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Los Angeles Times
June 4, 2008

Nuclear proliferation talks with North Korea to continue, Gates says

Despite criticism from conservatives, Gates says the talks involving the U.S., Russia, China, Japan and North and South Korea are the best way to confront the regime on nuclear issues.

By Peter Spiegel, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

SEOUL —Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Tuesday that despite intelligence allegedly showing that North Korea aided Syria in developing a nuclear facility, the United States would continue six-party talks with the communist regime over its nuclear program.

Gates called North Korea a "serious adversary," but he said he knew of no evidence that it was sharing nuclear capabilities with other countries besides Syria. The talks are the best way to confront the regime on proliferation issues, he said.

"I think that we are dealing with the consequences of the proliferation effort we saw in Syria in the six-party talks, and I think that is the appropriate vehicle for that," Gates said.

The Bush administration has been criticized by some conservatives within the Republican Party for continuing the talks even after North Korea's failure to make a timely disclosure of the full range of its nuclear activities, as required by an agreement reached this year.

The negotiations involve the U.S., Russia, China, Japan and North and South Korea.

The U.S. Defense chief spoke at a news conference at Yongsan Garrison, the American military base in Seoul, after a ceremony marking the change in command of four-star generals who oversee U.S. forces in South Korea. There are 28,500 American military personnel on the peninsula.

The incoming commander, Army Gen. Walter L. Sharp, pledged that the U.S. would continue to provide for South Korea's security even as wartime command of the Asian nation's forces gradually shifts to the Seoul government, a transfer scheduled to be completed in 2012. The South's military currently is part of a combined force overseen by the American commander.

"As an alliance, we must be prepared to fight and win," Sharp said. "Today, we and a majority of Seoul are within the range of North Korean artillery. North Korea claims to possess nuclear weapons. . . . Our allied purpose is to continue to deter aggression on the Korean peninsula."

While in Seoul, Gates also met with South Korea's defense minister, Lee Sang-hee, to discuss the transfer of command and the gradual move of U.S. forces from Yongsan to new bases south of the capital.

A senior U.S. official traveling with Gates said Lee also raised the prospect of working more closely outside East Asia with the U.S. and the international community.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-gates4-2008jun04,0,6364038.story>

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New York Times

June 4, 2008

Chief Cleric Says Iran Doesn't Seek Nuclear Arms

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN — Iran's supreme religious leader vowed Tuesday that his country would pursue a peaceful atomic energy program and had no interest in nuclear weapons, calling them expensive and useless.

The remarks by the leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, did not represent any change in Iran's official position, but were unusual because he said them publicly, just a few days before the major world powers were expected to offer Iran new incentives to suspend its uranium enrichment program.

Ayatollah Khamenei's remarks seemed clearly aimed at those powers, including the United States, that contend that Iran covets nuclear weapons and may secretly be trying to develop the technology to build them. Mr. Khamenei called those accusations false, saying they were meant to deprive Iran of its legitimate right to nuclear power.

"The Iranian nation is not seeking nuclear weapons," the ayatollah said at an event commemorating the 19th anniversary of the death of the founder of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

"We are seeking nuclear energy for peaceful purposes for daily use, and we will continue this path to the envy of our enemies," he said.

"You know the Iranian nation is in principle and on religious grounds against the nuclear weapon. Nuclear weapons only incur high costs and have no use. They do not bring power to a nation," he said.

The ayatollah spoke a day after the State Department said it expected Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, to travel to Iran in mid-June to offer a package of new inducements if it abandoned uranium enrichment, which can be used to produce both electric power and nuclear weapons.

Iran has consistently rejected demands that it stop enriching uranium, despite economic sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council.

Ayatollah Khamenei's speech also appeared to be a response to comments by the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, who said Monday in an unusually tough speech that Iran was holding back information needed to clarify intelligence reports that it had researched nuclear bombs in secret. The agency is the United Nations' nuclear monitor.

In what appeared to be a warning, the ayatollah said that terrorists could one day acquire nuclear bombs, leading to insecurity around the world.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/04/world/middleeast/04iran.html?ref=world>

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New York Times

June 4, 2008

Rice Calls Dialogue With Iran Pointless

By HELENE COOPER and ISABEL KERSHNER

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice escalated the Bush administration's anti-Iran rhetoric on Tuesday, accusing its government of pursuing nuclear weapons and calling any dialogue with its leaders pointless until they suspend the country's enrichment of uranium.

While Ms. Rice's message was familiar, the tone of her speech, before the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, was unusually sharp, taking oblique aim at Senator Barack Obama and other Democratic leaders who have called for the United States to engage Iran diplomatically.

"We would be willing to meet with them but not while they continue to inch toward nuclear weapons under the cover of talks," she told the group, a pro-Israel lobby known by its acronym, Aipac. "The real question isn't why won't the Bush administration talk to Iran. The real question is why won't Iran talk to us."

Ms. Rice stopped short of calling for consideration of military strikes against suspected Iranian nuclear targets, as some national security conservatives in Vice President Dick Cheney's office have advised. But, in a pointed nod to her pro-Israel audience, Ms. Rice called on America's allies in Europe to look for ways to further press the Iranian government.

"For the sake of peace, the world must not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon," she said.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel, on the other hand, put all options on the table. "The Iranian threat must be stopped by all possible means," he said Tuesday evening, speaking to the same group. "The international community has a duty and responsibility to clarify to Iran, through drastic measures, that the repercussions of their continued pursuit of nuclear weapons will be devastating."

Mr. Olmert also called for international sanctions against Iran to be toughened. He did not specifically mention military strikes, but did say that "Israel will not tolerate the possibility of a nuclear Iran, and neither should any country in the free world."

Mr. Olmert is scheduled to meet with President Bush at the White House on Wednesday.

The issue of opening high-level diplomatic talks with Iran has come under the spotlight this political season, and that has played out at Aipac's 2008 policy conference here.

On Monday, Senator John McCain, the presumptive Republican nominee for president, allied himself firmly with the Bush administration and charged that Mr. Obama's calls for diplomacy with Iran were misguided and insufficient. And on Tuesday, Howard Friedman, Aipac's president, used his introduction of Ms. Rice to implore her "to use your remaining time in office to ensure that Iran does not get a nuclear weapon."

Mr. Obama, who is seeking the Democratic nomination, will have the opportunity to defend his position on Wednesday when he, along with Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, his opponent, is scheduled to address the group.

Ms. Rice's speech was also notable for what it did not contain; she did not say that the Israeli-Palestinian peace deal that the Bush administration has been pursuing could be achieved by the end of the year.

"We still believe that we have a chance to reach an agreement on the basic contours of a peaceful Palestinian state," Ms. Rice said. "But if we can pursue this goal by the end of the year, it will be an historic breakthrough."

The difference seems small, but in the past President Bush and Ms. Rice have both spoken of sealing a deal by the end of the year, rather than simply pursuing one.

While Mr. Olmert was in Washington, in Israel, two senior members of his Kadima Party, both contenders to replace him as party leader in the event of his downfall over corruption charges, spoke out on national security issues.

Shaul Mofaz, the minister of transportation and a deputy prime minister, toured the Golan Heights on Tuesday and, in apparent contradiction with Mr. Olmert's policy, declared his opposition to returning that territory to Syria, which lost it to Israel in the 1967 war.

Mr. Mofaz said that it was possible to achieve peace with Syria without giving up the heights, and that "the significance of handing the Golan to the Syrians is Iranians in the Golan." Mr. Mofaz, born in Tehran, was referring to the alliance between Syria and Iran.

Although Mr. Olmert is widely believed to support Mr. Mofaz as a possible successor, Mr. Mofaz's message was a surprise. Israel and Syria recently resumed talks through Turkish mediation, and while Mr. Olmert denies having made any prior commitment to the Syrians regarding a withdrawal from the Golan, he says he is fully aware of Syria's expectations, as Syria is of Israel's.

Syria demands full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan while Israel expects Damascus to move out of the Iranian sphere and cease its support for militant anti-Israel organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah.

Israel's foreign minister and vice prime minister, Tzipi Livni, another Kadima Party leader who may one day replace Mr. Olmert, told Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday that it was important to keep the threat of a military option on the table for stopping Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

Iran says that its nuclear program is for civilian purposes only, which its supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, reiterated in a speech on Tuesday.

The Iranian issue was to figure prominently in Mr. Olmert's talks with American officials, according to the Israeli news media. Administration and Israeli officials said that President Bush could soon announce a security package for Israel that could include cruise missiles and a permanent hookup to a worldwide warning system against incoming ballistic missiles.

Ms. Rice alluded to such a package in her Aipac speech. "We will continue to improve the security capability of our friends, including their missile defense," she said.

Helene Cooper reported from Washington, and Isabel Kershner from Jerusalem.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/04/washington/04dipl.html?_r=1&ref=washington&oref=slogin

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Miami Herald

June 4, 2008

Pg. 16

Scientist Denies Direct Nuke Deals

A Pakistani nuclear expert says he did not offer technology directly to Libya and Iran, but set up the nations with businessmen.

By Saeed Shah, McClatchy News Service

A.Q. Khan, the renegade nuclear scientist from Pakistan who once admitted helping Iran and Libya obtain nuclear-weapons technology, said Tuesday that he'd only introduced those two "rogue" regimes to Western businessmen who provided the technology and the know-how for their fledgling nuclear-weapons program.

In a telephone interview with McClatchy in Islamabad, his first with an American news organization, Khan also said that others in Pakistan who had aided him had gotten away "scot-free" while he had become a "black sheep" for offering advice on nuclear weaponry.

Khan's protestations of innocence didn't impress Western experts.

Told of Khan's defense, David Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector who now heads the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington, said simply: "He's just lying; the facts are established." According to Albright, Khan agreed to oversee the building of a sophisticated nuclear facility for Libya.

In a startlingly detailed confession in 2004, Khan said that over a period of 15 years he'd provided Iran, Libya and North Korea with designs and technology. Much of that help, Pakistani officials said at the time, came from a secret network of smuggled equipment, the transfer of sensitive designs for centrifuges and technological advice offered in clandestine meetings with those nations' scientists. U.S. officials said the transfers didn't stop until just months before his confession.

In Tuesday's interview, Khan denied that he'd done anything but offer "very small advice" on where to acquire the technology. "When Iran and Libya wanted to do their program, they asked our advice. We said: 'OK, these are the suppliers, who provide all.'"

Khan said that the companies were European. Specifically, Khan said the nuclear technology included "complete centrifuge design, complete enrichment-plant drawings, complete weapons drawings."

"The Germans have those drawings. The South Africans have those drawings. The French have those drawings. They were the suppliers. You can't blame me for it. They were selling. They were making money. Why put blame on me? The fact that I brought [Libya and Iran] into contact with middlemen."

Khan disputed his confessed assistance to North Korea as well. He said that North Korea had obtained a different technology from its relationship with Russia.

"North Korea, right from the beginning, was one of the closest partners of Russia. All the North Korean scientists and engineers studied in Russia," Khan said.

Khan described the North Korean program as having "excellent technology" with "very sophisticated designs."

The Pakistani nuclear scientist, described by the CIA as "at least as dangerous as Osama bin Laden" and by Time magazine as "the merchant of menace," was bristling with indignation.

The allegations "are bull--- and concoctions," Khan said in the interview from his villa in one of Islamabad's leafiest residential areas, where he remains under house arrest. "Now I have become the black sheep."

An international pariah but still a hero to most Pakistanis, Khan said he wouldn't co-operate with inspectors from the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, who've pressed to interrogate him.

"Why should I? Are we their colony? We are not even a signatory to the NPT. There are no international laws that force anybody to comply," he said, referring to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. "Co-operation with the IAEA is voluntary."

Khan led Pakistan's covert nuclear program from its inception in the mid-1970s until he was forced to make his confession about his proliferation activities on national television in 2004, under huge pressure from Washington, which had discovered his allegedly lucrative trade.

According to many independent accounts, North Korea later sought to acquire uranium technology by swapping its missile systems for Pakistan's uranium-enrichment know-how. A recent book even claimed that the late former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was personally involved in the barter arrangement during a trip to Pyongyang. The Pakistani scientist remains under heavy guard at his home, with soldiers wielding automatic weapons stationed outside.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/world/story/557333.html>

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Boston Globe
June 4, 2008

Syria Refuses To Allow Nuclear Inspectors At 3 Suspect Sites

UN watchdog to probe building bombed by Israel

By George Jahn, Associated Press

VIENNA -- Syria has told fellow Arab countries that it will not permit an International Atomic Energy Agency probe to extend beyond a site bombed by Israel, despite agency interest in three other suspect locations, diplomats told the Associated Press yesterday.

The agency's main focus during its planned June 22-24 visit to Syria is a building in the country's remote eastern desert that was destroyed by Israeli jets in September.

IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei announced Monday that Damascus has agreed to an agency check of US assertions that target was a plutonium-producing reactor that was near completion, and thus at the stage where it could generate the fissile material for nuclear arms.

The UN agency is also interested in following up on information that Syria may have three other undeclared atomic facilities. Diplomats and a nuclear specialist told the AP on Monday that at least one of the sites might have equipment that can reprocess nuclear material into the fissile core of warheads.

One of the diplomats said the IAEA was following up on a US intelligence-based tip but emphasized the IAEA had not seen the intelligence. The nuclear specialist said two of the military sites were operational and one was under construction. He and the diplomats asked for anonymity because their information is confidential.

Yesterday, a senior diplomat familiar with the planned IAEA trip to Syria told the AP that expectations were Syria would gradually warm to the idea of giving agency specialists access to those three sites, as well as the bombed Al Kibar facility.

But two other diplomats briefed on the Syrian stance said outside a meeting of the IAEA's 35-nation board that a senior official from Damascus had ruled that out during a meeting with chief delegates of the 10 Arab nations accredited to the IAEA.

The diplomats said Syrian atomic energy chief Ibrahim Othman told the Arab delegates his country could not open secret military sites to outside perusal as long as Syria and Israel remained technically in a state of war.

After fighting three wars and clashing in Lebanon, Israel and Syria are bitter enemies whose last round of peace talks collapsed eight years ago. Both countries recently confirmed that they are holding peace talks through Turkish mediators.

The diplomats also said Othman expressed fear that too much openness on Syria's part would lead to years of relentless international perusal of the kind Iran's nuclear program is now undergoing, despite Tehran's assertions its aims are purely peaceful.

After-hours calls to the Syrian Mission to the IAEA in Vienna for comment went unanswered.

President Bashar Assad of Syria denied again that his country has a secret nuclear program yesterday in United Arab Emirates newspapers.

Neither the United States nor Israel told the IAEA about the bombed site until late April, about a year after they obtained what they considered decisive intelligence: dozens of photographs from a handheld camera of the inside and outside of the compound.

Syria had not reacted to repeated agency requests since for a visit to check out the allegations.

Satellite photos appear to show construction crews using the interval to erect another structure over the site - a move that heightened suspicions of a coverup.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2008/06/04/syria_refuses_to_allow_nuclear_inspectors_at_3_suspect_sites/

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Reuters

U.S. tells Syria not to restrict nuclear probe

Wed Jun 4, 2008 10:53am BST

By Mark Heinrich

VIENNA (Reuters) - The United States on Wednesday demanded Syria give free rein to U.N. nuclear investigators after diplomats said Damascus would bar access to some sites Washington believes are linked to a secret atomic reactor.

The United States says Syria was close to completing a reactor that could have yielded plutonium for nuclear arms before it was bombed by Israel last September.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog began an inquiry after receiving U.S. intelligence documentation in April.

International Atomic Energy Agency director Mohamed ElBaradei said on Monday that Syria, which had not responded to IAEA requests for explanations since the bombing, would allow in United Nations inspectors on June 22-24 to pursue the inquiry.

Informed diplomats said Syria would let inspectors examine the al-Kibar site in its northeast desert, but not go to three other locations believed to house facilities or equipment for producing plutonium from fuel from the reactor.

That prompted Gregory Schulte, U.S. ambassador to the IAEA, to demand that Syria not hinder agency investigators in any way.

"The United States welcomes the announcement that the IAEA will visit Syria and stands ready to support a rigorous IAEA investigation into Syria's clandestine nuclear activities," Schulte said in a statement sent to Reuters.

"It is imperative that Syria fully cooperate with the IAEA and in no way hinder the investigation either by further delaying an inspection or by refusing the IAEA unfettered access to any site requested by the IAEA," he said.

Syria, which has said the bombed site was a disused military building and that it has no clandestine nuclear programme, has not confirmed publicly the IAEA visit.

RESTRICTED VISIT

But a senior Syrian official told an Arab League meeting outside an IAEA governors' conference in Vienna on Tuesday that the IAEA trip would go ahead and inspectors would get access to the al-Kibar site, diplomats in the meeting said.

But they said Syrian Atomic Energy Agency chief Ibrahim Othman told them Damascus would not permit checks of other sites Washington had urged inspectors to examine as possible places for processing nuclear material.

They said the position of Syria, which is in a state of war with Israel, was that the other sites were off-limits military installations essential to national security and irrelevant to the IAEA because they had no nuclear connection.

Syria was granting inspectors access to al-Kibar as a one-off gesture to dispel international doubts and it expected the IAEA to close the file after the June mission, they said.

But nuclear analysts, citing satellite photos, say Syria has bulldozed and swept clean the al-Kibar zone since the bombing and erected a new building over it, possibly to erase evidence.

The United States says Syria had been building the nuclear reactor since 2001 with the help of North Korea, which quit the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 2003 and tested a nuclear device three years later.

Washington produced for reporters in April before-and-after aerial photographs of the suspected reactor as well as detailed interior photographs of what it said were key components.

Syria has one old research reactor under IAEA monitoring.

It is a close ally of Iran, whose secretive uranium enrichment programme has been under IAEA investigation since 2003 due to Western suspicions of a covert drive for atom bombs.

Iran says it wants only nuclear-generated electricity.

Syrian President Bashar Assad said earlier this week Damascus was not seeking nuclear arms but wanted access to peaceful atomic energy through a collective Arab project.

(Editing by Janet Lawrence)

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUKL0444861820080604?sp=true>

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Air Force Times

Some mobility bag gear expired, missing

More than half of the packs had problems

By Bruce Rolfsen - Staff writer

Posted : Wednesday Jun 4, 2008 12:59:11 EDT

The next time someone hands you a deployment mobility bag filled with chemical warfare protection gear, check the expiration dates.

The Air Force Audit Agency found that more than half the mobility bags opened by an inspection team were not correctly stocked. The same investigation found that many bags were missing items such as gas mask canisters and chemical protection suits or had gear stored beyond expiration dates.

And this isn't the first time.

In 2005, the audit agency checked mobility bags at 20 Air Force bases and found 24 percent of the items were incorrectly listed in the computer system used to track expiration dates. The bad information meant items would expire without being replaced.

In response, the Air Force started a standardized training program for airmen managing supplies of chemical warfare protection gear. But that training was dropped a year later to save money, auditors learned when they went back to check bags in 2007.

Getting handed green mobility bags for a deployment is part of an airman's deployment rite of passage. The bags contain gear that an airman doesn't need at home base, such as a gas mask or clothes for extreme cold weather.

Until three years ago, airmen got their bags as they prepared to leave for U.S. Central Command assignments. Then the service decided to save money — millions of dollars, in fact — by keeping the bags at deployment centers in the Persian Gulf region — Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar; Ali Al Salem Air Base, Kuwait; and Al Dhafra Air Base, Oman — and at Manas Air Base in Kyrgyzstan.

Airmen get the bags as they pass through the deployment centers. When it is time to head home, airmen return the bags.

The change saved the Air Force about \$10.3 million annually by not having to ship the bags back and forth from home bases, according to the Audit Agency.

However, the change also meant that keeping the bags correctly stocked and accounted for was a job that went to airmen who, themselves, were deploying for four-month stays and may have had no experience managing the bags until they deployed, the audit found.

The latest audit found that newly arrived logistics readiness squadron airmen often lacked the training they needed to manage the bags or keep records up to date in the software program used to track bags.

The audit agency inspected 550 bags used by airmen deploying to Iraq, Afghanistan and bases in the Persian Gulf region. Auditors found 291 were not properly stocked. At Al Dhafra, 14 of the 50 chemical protection bags lacked critical goods such as gas mask canisters, decontamination kits and protective outerwear.

Investigators also found that the teams in charge of the bags failed to keep up-to-date items in the chemical bags. Airmen were given 1,473 bags containing 3,391 items whose shelf-life expired while the airmen had the bags, the report said.

The agency inspected mobility bags and checked records from February 2007 to October and issued the report in February 2008. Air Force Times obtained a copy of the report through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Air Force officials in charge of maintaining mobility bags told the audit agency that many problems would be corrected by the end of May.

Today, airmen assigned to manage the mobility bag stockpile must complete a series of online courses before they deploy, said Vicki Stein, a spokeswoman for Air Force headquarters. The courses focus on the computer program used to track bags and the contents of each bag.

http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2008/06/airforce_mobility_bags_060308w/

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New York Times

June 6, 2008

Pg. 1

2 Leaders Ousted From Air Force In Atomic Errors

By Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON — The Air Force's senior civilian official and its highest-ranking general were ousted by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates on Thursday after an inquiry into the mishandling of nuclear weapons and components found systemic problems in the Air Force.

The Air Force secretary, Michael W. Wynne, and the service's chief of staff, Gen. T. Michael Moseley, were forced to resign after the inquiry found that the latest in a series of incidents reflected "a pattern of poor performance" in securing sensitive military components, Mr. Gates said at a Pentagon briefing.

So deep and serious are the problems, Mr. Gates said, that he has asked a former secretary of defense and of energy, James R. Schlesinger, to head "a senior-level task force" to recommend improvements in the safekeeping of nuclear weapons, delivery vehicles and other sensitive items.

In office 18 months, Mr. Gates has made accountability a central theme, firing senior Army officials after disclosures of shoddy conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and pushing into retirement other generals closely associated with a faltering strategy in Iraq.

But never before has a defense secretary simultaneously ousted a service secretary and a service chief. Mr. Gates said he had taken the action because the investigation identified "a lack of effective Air Force leadership oversight" and found that "the Air Force has not been sufficiently critical of its past performance."

"Mistakes are not acceptable when shipping and controlling sensitive, classified parts" of the United States' nuclear arsenal, Mr. Gates said. "Our policy is clear. We will ensure the complete physical control of nuclear weapons, and we will properly handle the associated components at all times. It is a tremendous responsibility, and one we must not, and will never, take lightly."

Mr. Wynne's only comment was a statement issued Thursday, in which he said, "Recent events convince me that it is now time for a new leader to take the stick and for me to move on."

The inquiry involving the Air Force was an effort to determine how four high-tech electrical nose cone fuses for Minuteman nuclear warheads were sent to Taiwan in place of helicopter batteries. The mistake was discovered in March — a year and a half after the mistaken shipment.

Mr. Gates made clear that most troubling was that the inquiry showed how little the Air Force had done to improve the security of the nuclear weapons infrastructure even after it was disclosed last year that a B-52 bomber had flown across the United States without anyone's realizing that it was carrying six armed nuclear cruise missiles.

Mr. Gates, whose military service includes a year as an intelligence officer within the Air Force's nuclear program, emphasized that neither incident posed a danger of a nuclear mishap.

Nevertheless, he said, the inquiry made it clear that the Air Force had suffered for years from a loss of expertise in handling nuclear materials. He acknowledged that the Air Force had taken steps to improve the situation, but he said that more must be done to fix "structural, procedural and cultural problems."

Mr. Gates, 64, served as deputy national security adviser and director of central intelligence under the first President George Bush. He has repeatedly said that he plans to retire from government service at the end of the Bush administration, but there has been speculation that he may be asked to stay on by either a President McCain or a President Obama after January, to help guide the Pentagon while the country is at war.

Pentagon officials said General Moseley, in his role as a member of the Joint Chiefs, met Thursday with Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman, who supported the decisions for both officials to retire.

The errors in handling nuclear weapons components constituted more than just an indication that the cold-war-era focus on these powerful weapons had become fuzzy. They have also put the Bush administration in a difficult position, as the United States is struggling to prevent nuclear technology from spreading to nations that do not have it and has criticized North Korea and Iran for their nuclear ambitions. American officials have even spoken strongly to Russia for not sufficiently safeguarding its stockpile.

After the incident with the nose cone fuses was discovered, Mr. Gates told the Air Force and Navy secretaries to conduct a comprehensive review and a physical site inventory of all nuclear and nuclear-associated material equipment across their respective programs. Adm. Kirkland H. Donald, director of Navy Nuclear Propulsion, led the investigation, and gave his report to Mr. Gates last week.

Senator Carl Levin, the Michigan Democrat who heads the Senate Armed Services Committee, applauded Mr. Gates's move.

"Secretary Gates's focus on accountability is essential and had been absent from the office of the secretary of defense for too long," Mr. Levin said in a statement. "The safety and security of America's nuclear weapons must receive the highest priority, just as it must in other countries."

Mr. Gates said his actions Thursday had been wholly driven by Admiral Donald's inquiry, and were not related to other embarrassments that have plagued the Air Force over recent months.

Among the troubles has been an inquiry into contracts for the Air Force's flying stunt team, the Thunderbirds, which found that a \$50 million contract to promote the Thunderbirds had been tainted by improper influence and preferential treatment. No criminal conduct was found, but three officials were subjected to administrative penalties.

Mr. Gates has also expressed frustration about some Air Force actions on weapons procurement, budgets and execution of the mission in Iraq and Afghanistan, his aides said.

The Air Force has more than doubled the number of armed Predator and Reaper hunter-killer aircraft over Iraq and Afghanistan since early last year, but aides to Mr. Gates say he is still not satisfied with the number of surveillance aircraft in the war zone.

The ouster of the top Air Force officials is similar to Mr. Gates's moves in March 2007 after disclosures of shoddy conditions at Walter Reed, when he forced Francis J. Harvey to resign as Army secretary, a day after a decision that the two-star general in charge of Walter Reed would be relieved of command.

Mr. Gates also decided last year not to recommend either the reappointment of Gen. Peter Pace as chairman of the Joint Chiefs or that of Gen. John P. Abizaid as commander of American forces in the Middle East. Both men were closely associated with early military policy for Iraq.

David Stout contributed reporting.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/06/washington/06military.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=2+Leaders+Ousted+From+Air+Force+In+Atomic+Errors&st=nyt&oref=slogin

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Washington Post

June 6, 2008

Pg. 1

Top Two Air Force Officials Ousted

Failures in Oversight Of Nuclear Arms Cited

By Ann Scott Tyson and Josh White, Washington Post Staff Writers

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates ousted the Air Force's civilian and military chiefs yesterday, an unprecedented move that came after a classified Pentagon investigation found "a chain of failures" in the Air Force's safeguarding of the U.S. nuclear arsenal.

Gates decided to remove Air Force Secretary Michael W. Wynne and the chief of staff, Gen. T. Michael "Buzz" Moseley, because "the focus of the Air Force leadership has drifted with respect to perhaps its most sensitive mission," he said yesterday, adding that he would recommend replacements for both positions to President Bush shortly.

The departures of Wynne and Moseley cap a disastrous period for the Air Force, one that has included a bomber wing inadvertently flying nuclear warheads over the continental United States, the mistaken and long-unnoticed transfer of secret nuclear-related materials to Taiwan, and a corrupt \$50 million contract for a Thunderbirds air show that went to a company owned by a retired four-star general and a civilian friend of senior Air Force leaders.

Gates is the first defense secretary to fire both the military and civilian heads of a service at the same time, underscoring his willingness to shake up the Pentagon establishment to advance his priorities, officials said. Only a few months into his tenure, in March 2007, Gates forced Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey to resign over his handling of problems in care for wounded outpatient soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

The recently completed Pentagon investigation into the Taiwan incident -- in which four Air Force ballistic missile fuses were mistakenly shipped to Taiwan from the Defense Logistics Agency in 2006 -- led Gates to realize that dramatic steps were needed to correct critical shortfalls in Air Force oversight of the nuclear arsenal. The classified materials were in Taiwan military control for about 17 months.

The investigation, led by Adm. Kirkland H. Donald, the Pentagon's top official for nuclear safety, also found a "gradual erosion" of nuclear standards, technical expertise and oversight over the past decade.

Speaking at a Pentagon news conference yesterday, Gates noted with some irritation that after the two highly publicized incidents in which the Air Force lost control over nuclear components, the call for a thorough investigation "was not initiated by the Air Force leadership, but required my intervention."

The Taiwan shipment "represents a significant failure to ensure the security of sensitive military components," Gates said. He added: "More troubling, it depicts a pattern of poor performance that was highlighted to us following last year's incident involving the improper [transfer] of nuclear weapons between Minot Air Force Base and Barksdale Air Force Base." In August, the service lost track of warheads for 36 hours when it unknowingly flew them between those bases, in North Dakota and Louisiana.

Not only did top officials fall short in those specific cases, Gates said, but "they failed to recognize systemic problems" or address them. He said a "substantial number" of Air Force generals and colonels also have been identified as "potentially subject to disciplinary measures."

In a resignation letter to Gates, Wynne wrote that "I have read with regret the recent report concerning the control of nuclear-related assets" and added: "I have to live up to the same standards I expect from my Airmen."

Moseley was called back to Washington yesterday morning to meet with Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Later in the day, Deputy Defense Secretary Gordon England flew to a meeting of senior Air Force leaders in Ohio to meet with Wynne, the Pentagon official said.

Gates thanked the two men for their service. "Mike Wynne is a dedicated and honorable public servant," he said, "and Buzz Moseley has given decades of courageous and devoted service to his country."

While the scathing nuclear report was the critical factor driving Gates's decision, officials acknowledged that earlier problems had also raised doubts about the effectiveness of the Air Force leadership.

The past year has seen friction between the Air Force and top Pentagon officials over matters including the service's role in the Iraq war and its preference for new, expensive F-22 fighter jets. The dispute over funding for the jets raised ire in the Bush administration because the Air Force lobbied for more jets than the White House was willing to officially request.

Senior Air Force officials have also seen their credibility slipping on Capitol Hill, where lawmakers have been challenging major acquisitions such as a tanker deal and the pursuit of advanced fighter jets. Recent revelations about inappropriate influence and command involvement in the Thunderbirds contract brought specific concerns to bear publicly.

In letters to Gates in April, Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), a member of the Armed Services Committee, singled out Moseley for his involvement in the contracting scandal and urged at least a reprimand; Moseley has said in interviews that in hindsight, his closeness to contract bidders could be viewed as inappropriate, but he has defended such relationships as critical to developing new ideas for the services.

McCaskill praised Gates yesterday. "What is refreshing . . . is that we finally hold those who are senior accountable, as we do for the subordinate ranks," she said.

Sen. Carl M. Levin (D-Mich.), chairman of the Armed Services Committee, also hailed Gates's focus on accountability, saying it had been "absent from the Office of the Secretary of Defense for too long."

Gates said former defense secretary James R. Schlesinger will head a task force to ensure the "highest levels" of control over nuclear weapons.

Gates already has candidates in mind to replace Wynne, and possible replacements for Moseley include Gen. Kevin P. Chilton, head of the U.S. Strategic Command; Gen. John D.W. Corley, chief of the Air Combat Command; and Gen. Norton A. Schwartz, head of the U.S. Transportation Command, according to senior defense officials.

White reported from Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/05/AR2008060501908.html>

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Las Vegas Sun

Russia shuts 2nd of its 3 remaining plutonium reactors

The Associated Press

Thu, Jun 5, 2008 (2:42 p.m.)

Russia closed down the second of its three remaining plutonium-producing reactors Thursday, part of a years-long effort by Moscow and Washington to shutter the Cold War-era facilities that produced material for nuclear weapons. The ADE-5 reactor at the Siberian Chemical Plant in Seversk stopped operation and workers will begin removing remaining uranium fuel, said the atomic energy agency, Rosatom, in a statement. It will take several years to dismantle the reactor's technical equipment.

The U.S. Energy Department also announced the closure.

The plant's first reactor was shut down on April 20. Russia's last plutonium-producing reactor, in the city of Zheleznogorsk, is expected to be shuttered by 2010.

Located in secret cities, the plants were part of the Soviet Union's sprawling nuclear weapons complex and produced weapons-grade plutonium over the course of 50 years. But in the early years after the Soviet breakup, the Defense Ministry stopped buying the plutonium.

The United States pushed for years to close down the plants, but they produced electricity and heat for nearby cities as a byproduct of their operations and the Russians did not want to leave Siberian cities without power before coal-fired replacement plants were built.

The United States committed \$926 million to help build the fossil fuel plants, along with donations from Britain, Canada and other nations.

The design of the Seversk and Zheleznogorsk reactors _ similar to the Chernobyl reactor that exploded in 1986 _ also raised fears of accidents.

According to the National Nuclear Security Administration, a U.S. agency that coordinates nonproliferation programs, the plants together produced more than 1 ton of plutonium annually.

The United States has also funded efforts to help Russia pay for construction of a plant to turn the stockpiled plutonium into a mixed oxide nuclear fuel and for research into a more advanced reactor that could speed up the process of disposing of plutonium.

The United States _ which has closed all its 14 plutonium-production facilities _ is believed to have about 110 tons of weapons-grade plutonium stockpiled and Russia about 154 tons.

While the two countries have promised to each dispose of about 37.5 tons of excess weapons-grade plutonium, Russia until earlier this year has continued to produce about 1.3 tons per year of new plutonium.

Associated Press writer H. Josef Hebert contributed to this report from Washington.

<http://www.lasvegassun.com/news/2008/jun/05/russia-shutters-2nd-of-its-3-remaining-plutonium-r/>

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Financial Times

June 7, 2008

Israel May Strike Iran, Deputy PM Says

By Tobias Buck and Daniel Dombey

A senior member of the Israeli government has stated that an attack on Iran is becoming “unavoidable” if Tehran is to be stopped from acquiring nuclear weapons.

The blunt warning that Israel’s government is ready to strike at its chief rival in the region was given by Shaul Mofaz, transport minister and a deputy prime minister, in a press interview published Friday.

He said: “If Iran continues with its programme for developing nuclear weapons, we will attack it. The sanctions are ineffective.”

The Iran-born Mr Mofaz added that “attacking Iran, in order to stop its nuclear plans, will be unavoidable”.

The remarks by Mr Mofaz, a former military chief of staff and ex-defence minister, reflect rising concerns in Israel and the US over Iran’s nuclear programme. But they are also made against the backdrop of a fierce succession struggle in Israel’s governing Kadima party. Mr Mofaz is positioning himself as an uncompromising defender of the country’s security interests.

Ehud Olmert, the prime minister and current Kadima leader, is facing intense pressure to resign over an investigation into allegations that he accepted illegal funds from a US Jewish businessman. His troubles have set off a race among senior Kadima officials to succeed him both as party leader and prime minister.

Tzipi Livni, the foreign minister and the figurehead for Kadima’s centrist wing, is widely seen as the frontrunner, with the hawkish Mr Mofaz emerging as her main rival. Mr Mofaz has a reputation for being a hardliner on security matters and is relying strongly on his military experience to win the backing of Kadima members.

Meanwhile, Mr Olmert issued a tough warning on Friday to Hamas, a main ally of Iran. The Palestinian Islamist group rules the Gaza Strip, from where it and other militant organisations regularly fire rockets on nearby Israeli towns. One rocket killed an Israeli man this week.

Mr Olmert said: “According to the information we have now, the pendulum is closer to a decision to embark on a harsh operation in the Gaza Strip than it is to an agreement with the terror organisations.”

Israel’s prime minister returned Friday from a trip to Washington, where his meetings with senior US officials were held amid increasing speculation that the Jewish state favoured a military strike on Iran.

Washington continues to back the current international diplomatic strategy based on sanctions and an offer of greater co-operation if Iran reins in its nuclear programme.

However, frustration with the current approach is growing in Washington. Many diplomats believe that Iran will reject or ignore an offer due to be made to Tehran next week by Javier Solana, the European Union’s foreign policy chief.

They also discount the prospects of a new round of United Nations sanctions this year, largely because of Russia’s reluctance to back measures while President George W. Bush is still in office in Washington.

The near impasse has been reached as Iran proceeds to build up its capacity for uranium enrichment, a process which can produce both nuclear fuel and weapons-grade material. Tehran insists its programme is purely peaceful.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/ce864e1a-33b7-11dd-869b-0000779fd2ac.html>

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Boston Globe

June 7, 2008

Sitting Down At The Nuclear Table With Iran

By Graham Allison

IN A SPEECH this week, Iran's supreme leader found himself in rare agreement with President Bush. Echoing Bush's judgment that nuclear terrorism is "the single most serious threat to American national security," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei warned that, "sooner or later, international terrorists will get their hands on nuclear weapons and bring the security of the world . . . to an end."

Bush has insisted that "for the sake of peace, the world must not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon."

Unfortunately, however, as a result of the failure of the Bush administration's strategy toward Iran, today Tehran stands seven years further down its path to nuclear weapons than it did on Jan. 20, 2001. Specifically, when Bush entered office, Iran had no operational uranium enrichment facilities. Today, as last month's International Atomic Energy Agency report documents, Iran is operating 3,492 centrifuges in a cascade that has produced 500 pounds of low-enriched uranium. This is one-third of what is required for Iran's first nuclear bomb.

The Bush administration's strategy to prevent Iran's mastering technology for enriching uranium and producing nuclear weapons has been characterized as a "diplomatic slow squeeze." The administration has hoped that UN Security Council resolutions isolating Iran, enforced by sanctions, would persuade Tehran to suspend enrichment activity. Ironically, the IAEA chose Memorial Day to inform its member governments that for the third time, Iran has stiffed the demands of the Security Council resolution.

In baseball, it's three strikes and you're out. After the undeniable failure of the third Security Council resolution imposing sanctions to slow Iran's nuclear program, Bush's Iran strategists should recognize that they have struck out. Hoping to divert attention from this record, the Bush administration has further confused the issue with exaggerated rhetorical attacks on those who advocate an alternative strategy of direct diplomacy including negotiations. Speaking to the Israeli Knesset on the 60th anniversary of Israel's creation, Bush accused proponents of negotiations with unfriendly regimes of "appeasement." More diplomatically, but equally pointedly, in addressing the American Israel Public Affairs Committee this week, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called for another dose of the same medicine the administration has been prescribing, and sought to shift the blame to Iran, asserting that "The real question is: Why won't Tehran talk to us?"

Facts are only obliquely relevant to political debate. But for the record, the charge of appeasement leveled against British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain focused not on his willingness to talk, but on his unwillingness to act. In the run-up to World War II, negotiation was not the issue. The question was whether Britain and France would act when Adolf Hitler violated Germany's Versailles Treaty commitments.

Winston Churchill criticized the governments for capitulating when Hitler remilitarized the Rhineland, arguing that if they had responded, "There is no doubt that Hitler would have been compelled by his own General Staff to withdraw. . . . They had only to act to win." Instead, a confident Hitler went on to absorb Austria, and after Munich, Czechoslovakia.

If Bush recognized the fact that his diplomatic squeeze has failed, and asked what he could do in his final eight months to advance US interests in relations with Iran, he would not have to look beyond his own Cabinet.

In a 2004 report titled "Iran: Now is the Time for a New Approach," Defense Secretary Robert Gates urged that "the United States deal with the current regime rather than wait for it to fall." When asked about this recommendation during recent testimony on the Hill, Gates noted that he had been "in a happier place" then.

But it is clear that Gates remains convinced that direct negotiations are imperative for solving the nuclear standoff. As he told the Academy of American Diplomacy last month, "We need to figure out a way to develop some leverage . . . and then sit down and talk with them."

Negotiations are never certain to yield results. The alternative, a world of nuclear anarchy, is of great concern to both nations. Having seen the results of seven years of nonengagement, Bush could do his successor - whether Democrat or Republican - a great favor by proposing to negotiate with Iran now.

Graham Allison is director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Harvard Kennedy School.

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/06/07/sitting_down_at_the_nuclear_table_with_iran/

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Yahoo! News

Army: US chemical weapons incineration on track

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press Writer

Thu Jun 5, 4:31 AM ET

ANNISTON, Ala. - When the Army began building incinerators to destroy tons of deadly chemical weapons, many feared the worst.

They protested, sued, demanded gas masks for nearby residents and raised the specter of exposure to deadly exhaust. But now, more than half the nation's aging cache of 31,500 tons of nerve agents and mustard gas has been burned or chemically neutralized at seven sites with no major accidents in the 18 years since the program began.

In eastern Alabama, Joyce Walker says she and her husband sleep well at night, a few miles away from Anniston Army Depot, where 2,254 tons of chemical munitions were stored for decades in dirt-covered concrete bunkers. "I'll be glad when it's gone, but I don't think about it very much," Walker said.

Like many people in the area, she hasn't opened the safety gear given by the military and meant to save her life in the worst-case scenario considered by officials: A large explosion, like one caused by an airliner crashing into a bunker, creating a cloud of lethal nerve agent that could drift for several miles.

Officials say the most deadly chemicals were destroyed first and almost all the risk to residents has been eliminated. "The engineers who designed this thing were really on top of things as far as I can tell," said Darrell Davenport, who handled the first weapon brought into the incinerator site in 2003 and still works there.

Critics still challenge the safety of the program, arguing the incinerators scattered across the United States belch unknown amounts of deadly chemicals on an unsuspecting public. The incinerators heat the agents and their containers at thousands of degrees, then run the exhaust through pollution-removing filters and afterburners.

"If you go by their body count so far, I guess it has been a success," said Craig Williams of the Kentucky-based Chemical Weapons Working Group, which has been the lead watchdog group on the program and has pushed the Army to consider alternatives to incineration. "The fact is we still don't know what is coming out of the stacks or what the long-term effect will be."

The Army says all its emissions are closely monitored and there is likely no risk. Low-level leaks have been detected in the past at some of the incinerator sites and bunkers, but they have not threatened any people, officials say.

The Chemical Materials Agency, which oversees the storage and destruction of most of the military's chemical stockpile, says the program's only death was at Johnston Atoll in the South Pacific, where a worker died in a fall after scaffolding collapsed.

"We really haven't had a serious incident throughout the life of the program concerning chemical weapons," said Greg Mahall, a spokesman for the agency. "We're very proud of our safety record."

The cost is steep. The total cost of destroying all U.S. chemical weapons is estimated at \$34 billion. Under an international treaty, it's supposed to be completed by 2012.

Incinerators are operating at Tooele, Utah; Umatilla, Ore.; and Pine Bluff, Ark. A facility at Newport, Ind., is nearly finished using chemical treatments to break down old weapons.

The stockpile at Aberdeen, Md., has been neutralized, and the first incinerator, on Johnston Atoll in the South Pacific, was dismantled after destroying about 2,000 tons of chemical agents.

Destruction of stockpiles by chemical neutralization has yet to start in Pueblo, Colo., and Richmond, Ky.

Located near Interstate 20 about 50 miles east of Birmingham, Anniston was the nation's first weapons incinerator located in a residential area. The region is home to thousands of depot employees and retirees who owe their livelihoods to the Army.

The site has finished destroying its most hazardous munitions, including rockets and artillery shells loaded with VX or sarin. Thousands of VX land mines and shells and mortars packed with mustard gas await destruction.

"From a risk perspective to the community, over 98 percent of the risk is gone," site manager Timothy Garrett said.

"The risk with the land mines is so small it's hard to put on a chart, and there is no risk to the community from the mustard gas."

The state has issued \$50,700 in fines since 2005 for violations that included improper processing procedures and using faulty equipment. Garrett called the amount small for the size of the operation.

Responding to demands from local officials and incineration opponents, the military provided many of the 35,000 people who live within nine miles of the incinerator with safety kits that include breathing hoods, sheeting and tape to seal off a room. Some schools retrofitted buildings so they can be overpressurized to keep out lethal fumes. So far, none of the precautions have been needed.

At the site, detection devices constantly monitor the air. Everyone carries a gas mask. Workers wear gear resembling astronaut suits when they enter potentially lethal areas, and nearly all the incineration work is done by remote control.

When the work is done, the incinerator will likely cannibalize some of its own parts and close down, as required by law. Workers like Chuck Doscher, a control room supervisor, wonder if it could be converted for civilian use, but realize their goal.

"We know we're all working ourselves out of a job," Doscher said.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080605/ap_on_re_us/chemical_weapons_2

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INSIDE THE PENTAGON - www.OutsideDefense.com

June 5, 2008

STRATCOM CHIEF TO LEAD NUCLEAR COMMAND AND CONTROL REVIEW PANEL

U.S. Strategic Command chief Gen. Kevin Chilton will spearhead a Pentagon-led, multiagency review tasked with revamping command and control capabilities for U.S. nuclear weapons programs, *Inside the Pentagon* has learned.

Chilton will chair the five-member executive panel of the U.S. Nuclear Command and Control System (NCCS) Comprehensive Review Committee, a command spokesman told *ITP*. The executive panel will oversee research and analysis work of four separate groups focusing on various aspects of the U.S. nuclear command and control system.

"Each of the working groups, and their associated research groups, will be comprised of representatives of departments and agencies having equities in the NCCS," the spokesman said. Along with DOD and STRATCOM, representatives from the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration, the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department and the White House will also be included on the panel, the spokesman said.

Aside from Chilton, members of the committee and working groups have yet to be approved by Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

Elements of the State Department may also participate on the panel, but that has yet to be finalized, a defense official, on condition of anonymity, told *ITP* last month.

To that end, the command spokesman added that "several other agencies" could also be integrated into the panel's working group construct, but provided no details as to which specific agencies are being considered. The working groups will consist of a group "chairman" directing the work of eight people assessing the U.S. nuclear command and control apparatus in four different areas.

The first working group will explore "intelligence and other support" elements of the nuclear C2 system, the spokesman said. Members of the intelligence working group will evaluate information assurance systems, integrated tactical warning and attack assessment, communications and "threats to the nuclear weapons enterprise."

The second working group will focus on C2 elements of the actual nuclear weapons systems, specifically on weapon delivery systems, warheads and the overall stockpile. The third working subpanel will drill down into security issues related to the U.S. nuclear stockpile, from physical security of nuclear weapon systems to response strategies in cases of accidents or other "incidents" to the stockpile.

The fourth and final group will take a hard look at the command and control structure of the stockpile with an eye toward planning and execution of nuclear weapon strikes.

"We have a procedure in place to identify and address cross-cutting issues," the spokesman said. "Committee support staff facilitators, positioned within the working and research groups, will assist in coordinating cross-cutting issues."

Other advisory roles and responsibilities of STRATCOM are still in the coordination process, the spokesman said. "Many of the teams will be briefed by STRATCOM and other knowledgeable agencies, and in select instances, working group chairs and their associated teams will directly draw on the expertise of STRATCOM," he said. DOD officials formally stood up the panel on Jan. 17 in response to a request from Chilton late last year.

Chilton noted in a December 2007 missive that since the issuance of National Security Presidential Directive 28 in 2003 -- which supported the implementation of high-level policy guidance for protecting the homeland against nuclear terrorism -- "there has been no inter-departmental, comprehensive review of nuclear command and control responsibilities."

In the interim, "significant policy and guidance changes, emerging threats and vulnerabilities . . . and technological opportunities and challenges have occurred," Chilton wrote in the letter requesting the panel's creation.

"These factors affect the ability of the eight federal departments and agencies comprising the NCCS to maintain an appropriate balance between assuring authorized use of nuclear weapons, while assuring against unauthorized or inadvertent use," Chilton wrote.

U.S. officials have recently endured two embarrassing, high-profile incidents in which U.S. military personnel mistakenly transported sensitive nuclear weapons material.

Last August, six live nuclear cruise missiles on board an Air Force B-52 bomber were accidentally flown across the United States from Minot Air Force Base, ND, to Barksdale AFB, LA. Air Force officials discovered the aircraft's highly dangerous cargo only after the bomber landed at Barksdale that same day.

In March, it was discovered that the Pentagon had mistakenly shipped four ballistic missile detonators to Taiwan three years prior as part of what was thought to be a shipment of helicopter batteries to the Asian nation. -- *Carlo Muñoz*

<http://insidedefense.com/secure/print/PENTAGON.pdf>

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