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Articles & Other Documents:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Russia opens 4th chemical weapons destruction plant | Did Rogue Network Leak Nuclear Bomb Design? |
| Advisers To Obama, McCain See Common Ground On Nonproliferation | WMD threat office |
| As Poles Balk, U.S. Eyes Lithuania As Site For Missile Shield | Rice: Concessions Outweigh U.S. Cost |
| Department of Defense Chemical and Biological Defense Program Annual Report to Congress | US military loses nuclear parts: report |
| U.S. Says Exercise By Israel Seemed Directed At Iran | U.S. Nuke Spotters Sent To China Before Games |
| U.S. looks for N.Korean declaration "in near future" | |
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Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

Established in 1998, the USAF/CPC provides education and research to present and future leaders of the Air Force, as well as to members of other branches of the armed services and Department of Defense. Our purpose is to help those agencies better prepare to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Please feel free to visit our web site at <http://cpc.au.af.mil/> for in-depth information and specific points of contact. Please direct any questions or comments on CPC Outreach Journal to Jo Ann Eddy, CPC Outreach Editor, at (334) 953-7538 or DSN 493-7538. To subscribe, change e-mail address, or unsubscribe to this journal or to request inclusion on the mailing list for CPC publications, please contact Mrs. Eddy, joann.eddy.ctr@maxwell.af.mil.

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International Herald Tribune

June 17, 2008

Russia opens 4th chemical weapons destruction plant

The Associated Press

Tuesday, June 17, 2008

MOSCOW: Russia opened a fourth plant Tuesday to destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles, which are the largest in the world.

The destruction facility, near the site of one of Russia's seven major chemical weapons arsenals, will help accelerate an ambitious effort to eliminate the stockpiles in less than four years.

The facility near Leonidovka in the Penza Oblast will serve to destroy 7,600 tons (6,885 metric tons) of VX, sarin, and soman nerve agents, about 17 percent of Russia's declared chemical weapons stockpile, according to Global Green USA, the Washington-based affiliate of former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's Green Cross International environmental organization.

The plant is about 350 miles (550 kilometers) southeast of Moscow,

Global Green USA congratulated Russia on neutralizing about 25 percent of its declared 40,000 metric tons chemical weapons stockpiles.

The start-up of the fourth facility will help speed up destruction "and potentially meet the April 2012 deadline of the Chemical Weapons Convention" for elimination of the stockpile, Global Green USA program director Paul Walker said in a statement.

"However, deadlines must not trump safety and protection of public health, and we urge Russia to be extremely cautious and transparent as they move forward with this dangerous process," Walker said.

The U.S. has declared the world's second-largest chemical weapons stockpiles, 31,500 tons, and has completed destruction of about half of it.

Russia signed the Chemical Weapons Convention in 1997, pledging to eliminate its arsenal within 10 years. Both Russia and the U.S. have been granted a five-year extension to the original deadline.

Rogelio Pfirter, director-general of The Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, who attended Tuesday's plant opening, praised Russia for working to fulfill its pledge and called for international assistance in the effort.

Of Russia's three other chemical weapons disposal plants, two were built with foreign funding.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2008/06/17/news/Russia-Chemical-Weapons.php>

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

Christian Science Monitor

June 18, 2008

Did Rogue Network Leak Nuclear Bomb Design?

Some US experts worry that a smuggling ring gave rogue states plans for a light warhead, apparently from Pakistan.

By Peter Grier | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON - An infamous atomic smuggler may have had blueprints for a compact, sophisticated nuclear warhead, and that could mean that the world's proliferation problem is even worse than many experts had thought.

US officials have long declared the nuclear technology ring run by Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan to be shattered. But revelations that a digitized bomb design turned up on the computer of an associate of Mr. Khan's show that US and UN investigators may not yet know everything Khan did, despite the fact that he has been under house arrest in Pakistan for years.

At the least, the US should now press Pakistan for direct access to Khan, says one expert. Secondhand intelligence reports may no longer be good enough.

"People seem to have taken the Bush administration line that we have rolled up A.Q. Khan's network. I don't believe it," says Jon Wolfsthal, a senior fellow in the international security program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington.

The design in question is for a relatively small and light warhead, apparently of Pakistani origin. Computer files containing the design were among the items seized by Swiss authorities from Swiss nationals Friedrich, Marco, and Urs Tinner in 2004, according to a report by David Albright, a former International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspector, made public on June 16.

The computer files were encrypted and difficult to decipher, according to Mr. Albright. At least one current IAEA official doubts that the Tinner family, former associates of Khan's, were the only people in possession of the design.

The compact weapon would have been ideal for Iran and North Korea, notes Albright's report.

"They both faced struggles in building a nuclear weapon small enough to fit atop their ballistic missiles, and these designs were for a warhead that would fit," says the study.

US and UN investigators have long known that the Khan network sold to Libya a nearly complete set of blueprints and instruction manuals for a relatively basic nuclear warhead of Chinese design.

But it was apparently not until sometime last year that US intelligence was able to crack the Tinner family's codes and discover the hidden, second design. They were apparently not the only ones surprised by its existence in the hands of known nuclear smugglers.

The Pakistanis, too, were upset, according to the Albright study, because they recognized that the design was most likely their own. Although Pakistani warheads are also derived from Chinese originals, Pakistan has gone much further in developing the sophisticated electronics and triggering mechanisms necessary for smaller designs.

The Pakistanis "were genuinely shocked; Khan may have transferred his own country's most secret and dangerous information to foreign smugglers so that they could sell it for a profit," writes Albright.

In some ways, possessing a sophisticated warhead design would not help would-be nuclear proliferators all that much.

For one thing, it might take only a crude bomb, even though it might be as bulky as a truck, to provide the strategic deterrent power of nuclear weapons. For another, designing a bomb is not the hardest part of obtaining a bomb. Producing or obtaining the fissile material necessary for the weapon's explosive heart remains a more daunting challenge.

Still, nuclear engineering is difficult. North Korea's nuclear test of 2006 was widely considered by Western scientists to be a fizzle. Even US national labs have occasionally designed warhead duds.

"It's tough to really get all those parts working right," says Charles Ferguson, a nuclear expert and fellow for science and technology at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington.

And Iran and North Korea might have special reason to desire a small warhead, one that would fit atop medium-range missiles they are already developing, threatening neighbors and turning them instantly into regional superpowers.

Clearly, the US does not yet quite understand the reach of the modern model of proliferation: nonstate actors, motivated by profit, drawing on sources and contacts in many nations.

"Even if the Khan network itself is shut down, there still are nuclear black markets going on," says Mr. Ferguson. Ferguson and other experts say that there is no public evidence that the US yet has pressured Pakistan to allow US investigators to personally interview Khan.

Khan remains under house arrest in Pakistan. On June 16 he denied being the source of the design found in the Tinners' possession.

"This is all a lie, there is no truth to it," Khan told Agence France-Presse by phone from Islamabad.

While the US can be confident that it has gotten at least a partial picture of the Khan network through indirect sources, sitting down in a room with the mastermind for a concerted interrogation could still be invaluable, says Mr. Wolfsthal of CSIS.

The Bush administration has not pushed for such access because Khan remains a hero to many Pakistanis, and the White House does not want to do anything to further risk the position of President Pervez Musharraf, says Wolfsthal.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0618/p02s01-usfp.html>

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

INSIDE THE PENTAGON

www.InsideDefense.com

June 19, 2008

Holum, Biegun outline views

Advisers To Obama, McCain See Common Ground On Nonproliferation

Presidential contenders Sens. Barack Obama (D-IL) and John McCain (R-AZ) generally agree on the urgent need to bolster efforts to prevent catastrophic nuclear terrorism, the goal of working toward a world free of nuclear weapons and U.S. plans to base missile defenses in Europe, advisers to both camps say.

Surrogates for the senators participated Tuesday (June 16) in a panel discussion on U.S. nuclear nonproliferation efforts in Washington during the Arms Control Association's annual meeting at the Carnegie Endowment for International

Peace.

John Holum, who directed the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency and served as under secretary of state for arms control and international security for the Clinton administration, represented the Obama campaign. The McCain

campaign was represented by Stephen Biegun, previously a national security adviser to former Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-TN) and executive secretary of the National Security Council from 2001 to 2003.

In a clear sign that nuclear nonproliferation is unlikely to be a divisive issue during the presidential campaign, Biegun concluded by saying he sees Obama and McCain with a 90 percent common agenda on such issues. And Biegun said he finds that comforting as an American.

When asked about the threat of catastrophic nuclear terrorism, Holum said Obama's first priority is prevention. The Illinois Democrat wants to secure nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere over the next four years instead of the planned 12 years, Holum said, citing the risk that terrorist groups will acquire materials. Obama's second priority on this issue is to close down any nuclear weapons efforts in North Korea and Iran, Holum added.

Biegun noted McCain has long been a supporter of treaty-based arms control. The outside adviser to the Arizona

Republican also noted catastrophic nuclear terrorism is a growing, plausible threat. Biegun said he is confident the next president -- whether it is Obama or McCain -- will put the issue at the top of the White House's agenda. In another bipartisan moment, Holum suggested the Democratic and Republican platforms should include the goal of working toward a nuclear-weapons-free world, since Obama and McCain both support the objective. Biegun said McCain would continue with plans to deploy missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic. McCain would seek to address Russian concerns, but not to the point of allowing Russia to improperly overshadow the sovereignty of another country's affairs, Biegun added. Holum similarly said it is likely the next president will work out understandings with Russia that would facilitate the missile defense arrangement in Europe. But Holum also underscored the threat of nuclear terrorism, arguing the need for greater emphasis on initiatives such as port security as opposed to missile defense. It is more likely, he said, that the United States would face a threat from a nuclear weapon smuggled into the country via a suitcase, a shipping container or a boxcar -- not from an incoming missile with a clear return address.

Holum also said missile defenses must be deemed capable before being fielded.

"Sen. Obama agrees with the deployments that are in place and certainly supports the deployments that are in place in California and Alaska," Holum said. "But at the same time, he thinks it's very important to proceed on the basis of workable defenses -- making sure that systems are capable before we put . . . so many of our resources into these systems."

The United States should prioritize its missile defense efforts, focusing first on theater defenses and local defenses, Holum said. Further down the priority list, as the technology is proven, would be national or longer-range missile defenses, he added.

The Obama and McCain camps agree on the need to slash nuclear weapons arsenals. Under a 2002 treaty with Russia, the United States plans to cut the number of deployed warheads to between 1,700 and 2,200 by 2012. But Holum said Obama supports cutting U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons arsenals far below that level. Also, Obama wants new agreements to be verifiable and durable. The next president needs to resume negotiations to advance these

goals, Holum said. Biegun agreed. He said McCain would begin this process with a nuclear posture review, consulting

with the Pentagon and allies, but noted Obama would likely do the same.

Biegun said McCain has not articulated a specific position on the Pentagon's Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program, which is intended to develop a new generation of U.S. warheads. He cited a May 27 speech in which McCain said, "I would only support the development of any new type of nuclear weapon that is absolutely essential for the viability of our deterrent, that results in making possible further decreases in the size of our nuclear arsenal, and furthers our global nuclear security goals."

Holum noted Obama "has not ruled out for all time" the idea of proceeding with the RRW program. However, Holum argued the next president should not rush to deploy RRW, but should instead focus on showing leadership in nonproliferation on the world stage. Holum said all of the weapons in the U.S. nuclear stockpile have been thoroughly tested.

Both Obama and McCain are strongly opposed to the Pentagon's Robust Earth Penetrator program, which explored using low-yield nuclear weapons as bunker busters, the two advisers said. Holum said Obama has always opposed the idea. Biegun said McCain initially supported feasibility studies but later came to oppose the project. The advisers did not agree on everything, however. Biegun, for instance, strongly criticized Obama's professed willingness to sit down and hold diplomatic discussions with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Also, Holum said Obama supports ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which would ban nuclear explosions worldwide, while Biegun said only that McCain is committed to taking a look at the issue.

Holum encouraged McCain to join Obama in supporting the CTBT. -- *Christopher J. Castelli*

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

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

Washington Times

June 19, 2008

Pg. B1

Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz

WMD threat office

A blue-ribbon panel that conducted a review of the Pentagon's Defense Threat Reduction Agency, or DTRA, found that the office set up to counter weapons of mass destruction needs more money and a strategic plan.

The review panel was headed by former Assistant Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter, now at Harvard University, and former Undersecretary of State for International Security Robert Joseph, now with the National Institute for Public Policy.

"DTRA has done much to advance national and international combating WMD missions, with the resources available," the report concluded. "However, it requires substantially more budgetary resources and senior-level support to realize its full potential in helping [the Defense Department] and the U.S. government to confront the WMD threats of today and tomorrow."

The report called for the Pentagon to provide more senior-level backing for the agency and the formulation of a "detailed strategic plan for combating WMD."

"The plan without the commitment would be hollow," the report said. "The plan combined with the commitment would allow the recommendations for [Defense Department] combating WMD activities - including those in this report - to be operationalized in an ambitious, but realistic fashion."

<http://www.washtimes.com/news/2008/jun/19/inside-the-ring-94640713/>

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

New York Times

June 19, 2008

As Poles Balk, U.S. Eyes Lithuania As Site For Missile Shield

By Judy Dempsey

BERLIN — Poland is balking at further negotiations with the United States over plans to deploy an antiballistic missile shield, prompting Washington to seek out Lithuania, formerly part of the Soviet Union, as a possible alternative location, officials said Wednesday.

The American approach to Lithuania is likely to stir fresh tensions with Russia, which has already threatened to act if the United States deploys the shield's missile interceptors in Poland and its radar in the Czech Republic. Both are NATO countries that once belonged to the defunct Soviet-led Warsaw Pact.

But the idea of putting the shield on former Soviet territory surprised some European security experts.

"The last thing we need is another conflict with Russia," said Gereon Schuch, program director in the Robert Bosch Foundation for Central and Eastern Europe at the German Council for Foreign Affairs.

Russia is already angry over NATO's attempts to expand to Ukraine, another former Soviet republic, especially since NATO's top representatives visited Ukraine this week to see what changes it was making to start membership talks.

Russia has made clear that it will try to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and may retaliate. It is, for example, preparing to introduce visa restrictions for Ukrainians entering Russia.

If the United States negotiated to deploy the shield in Lithuania, Russia would almost certainly adopt an even tougher stance toward that country, military experts said. The Russian defense and security establishment still finds it extremely difficult to accept that the three Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, broke away from the Soviet Union and became independent in 1991 and subsequently joined the European Union and NATO.

"There is no doubt that Russia would exploit this to the full if parts of the U.S. missile shield were based here," said Raimundas Lopata, a professor of political science at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science at Vilnius University.

The State Department said its security experts had already spoken to the Lithuanians.

"We have had general conversations with the government of Lithuania about missile defense issues," said Tom Casey, the State Department's deputy spokesman. "But, certainly, we expect and hope that we will be able to conclude an agreement with Poland in the near future. And we do expect it will work out, so I don't think there's going to be a need for any alternatives."

But Geoff Morrell, the Pentagon spokesman, said Tuesday that "there are other options available to us."

"There are several European countries that could host the interceptors, and Lithuania is one of them," he said.

Juozas Olekas, the Lithuanian defense minister, said Wednesday that his government was waiting to see what terms the United States might offer.

The overtures to Lithuania reflect exasperation in Poland and the United States over negotiations to deploy the shield in Poland.

In March, Poland's center-right government, led by Donald Tusk, presented the United States with a short but costly list of conditions for placing up to 10 interceptors on its territory. It demanded that the United States provide a mobile air defense system that NATO diplomats have said could cost billions of dollars.

Radek Sikorski, the Polish foreign minister, said last month that if his country agreed to accept the interceptors and a United States presence, it needed to modernize its air defenses to protect itself from threats. The Polish Defense Ministry has said those threats could come from Russia.

The United States has rejected the Polish requests, apparently leaving the government in Warsaw with the impression that no deal can be struck before the Bush administration leaves office in January. Ministers have said it might be better to wait until a new administration is in place.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/19/world/europe/19shield.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

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

Washington Times

June 19, 2008

Pg. 12

Rice: Concessions Outweigh U.S. Cost

Removal from terrorism list depends on nuke declaration

By Nicholas Kralev, The Washington Times

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Wednesday that the cost the United States has paid so far in its effort to rid North Korea of nuclear weapons is much smaller than the concessions made by Pyongyang.

She said, however, that President Bush intends to remove North Korea from the blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism, contingent on a nuclear declaration the North will provide "soon" to China, which hosts six-country negotiations.

In a speech at the Heritage Foundation a week before she is expected to travel to Asia, the secretary offered a pointed response to administration critics, who have accused her of talking Mr. Bush into appeasing a brutal regime. "We haven't given North Korea any significant economic assistance, we have not engaged in any trade or investment, and North Korea is still largely isolated from the international financial system. We haven't made any security guarantees or normalized relations," Miss Rice said.

"Most importantly, we have not lifted any of the pages and pages worth of sanctions that are still in effect on North Korea - both numerous bilateral sanctions passed by our Congress and multilateral sanctions, to which we are a party through the U.N. Security Council," she said.

The only U.S. reward to the North so far, she said, is 134,000 tons of heavy fuel oil, which can only be used for heating, and not "in cars or trucks or tanks or high-performance engines of any kind."

The thousands of tons in food aid the United States has given the North is "unrelated to our diplomacy, because providing food to starving people should never be treated as a tool of policy."

In contrast to the little that she said Washington has done so far, Miss Rice listed a series of concessions by Pyongyang. They include handing over to the U.S. more than 18,000 pages of records from the North's main plutonium facility in Yongbyon and disabling the reactor under U.S. supervision.

"The Yongbyon facility was producing nuclear material for weapons, and we've set back that capability," she said. "And every day that North Korea is less able to develop the material for nuclear weapons is a safer day for our friends, for our allies and for us."

Miss Rice conceded that the administration is prepared to offer more rewards to Pyongyang, but insisted that they will depend on the North's behavior and will be reversible if cheats.

"North Korea will soon give its declaration of nuclear programs to China," she said. "President Bush will then notify Congress of our intention to remove North Korea from the state-sponsors of terrorism list and to cease the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act."

In the following 45 days, the administration will verify the truthfulness of the declaration, and if it determines that the North has cheated, Mr. Bush will reverse his decision, she said. Washington will seek access to more documents, as well as to key personnel and the nuclear reactor itself.

Bruce Klingner, a senior fellow at Heritage who asked Miss Rice about the sequencing of the next series of actions by the six parties, which also include Japan, South Korea and Russia, said it was not clear whether the North Koreans will provide access to sites other than Yongbyon.

"She was more definitive on the declaration and the terrorist list than the administration has been before," Mr. Klingner said after Miss Rice's speech. "She signaled that things are in progress."

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2008/jun/19/rice-concessions-outweigh-us-cost/>

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

Department of Defense Chemical and Biological Defense Program Annual Report to Congress

May 2008

Introduction

Today, the United States Armed Forces are engaged in global operations while simultaneously protecting the homeland. Our Service members face many challenges, but the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD) is among the greatest. The Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP) provides support and world class capabilities, which enable them to survive and operate successfully in chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) environments.

The CBDP is an essential component of Department of Defense (DoD) efforts supporting national and military strategies to combat WMD. The CBDP supports a comprehensive strategic framework to improve CBRN defense preparedness and readiness, reduce risk to the warfighter, and field the appropriate mix of capabilities for sustained military operations with minimum degradation of combat effectiveness attributed to CBRN hazards.

In accordance with the *2006 National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*, the DoD seeks to "dissuade, deter and defeat those who seek to harm the United States, its allies, and partners through WMD use or threat of use and, if attacked, to mitigate the effects and restore deterrence."

Research, development, and acquisition (RDA) of chemical and biological (CB) defense equipment and capabilities is executed by DoD as a Joint Service program in accordance with Title 50 United States Code (U.S.C.) 1522 (Public Law 103-160). The CBDP also addresses radiological and nuclear defense requirements; however, these activities are limited by U.S.C. 1522 to specific types of radiation detection equipment, modeling and simulation (M&S) capabilities, and medical countermeasures to treat the physiological effects of radiological and nuclear source material exposure.

This May 2008 CBDP Annual Report to Congress (ARC) is provided in accordance with Title 50 U.S.C. 1523. It describes progress made by DoD to protect our nation and our allies from the threat or actual use of WMD, and outlines management initiatives undertaken to identify and balance investment priorities against risks over time. In addition, the report: Outlines CBDP organizational structure, roles • and responsibilities, oversight procedures, and program plans Describes and assesses CBDP research, • development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) programs and infrastructure, and summarizes accomplishments Reports CBDP equipment logistics postures • Presents an overview of CBRN defense, • doctrine, training, exercises, leadership, and education. . . .

(For complete report, click on link below.)

<http://www.acq.osd.mil/cp/cbdreports/cbdpreporttocongress2008.pdf>

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

Yahoo! News

US military loses nuclear parts: report

Thu Jun 19, 10:07 AM ET

LONDON (AFP) - The US military has lost hundreds of sensitive nuclear missile components, in the latest embarrassment for The Pentagon, the Financial Times reported in its online version Thursday.

Citing US officials familiar with a Pentagon report, the British daily said the US Air Force could not account for many sensitive components previously in its nuclear inventory. One official put the number at over 1,000, it said. The latest incident comes after blunders which saw live nuclear warheads transported over US skies, and an accidental shipment of nuclear triggers to Taiwan.

A senior official said the report had "identified issues about record keeping" for sensitive nuclear missile components. There was no suggestion they could have ended up in countries that should not have received them, he said.

Earlier this month US Defence Secretary Robert Gates sacked the air force's civilian secretary and chief of staff, blaming them for two major blunders that shook confidence in US control over its nuclear arsenal.

Gates said "a substantial number" of generals and colonels also face possible disciplinary action as a result of an investigation into a mistaken shipment of fuses for nuclear weapons to Taiwan.

The Taiwan incident, and an accidental transfer of nuclear armed cruise missiles from one US air base to another last year, were symptoms of a decline in the air force's standards and focus, Gates said at the time.

Daryl Kimball, head of the Arms Control Association in Washington, said the latest revelation was "very significant and extremely troubling" because it showed the Pentagon was not properly in control of its resources.

"It raises a serious question about where else these unaccounted for warhead related parts may have gone," he was quoted as saying by the FT. "I would not be surprised if the recent Taiwan incident is not the only one."

A spokesman for the US National Security Council declined to comment on the reportedly mislaid components. "The White House has confidence that secretary Gates, through his actions with the air force, is addressing all of these issues," said spokesman Gordon Johndroe, cited by the FT.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20080619/wl_afp/usmilitarysecuritynuclear_080619140725

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

New York Times

June 20, 2008

Pg. 1

U.S. Says Exercise By Israel Seemed Directed At Iran

By Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON — Israel carried out a major military exercise earlier this month that American officials say appeared to be a rehearsal for a potential bombing attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

Several American officials said the Israeli exercise appeared to be an effort to develop the military's capacity to carry out long-range strikes and to demonstrate the seriousness with which Israel views Iran's nuclear program. More than 100 Israeli F-16 and F-15 fighters participated in the maneuvers, which were carried out over the eastern Mediterranean and over Greece during the first week of June, American officials said.

The exercise also included Israeli helicopters that could be used to rescue downed pilots. The helicopters and refueling tankers flew more than 900 miles, which is about the same distance between Israel and Iran's uranium enrichment plant at Natanz, American officials said.

Israeli officials declined to discuss the details of the exercise. A spokesman for the Israeli military would say only that the country's air force "regularly trains for various missions in order to confront and meet the challenges posed by the threats facing Israel."

But the scope of the Israeli exercise virtually guaranteed that it would be noticed by American and other foreign intelligence agencies. A senior Pentagon official who has been briefed on the exercise, and who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the political delicacy of the matter, said the exercise appeared to serve multiple purposes. One Israeli goal, the Pentagon official said, was to practice flight tactics, aerial refueling and all other details of a possible strike against Iran's nuclear installations and its long-range conventional missiles.

A second, the official said, was to send a clear message to the United States and other countries that Israel was prepared to act militarily if diplomatic efforts to stop Iran from producing bomb-grade uranium continued to falter. "They wanted us to know, they wanted the Europeans to know, and they wanted the Iranians to know," the Pentagon official said. "There's a lot of signaling going on at different levels."

Several American officials said they did not believe that the Israeli government had concluded that it must attack Iran and did not think that such a strike was imminent.

Shaul Mofaz, a former Israeli defense minister who is now a deputy prime minister, warned in a recent interview with the Israeli newspaper Yediot Aharonot that Israel might have no choice but to attack. "If Iran continues with its program for developing nuclear weapons, we will attack," Mr. Mofaz said in the interview published on June 6, the day after the unpublicized exercise ended. "Attacking Iran, in order to stop its nuclear plans, will be unavoidable." But Mr. Mofaz was criticized by other Israeli politicians as seeking to enhance his own standing as questions mount about whether the embattled Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, can hang on to power.

Israeli officials have told their American counterparts that Mr. Mofaz's statement does not represent official policy. But American officials were also told that Israel had prepared plans for striking nuclear targets in Iran and could carry them out if needed.

Iran has shown signs that it is taking the Israeli warnings seriously, by beefing up its air defenses in recent weeks, including increasing air patrols. In one instance, Iran scrambled F-4 jets to double-check an Iraqi civilian flight from Baghdad to Tehran.

"They are clearly nervous about this and have their air defense on guard," a Bush administration official said of the Iranians.

Any Israeli attack against Iran's nuclear facilities would confront a number of challenges. Many American experts say they believe that such an attack could delay but not eliminate Iran's nuclear program. Much of the program's infrastructure is buried under earth and concrete and installed in long tunnels or hallways, making precise targeting difficult. There is also concern that not all of the facilities have been detected. To inflict maximum damage, multiple attacks might be necessary, which many analysts say is beyond Israel's ability at this time.

But waiting also entails risks for the Israelis. Israeli officials have repeatedly expressed fears that Iran will soon master the technology it needs to produce substantial quantities of highly enriched uranium for nuclear weapons.

Iran is also taking steps to better defend its nuclear facilities. Two sets of advance Russian-made radar systems were recently delivered to Iran. The radar will enhance Iran's ability to detect planes flying at low altitude.

Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence, said in February that Iran was close to acquiring Russian-produced SA-20 surface-to-air missiles. American military officials said that the deployment of such systems would hamper Israel's attack planning, putting pressure on Israel to act before the missiles are fielded.

For both the United States and Israel, Iran's nuclear program has been a persistent worry. A National Intelligence Estimate that was issued in December by American intelligence agencies asserted that Iran had suspended work on weapons design in late 2003. The report stated that it was unclear if that work had resumed. It also noted that Iran's work on uranium enrichment and on missiles, two steps that Iran would need to take to field a nuclear weapon, had continued.

In late May, the International Atomic Energy Agency reported that Iran's suspected work on nuclear matters was a "matter of serious concern" and that the Iranians owed the agency "substantial explanations."

Over the past three decades, Israel has carried out two unilateral attacks against suspected nuclear sites in the Middle East. In 1981, Israeli jets conducted a raid against Iraq's nuclear plant at Osirak after concluding that it was part of Saddam Hussein's program to develop nuclear weapons. In September, Israeli aircraft bombed a structure in Syria that American officials said housed a nuclear reactor built with the aid of North Korea.

The United States protested the Israeli strike against Iraq in 1981, but its comments in recent months have amounted to an implicit endorsement of the Israeli strike in Syria.

Pentagon officials said that Israel's air forces usually conducted a major early summer training exercise, often flying over the Mediterranean or training ranges in Turkey where they practice bombing runs and aerial refueling. But the exercise this month involved a larger number of aircraft than had been previously observed, and included a lengthy combat rescue mission.

Much of the planning appears to reflect a commitment by Israel's military leaders to ensure that its armed forces are adequately equipped and trained, an imperative driven home by the difficulties the Israeli military encountered in its Lebanon operation against Hezbollah.

"They rehearse it, rehearse it and rehearse it, so if they actually have to do it, they're ready," the Pentagon official said. "They're not taking any options off the table."

Ethan Bronner contributed reporting from Jerusalem.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/20/washington/20iran.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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

Washington Times

June 20, 2008

Pg. 1

Exclusive

U.S. Nuke Spotters Sent To China Before Games

Secret team acts on attack fears

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

The Bush administration has dispatched a secret team of nuclear specialists to China in response to Chinese concerns that terrorists may attempt to set off a radiological bomb during the Beijing Summer Olympics, The Washington Times has learned.

The Nuclear Emergency Support Team (NEST) was sent on Chinese intelligence indicating that any attack likely would involve a radiological device - a conventional explosive laced with radioactive material to enhance its effect - said Bush administration officials familiar with the security efforts.

The NEST deployment was disclosed as China announced this week that it is conducting a citywide drill in Beijing to test responses for a radiological bomb attack. It could not be learned whether the NEST unit will participate in the drill.

The deployment to China is unusual. NEST units usually deploy to areas in the United States and use highly classified equipment and techniques.

The team is part of the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration and was ordered to Beijing as part of U.S.-China security cooperation, the Bush administration officials said.

Asked about the dispatch of the nuclear detection team, an Energy Department spokesman declined to comment, noting that NEST deployments are not announced.

Other officials familiar with the NEST said the team is made up of nuclear weapons scientists and technicians, many from Energy Department nuclear laboratories, who will provide specialized technical expertise in Beijing before the Aug. 8-24 games.

Team members will be outfitted with special nuclear detection gear and will operate in secret, the officials said. A fact sheet from the Energy Department states that the NEST deals "with the technical aspects of nuclear or radiological terrorism."

The groups conduct search operations. If radiation is detected, they will perform an identification of nuclear materials, diagnostics and assessments of nuclear devices and bomb dismantling.

"Response teams vary in size from a five-person technical advisory team to a tailored deployment of dozens searchers and scientists who can locate and then conduct or support technical operations on a suspected nuclear device," the fact sheet states.

The exact size of the NEST being sent to Beijing could not be learned, but the officials said it will include about 10 people.

The teams use compact nuclear detection gear hidden in briefcases, knapsacks or portable coolers. They travel in vans searching for radiation sources, often at night to avoid public scrutiny.

Under the Atomic Energy Act, the State Department is the lead federal agency for deploying the team, which will work with FBI agents in Beijing.

Henry Sokolski, director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, said the danger of nuclear terrorism is growing and the NEST teams are limited in dealing with the threat.

"We are entering a brave new world where nuclear energy for peaceful purposes literally is providing the fuel for terror," Mr. Sokolski said. "Against this new security sore, NEST teams should be seen as a Band-Aid."

The International Atomic Energy Agency stated in a staff report May 23 that the agency and China are working behind the scenes to "bolster the country's security and minimize threats."

"We have been working with the Chinese authorities over the last 18 months to add a radiological dimension to their existing security plans so that security for the Olympics is as comprehensive as possible," Anita Nilsson, director of the IAEA's Office of Nuclear Security, was quoted as saying in the report.

The IAEA is working to integrate planning for a radiological attack into existing security efforts for police, intelligence agencies and bomb squads. The IAEA is working with Chinese authorities on radiation detection, physical protection and emergency response.

"To guard and look after the Games and its visitors - as the Chinese are doing - is a responsible way of acting," Ms. Nilsson said.

The agency said no specific radiological terrorist-threat information was issued.

The Beijing city government announced Tuesday that it will conduct its first exercise to test responses to a nuclear attack in preparation for the Olympics.

The drill will involve several Chinese agencies including police, fire and environmental responders, Chinese government official Shan Qingsheng told the state-run Xinhua news agency.

The drill will simulate the effects of a radiological bomb set off inside the Olympic stadium.

The dispatch of the nuclear team to China has raised concerns among some counterintelligence officials because of the past compromise of nuclear weapons secrets to China.

The CIA determined that China obtained through espionage details of every deployed nuclear warhead in the U.S. arsenal, and the FBI has failed to identify the source despite investigating for more than a decade.

Computer hard drives from a NEST laptop computer that contained nuclear weapons secrets used to disarm weapons disappeared from a Los Alamos National Laboratory vault in May 2000.

Since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, countering nuclear terrorism was made a high priority for U.S. intelligence and law-enforcement agencies, based on intelligence reports that al Qaeda planned to assemble and use a radiological bomb in an attack in the United States.

In 2002, the FBI and NEST conducted joint monitoring of Muslim sites in Washington and five other cities looking for signs of a nuclear material, according to U.S. News & World Report.

<http://www.washtimes.com/news/2008/jun/20/us-nuke-spotters-sent-to-china-before-games/>

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

Yahoo! News

U.S. looks for N.Korean declaration "in near future"

By Arshad Mohammed and Susan Cornwell

June 20, 2008

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States hopes North Korea will produce an overdue declaration of its nuclear programs "in the near future," said a U.S. official on Friday who held out the possibility it could come next week.

"We are looking for it in the near future," said the official who spoke on condition he not be named because of the sensitivity of talks with the secretive, communist state.

In September 2005, North Korea agreed to abandon its nuclear programs and nuclear weapons in exchange for economic and diplomatic incentives under an accord negotiated among the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States.

Under a later accord, North Korea promised to produce a "complete and correct" declaration of its nuclear programs and to disable nuclear facilities at Yongbyon by the end of 2007.

During this "second phase" of the agreement, the United States has made clear it would drop North Korea from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism and cease to apply sanctions under its Trading with the Enemy Act.

The U.S. official told reporters the likely occasion for North Korea to hand over the declaration would be at a meeting of the lead negotiators in the six-party talks.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said on Wednesday she expected the declaration "soon," her strongest comment to date on the matter.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Chris Hill, the top U.S. negotiator with North Korea, arrived in Beijing on Friday and was to stay several days. He is then expected to join Rice in Japan at a June 26-27 Group of Eight foreign ministers summit.

Asked if Hill was staying in Beijing in case there was a six-party "heads of delegation" meeting, the U.S. official said: "That is a possibility."

CUTTING CORNERS?

"You don't know until you actually have something (in hand) ... but one would expect that a head of delegation meeting, whenever that would be, would be the venue for their handing over something," he said.

Critics of the deal believe the Bush administration has softened its demand for a "complete and correct" declaration.

Under a face-saving compromise, the declaration is expected to be split in two parts: North Korea's detailed disclosure of its plutonium program and its "acknowledgment" of U.S. concerns over its suspected uranium enrichment and proliferation activities.

Washington has accused Pyongyang of pursuing a uranium enrichment program, which could provide it with a second way to produce fissile material for nuclear weapons in addition to the plutonium-based program used in its 2006 nuclear test.

The United States has also accused North Korea of helping Syria with a suspected nuclear reactor project that Israel destroyed in a September air strike.

"We appear ready to accept considerably less than the original agreement," said Michael Green, senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and a former Bush administration National Security Council official.

"It appears that there have clearly been some corners cut. Acknowledging U.S. concerns about the (uranium enrichment) program, or proliferation, is not a declaration," he added.

Bruce Klingner, a former CIA analyst and Korea expert now at the Heritage Foundation think tank, said the administration appeared upbeat about the declaration and welcomed movement on ending its plutonium program.

"Any progress on getting North Korea working towards plutonium denuclearization is all to the good," he said, but he added Pyongyang should not be allowed to "skate by" on giving information about any uranium and proliferation programs.

It remains unclear whether North Korea will hand over its plutonium and any nuclear weapons, issues that will be addressed in the third and final phase of the six-party deal.

(Editing by Chris Baltimore)

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20080620/pl_nm/korea_north_usa_dc;_ylt=Ak6mLvsR6BikyFuN9.o0r45vaA8F

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