nuclear weapons. But he said in an interview yesterday that as a result of his discussions in Pyongyang April 22 to 26, he thinks the Bush administration reached a poor agreement. "It is a weak handoff that will cause the next administration more problems than it solves," Pritchard said.

Both Sen. John McCain, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, and Sen. Barack Obama, the Democratic front-runner, have raised questions about the agreement in recent weeks, with both calling for "tougher diplomacy." The Korea Economic Institute is a think tank funded largely by the South Korean government, but Pritchard was speaking in his capacity as a longtime expert on North Korea.

State Department officials dismissed Pritchard's report, saying that North Korea often takes a tougher stance in conversations with private-sector analysts to enhance its negotiating position.

Under a tentative accord reached by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill in Singapore last month, North Korea agreed to disclose the extent of plutonium production at its Yongbyon nuclear facility, including providing 18,000 pages of records. But, in a side accord, it pledged only to "acknowledge" U.S. concerns about uranium enrichment (another path to nuclear weapons) and about North Korea's help in building a nuclear reactor in Syria that Israeli jets destroyed last September.

Pritchard said he questioned Kim Gye Gwan, North Korea's chief negotiator, and another senior official, Li Gun, closely about the agreement reached in Singapore. They said that while they promised to be "very cooperative" in helping the United States verify its claims about plutonium, they were not required to disclose information about facilities that fabricate plutonium metal or weaponize the metal; they also would not disclose how many nuclear weapons North Korea possesses.

Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura, in the Japanese Diet, recently said that not including those elements would make North Korea's declaration unacceptable to Japan, one of the six nations participating in the nuclear talks. A State Department official said North Korea's assertion on the plutonium metal facility was not true.

Moreover, the North Koreans told Pritchard that they would not acknowledge whether U.S. allegations about uranium enrichment or Syria were valid. In fact, the officials emphatically denied that North Korea had a uranium-enrichment program or any role in the Syrian reactor -- on the very day when the CIA briefed Congress and the media on the evidence it had collected about the Syria project.

Pritchard said North Korea made a "strategic decision" two years ago that it had harvested enough plutonium from the Yongbyon reactor and would shut it down. The reactor and related facilities since then have been partly disabled. North Korea told Pritchard that the next phase, dismantling the facilities, will take three years. During that period, they said, they expect the United States to complete a light-water reactor promised under a Clinton-era accord that was later nullified.

When Pritchard asked when North Korea would give up its nuclear weapons, he said he was told: "The United States should get used to us as a nuclear weapons state." North Korean officials asserted that they would consider talking about giving up atomic weapons only after "full and final normalization" of relations.

Hill, the chief negotiator, told reporters earlier this week in Beijing that "obviously, completing everything by the end of the year will be a challenge."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/29/AR2008052904044.html>

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Washington Post

May 30, 2008

Pg. 11

Rice Says Policy On N. Korea Is A Team Effort

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice wants people to know: The Bush administration's policy toward North Korea has been carefully coordinated and developed by many people at different agencies.

That might come as a surprise to many insiders, who have complained for months that Rice and her chief negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, have kept many skeptics of the diplomatic effort in the dark as they maneuvered to keep disarmament talks with North Korea alive.

It also might come as a surprise to Hill, who is quoted in an upcoming book, "Meltdown," by Mike Chinoy, as saying: "Some of this minimal paperwork business is coming directly from the secretary. She said, 'Bring it only to me.'"

Hill appeared to be confirming what already has appeared in various news reports, and is amply documented in Chinoy's book -- that Rice and Hill keep the circle of knowledge about his dealmaking tightly held. During the early years of the administration, factions for and against engagement with North Korea battled each other and policy toward North Korea was often stalemated. But now many skeptics of the process complain that they feel frozen out or ignored, which allows Hill to have much greater flexibility to strike deals.

In a recent interview with the Weekly Standard, released this week by the State Department, Rice disputed Hill's comment when she was asked about it.

"That wouldn't happen to be accurate," Rice told reporter Steve Hayes. "I don't know what he's referring to. . . . I don't cut out people of my team. . . . So this has been very much an administration effort."

Rice added: "Now, I do not believe this is an issue about hard-liners and not hard-liners. This is an issue about how to deal with a very difficult and, in fact, ugly situation, which is you have a terrible regime that, for 30 years, has pursued nuclear weapons and has them."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/29/AR2008052903678.html>

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New York Times

May 30, 2008

Help Russia Help Us

By Richard Lugar and Sam Nunn

IN a campaign speech this week, John McCain cited the "special responsibility" of the United States and Russia to cooperate to prevent the spread and use of nuclear weapons. There is a remarkable consensus among the presidential candidates about this imperative. But we must not wait until a new administration in 2009 to advance this vital work. An agreement the Bush administration signed with Russia earlier this month is an essential step for this cooperation. That agreement is now before Congress.

The overriding priority of our national security policy must be to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. This task is impossible without the cooperation of Russia. Whether our goal is to lock down nuclear weapons and highly enriched uranium and plutonium, to apply pressure to difficult regimes or to provide other countries with assurances of nuclear-fuel services (both providing and removing the fuel needed for civilian nuclear energy), Russia plays a central role.

The United States already has agreements like the one pending with Russia with 18 countries, including China, and two international organizations. They set the nonproliferation conditions for the transfer — for peaceful, civilian purposes — of nuclear fuel, nuclear reactors and their major components, and certain nuclear technologies.

Having an agreement with Russia would also permit joint work on projects to inhibit the spread of nuclear weapons technology. Under the agreement, the United States and Russia, working together with other nations, can close the major loophole in the world's nuclear-nonproliferation regime: the ability of a nation, like Iran, to walk up to the threshold of a nuclear bomb by building an enrichment plant for allegedly peaceful energy needs, and then simply renounce its binding obligation under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty not to build a bomb.

With this agreement, we can better work with Russia to create an international fuel bank and guarantee the availability of nuclear-fuel services on the international market, undercutting countries that falsely claim they want to enrich and reprocess uranium but only for civilian use. Russia's role is essential.

Additionally, our two countries could develop new types of nuclear power plants that increase the difficulty of diverting nuclear materials for weapons. We could share technologies to improve detection of illicit nuclear materials. We could enhance the safety of reactors built abroad. But we can do these things only if we have this agreement in place.

Although the agreement creates a framework for cooperation, it doesn't, by itself, authorize any of these projects. Nuclear material that originates from the United States cannot be enriched or reprocessed without our government's approval.

Unfortunately, some members of Congress have come out against the agreement on the grounds that it should be blocked until Moscow does more to thwart Iran's building of a nuclear bomb. Russia can and should do more in this arena, but this agreement is the wrong bargaining chip. Rejecting it would, we believe, have exactly the opposite result.

One goal of this agreement is to prevent more countries from following Iran's path to becoming a nuclear power. We should not sacrifice our most promising long-term nonproliferation strategy in the pursuit of short-term leverage that is likely to backfire.

The critics say cooperating with Russia benefits Russia — and therefore we shouldn't act until Russia does more to benefit us. We heard the same argument in 1991 when the Soviet Union was unraveling, and the two of us urged Congress to help Moscow secure and destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

But we weren't acting to help the former Soviet Union. We were working to protect Americans. After spirited debate, members of Congress from both parties realized that cooperation was the only way to keep ourselves safe. Since then, the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program has deactivated thousands of warheads and secured tons of nuclear materials. The world is safer as a result.

We need to summon that same common sense again today. The agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation has been submitted to Congress, where by law it will take effect unless both houses disapprove. Virtually every nuclear danger America faces will be made more difficult and more dangerous if Congress rejects it.

Richard Lugar, Republican of Indiana, is the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sam Nunn, a former Democratic senator from Georgia, is the co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/30/opinion/30lugar.html?ref=opinion>

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Yahoo! News

Official defends US monitoring of Syrian site

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press Writer

Thu May 29, 9:22 PM ET

A senior intelligence official on Thursday defended U.S. efforts to monitor an alleged Syrian nuclear facility that the U.S. says was built with North Korean help.

Joseph DeTrani, the national intelligence director's mission manager for North Korea, said U.S. intelligence had been watching the reactor very closely and for a number of years.

"This was not a failure," he told an audience at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank. "Action was taken when it was going operational, and they are now out of business."

The structure in the remote eastern desert of Syria was bombed by Israeli jets in September 2007. Syria's ambassador to the United States has said the United States fabricated pictures allegedly taken inside.

Senior U.S. intelligence officials have said they believe it was a secret nuclear reactor meant to produce plutonium, which can be used to make high-yield nuclear weapons. They alleged that North Korea aided in the design, construction and outfitting of the building.

DeTrani's comments came as Christopher Hill, the top U.S. envoy to nuclear talks with North Korea, conceded that the North's disarmament will be difficult to achieve this year.

Disarmament talks stalled when the North missed a deadline at the end of last year to give a full accounting of its nuclear programs.

The United States previously insisted that any declaration include North Korea's alleged uranium enrichment program and nuclear cooperation with Syria. The U.S. apparently has backed down from those demands, drawing strong criticism.

The United States and North Korea have been trying to hash out a timeline for the declaration, along with American concessions that include removing Pyongyang from terrorism and economic sanctions blacklists.

DeTrani said the key to the talks is "verification, verification, verification." The United States, he said, would insist that, once the North handed over a "complete and correct" declaration, it would then have to dismantle all its nuclear programs and weapons.

As a result of six-nation nuclear talks, the North has stopped making plutonium and begun disabling its nuclear facilities so they cannot be quickly restarted. It still has a stockpile of radioactive material that experts believe is enough to make about a half-dozen bombs.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080530/ap_on_go_ot/us_nkorea_syria;_ylt=AvdB3Gs0XsKXu89UKY7c6KcNJ_wE

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Mail Online

Al-Qaeda's terrifying vision of a devastated America in the wake of a nuclear attack

By Barry Wigmore

Last updated at 11:12 AM on 30th May 2008

Washington is laid to waste. The Capitol is a blackened, smoking ruin. The White House has been razed. Countless thousands are dead.

This is the apocalyptic scene terrorists hope to create if they ever get their hands on a nuclear bomb. The computer-generated image below was posted on an Islamic extremists' website yesterday.

(Editor's Note: Link to image below.)

http://i.dailymail.co.uk/i/pix/2008/05/29/article-1022840-0168F03500000578-456_468x285_popup.jpg

This computer generated image posted on terror forums depict what would happen if a nuclear attack took place in Washington D.C

It appeared as rumours swept the Internet that the FBI was warning that an Al Qaeda video was about to be released urging militants to use weapons of mass destruction to attack the West.

The information was said to be coming from 'groups that monitor Islamic militant websites'.

The FBI was quick to point out that it had not issued any warning and that the video was not an official Al Qaeda release through its media arm, Al Sahab, but simply an 'amateur' collection of old footage spliced together and posted on the Internet.

U.S. analysts said a lot of effort had been put into the video - entitled Nuclear Jihad, The Ultimate Terror - with graphics, music, and clips of different leaders and groups.

The same expertise seems to have gone into creating this image of a devastated Washington.

Al Sahab puts out more than 80 'officially sanctioned' videos a year to keep up the propaganda on the West. And the Internet shows how easy it is to stir up militancy. One message with the Washington picture said: 'The next strike's in the heart of America. When? When? When? And How?'

Last night FBI sources said Al Qaeda was desperate to get its hands on a weapon of mass destruction, be it nuclear, chemical, or biological.

So far that is only a dream... or, as this picture suggests, a nightmare.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1022840/Al-Qaedas-terrifying-vision-devastated-America-wake-nuclear-attack.html#>

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Washington Post

May 31, 2008

Pg. 3

Air Force Unit's Nuclear Weapons Security Is 'Unacceptable'

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

The same Air Force unit at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota that was responsible for mishandling six nuclear cruise missiles last August failed key parts of a nuclear safety inspection this past weekend, according to a Defense Department report.

The 5th Bomb Wing was given an "unacceptable" grade in security of nuclear weapons, according to the review by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. In another category, management and administration, it received a grade of "marginal," based on deficiencies in recording changes that affected the operational status of nuclear cruise missiles and gravity bombs.

Those are two areas where failures last summer allowed a B-52 at Minot to be loaded with six air-launched cruise missiles and flown to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana without the pilots, air or ground crews knowing they contained nuclear warheads.

Among the problems found during last week's inspection: Internal security forces did not go to assigned defensive areas during an exercise that involved an attempt to steal a nuclear weapon; security guards failed to search an emergency vehicle that entered and left the nuclear storage area during that exercise; a security guard used his cellphone to play video games while on duty; and guards were unarmed at traffic control points along the route where nuclear weapons were to travel.

While 5th Bomb Wing units received passing grades in the remaining eight categories, agency inspectors concluded that security forces' lack of knowledge of their duties represented "a lack of supervision" and a "lack of training," according to the report.

The test failure was first reported yesterday by Air Force Times.

Hans Kristensen, director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists, who has seen the report, said yesterday that "this certainly requires a closer look than we have so far, because these are serious issues."

Maj. Thomas Crosson, spokesman for Air Combat Command, which supervises the 5th Bomb Wing, said yesterday that he would neither confirm nor deny the contents of the defense agency's report. He said they would not be released.

"There are areas identified as needing improvement," Crosson said. He said 5th Bomb Wing units will be reinspected in 90 days by the command's inspector general. In the interim, however, he said the wing will not lose its certification to handle nuclear weapons.

Col. Joel Westa, who took over the wing after last summer's incident, had warned his subordinates that the inspection would be tough. On Thursday, in a commentary on the Minot Air Force Base Web site, he praised two units of the wing that received good grades but made no mention of the poor ones.

After investigations that followed the August incident, the 5th Bomb Wing lost its certification, and personnel at every Air Force base with nuclear weapons had to go through retraining. Five officers, including the 5th Bomb Wing commander, lost their jobs along with some noncommissioned officers.

The Minot unit was recertified two months ago, after increased training and several practice runs.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/30/AR2008053003120.html>

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New York Times

May 31, 2008

In Disclosure, North Korea Contradicts U.S. Intelligence on Its Plutonium Program

By Helene Cooper

WASHINGTON — An 18,000-page declaration submitted by North Korea to the United States is stirring debate about whether American intelligence agencies previously overstated how much plutonium the Pyongyang government might have produced for its nuclear weapons program.

Bush administration officials have declined to comment on the declaration, which State Department officials say will take weeks to study, but they have indicated that North Korea is acknowledging it produced 37 kilograms of plutonium, or about 81 pounds.

That total would be more than the 30 kilograms that North Korea has acknowledged previously but somewhat less than the 40 to 50 kilograms that American intelligence agencies had calculated in the past. Estimates on how many nuclear bombs North Korea could wring from its plutonium program have ranged from 6 to 10.

No one in the administration is prepared to accept the documents at face value, a Bush administration official said, and some intelligence analysts are particularly wary of the numbers they have seen so far.

"We're coming to an important juncture in this process," Christopher R. Hill, the chief North Korea nuclear negotiator, told reporters in Moscow on Friday after meeting with his Russian counterpart and after meetings this week in Beijing with North Korean officials. Mr. Hill said that the North Koreans were working very hard on the overall plutonium declaration.

State Department officials have assembled a team of reactor experts and translators to go through the seven boxes of plutonium documents in hand. The documents go back to 1987 and contain information about North Korea's three major campaigns to reprocess plutonium for weapons — in 1990, 2003 and 2005, administration officials said.

The documents do not include any information about North Korea's uranium program or proliferation activities. The declaration is part of what officials call a six-party nuclear agreement — still a work in progress — among North Korea, the United States, Russia, China, Japan and South Korea for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. The declaration and the agreement are facing skepticism from Congress and from more hard-line North Korea experts who say that the North cannot be trusted. A former diplomat who recently met with North Korean officials said Thursday at a forum on North Korea that the North was not planning to give up all of its nuclear weapons or material.

The former diplomat, Charles L. Pritchard, who is now head of the Korea Economic Institute and was a North Korea policy coordinator under Presidents Clinton and Bush, said the North Korean officials told him they would destroy their nuclear facilities but not necessarily destroy the weapons and material already manufactured. Mr. Pritchard said the North Koreans also told him they expected to be provided with light-water reactors for dismantling their nuclear installations.

Tom Casey, the deputy spokesman for the State Department, said: "With all due respect to Mr. Pritchard, he's a former government official. I'm not sure who he's talking to. But I think the secretary, the president and Chris Hill have all made clear that we expect the North Koreans to provide us a declaration that meets the requirements of the six parties."

The question of uranium could also eventually confront American intelligence agencies with an even bigger challenge, if the North Koreans ever get around to completing a declaration about any nuclear activities involving uranium. The United States has long asserted that North Korea's weapons efforts included the enrichment of uranium, but the North has denied having an uranium program.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/31/world/asia/31korea.html?scp=1&sq=&st=nyt>

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New York Times
May 31, 2008

Pakistani Nuclear Scientist Denies Selling Secrets

By Alan Cowell

PARIS — Abdul Qadeer Khan, the founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, was reported on Friday to have withdrawn an admission that he sold nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya, saying that he had made it under pressure from President Pervez Musharraf.

He made the comment in a telephone interview with a correspondent in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, from The Guardian, a British newspaper, which called the conversation his first with the Western media since an emotional television appearance in 2004 in which Dr. Khan admitted selling nuclear technology to other countries.

"It was not of my own free will," he told The Guardian, saying he had been forced to make the admission by Mr. Musharraf. "It was handed into my hand," he was quoted as saying.

Western intelligence agencies fear that any technology passed on by Dr. Khan could be used by terrorists. But in the interview he maintained his longstanding resistance to being questioned by investigators from the International Atomic Energy Agency or the United States.

"Why should I talk to them?" Dr. Khan was quoted as saying. "I am under no obligation." Pakistan, he said, was not a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. "I have not violated international laws," he added, calling his nuclear secrets "my internal affair and my country's affair."

Since 2004, Mr. Khan has been confined under house arrest to a villa in Islamabad. Initially, he lived under tight controls, with soldiers at his gate, Internet access denied and his telephone monitored. But he hinted on Friday that he was hoping that the restrictions would be eased.

"As long as you are living, there is always hope," he said in the interview.

He was dismissive of what he depicted as Western attempts to demonize him.

"It doesn't bother me at all," he said. "They don't like our God, they don't like our prophet, they don't like our holy book, the Koran. So how could they like me?"

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/31/world/asia/31khan.html?scp=1&sq=Pakistani+Nuclear+Scientist+Denies+Selling+Secrets&st=nyt>

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Boston Globe
May 31, 2008

Iran Cool To Suspending Nuclear Agenda

Diplomat says issue is one of national pride

By Farah Stockman, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON - A series of increasingly strong UN sanctions against Iran has only hardened the regime's resolve to press ahead with its nuclear program, Mohammad Khazaee, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, said this week.

"This has become an issue of national pride," he said during an hourlong interview at Iran's permanent mission in New York. Regardless of what Iran is offered in talks, he said, "the Iranian people will not accept suspension" of its enrichment program as the UN Security Council has demanded.

Still, he said, Iran is seeking to resume negotiations over a wide range of topics, including some aspects of its nuclear program.

A May 13 proposal by Iran to the UN secretary general suggested six months of negotiations on regional security, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, energy cooperation, and narcotics trafficking, as well as ways to improve international nuclear safeguards and monitoring and prevent the diversion of nuclear material.

Iran submitted its proposal as the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, prepares to offer a new package of economic incentives to Iran in exchange for a prolonged suspension of Iranian enrichment activities.

The timing led State Department officials and some European diplomats to dismiss Iran's own package as an attempt to divert attention from Solana's offers or change the subject from Iran's defiance of Security Council resolutions. "We see it as nothing really new," said a Washington-based European diplomat who asked that his name be withheld because he is not authorized to be quoted in the press. "Now we have no choice. If Iran doesn't move [to suspend enrichment], we have to increase the sanctions, and also to make the package more attractive."

But others see the Iranian offer as a hopeful sign that Tehran is moving to end international censure.

David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington-based think tank, said the Iranian offer "shows a willingness" to negotiate, unlike a 2006 Tehran proposal that seemed aimed at frustrating talks.

Khazae described the Iranian proposal as a sincere attempt to open talks on areas of common ground.

"Some people - basically the United States, and maybe a couple of European countries - have been raising the claim that Iran is not ready to cooperate with the international community and Iran is going to isolate itself," he said.

"Basically, one of the main messages of this [May 13] package is that such assumptions are wrong."

Khazae said Iran would carefully consider Solana's offer, which reportedly includes new economic incentives and may allow limited enrichment research.

The ambassador said his country would not suspend its own enrichment program, but would consider establishing an internationally owned consortium inside Iran that could produce nuclear fuel with Iranian participation. Iran's May 13 proposal referred to the idea, but gave no details.

"How it is going to work, what is the legal framework for that, what are the economics aspects of it, as far as investments are concerned; these are things that I think a group of experts should get together and discuss," Khazae said.

He said Tehran expects negotiations to go forward on the basis of its own proposal and include the broader subjects that Iran wants to discuss. "The issues that are on the table for our cooperation with the other side are not only confined to the peaceful nuclear program of Iran," he said. "There are other issues that should be addressed."

Iran's uranium enrichment program has been under heavy scrutiny since 2002, when its existence was disclosed by an Iranian exile group. Iran insists that its clandestine facility was being built for peaceful purposes, but a report released this week by the UN nuclear watchdog said serious questions remain about why Iran refuses to allow international inspectors to question scientists about documents the United States believe prove that Iran's program has been geared toward military use.

Khazae said Solana must give Iran time to study his offer. Iran rejected a similar offer in 2006 that included membership to the World Trade Organization and access to spare parts for Iran's aging aircraft in exchange for Iran forgoing enrichment and receiving nuclear fuel from abroad. "If it is going to be the same [as the package offered to Iran in 2006], it was not a comprehensive package, but we hope there are enough changes and we have to look at them," Khazae said.

Throughout the interview, Khazae returned often to the theme of national pride. He said historic talks on Iraqi security between the US ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, and Iranian diplomats broke down after the United States insulted Iran publicly after the meetings.

"After the negotiations, the US side came out . . . and made political statements, as if he was a judge in a courtroom, saying, 'OK, we ruled this, we ruled that, we told the Iranians this, we told the Iranians that,' " he said. "What do you expect from your partner in negotiations when they see that you come out from the room and you talk like that?"

He also said the recent US attacks on Sadr City and other areas in Iraq made it impossible to continue talks, although he maintained that Iranian officials remain ready to resume if conditions improve.

Khazae said tensions between Iran and the United States will ease if the next American president respects Iran and realizes Iran's power and role in the region and the world.

"Anybody who becomes president of the United States should realize that Iranians are a great nation, a great civilization, with great regional and global potential and capacities," he said.

Recognizing that, he said, "would pave the ground for a better understanding and a reduction of tension."

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2008/05/31/iran_cool_to_suspending_nuclear_agenda/

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Washington Times

May 31, 2008

Pg. 5

WMD Commission Begins Work On 'Broad Mandate'

By Shaun Waterman, United Press International

A new blue-ribbon commission set up by Congress has begun developing recommendations for the next administration on how to prevent nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction from falling into the hands of rogue states and terrorists.

The congressionally mandated Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation and Terrorism, known as the WMD commission, held its first meeting Thursday. It is chaired by former Sen. Robert Graham, Florida Democrat.

The commission was established in legislation passed by Congress after Democrats took control in January 2007, and has what Mr. Graham called "a very broad mandate" to look at policies and programs to secure nuclear and other WMD material, prevent the spread of weapons technology and protect the United States from WMD terrorism. The commission is mandated to report within 180 days of its establishment, or by Nov. 2, and Mr. Graham said he wants the nine-member body - composed of five Democrats and four Republicans - to proceed by consensus. "Our goal is to have a unanimous report," he said, an outcome that would be aided by the commission's forward-looking perspective.

"We will be looking at the past in order to make recommendations for the future," said Mr. Graham, a former chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence. "The focus is on influencing the next administration and the next Congress."

The issue of WMD proliferation, especially to rogue regimes and terror groups - "the worst weapons in the hands of the worst people" - is seen by some, including Mr. Graham, as the most serious threat to U.S. national security. The record of the Bush administration - which has favored ad hoc efforts with allies with the Proliferation Security Initiative over statutory international institutions like the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency - will be a likely topic of debate in an election year.

Mr. Graham said that if the commission's report is ready in time, he hoped it could be published earlier than November, so its recommendations "will be part of the election-year debate" - much as the report of the Sept. 11 commission was.

"We don't know at this stage whether we will be done in time," he said.

Mr. Graham's vice chairman, former Missouri Republican Sen. James Talent, said the decision would also depend on whether the commissioners "feel that the [election year] publicity would help."

"There was an absolute consensus," said Mr. Talent, that "we don't want our report to become fodder for ... election-year craziness."

Both men said that, given the breadth of the commission's mandate and the shortness of time, the members would need to focus on a few areas for its recommendations.

"We want to make very solid recommendations of a practical character," Mr. Talent said. "If you try to do everything, you don't get to do anything the way you really need to."

"Rather than burying the reader in dozens of recommendations," Mr. Graham said, we want to focus in on a handful."

<http://www.washtimes.com/news/2008/may/31/wmd-commission-begins-work-on-broad-mandate/>

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New York Times

June 1, 2008

THE NATION

Look Who's Tough on Iran Now

By WILLIAM J. BROAD

In the annals of role reversal, the switch by the United Nations' atomic sleuths in Vienna and the American intelligence community has been striking. Having long taken a back seat to the Bush administration in publicly challenging Iran's nuclear program, the global inspectors last week moved into the driver's seat, demanding that Tehran come clean on any progress it has made toward building a bomb.

What gives?

Quite simply, and to some extent literally, the Americans have handed over the wheel on the confrontation with Iran. After challenging Iran's atomic efforts with everything from diplomatic crusades to shows of military force, the Americans backed off late last year, based on a new intelligence finding that Tehran had suspended work in late 2003 on the design of nuclear arms. Now, in the waning days of President Bush's second term, it would be difficult — politically, diplomatically and militarily — for them to try to press for a new confrontation.

But early this year, Washington also turned over a trove of its own intelligence to the atomic investigators in Vienna, who put it together with clues gathered from many foreign capitals and findings from their own long years of inquiries.

On the basis of that combination of new and old evidence, over the last few months, the inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency have come to worry that Iran — before suspending its work nearly five years ago — may have made real progress toward designing a deadly weapon.

Last week, the issue crystallized publicly when the inspectors issued an uncharacteristically blunt demand for more information from Tehran and, even more uncharacteristically, disclosed the existence of 18 secretly-obtained documents that suggest Tehran had high interest in designing a nuclear weapon before the program was suspended. The presentation posed a central question and gave it urgency: Just how far did Tehran get toward designing a bomb before the program was halted?

That question could transform the debate over what to do about Iran, particularly because it is being posed now by an international agency that retains high credibility overseas, something the Bush administration lost long ago. In their report last week, the Vienna-based investigators called the evidence of the early warhead work “a matter of serious concern,” and said that uncovering the real story “is critical to an assessment of the nature of Iran’s past and present nuclear program.”

As they have for years, the Iranians repeated their assertion that there was no such armaments program — that their nuclear program is intended solely for peaceful purposes like generating electricity. But the inspectors showed their impatience with such responses, and with the lack of cooperation from Iran in general, by discussing the 18 suspicious documents. They also revealed that an Iranian scientist once displayed photos of the world’s first nuclear blast, in 1945, alongside equations for calculating its destructive power.

Why the emphasis now on sins Iran may have committed in the past? Wasn’t the finding that warhead design stopped in 2003 reassuring enough?

No, say nuclear experts inside and outside the international agency. Candor about Iran’s progress in designing a weapon matters because Tehran’s scientists continue to move forward on a related front. They are learning how to make uranium fuel. And if they already have a good warhead design in hand, the lack of fuel may be the one thing standing between them and the ability to make a bomb.

“Fuel is usually the limiting factor,” said Robert S. Norris, author of “Racing for the Bomb,” a history of the Manhattan Project. “The other stuff is relatively easy.” He noted that the United States managed to design the Hiroshima bomb by 1944 but could make its needed uranium fuel only after years of industrial labor that culminated in 1945. “As soon as they had enough — bingo — it went into a design they were so sure would work that they never bothered to test it,” Dr. Norris said.

Last week, the Institute for Science and International Security, a private group in Washington that tracks the spread of nuclear weapons, said its analysis of the new inspectors’ report showed that the Iranians are steadily overcoming problems and enriching uranium fuel at faster rates.

American intelligence agencies say the earliest Iran could have enough fuel for a nuclear warhead is 2009, but 2010 to 2015 is a more likely time frame. Any estimate in that range could put the potential for a crisis squarely on the agenda of the next American president.

The documents cited by the inspectors in Vienna carry dates like 1984, 1987, 1989, 1993, 1998, 2002, 2003 and 2004. Many are in Persian. One describes experiments on a sphere of detonators like the array that could trigger an atomic explosion. Another tells of tests of 500 detonators, and yet another bears a schematic diagram of a shaft a quarter-mile deep and six miles from a firing point — a good setup, experts say, for the underground detonation of a nuclear weapon.

The inspectors say one reason they want more information from Iran is to test the Iranian assertion that the documents are forgeries or repetitions of false charges. In fact, these sleuths are considered quite skilled in fraud detection. In early 2003, on the eve of the American invasion of Iraq, their agency was the one that exposed as false American claims that Saddam Hussein had sought uranium in Niger.

This time, the agency is putting on Iran the onus of disproving the documents’ authenticity. The Iranians “lied, obfuscated and didn’t tell us for 20 years what they were doing,” said a senior official close to the agency, who spoke on the condition of anonymity under normal diplomatic rules. “What’s the intention? That’s the question.” The American finding last December that Iran suspended its weapon-design work in 2003 created a classic case of a glass that could be seen as either half full or half empty. The American intelligence community, in the finding, judged that “the program probably was halted in response to international pressure” and drew the inference that “Iran may be more vulnerable to influence on the issue than we judged previously.”

It did not mention the possibility that now seems to concern the international inspectors — that Iran had perhaps made enough progress that it could afford to slow down or stop.

Senior officials who oversaw preparation of the American intelligence report say Iran’s weapon-design work, with the right fuel, might have progressed enough by 2003 to make a bomb comparable to the five-ton blunderbuss dropped on Hiroshima. But that does not mean they have a workable design for the most frightening kind of bomb in today’s world — one miniaturized to about one ton so it can sit atop a missile, which is much faster and harder to

stop than any plane. Such a weapon, say military strategists, can change a region's balance of power without ever being fired.

And that is why determining the extent of Iran's progress on weapons design is so important to the atomic investigators in Vienna.

Iran is working hard to develop a family of long-range missiles, the Shahab, Persian for shooting star. The Shahab 3, Iran's most-advanced missile, can reach European capitals, and in their report the atomic investigators cited a document whose title, translated from Persian, reads: "Implementation of Mass Properties Requirements of Shahab-3 Missile Warhead With New Payload."

Officials in Vienna doubt that Iran will quickly answer their questions about possible work on miniaturized nuclear arms. So, they say, it could take months to come to definitive conclusions about the true nature of the Iranian program.

In the meantime, the Institute for Science and International Security has concluded that Iran will find it hard to deny convincingly that it sought the secret of making nuclear arms. "These documents," the institute concluded, "make a powerful case."

The question remains, though: How far did Iran get?

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/01/weekinreview/01broad.html?ref=world>

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Washington Post

Bhutto Dealt Nuclear Secrets to N. Korea, Book Says

By Glenn Kessler

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, June 1, 2008; A16

Former Pakistani prime minister Benazir Bhutto, on a state visit to North Korea in 1993, smuggled in critical data on uranium enrichment -- a route to making a nuclear weapon -- to help facilitate a missile deal with Pyongyang, according to a new book by a journalist who knew the slain politician well.

The assertion is based on conversations that the author, Shyam Bhatia, had with Bhutto in 2003, in which she said she would tell him a secret "so significant that I had to promise never to reveal it, at least not during her lifetime," Bhatia writes in "Goodbye, Shahzadi," which was published in India last month.

Bhutto was slain in December while campaigning to win back the prime minister's post.

The account, if verified, could advance the timeline for North Korea's interest in uranium enrichment. David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a research organization on nuclear weapons programs, said the assertion "makes sense," because there were signs of "funny procurements" in the late 1980s by North Korea that suggested a nascent effort to assemble a uranium enrichment project.

Pakistan -- and, in particular, a nuclear smuggling ring run by Pakistani metallurgist Abdul Qadeer Khan, who was instrumental in developing a Pakistani nuclear bomb -- has long been suspected as a source of expertise for North Korea, but such high-level government involvement always has been denied.

In 2002, after observing a series of suspect North Korean purchases, the Bush administration accused Pyongyang of having a clandestine program to produce highly enriched uranium -- a charge that helped sink a Clinton-era deal that had frozen North Korea's plutonium-based reactor. North Korea insists that it had no such program, though it recently agreed to "acknowledge" U.S. concerns as part of an agreement to disable its nuclear reactor.

Nadeem Kiani, spokesman for the Pakistani Embassy, denounced Bhatia's account as "an absurd and baseless claim," adding, "It has no iota of truth and not even worth commenting."

Bhatia is a London-based investigative reporter who has written four other books, including one of the earliest accounts of India's nuclear program. Bhatia said he first met Bhutto at Oxford University in 1974 and kept contact with her until just weeks before she was killed.

George Perkovich, a nuclear expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, knows Bhatia and cited his book in Perkovich's own study of the Indian program. "He is very smart, a serious guy, and the work he did on the Indian nuclear program has held up really well," Perkovich said.

Selig S. Harrison, a specialist on South Asia and North Korea at the Center for International Policy who has read the book, said Bhatia "is credible on Bhutto. . . . He knew her very well and is a reputable Indian journalist."

In his book, Bhatia writes that Bhutto brought up the North Korea visit during a discussion in 2003 about her difficulties with Pakistan's military. "Let me tell you something," she declared, before telling Bhatia to turn off his tape recorder. "I have done more for my country than all the military chiefs of Pakistan combined."

At the time, Pakistan was in desperate need of new missile technology that would counter improvements in India's missiles. Bhutto said she was asked to carry "critical nuclear data" to hand over in Pyongyang as part of a barter deal.

"Before leaving Islamabad she shopped for an overcoat with the 'deepest possible pockets' into which she transferred CDs containing the scientific data about uranium enrichment that the North Koreans wanted," Bhatia writes. "She implied with a glint in her eye that she had acted as a two-way courier, bringing North Korea's missile information on CDs back with her on the return journey."

Bhatia said Bhutto did not tell him how many CDs she carried or who she gave them to in Pyongyang. His repeated efforts to persuade her to go on the record about the story were not successful.

Highly enriched uranium, a fuel for nuclear weapons, is produced by cascades of centrifuges that spin hot uranium gas. Albright, who has read Bhatia's account, said the CDs probably contained blueprints of the more than 100 centrifuge components as well as general assembly drawings. "It is tricky to assemble a centrifuge," he said.

Bhutto has always publicly said that Pakistan paid cash for the missile cooperation, though Albright has located one quote by Bhutto in 2004 making reference to computer disks being involved.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/05/31/AR2008053102122.html>

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Boston Globe

June 2, 2008

Iran Raps UN Report On Nuclear Program

Tehran warns it might limit cooperation

By Reuters

TEHRAN - Iran said yesterday it might have to limit its cooperation with the United Nations nuclear watchdog, criticizing the agency's report that said Tehran's alleged research into nuclear warheads was a matter of serious concern.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, in a May 26 report, also said Tehran should provide more information on its missile-related work.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said Tehran believed the UN agency could have submitted a better report had it not been for the "continuing pressures of one or two known countries," in a clear reference to Tehran's Western foes. The United States accuses the Islamic republic of seeking to develop nuclear arms. Iran disputes the charge but its refusal to suspend sensitive nuclear work has prompted three rounds of UN sanctions since 2006.

"In regard to this report, we of course had more expectations from the agency," spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini told a news conference, a day before the IAEA's board of governors begin a June 2-6 meeting in Vienna.

He added: "The trend of cooperation . . . should continue in a way that, as Dr. Larijani pointed out, the parliament and the Islamic Republic of Iran would not be compelled to review the going trend of the cooperation and adopt new limitations."

Hosseini was referring to Iran's new Parliament speaker, Ali Larijani, who on Wednesday said the current levels of cooperation with the IAEA were in jeopardy if major powers continued to "kick around" Iran's disputed nuclear case.

Hosseini did not elaborate under what circumstances and in what way Iran might limit cooperation with the IAEA. Iran in 2006 ended voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to the Non-proliferation Treaty that allowed for short notice IAEA inspections of its nuclear sites, after being referred to the UN Security Council.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Wednesday Iran had much to explain about the latest IAEA report.

But Larijani, in comments after he was elected speaker of Parliament yesterday, accused US and Israeli intelligence services of misleading the IAEA and said this could force Iran to "choose a different path", state television reported. Earlier yesterday in Singapore, Defense Minister Herve Morin of France said Iran should open its nuclear installations to international scrutiny to clear suspicions about its ambitions.

The IAEA has been pressing Tehran to provide answers to Western intelligence accusations that it covertly studied how to design atomic bombs. Iran has rejected the intelligence as baseless, forged, or irrelevant.

World powers have prepared an enhanced package of economic and other incentives for Iran if it suspends its most sensitive nuclear work, something Tehran has consistently failed to do.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2008/06/02/iran_raps_un_report_on_nuclear_program/

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Yahoo! News

June 3, 2008

North Korea Is 'Serious Adversary': U.S.'s Gates

By Jon Herskovitz, Reuters

SEOUL--North Korea presents a serious security threat and U.S. forces in South Korea are ready to respond quickly and decisively to counter any attack, the U.S. defense secretary and military leaders said on Tuesday.

The United States has been trying to convince impoverished North Korea to abide by an international disarmament deal and scrap its nuclear arms program in exchange for aid and better global standing.

"We face a serious adversary across the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) in the North. That is why we have this alliance," Defense Secretary Robert Gates told reporters at a ceremony to mark a change of command for U.S. military forces in South Korea.

The United States has about 28,000 troops in the country to support the South's 670,000-strong military. North Korea stations most of its 1.2-million-troop army near the DMZ buffer that has divided the peninsula since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Gates and South Korean Defense Minister Lee Sang-hee met ahead of the ceremony and agreed to keep U.S. troop numbers at their current levels, the ministry said in a statement.

General Walter L. Sharp, who took over as commander of U.S. Forces Korea, said the allies were ready to deter North Korean aggression with "immediate and overwhelming firepower".

"We are ready to respond quickly and decisively against any attempts to threaten the security of the Republic of Korea (South Korea)," Sharp said.

Last Friday, North Korea, which has more than 1,000 missiles with at least 800 of them ballistic, rattled sabers by launching short-range missiles off its west coast.

Experts said North Korea, which tested a nuclear device in October 2006, developed an arsenal of short-range missiles to threaten the capital Seoul as well as South Korean and U.S. military bases near their heavily armed border.

North Korea, which wants to see U.S. soldiers removed from the peninsula, says it developed nuclear weapons to deter what it sees as a hostile policy from Washington.

"Never again can we allow the Republic of Korea to be unprepared for an attack," the outgoing U.S. commander, General B.B. Bell, said.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20080603/ts_nm/korea_north_usa_dc_1

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New York Times

June 3, 2008

Pg. 12

North Korea Didn't Dupe U.N. Office, Report Says

By Neil MacFarquhar

UNITED NATIONS — American allegations that North Korea duped the United Nations Development Program by diverting aid money for its own needs are not supported by any evidence, according to a lengthy external review released Monday.

There was no sign that millions of dollars were mismanaged, diverted elsewhere or unaccounted for, the report said, countering accusations made in early 2007 by the United States Mission to the United Nations. Although the report acknowledged that some information the panel had sought was unavailable, the review's conclusion was that the money had been "used for the purposes of the projects."

The controversy surrounding the accusations led the development program to suspend its operations in North Korea in March 2007. They have remained suspended because of differences over whether the government should choose local employees who work for the agency.

The review was conducted by a three-member panel, led by Miklos Nemeth, a former Hungarian prime minister, and was presented Monday by Kemal Dervis, a former Turkish finance minister who leads the development program. Mr. Dervis said the panel members preferred not to comment publicly.

At the news conference, when asked whether he thought the accusations emerged out of the political dispute over the Bush administration's negotiations with North Korea, Mr. Dervis said he would not comment on internal government ideological battles.

"All these allegations, clearly — when you compare it to what is in the report — are either vastly exaggerated or stem from misunderstandings or some of them may be from ill intent," he said.

The accusations were raised by Mark D. Wallace, who leads the department at the United States Mission that evaluates United Nations management practices. In early 2007, he said millions of dollars in program money had been used to buy real estate abroad and to pay a North Korean financial agent responsible for sales of missiles and arms.

He compared the program to the multibillion-dollar oil-for-food scandal in Iraq before the invasion and suggested that the United Nations money might have helped finance North Korea's nuclear program.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the American ambassador, said his staff was studying the report, but noted that it was the American Mission's responsibility to pursue any allegations about the abuse of money, especially since United States taxpayers helped underwrite the United Nations budget. The United States supports all recommendations in the report that would increase transparency and accountability, he said.

The report, which surveyed the disbursement of more than \$23 million between 1999 and 2007, recommended that the development program pay closer attention when it adapts its general guidelines to "a challenging environment" like North Korea. The dense 353-page report appeared to concur with what the program had maintained all along, that the American allegations were baseless. But it recognized some sloppy practices, like tossing \$3,500 in defaced counterfeit \$100 bills into the bottom of its safe in Pyongyang and forgetting about them for more than a decade. Some confusion stemmed from the fact that the North Koreans used the development program's name on international money transfers — hoping the funds would come under less scrutiny that way. Such tactics were beyond the program's control, the study concluded.

Among other key findings, the report said that the former development program operations manager in North Korea who was a source for many of the allegations, Artjon Shkurta, lacked credibility and "proved to be an evasive witness."

Mr. Shkurta issued a statement via e-mail objecting to not having been shown the report before it was released. He said he still hoped for a ruling from the United Nations Ethics Office on whether he had been fired in retaliation for being a whistle-blower. The report dismissed accusations that the development program had retaliated against him.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/03/world/asia/03nations.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

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New York Times

June 3, 2008

Pg. 6

U.N. Nuclear Inspectors To Visit Syria

By William J. Broad

Syria will let nuclear inspectors visit the site of a suspected reactor that Israeli warplanes bombed last September, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Monday. The visit, to a desolate spot on the Euphrates River some 90 miles north of the Iraqi border, is to take place June 22 to 24.

The atomic agency, the nuclear monitor of the United Nations, had pledged to investigate after American intelligence officials released evidence in late April of what they described as a clandestine nuclear reactor that had been "nearing operational capability" a month before the bombing.

The evidence included a series of close-up photographs of what the Americans claimed was the partly built reactor before its destruction. The Israeli airstrike on Sept. 6 spurred international debate over whether the Syrians were starting a secret program to make nuclear weapons.

Syria has strongly denied the charges. However, it wiped the Euphrates site clean of rubble late last year and erected a new building where the destroyed one had been — a step nuclear experts said would complicate the job of hunting for atomic clues. Some analysts said the rapid cleanup and new construction had been tacit admissions of guilt.

Mohamed ElBaradei, director general of the atomic agency, announced the impending visit at a meeting of the agency's board in Vienna. "I look forward to Syria's full cooperation," he said.

If it proceeds, the inspection will mark the first time an international body has scrutinized the site, which the United States claims was built with years of North Korean aid.

The United States urged Syria on Monday to cooperate fully with the inspectors. "Let's hope that the Syrian efforts haven't been too effective in covering up what it is they are trying to cover up," said a State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack.

The press secretary at the Syrian Embassy in Washington declined to comment specifically on the inspection visit, and other Syrian officials also did not comment. But Ahmed Salkini, the press secretary, said in a statement that Syria had always had a good working relationship with the atomic agency "and we intend to keep it that way."

He added: “This fabricated story by the U.S. administration will deconstruct from within and without. We are working on different fronts, and with different parties, to ensure that this fabrication is exposed to the world, and this administration embarrassed, once again.”

In Vienna, a senior official close to the atomic agency, who spoke on the condition of anonymity under normal diplomatic rules, said Olli J. Heinonen, the head of the agency’s inspection arm, would lead a team to Syria. Three or four inspectors would be involved, the official said, and would bring equipment meant to check for nuclear activity.

Dr. ElBaradei, in a statement to his agency’s board of governors, noted that Syria “has an obligation to report the planning and construction of any nuclear facility to the agency.” He said the inquiry would proceed “to the extent possible at this stage” — a reference, it seemed, to possible challenges stemming from the site’s rehabilitation.

David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington and a former United Nations weapons inspector, said three days at the site would be sufficient for only a preliminary appraisal by the atomic agency.

“They have to investigate the whole fuel cycle,” he said, a reference to everything from the mining of uranium, to the making of reactor fuel, to the extraction of plutonium from spent fuel that could be used to make an atom bomb. “It’s going to take months.”

At the Euphrates site, Mr. Albright said, the agency’s inspectors should look for evidence like special piping, old foundations and chemical traces of graphite, a basic reactor building material.

“If the Syrians think that a quick visit and some interviews” will clear up the nuclear suspicions, he said, “they’re sadly mistaken.”

The senior official in Vienna said the atomic agency’s inspectors were interested in two or three additional sites that American intelligence agencies had identified as suspicious, but suggested that this first visit would focus exclusively on the supposed reactor site.

The photographs released by the United States, taken inside the site before its destruction, clearly show what appear to be rows of nuclear control rods — one of many similarities to a reactor halfway around the globe where North Korea made fuel for its nuclear arms.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/03/world/middleeast/03syria.html?ref=world>

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