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New York Times

June 21, 2008

Pg. 10

**News Analysis**

**Bush May End Term With Iran Issue Unsettled**

By Helene Cooper

WASHINGTON — For more than five years now, President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have made clear that they did not want to leave office with Iran any closer to possessing nuclear weapons than when they took office. “The nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons,” Mr. Bush said in February 2006. The United States is prepared to use its naval power “to prevent Iran from gaining nuclear weapons and dominating this region,” Mr. Cheney said in 2007 from a Navy carrier in the Persian Gulf.

But with seven months left in this administration, Iran appears ascendant, its political and economic influence growing, its historic foes in Iraq and Afghanistan weakened, and its nuclear program continuing to move forward. So the question now is: Are Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney resigned to leaving Iran more powerful than they found it when they came to office?

The evidence is mixed. For all the talk to the contrary, Bush administration officials appear to have concluded that diplomatic efforts to rein in Iran's nuclear ambitions will not yield any breakthroughs this year.

Despite a recent flurry of efforts to tighten sanctions on Iran, top officials on both sides of the Atlantic, in recent interviews, had no expectations that Iran's rulers would make any concessions, particularly on the critical issue of suspending the enrichment of uranium, while Mr. Bush remained in office.

On the military front, the picture is fuzzier. Two senior administration officials said that barring a move by Israel, which one characterized as "the wild card" on the Iranian issue, this administration would not be likely to pursue military strikes against Iranian nuclear targets.

Mr. Bush himself seemed to signal as much at the start of his European tour last week in Slovenia, when he said of Iran that he expected to "leave behind a multilateral framework to work on this issue," a statement that seemed to suggest that military action against Iran may no longer be on the table.

But there remains the possibility that Israel could force the hand of the Bush administration, foreign policy analysts and diplomats said. Israel carried out a three-day military exercise this month that American intelligence officials say appeared to have been a rehearsal for a potential strike on nuclear targets in Iran.

Israeli officials have tried to put pressure in recent months on the Bush administration to consider such a strike if Iran did not abandon its nuclear program, and the exercise may have been intended as a new signal that Israel might be willing to act alone if the United States did not.

"Israel prefers this threat be dealt with peacefully, by dramatically increasing sanctions and maintaining a credible resolve to keep all options on the table," said Sallai Meridor, the Israeli ambassador to the United States. "But time is running out."

Iran, he said, "should understand that under no circumstances will the world allow it to obtain a nuclear capability." Mohamad ElBaradei, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, told Al Arabiya television that he would quit his job in the event of a military strike on Iran.

"It would turn the region into a fireball," he said in an interview broadcast Friday, according to Reuters.

Israeli officials have expressed fear to the Bush administration that a new administration would take months, if not years, to decide on its approach to Iran. The consensus in the United States and Europe is that Iran is still at least two years away from a nuclear weapon. Israeli officials say they believe the threshold is closer to a year.

An Israeli military strike on Iran would almost certainly require American help. For one thing, Pentagon officials say, it would take hundreds of sorties to take out a big swath of Iranian air defense. For another, the United States controls much of the airspace around Iran. Beyond that, Iran would hold the United States accountable for an Israeli strike, and could retaliate against American troops in Iraq.

In Moscow on Friday, Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov urged dialogue rather than confrontation with Iran and said that the United States and Israel had not offered any proof that Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons program.

"So far we have not seen any," Mr. Lavrov said, according to Interfax news agency.

A trip to Tehran last weekend by European diplomats with a new package of incentives was largely for Iranian public consumption, and to appease Russia and China by appearing to be still trying to woo Iran, European and American diplomats said.

But European diplomats have been loath to acknowledge publicly that diplomacy on Iran's nuclear development is in a holding pattern for the next eight months because they fear that Iran will only use that time to make progress on its nuclear program, which Iran says is for peaceful purposes.

"One should not talk about keeping the status quo because that would be dangerous," one European diplomat said, speaking on condition of anonymity under diplomatic rules. "We can't say the clock has stopped and we will begin work again after Jan. 1; that is not a good recipe for success."

Administration efforts to convey a sense of urgency about stopping Iran's nuclear program were dealt a blow late last year with the release of a National Intelligence Estimate reporting that Iran had stopped work on a nuclear weapons program in 2003. In recent months, Bush administration officials have tried to walk back from that report, repeating often that Iran's nuclear program remains a threat.

Many foreign policy experts are now looking to the next administration for a possible new approach to the standoff with Iran. "The Europeans all understand that the carrots-and-sticks approach is not working, and the entire Iran diplomatic policy has to be rethought," said Vali R. Nasr, an Iran expert at Tufts University. Until a new administration takes over, he said, "we're stuck in a process where the ball is kicked to the bureaucrats."

*Sophia Kishkovsky contributed reporting from Moscow.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/21/washington/21diplo.html?scp=1&sq=Bush%20May%20End%20Term%20With%20Iran%20Issue%20Unsettled&st=cse>

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## Israel Conducted War Games, U.S. Officials Report

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

In the latest sign of escalating tension over Tehran's alleged nuclear program, Israel held a massive military exercise this month that involved the types of warplanes, distances and maneuvers required for airstrikes on Iran, according to senior U.S. officials.

The mock operation reflected a growing policy schism over Iran among major international players at a time when U.S. politics may freeze major decisions until a new administration is in place, its officials are confirmed and a policy review is complete.

More than 100 Israeli warplanes -- including F-15s and F-16s, refueling tankers and helicopters for pilot rescue -- were involved in the military exercise, which was first reported by the New York Times yesterday. Israeli warplanes flew as much as 900 miles across the Mediterranean and back, U.S. officials said.

Israel refused to comment on the exercise. "The Israeli Air Force regularly trains for various missions in order to confront and meet the challenges posed by the threats facing Israel," the Israel Defense Forces said.

Western officials said Israel has carried out maneuvers as part of a program started in the 1990s by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. He began acquiring long-range bombers and missiles after warning that Iran's nuclear program threatened Israel's existence.

But the latest exercise comes at a tense time, with the standoff in diplomacy fueling divergent strategies.

Washington faces growing constraints; Israel feels increasingly threatened; and U.S. allies are determined to avoid military action. Iran is more powerful than at any time since the 1979 revolution, U.S. officials say.

Iran is now producing about one kilogram of low-enriched uranium a day for its energy program, which Tehran has repeatedly stated is only for electricity, not weaponry. By the end of the year, Iran could have 500 kilograms of low-enriched uranium. It would take about 700 kilograms to begin enrichment for weapons-grade uranium for a bomb, according to former U.N. weapons inspector David Albright. In a move that may have been partly fueled by domestic politics, Israeli Transportation Minister and former Army chief Shaul Mofaz said this month that an attack on Iran was unavoidable because international sanctions had been ineffective.

Israel's exercise sends a signal to Iran and its allies. "It's a way of saying, 'If you're not willing to ratchet up the pressure, you're going to make force more likely, as the current path is not changing Iranian behavior,'" said Dennis Ross of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

The challenge of dealing with Iran's nuclear program is complicated by other issues. A lame-duck Bush administration and presidential candidates with disparate positions limit Washington's short-term options, U.S. officials and analysts said. The U.S. presence in Iraq also might be undermined by military action that could provoke an Iranian response.

"I don't think the Pentagon is in the business of scaring the Iranians," said former assistant secretary of state Martin Indyk, now at the Brookings Institution. "They are happy with the way things are going in Iraq and don't want anything to upset the apple cart in a way that will make the surge look problematic."

A senior Iranian cleric warned that Iran will respond to external threats. "If the enemies, particularly Israel and its American backers, adopt a language of force against Iran, they can be sure that they will receive a strong slap on the face from Iran," cleric Ahmad Khatami said in a sermon broadcast on state radio.

The soaring price of oil is another constraint on U.S. military action or on prospects that the Bush administration would give Israel a green light to act. "A raid on Iran would convulse the markets," said J. Robinson West of PFC Energy. "The price would go into uncharted territory. Pick a number. It could easily reach \$200."

But oil markets may not deter Israel, said energy specialist James Placke, a former U.S. diplomat. "Take Israel's statements at face value. They really do regard [Iran's program] as an existential threat, and they will do whatever they feel is necessary."

The Bush administration said yesterday that it is firmly committed to a package presented last weekend by the world's six major powers. The deal calls for Iran to suspend uranium enrichment in exchange for political and economic incentives, including talks with Washington.

"We've told the Israelis, we've told everybody who will listen, anybody who asks, what our focus is on in terms of the diplomacy, trying to make that work, trying to find a peaceful resolution to a very serious issue," said Sean McCormack, a State Department spokesman.

Russia, one of the six powers involved, warned against military action. "If things happen like threats of force and unilateral sanctions outside the framework of the [U.N.] Security Council, it is distracting from the negotiating process," said Vitaly Churkin, Russia's ambassador to the United Nations. "A military move would have devastating consequences for the prospect of resolving the Iranian nuclear issue, for the region and internationally."

Tehran has sent mixed signals on the incentives package, with Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki saying Thursday that the offer is under study. Western officials are not optimistic about a breakthrough.  
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/20/AR2008062002724.html>

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Washington Post  
June 21, 2008  
Pg. 8

## **New Data Found On North Korea's Nuclear Capacity**

### *Intelligence on Enriched Uranium Revives Questions About Weapons*

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States in recent weeks has obtained new intelligence -- fresh traces of highly enriched uranium discovered among 18,000 pages of North Korean documents -- that are raising new questions about whether Pyongyang pursued an alternative route to producing a nuclear weapon, according to sources familiar with the intelligence findings.

Officials at the State Department and with the director of national intelligence declined to comment on the new information, but sources said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made an oblique reference to it in a speech on North Korea policy to the Heritage Foundation on Wednesday.

"As we've gotten deeper into the process, we've been troubled by additional information about North Korea's uranium-enrichment capability," Rice said. "And this information has reaffirmed skepticism about dealing with North Korea."

The new intelligence arrived at an awkward moment for the Bush administration. North Korea next week plans to submit its long-awaited declaration on its nuclear programs, which is expected to disclose that its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon produced about 37 kilograms of plutonium. Then, on June 27 or 28, North Korean officials are expected to blow up the cooling tower attached to the facility, diplomats said.

Plutonium offers a different route to producing a nuclear weapon than uranium enrichment. The Bush administration in 2002 accused North Korea of having a clandestine uranium-enrichment program, based partly on North Korea's large-scale purchases of aluminum tubes. Analysts speculated the tubes could be used as the outer casing for centrifuges needed to spin hot uranium gas into the fuel for nuclear weapons.

Pyongyang has insisted that it had no uranium-enrichment program, even taking an American diplomat in 2007 to a missile factory using the tubes and allowing him to bring home samples in his suitcase.

But late last year, U.S. analysts unexpectedly discovered traces of enriched uranium on the smelted aluminum tubing. Despite months of analysis, intelligence officials have been unable to determine whether the tubes acquired traces of uranium as part of an active enrichment program or were contaminated by exposure to other equipment. Pakistan, for instance, has acknowledged providing North Korea with a sample centrifuge kit, and so the tubes might have acquired the enriched uranium from the Pakistani equipment. In 2003, inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency detected traces of enriched uranium at an Iranian nuclear facility and determined that the material came from Pakistani equipment provided by a nuclear smuggling network.

Now, the fresh samples of enriched uranium complicate the issue. Sources said that traces of highly enriched uranium were found on the 18,000 pages of Yongbyon reactor records provided by North Korea to the United States last month. North Korea provided the documents, which date back to 1987, to help the Bush administration verify the amount of plutonium it produced in the reactor. But the documents have become central to the debate over Pyongyang's possible enrichment activities.

The uranium enrichment data are preliminary, though at least one source familiar with the intelligence said experts had concluded it did not come from Pakistan. Other sources, however, said there was still a dispute on that question. Analysts also do not know how the documents might have been handled and how they could have come into contact with a possible enrichment program.

Last year, U.S. officials played down the 2002 intelligence that North Korea had an uranium-enrichment program, suggesting that North Korea might have tried to start such a program but did not get far. But the public comments have shifted in recent months.

"They have been either seeking or have gotten or have done something on the highly enriched uranium side," Rice said Thursday in an interview with the Wall Street Journal editorial board that was released by the State Department yesterday. "The problem is we don't actually know what they've done. I will tell you that the more we dig into it and the more we actually talk to them about it, the more concerning it is."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/20/AR2008062002499.html>

Boston Globe  
June 22, 2008  
Pg. 1

## **Bush Fails To Appoint A Nuclear Terror Czar**

*President leaves unfilled a congressional mandate backed by the 9/11 panel*

By Bryan Bender, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON - Ten months after Congress passed a law establishing a White House coordinator for preventing nuclear terrorism, President Bush has no plans to create the high-level post any time soon, according to the National Security Council.

The provision - suggested by leading members of the commission that investigated the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks - was contained in 2007 legislation designed to improve homeland defenses. Congress passed it by a wide margin, with bipartisan support.

Some congressional leaders said Bush's failure to fill the job nearly a year later marks an outright evasion of the law, and called on the president to fill the position swiftly, even though his administration has only seven months left in office.

"Congress and a range of bipartisan experts, including 9/11 commissioners, clearly judged that such a position would help strengthen the effectiveness of the administration's handling of [weapons of mass destruction] proliferation matters," the office of Senate majority leader Harry Reid of Nevada, who sponsored the legislation in the Senate, said in a statement. "The Congress passed and the president signed into law this requirement."

When asked this month why the position remains unfilled, the National Security Council described it as an internal matter still under deliberation.

"There has been no decision as yet on how best to implement the coordinator position," the council said in a statement.

The White House opposed creating the position from the start. In a January 2007 letter to Congress - six months before the law was adopted - the Bush administration wrote that the appointment of a nuclear antiterrorism chief "is unnecessary given extensive coordination and synchronization mechanisms that now exist within the executive branch," citing a 2006 strategy document that lays out the responsibilities of numerous government departments. But in the past, Bush has tried to bypass provisions of laws he disagrees with by issuing "signing statements," documents singling out those parts of statutes that White House lawyers advised would infringe on his constitutional powers as chief of the government's executive branch. Bush has used this practice more than any prior president. This time, however, the White House seems to be ignoring the nuclear terrorism coordinator requirement not for constitutional reasons but simply because the administration thinks it is a bad idea. It is a stance some legal scholars called an even more blatant disregard of the checks and balances on presidential power.

"It is one thing when the president claims it infringes on his constitutional authority," said Phillip J. Cooper, a Portland State University law professor who specializes in separation of powers issues. "It is something else altogether when no such argument is made."

"Congress has the authority to create by statute different responsibilities in executive departments," he added. "You can't ignore a valid statute. I don't think he has the authority to do that."

National security analysts have long advocated for a top presidential adviser focused solely on organizing the government to prevent terrorists from acquiring catastrophic weapons, such as a nuclear device, a radioactive "dirty bomb," or biological agents. They contend that the current arrangement - in which that responsibility is spread across the Departments of Energy, Defense, State, and Homeland Security - is not fully integrated and has gaps in preparedness.

Calls to create such a post date to before the 9/11 attacks. A January 2001 task force - headed by former Senate majority leader Howard Baker, a Republican, and Lloyd Cutler, a former White House aide to Democratic presidents Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter - called for a similar position and additional resources to lock down former Soviet arsenals and vulnerable nuclear stockpiles worldwide.

Under the law at issue, which Bush signed on Aug. 3, 2007, the nuclear antiterrorism coordinator would serve as the "principal adviser to the president on all matters relating to the prevention of weapons of mass destruction proliferation and terrorism."

That official - which the legislation stipulates must be "full time" and carry no other responsibilities - would draw up budgets and strategies for securing and detecting materials around the world that could be used in weapons of mass destruction. The president would appoint the coordinator pending Senate approval, and he or she would command a small staff that would participate in the deliberations of both the National Security Council and the Homeland Security Council, the law states.

Advocates say the post is needed now more than ever, pointing to growing evidence - documented by international intelligence agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency - that terrorist groups are actively seeking nuclear or radiological weapons and the know-how to make them.

Meanwhile, a government-funded report released this month concluded that some of the current efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and terrorism are not fully coordinated.

The review by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Pentagon office that helps secure nuclear stockpiles in the former Soviet Union, found that the current practice of having individual executive departments propose their own budgets for nuclear security programs "risks creating gaps and redundancies."

The review pointed out that the White House budget examiner who is responsible for approving Department of Defense and Department of Energy programs is not responsible for the State Department's related efforts. It also found that the Pentagon agency - which employs some of the preeminent antiproliferation specialists - often is not consulted on critical decisions related to stopping nuclear proliferation.

Senator John F. Kerry, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, said he believes a presidential adviser with the power to track and coordinate the nation's efforts to prevent nuclear terrorism is critical to national security.

"There needs to be someone with a clear line of authority whose full-time job and only job is this," the Massachusetts Democrat said in a recent interview.

During a debate between Kerry, the Democratic nominee, and Bush during the 2004 presidential election, Kerry declared that a terrorist attack involving a nuclear or radiological device poses the greatest national security threat.

Bush readily agreed.

But without a single person coordinating the government's prevention efforts, the necessary urgency is lacking, said Charles Curtis, president of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a nonprofit organization in Washington, and the former deputy secretary of energy in the Clinton administration.

"I believe that until there is a senior official with direct access to the president who has specific and singular responsibility for coordinating efforts to keep nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction out of terrorist hands, we will not get the action we need," he told the National Defense University Foundation in Washington last month. "We need a centralized means in the office of the president to set priorities, assign responsibilities, ensure resources, and hold people to account."

"It's the law," he added. "But it's not enough to have a law."

[http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2008/06/22/bush\\_fails\\_to\\_appoint\\_a\\_nuclear\\_terror\\_czar/](http://www.boston.com/news/nation/washington/articles/2008/06/22/bush_fails_to_appoint_a_nuclear_terror_czar/)

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Philadelphia Inquirer

June 22, 2008

## 'Ball Of Fire' Warning If Iran Is Hit

By Ali Akbar Dareini, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - The U.N. nuclear watchdog chief warned in comments aired yesterday that any military strike on Iran could turn the Mideast into a "ball of fire" and lead the country to a more aggressive stance on its nuclear program.

The comments by Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, came in an interview with an Arab television station aired a day after U.S. officials said they believed recent large Israeli military exercises may have been meant to show Israel's ability to hit Iran's nuclear sites.

"In my opinion, a military strike will be the worst . . . it will turn the Middle East to a ball of fire," ElBaradei said on Al-Arabiya television. It also could prompt Iran to press harder to seek a nuclear program, and force him to resign, he said.

Iran yesterday also criticized the Israeli exercises. The official IRNA news agency quoted a government spokesman as saying the exercises demonstrate that Israel "jeopardizes global peace and security."

Israel sent warplanes and other aircraft on a major exercise in the eastern Mediterranean this month, U.S. military officials said Friday. Israel's military refused to confirm or deny that the maneuvers were practice for a strike in Iran, saying only that it regularly trains for various missions to counter threats.

But the exercise may have been a show of force as well as a practice of skills needed for a long-range strike mission, one U.S. official said on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak on the record on the matter.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has said he prefers that Iran's nuclear ambitions be halted by diplomatic means, but he has declined to rule out military action.

The United States says it is seeking a diplomatic resolution to the threat the West sees from Iran's nuclear program, although U.S. officials also have refused to take the military option off the table.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice refused to comment on the Israeli maneuvers in an interview with National Public Radio aired yesterday but said: "We are committed to a diplomatic course."

The United States and other Western nations accuse Iran of seeking a nuclear bomb. Iran has said its nuclear program is aimed at generating electricity.

[http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world\\_us/20635159.html](http://www.philly.com/inquirer/world_us/20635159.html)

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Washington Post

June 22, 2008

Pg. 14

## **Europe Fears Obama Might Undercut Progress With Iran**

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

European officials are increasingly concerned that Sen. Barack Obama's campaign pledge to begin direct talks with Iran on its nuclear program without preconditions could potentially rupture U.S. relations with key European allies early in a potential Obama administration.

The U.N. Security Council has passed four resolutions demanding that Iran stop enriching uranium, each time highlighting the offer of financial and diplomatic incentives from a European-led coalition if Tehran suspends enrichment, a route to producing fuel for nuclear weapons. But Obama, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, has said he would make such suspension a topic for discussion with Iran, rather than a precondition for any negotiations to take place.

European officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said they are wary of giving up a demand that has been so enshrined in U.N. resolutions, particularly without any corresponding concessions by Iran. Although European officials are eager to welcome a U.S. president promising renewed diplomacy and multilateralism after years of tensions with the Bush administration, they feel strongly about continuing on the current path.

"Dropping a unanimous Security Council condition would simply be interpreted by Iran and America's allies as unconditional surrender, and America's friends would view this as confirmation of America's basic unreliability," said François Heisbourg, a Paris-based military analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies. "A hell of a way to start a presidential term."

The United States does not have formal diplomatic relations with Tehran, unlike the other countries in the coalition. Obama advisers contend that U.S. willingness to engage directly with Iran would improve a process that they say is not effective in thwarting Iranian ambitions. "People say we can't give something for nothing," said Susan Rice, a key Obama foreign policy aide. "But every day that passes, the Iranians are getting something for nothing -- progress on their nuclear program."

Obama advisers appear to distinguish between full negotiations and preparatory talks with Iran, stressing that the most immediate consequence of their approach is that a U.S. official likely would accompany European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana when he meets with Iranian representatives, a shift European officials said they would welcome.

Still, Philip H. Gordon, a Europe expert at the Brookings Institution who has advised the Obama campaign, acknowledged that European officials "are uncomfortable with giving up the precondition of uranium enrichment right now." Gordon, who emphasized he was not speaking for the campaign, said the dynamic has changed in recent years, so that "after all the lies and dissembling by the Iranians, the European negotiators have become pretty hard-line" on Iran.

European officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they did not want to be seen as interfering with U.S. politics, said the demand that Iran first suspend its uranium enrichment is a European concept, not something forced on them by the Bush administration. Three European countries -- Britain, France and Germany -- persuaded Tehran to suspend its enrichment activities in 2003 while the two sides negotiated, until Iran declared in 2006 that the talks were fruitless and restarted their nuclear program.

After the United States, Russia and China joined the European-led effort in 2006, the six nations jointly offered a large package of incentives if Iran would once again suspend enrichment. This month, the six sweetened the terms of the deal -- and European leaders warned that Iran faces even tougher sanctions if it does not stop its nuclear work. But Iran has shrugged off the offers and threats and is building a stockpile now estimated at 150 kilograms (330 pounds) of low-enriched uranium.

European officials say they are not prepared to start negotiations on the package of incentives while Iran continues its enrichment activities. "Formal negotiations can start as soon as Iran's enrichment-related and reprocessing activities are suspended," declared a June 12 letter to Iran's foreign minister, signed by all six foreign ministers in the coalition, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

President Bush, during his farewell tour of Europe last week, pointed to the coalition as one of his foreign policy legacies. "I leave behind a multilateral framework to work this issue," Bush said. "You know, one country can't solve all problems. I fully agree with that. A group of countries can send a clear message to the Iranians." But in a recent interview on CNN, Susan Rice, Obama's adviser, was blunt in her criticism of the current approach. "Before we will talk to them about their nuclear problem, they have to suspend their nuclear program. That [is a] counterproductive precondition," she said.

Obama, during a speech this month to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, argued that Iran's growing expertise in uranium enrichment meant there is "no time to waste" and that it is "time for the United States to lead." He dismissed the Bush administration approach as "limited, piecemeal talks while we outsource the sustained work to our European allies." But, he added: "There will be careful preparation. We will open up lines of communication, build an agenda, coordinate closely with our allies and evaluate the potential for progress."

Obama's Republican rival, Sen. John McCain (Ariz.), has lauded the European efforts, saying in April that the coalition "deserves praise for its great efforts to present a positive endgame: an Iran with far-reaching economic incentives, external support for a civilian nuclear energy program and integration into the international community." "Obama criticizes a multilateral process and disparages the European contribution. What he is proposing is unilateral cowboy summitry," said Randy Scheunemann, the McCain campaign's national security director. He said McCain "agrees we need to have basic benchmarks, such as suspension, before you go further. And he has called for a significant increase in sanctions, through the U.N. if possible or through like-minded allies if necessary."

Obama campaign officials, however, dismiss the current effort as "weak carrots and weak sticks" and argue that U.S. willingness to engage Iran could be used to prod both Iran and U.S. allies -- such as by seeking an upfront commitment from Europe, Russia and China to support much tougher sanctions if the negotiations fail.

"This will give us stronger carrots and stronger sticks," said Dennis Ross, a Middle East envoy in the Clinton administration who advises the campaign and acknowledged he has heard concerns from Europeans. "This will give us leverage with those who are convinced Iran should be stopped but have not provided tough economic sanctions," such as ending financing of Iran's energy businesses. "This will not take place divorced from the U.N. Security Council. But we have to be mindful we have a process that is not working."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/06/21/AR2008062101658.html>

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Baltimore Sun  
June 22, 2008

## **N. Korea Breakthrough Expected**

*Signs it will abandon nuclear arms grow as Rice heads to Asia*

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON--Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice heads to Asia this week amid signs of an imminent breakthrough in efforts to get North Korea to abandon nuclear weapons and bring a formal end to the Korean War. After months of delay, the Communist North appears set to hand over an accounting of its atomic activities by the end of the month, fulfilling a key step in the denuclearization process that will trigger an announcement by the Bush administration that it intends to lift sanctions against Pyongyang, U.S. officials said Friday.

Once that announcement is made, North Korea is expected to blow up the cooling tower at its Yongbyon reactor complex in what would be a dramatic, if only symbolic, televised signal of its intent to abandon nuclear arms, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity to describe sensitive diplomatic discussions.

All of these developments could happen within the next 10 days while Rice is on her Asian trip - she is visiting Japan, South Korea and China.

But that timeline is regarded as a best-case scenario, given the difficulty in predicting North Korean behavior because of the closed nature of its authoritarian regime. North Korea has in the past unexpectedly backed out of completing promised actions, confounding attempts to read the country's opaque leadership.

However, as Rice prepares to leave Washington tomorrow, she and her aides have been setting the stage for potential movement by North Korea and how the administration will respond under the terms of agreements reached in what are known as the "six-party talks." Those involved are China, Japan, the two Koreas, Russia and the United States.

North Korea, which detonated a nuclear device in 2006, has stopped making plutonium and begun disabling its nuclear facilities so they cannot be quickly restarted, but it still has a stockpile of radioactive material that experts believe is enough to make about a half-dozen bombs.

The talks have been stalled since Pyongyang failed to meet an earlier obligation to provide a declaration of its nuclear activities by the end of 2007.



Since then, the United States has been pushing hard for progress, hoping to reach a final deal before President Bush leaves office. There has been a flurry of exchanges between U.S. and North Korean officials. After a series of incremental steps forward in recent months, including the North's hand-over to the United States of nearly 19,000 documents related to its plutonium production, Rice said Wednesday that she expected Pyongyang soon to produce its declaration to the Chinese hosts of the talks. In return, she reiterated, the Bush administration would notify Congress of its intent to remove North Korea from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism and lift sanctions on it under the Trading With the Enemy Act. But, she also stressed, unless the North's denuclearization actions are verified, U.S. policy toward the country would not change. Rice chose to make those comments at the conservative Heritage Foundation think tank in a deliberate shot at conservative critics who believe the administration's North Korea policy is fatally flawed because its reclusive leader, Kim Jong Il, and his colleagues cannot be trusted under any circumstances. A day later, she told CNN in an interview that she expected the North Korean declaration to be submitted this month, meaning on or before June 30, when she will be in Beijing on the final day of her Asia swing. <http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nation/bal-te.nkorea22jun22.0.4319717.story>

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New York Times  
June 23, 2008  
Pg. 12

## **Nuclear Inspectors To Check Syria Site**

VIENNA (Reuters) — Senior United Nations inspectors arrived in Syria on Sunday to investigate allegations by the United States that Syria was building a clandestine nuclear reactor for military purposes before an Israeli airstrike destroyed it in September, officials said.

Syria denies the accusations, saying the remote desert site housed an ordinary military building under construction. The United States says the project, at a site known as Al Kibar, was camouflaged to hide its nature, and Western nuclear analysts say satellite pictures taken since the bombing on Sept. 6 show that it was bulldozed in a possible effort to remove incriminating evidence.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has indicated that uncovering the truth at this stage could be difficult. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/23/world/middleeast/23syria.html?scp=1&sq=Nuclear+Inspectors+To+Check+Syria+Site&st=nyt>

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Yahoo! News

## **North Korea invites TV crews for nuclear show**

By JAE-SOON CHANG, Associated Press Writer  
Sun Jun 22, 4:27 AM ET

SEOUL, South Korea - North Korea has invited foreign television stations to broadcast its planned destruction of a key facility at the Yongbyon nuclear complex, South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator said Sunday.

Five broadcasters — each from the five countries in nuclear talks with North Korea — have been asked to cover the planned blowing up of the cooling tower at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang, Seoul's nuclear envoy Kim Sook told reporters.

Kim said CNN was chosen as U.S. broadcaster, but did not name the other four stations invited from South Korea, China, Japan and Russia.

Pyongyang also has notified the five stations of a date for the tower's destruction, Kim said, without elaborating. The North's move indicates a breakthrough is imminent in the impasse that has held up the six-party nuclear negotiations for months, since the tower's destruction is supposed to come only after Pyongyang submits its long-delayed list of nuclear programs.

North Korea agreed last year to disable its nuclear facilities and fully account for its nuclear programs in exchange for economic and political concessions.

The denuclearization process reached an impasse as Pyongyang failed to meet an end-of-2007 deadline for declaring its nuclear activities, although the North has made progress in disabling its nuclear facilities so they cannot be easily restarted.

Kim said the North is expected to present the nuclear declaration "soon" but declined to specify a date.

The cooling tower's destruction — a symbolic act designed to show Pyongyang's intent to abandon its nuclear ambitions — is part of a series of carefully sequenced reciprocal moves that Pyongyang and Washington agreed to take to move the nuclear talks forward.

Once the North submits a nuclear declaration, the U.S. government is supposed to begin the process of taking Pyongyang off Washington's terrorism and sanctions blacklists. Next would come the North's destruction of the cooling tower, which is supposed to be followed by a resumption of six-nation nuclear talks.

U.S. officials said all of these developments could happen within the next 10 days while U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is en route to Japan, South Korea and China next week.

Kim said he would travel to Beijing later Sunday for talks with his U.S. and Chinese counterparts. U.S. chief nuclear envoy Christopher Hill has been in the Chinese capital since Friday for talks with China's envoy Wu Dawei.

The six-party nuclear talks were last held between late September and early October.

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080622/ap\\_on\\_re\\_as/koreas\\_nuclear\\_1](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080622/ap_on_re_as/koreas_nuclear_1)

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Boston Globe  
June 23, 2008

## **If Poison Gas Can Go, Why Not Nukes?**

By James Carroll

NUCLEAR ABOLITION is for dreamers. That is the "realist" assessment of the ever-slowing movement to eliminate nuclear weapons from the planet. Despite treaty obligations to the contrary, US planners take for granted the permanent legitimacy of the nuclear arsenal, and, therefore, the necessity of enhancing it with next-generation weapons. This assumption undergirds the determination of other nations either to maintain their nukes, or, if they have none, to acquire them. Here is what keeps the Iran crisis simmering, and ignites future crises with other nuclear wannabes. Only a restoration of the goal of universal nuclear abolition as an achievable program of realpolitik will avert coming catastrophe.

A model for such restoration is right in front of us - the success of the century-old movement to eliminate chemical weapons. That project has evolved so slowly that it is hardly noticed. Yet, with the full abolition of chemical weapons in sight, it should be celebrated as an astonishing triumph of the dream over "realism."

In the beginning, the problem was defined quite simply as "poison." In the early 20th century, humans already felt as though they were being dragged by new weapons technologies into realms of exile where mere survival could itself seem like treason. They resisted by focusing rejection on "poisonous weapons," and ordered them outlawed with the Hague Convention of 1907. That prohibition did not stop both sides in World War I from using asphyxiating gas (the Germans beginning at Ypres in the spring of 1915, the British at Loos the following fall). Poison gas defined the nightmare of that war, and though relatively few combatants were killed by it (less than 100,000), the grotesque suffering of the many gassed casualties (more than a million) registered powerfully on the European imagination. Perhaps a civilization grown hardened to the sight of spilt blood could not abide the sound of ravaged lungs gasping for air.

Immediately after the war, the movement to ban gas resumed. In 1925, gas was indeed outlawed by the Geneva Convention, but realists always knew better (which explains why the US Senate ratified that treaty only in 1975). "That gas is a legitimate weapon of war," a British commission had concluded in 1919, is beyond a "shadow of doubt . . . for history shows that in no case has a weapon which has proved successful in war been abandoned." Assumptions about the inevitability of weaponized gas prompted Britain, in 1939, both to stockpile the banned substance and to distribute gas masks to its citizens. Yet, for all the barbarities of World War II, gas, including newly developed nerve agents, was hardly used as a weapon in Europe (German use of it in death camps was in its own category and the Japanese used it in Asia, although rarely against Allied forces). Such restraint was grounded more in fear of retaliation than in humanism.

Once nuclear weapons were introduced in 1945, all devils were loosed, and both sides in the Cold War accumulated vast stocks of weaponized poison, now designated as "chemical." Though the mushroom cloud dominated nightmares, multiple scenarios for civilization-ending mass destruction became possible. Chemical weapons, having been made morally acceptable by the relatively even more heinous nukes, had come into their own by the time Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev tried to call the whole business off. At Geneva and Reykjavik, they set their sights on eliminating nuclear weapons by the year 2000 - a purpose that failed. But with chemical weapons they began to succeed. (Saddam Hussein, against both Iran and his own people, was showing that chemical weapons could still actually be used - and to what dread effect.)

In 1990, Gorbachev and George H.W. Bush signed a bilateral treaty agreeing to begin the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles, and in 1993, the global Chemical Weapons Convention was agreed to - a realization of the

dream first articulated at the Hague and Geneva nearly a century before. The 1993 convention, outlawing chemical weapons, has been ratified by almost every nation on Earth. Stockpiles and production facilities remain, but are being reduced and closed. Chemical weapons are being destroyed. Their legitimacy has been entirely removed, their permanence rejected. The poison gas realists of 1919 have been proven wrong. Now to do the same with the nuclear realists of 2008.

*James Carroll's column appears regularly in the Globe.*

[http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial\\_opinion/oped/articles/2008/06/23/if\\_poison\\_gas\\_can\\_go\\_why\\_not\\_nukes/](http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/06/23/if_poison_gas_can_go_why_not_nukes/)

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London Daily Telegraph  
June 24, 2008

## Iran To Get ICBMs Before Missile Shield Deployed

By Damien McElroy, Foreign Affairs Correspondent

America's proposed missile shield in Europe is unlikely to be operational before Iran acquires inter-continental weapons, it has emerged.

The latest setback to hit the troubled project came after Defence Department experts refused to certify the interceptor missiles to shoot down an incoming threat because they had not been fully tested.

Washington had set a 2013 deadline to finish the system but defence experts believe the Pentagon will miss that date by up to five years.

Democrats in Congress had threatened to withhold funding for the system until certification was obtained.

Meanwhile experts believe Iran will be able to produce inter-continental ballistic missiles capable of reaching Europe, and possibly America, by 2015. Some intelligence reports suggest Iran will have obtained the amount of uranium needed for a nuclear weapon much sooner.

The Pentagon claimed that earlier tests on interceptor missiles in the US missile defence system had proved the viability of the European systems. Scientists disagreed, pointing to significant design differences, most importantly that the European system relied on two stage rockets, one less than the American version.

"It is important to know that this system will work effectively before we buy or deploy it," said Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

A spokesman for the Missile Defence Agency, Rick Lehner warned that testing could push the launch of the system back by several years, with the missile launches likely to stretch over two to three years.

"It takes a significant amount of time to conduct three flight tests," he said. "They can take a long time to design, a long time to execute and a long time to do the post-test analysis. It's not impossible but we have been running one to two a year in recent years."

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/2181807/Iran-to-get-ICBMs-before-missile-shield-deployed.html>

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Christian Science Monitor

## Can Syria Avoid Sanctions With A U.N. Nuclear Inspection?

An IAEA team visits the site of an alleged nuclear weapons facility bombed by Israel in September.

**By Julien Barnes-Dacey** | Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

from the June 25, 2008 edition

*DAMASCUS, SYRIA* - International nuclear detectives are at work in the Syrian sands following American allegations of covert nuclear activity, in a trip that could well determine Syria's international fate.

In Damascus, the inquiry has been met with both a sense of foreboding and cautious optimism. While the country fears Iran-like isolation, it hopes that by opening its doors to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) it can prevent any global sanctions.

"What's driving Syria right now is an anxiety about becoming a pariah," says Joshua Landis, a Syria expert at the University of Oklahoma.

According to the US government, the remote desert site in northeastern Syria, which was bombed by Israeli planes last September, was a nuclear facility being built with North Korean assistance. The IAEA placed Syria on its proliferation watch list in April following US photographic evidence showing the construction of an alleged reactor. Syria has granted inspectors access to the area, but it razed the site after it was bombed.

On Sunday, Der Spiegel, a German news weekly, reported that Syria, North Korea, and Iran were jointly developing a nuclear reactor to build weapons-grade plutonium at the location.

The allegations have been fervently denied by Syria – a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty – which says the site was a military location with no nuclear activity. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said the evidence was "fabricated 100 percent."

Nonetheless, the IAEA visit comes at a precarious time for Syria and risks undermining recent diplomatic gains after a long period of international condemnation.

Following the Doha agreement in May that temporarily settled Lebanon's internal political disputes, the resumption of Turkish-mediated peace talks with Israel, and most recently the Hamas-Israeli cease-fire, which Syria says it helped broker using influence over Damascus-based Hamas leaders, Syria is slowly breaking out of isolation. Most significantly, France resumed diplomatic ties and has invited Mr. Assad to Paris in July to attend a Euro-Mediterranean conference and Bastille Day celebrations.

With claims of illicit nuclear activity continuing to swirl over Syria's head however, Syrians are concerned that it could yet become a pariah state like Iran. An editorial in Syria's Al-Watan newspaper Monday said America's nuclear claim is a "sword hanging over Syria ... in what resembles a blackmail policy that might later turn into direct targeting."

It is these fears that prompted Syria, against all expectations, to cooperate with the IAEA, say analysts.

"Iran can afford to thumb their nose at the West because they have so much money coming in from oil that will help insulate them from sanctioning," says Mr. Landis. "Syria doesn't have a cushion like that."

Already suffering severe economic difficulties, the Assad regime, which trades economic provision for domestic legitimacy, can ill-afford international sanctions in addition to those already put in place by the US.

But even as Syria has opened the bombed site to IAEA inspectors, it has maintained a tight grip over proceedings, drawing comparisons to Iran, which in recent years has provided the UN nuclear watchdog only limited access to its nuclear facilities. A request by the IAEA to visit three other sites was denied by Syrian officials, and local and international press have been given no access.

"The reality here is that there's some pretty strong evidence out there about what Syria was doing.... It's important that the IAEA be allowed to fully investigate that facility and any other one that they might find of interest to them," State Department spokesman Tom Casey said last week.

While calling on Syria to show "absolute transparency," IAEA chief Mohamed El Baradei says it is unlikely investigators will discover any evidence so long after the September bombing. He criticized the US and Israel for withholding intelligence from his agency and taking unilateral action against the site.

Syrian government officials say they are confident that they will weather the political storm, which they see as the Bush administration's attempt to scuttle the country's world standing.

"America has tried and tried to put pressures on Syria ... but it is all false," says Suleiman Haddad, chairman of the parliament's foreign affairs committee. "We will not respond to this pressure. We are in full cooperation with the IAEA to prove to the world that Syria has nothing to hide."

Like many Syrian analysts, Mr. Haddad says that Syria will only be able to fully return to the fold once a new American administration comes to power.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2008/0625/p04s01-wome.html>

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Bloomberg News

## **North Korea May Deliver Its Nuclear List in Two Days**

(Update2)

By Paul Tighe and Heejin Koo

June 24 (Bloomberg) -- North Korea may deliver its list of nuclear plants and materials to China on June 26, White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said, a move that will allow the six-nation disarmament forum to resume.

"There is word that they would try to do that by Thursday," Perino said at a briefing in Washington yesterday.

"This is a deadline that the North Koreans themselves have put out there. We'll see if they decide to do that."

While the declaration is a step toward achieving the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, it will have to be "reviewed and considered verifiable" before the process moves on, she said.

The six-nation talks have stalled since Kim Jong Il's regime missed a Dec. 31, 2007, deadline to declare its nuclear plants and programs under an agreement with the U.S., China, South Korea, Japan and Russia. China may be able to announce news about the declaration "very soon," the U.S. chief nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill said in Beijing yesterday without elaborating.

``We're getting very soon to the North Korean submission of their declaration," Hill said. ``These six-party talks are coming up soon and let's hope that they can move the process along and get us to the end goal here, which is denuclearization."

Nobutaka Machimura, Japan's chief cabinet secretary, said in Tokyo today that he's aware of reports that North Korea may make the disclosure on June 26.

#### Documents Released

North Korea released more than 18,000 pages of documents last month in a partial fulfillment of its pledge. The U.S. said earlier this month that North Korea has ``performed on about 8 of 11" disablement tasks set out in the February 2007 accord.

North Korea shut down its main Yongbyon nuclear reactor last July and began disabling it in November. The communist nation will invite CNN and other media agencies from the five countries involved in the talks to witness and report on the blowing up of its cooling tower at Yongbyon, Kim Sook, South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator to the forum, said in Seoul on June 22.

Kim said he expects North Korea to hand in its declaration ``soon" to China. The government in Beijing will confer with member nations to schedule the next round of six-nation talks.

Kim returned late yesterday from a two-day visit to Beijing for talks with his Chinese counterpart Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei, and the U.S. assistant secretary of state Hill, after meeting last week with U.S. and Japanese negotiators in Tokyo.

#### Fuel Supplies

``The key element of the declaration of course is the North Koreans, in addition to laying out all their facilities, giving us a verifiable figure on how much plutonium they have," Hill said today in Beijing. ``Plutonium here is really the heart of the game because that's the stuff they make bombs out of."

North Korea agreed to disable its nuclear programs in return for normalized diplomatic ties and economic aid equivalent to 1 million metric tons of heavy fuel oil.

The country, which tested a nuclear bomb in October 2006, complained earlier this month about the slow pace of energy assistance. North Korea has so far received 390,000 tons of aid, with another 100,000 tons on its way. Japan has refused to take part in providing the fuel oil before it has resolved the question of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korea during the 1970s and 1980s.

The abduction issue won't be lost in the denuclearization process, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in Germany yesterday.

``This issue is not going away," Rice said, according to a transcript. ``It's not going away for Japan; it's not going away for the United States and we're going to continue to press North Korea to make certain that this issue is dealt with."

Rice visits Kyoto, Japan, in two days to prepare for the Group of Eight summit next month. She is also scheduled to visit the South Korean capital, Seoul, June 27 and Beijing June 28.

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