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Financial Times
FT.com

US ready to put Russia nuclear deal on ice

By Daniel Dombey in Washington

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The Bush administration is set to put a high-profile nuclear deal with Russia on hold, according to US diplomats.

Officials expect Condoleezza Rice, US secretary of state, to recommend that George W. Bush, president, recall the civil nuclear co-operation agreement from Congress in the wake of Russia's conflict with Georgia.

"At this point, it's dead," a congressional staffer said.

The deal would be one of the most visible victims so far of tensions between Washington and Moscow, which have risen to levels rarely seen since the end of the cold war. US officials have warned Russia it faces "consequences" for its conduct in Georgia and they increasingly write off Russia's hopes of joining the World Trade Organisation.

The move to put the nuclear agreement on ice would darken prospects for bilateral co-operation between the two countries in the area of nuclear safety.

US hopes of United Nations action on issues such as Iran's nuclear programme depend on working with Russia. The campaigns of John McCain and Barack Obama, the Republican and Democratic candidates for president, have also spelled out programmes for collaborating with Russia on arms control and non-proliferation initiatives.

Moscow has put great store in the civil nuclear co-operation deal, which would permit the potentially lucrative transfer of fuels and materials between the two countries. The US had earlier argued the agreement was needed to set up an international nuclear fuel bank in Russia.

The idea of such a facility, intended to dissuade countries from developing highly sensitive nuclear technologies, has won broad international support.

But the deal faced resistance in Congress even before the Russia-Georgia conflict, with representatives arguing that Moscow was co-operating too much with Iran.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4c45d088-720f-11dd-a44a-0000779fd18c.html?nclick_check=1

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London Sunday Times

August 24, 2008

Pakistan's Dr Nuke Bids For The Presidency

The 'rogue scientist' blamed for selling bomb secrets has strong popular support, writes his confidant

By Simon Henderson

After the resignation of Pervez Musharraf, who will be the next president of Pakistan? A controversial politician such as Benazir Bhutto's widower, Asif Ali Zardari, or a nonpolitical figure? If the latter, it might, just might, be the detained nuclear scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan.

Last week a group of lawyers in the Pakistani city of Lahore marched in support of Khan's candidacy. His actual election, requiring a majority vote in the national assembly, would shock the world, which was aghast at revelations, four years ago, that Khan had sold nuclear secrets to Libya, Iran and North Korea. But it would be justice of sorts. Khan was not a rogue agent selling centrifuges to enrich uranium – and enrich himself. He was a loyal and obedient servant of a succession of military and political regimes in Islamabad. Generals and prime ministers traded his talents, which also included making an atomic bomb and two different missiles capable of carrying it, for a range of diplomatic and political favours.

That, at least, is his story. He has been telling it to me for more than a year, correcting what he regards as the falsehoods and errors in the books published about him. Their authors never managed to contact Khan so relied on the claims of his detractors. But, circumventing his guards, I did manage to reach him and made a simple request: tell me your version. I have hundreds of thousands of his words, as well as letters, photographs and video. My biography of him is nearly complete.

Khan's fall from grace was spectacular. Twice awarded Pakistan's highest honour for leading the teams that created the country's nuclear strike force, he was forced to make a televised confession about his proliferation activities – and take all the blame himself. For four years he has been confined to his Islamabad home. Yet in neighbouring rival India, A P J Abdul Kalam, seen as Khan's counterpart and popularly known as "the missile man", went on to serve as his nation's president from 2002 to 2007.

The political demise of Musharraf still leaves several obstacles to Khan's rehabilitation, never mind his election as head of state. There are many people who do not want the real story to emerge. Musharraf himself said in June that the true story "is a confidential issue . . . a very serious matter, as Pakistan may suffer".

Within Pakistan, Khan's successes – and impatience with bureaucratic obstacles and rivals – caused much envy and anger. For three decades a sub-plot of the country's nuclear programme was the antagonism between the Khan Research Laboratories and the country's official nuclear authority, the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission. Pakistani leaders encouraged rivalry between the teams trying to make highly enriched uranium and the other nuclear explosive, plutonium. Khan's team won. His team was also the recipient of a gift from China of a design for an atomic bomb and enough highly enriched uranium for two devices, after Beijing decided to back Khan to jump-start Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. I remember being told about China's nuclear generosity by an outraged British official in the 1980s. I later asked what Beijing had received in return. It was an enrichment plant.

The plant is at Hanzhong in central China. C-130 Hercules transports of the Pakistan air force made more than 100 flights to China carrying centrifuge equipment. Beijing needed the plant, not for bombs but to fuel its nuclear power plants. Centrifuge technology is good for both levels of enrichment, hence the current concern that Iran's nascent plant at Natanz has a military purpose. China could not make the Pakistan-supplied centrifuges work properly, so replaced them with Russian centrifuges. What happened to the Pakistani centrifuges? A good question. They were not returned to Pakistan. Could they have ended up in Iran?

Pakistani nuclear cooperation with Iran began after a visit from Ali Khamenei, then Iran's president and now supreme leader, in 1986. The collaboration was ordered by President Zia ul-Haq, then Pakistan's military dictator who, five years earlier, had publicly declared that Pakistan would "acquire [nuclear technology] . . . even if we have to beg, borrow or steal [it]".

Many outsiders first heard of Khan after Colonel Gadaffi's sudden announcement in 2003 that Libya was giving up its weapons of mass destruction programmes. Foreign businessmen who had supplied Khan had been commissioned by the Libyans to build an enrichment plant. The whole deal had been instigated by Bhutto, assassinated in December 2007, but, confronted by the US, Musharraf blamed Khan, prompting the nuclear scientist's arrest and incarceration. The explanation suited Washington which, post 9/11, needed Pakistan's help to fight Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and stop the use of sanctuaries in the border region.

Apart from Iran and Libya, the other main sin laid at Khan's door is North Korea. Having built an atomic bomb for Pakistan by 1984, Khan had no means of being able to deliver it. One version was adapted for use by Pakistan's American-supplied F-16 fighter bombers; another was put on the Ghaznavi missile, the first Pakistan-produced version of China's M-11 rocket. It was not until Khan won authorisation to buy manufacturing rights for North Korea's No-dong missile that Pakistan had a missile capable of reaching nearly all of neighbouring India, which had first tested a bomb in 1974.

The North Korean missile, known in Pakistan as the Ghauri (and, in Iran, as the Shehab-3), was manufactured at the Kahuta enrichment facility outside Islamabad. While at Kahuta, North Korean scientists helped fit the nuclear warhead to the Ghauri and also learnt about centrifuges.

In his biography, Musharraf said Khan had shipped examples of centrifuges to North Korea. Correct, but with the connivance and at the instruction of the Pakistan military. North Korea now probably has a functioning enrichment plant but has not admitted its existence to US diplomats negotiating the country's de-nuclearisation. It is already sitting on a stockpile of highly enriched uranium courtesy of Stalin, the Soviet leader.

Musharraf's depiction of Khan as a rogue agent, and the international acceptance of this tale, had led to moments of farce. To the bemusement of foreign officials, one of the officials sent to the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations nuclear watchdog, had been involved in the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission's own clandestine purchasing network.

The notion that Khan might be a credible candidate to be Pakistan's next president will cause apoplexy for many in Washington DC. But President Bush's officials realise that, denied access to Khan, they had to rely on the version of what he did supplied to them by Pakistan's powerful Inter-Services Intelligence spy agency.

A postscript: Khan's activities give a new explanation for the crash of President Zia's C-130 plane in 1988, in which Arnold Raphel, the US ambassador, and General Herbert Wassom, head of the military mission, also died. Wing Commander Mash'hood Hassan, the plane's pilot, had also been flying Khan's centrifuge equipment to China. On one such trip he confided in a colleague of Khan that he hated Zia, holding him responsible for the murder of a local religious leader: "The day Zia flies with me, that will be his last flight." The aircraft plummeted to the ground soon after taking off, killing all on board.

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article4595628.ece>

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San Gabriel Valley Tribune
sgvtribune.com

Russian Invasion May Speed U.S. Missile Defense Plans

By Associated Press

Article Launched: 08/23/2008 10:17:43 PM PDT

WASHINGTON-- U.S. outrage over Russia's invasion of Georgia could prompt Congress to speed up plans for a missile defense system in eastern Europe.

As missile defense proponents push congressional Democrats to drop funding restrictions, however, they appear to be bolstering an argument made repeatedly by Moscow and rejected by Washington: that the true target of the system is Russia.

Russia has long been angered by U.S. plans to deploy 10 interceptors in Poland and a radar system in the Czech Republic. Russia says interceptors will target Russian missiles; the United States denies this, saying the system is aimed at countering threats from Iran and North Korea.

After agreeing with the Czech Republic in April, the Bush administration faced hurdles to deploying the system. Negotiations with Poland had bogged down, and the Democratic-led Congress probably would require more testing for the interceptors before they could be deployed.

Republican lawmakers, pointing to the Russian invasion, are pushing Democrats to drop the testing requirements, which could add years of delay to plans.

Republicans, including presidential candidate John McCain, tend to be strong advocates of missile defense plans. Democrats, including their candidate, Barack Obama, have been more skeptical.

http://www.sgvtribune.com/ci_10287406?source=rss

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New York Times

August 25, 2008

Pg. 1

In Nuclear Net's Undoing, A Web Of Shadowy Deals

By William J. Broad and David E. Sanger

The president of Switzerland stepped to a podium in Bern last May and read a statement confirming rumors that had swirled through the capital for months. The government, he acknowledged, had indeed destroyed a huge trove of computer files and other material documenting the business dealings of a family of Swiss engineers suspected of helping smuggle nuclear technology to Libya and Iran.

The files were of particular interest not only to Swiss prosecutors but to international atomic inspectors working to unwind the activities of Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani bomb pioneer-turned-nuclear black marketeer. The Swiss engineers, Friedrich Tinner and his two sons, were accused of having deep associations with Dr. Khan, acting as middlemen in his dealings with rogue nations seeking nuclear equipment and expertise.

The Swiss president, Pascal Couchepin, took no questions. But he asserted that the files — which included an array of plans for nuclear arms and technologies, among them a highly sophisticated Pakistani bomb design — had been destroyed so that they would never fall into terrorist hands.

Behind that official explanation, though, is a far more intriguing tale of spies, moles and the compromises that governments make in the name of national security.

The United States had urged that the files be destroyed, according to interviews with five current and former Bush administration officials. The purpose, the officials said, was less to thwart terrorists than to hide evidence of a clandestine relationship between the Tinnings and the C.I.A.

Over four years, several of these officials said, operatives of the C.I.A. paid the Tinnings as much as \$10 million, some of it delivered in a suitcase stuffed with cash. In return, the Tinnings delivered a flow of secret information that helped end Libya's bomb program, reveal Iran's atomic labors and, ultimately, undo Dr. Khan's nuclear black market.

In addition, American and European officials said, the Tinnings played an important role in a clandestine American operation to funnel sabotaged nuclear equipment to Libya and Iran, a major but little-known element of the efforts to slow their nuclear progress.

The relationship with the Tinnings "was very significant," said Gary S. Samore, who ran the National Security Council's nonproliferation office when the operation began. "That's where we got the first indications that Iran had acquired centrifuges," which enrich uranium for nuclear fuel.

Yet even as American officials describe the relationship as a major intelligence coup, compromises were made. Officials say the C.I.A. feared that a trial would not just reveal the Tinnings' relationship with the United States — and perhaps raise questions about American dealings with atomic smugglers — but would also imperil efforts to recruit new spies at a time of grave concern over Iran's nuclear program. Destruction of the files, C.I.A. officials suspected, would undermine the case and could set their informants free.

"We were very happy they were destroyed," a senior intelligence official in Washington said of the files.

But in Europe, there is much consternation. Analysts studying Dr. Khan's network worry that by destroying the files to prevent their spread, the Swiss government may have obscured the investigative trail. It is unclear who among Dr. Khan's customers — a list that is known to include Iran, Libya and North Korea but that may extend further — got the illicit material, much of it contained in easily transmitted electronic designs.

The West's most important questions about the Khan network have been consistently deflected by President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, who resigned last Monday. He refused to account for the bomb designs that got away or to let American investigators question Dr. Khan, perhaps the only man to know who else received the atomic blueprints. President Bush, eager for Pakistan's aid against terrorism, never pressed Mr. Musharraf for answers. "Maybe that labyrinth held clues to another client or another rogue state," said a European official angered at the destruction.

The Swiss judge in charge of the Tinner case, Andreas Müller, is not terribly happy either. He said he had no warning of the planned destruction and is now trying to determine what, if anything, remains of the case against Friedrich Tinner and his sons, Urs and Marco.

Some details of the links between the Tinnings and American intelligence have been revealed in news reports and in recent books, most notably "The Nuclear Jihadist," a biography of Dr. Khan by Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins. But recent interviews in the United States and Europe by The New York Times have provided a fuller portrait of the relationship — especially the involvement of all three Tinnings, the large amounts of money they

received and the C.I.A.'s extensive efforts on their behalf. Virtually all the officials interviewed spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss matters that remain classified.

The destroyed evidence, decades of records of the Tinnings' activities, included not only bomb and centrifuge plans but also documents linking the family to the C.I.A., officials said. One contract, a European intelligence official said, described a C.I.A. front company's agreement to pay the smugglers \$1 million for black-market secrets. The front company listed an address three blocks from the White House.

The C.I.A. declined to comment on the Tinner case, but a spokesman, Paul Gimigliano, called the disruption of Dr. Khan's network "a genuine intelligence success."

With the evidence files destroyed and a trial in question, it is unlikely that the full story of the Tinnings will be told any time soon. If it is, it is unlikely to come from the elder Mr. Tinner.

Approached at his home in Haag, Switzerland, near the Liechtenstein border, Mr. Tinner, 71, was polite but firm in his silence. "I have an agreement not to talk," he told a reporter.

Beginning a Double Life

An inventor and mechanical engineer, Friedrich Tinner got his start in Swiss companies that make vacuum technology, mazes of pipes, pumps and valves used in many industries. Mr. Tinner received United States patents for his innovative vacuum valves.

By definition, his devices were so-called dual-use products with peacetime or wartime applications. Governments often feel torn between promoting such goods as commercial boons and blocking them as security risks.

As recounted in books and articles and reports by nuclear experts, Mr. Tinner worked with Dr. Khan for three decades, beginning in the mid-1970s. His expertise in vacuum technology aided Dr. Khan's development of atomic centrifuges, which produced fuel for Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, now variously estimated at 50 to 100 warheads. Yet while Mr. Tinner repeatedly drew the attention of European authorities, who questioned the export of potentially dangerous technology, he never faced charges. Mr. Tinner's involvement with Dr. Khan deepened beginning in the late 1990s, when, joined by his sons, he helped supply centrifuges for Libya's secret bomb program.

In 2000, American officials said, Urs Tinner was recruited by the C.I.A., and American officials were elated. Spy satellites can be fooled. Documents can lie. Electronic taps can mislead. But a well-placed mole can work quietly behind the scenes to get at the truth.

For instance, the United States had gathered circumstantial evidence that Iran wanted an atom bomb. Suddenly it had a direct view into clandestine Iranian procurement of centrifuges and other important nuclear items.

"It was a confirmation," recalled Dr. Samore, the former national security official who is now director of studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. "That was much more significant than Libya," because that country's atomic program was in its infancy whereas Iran's was rushing toward maturity.

Despite considerable income from their illicit trade, the Tinnings had money problems, a European intelligence official said. Eventually, Urs Tinner persuaded his father and younger brother to join him as moles, and they began double lives, supplying Dr. Khan with precision manufacturing gear and helping run a centrifuge plant in Malaysia even as their cooperation with the United States deepened.

At the time, Washington was stepping up efforts to penetrate Libya's bomb program. In early 2003, the European official said, the Tinnings and C.I.A. agents met at a hotel in Innsbruck, Austria, to discuss cooperative terms. Several months later, in Jenins, a Swiss mountain village, Marco Tinner signed a contract dated June 21, 2003, with two C.I.A. agents, the official said.

The contract outlined the sale of rights that the Tinnings held for manufacturing vacuum gear, and of proprietary information about the devices. In exchange, \$1 million would be paid to Traco Group International, a front company Marco Tinner had established in Road Town, the capital of the British Virgin Islands, on the island of Tortola.

In the contract, according to the European intelligence official, the two C.I.A. agents used cover names — W. James Kinsman and Sean D. Mahaffey — and identified their employer as Big Black River Technologies Inc. In military and intelligence work, "black" means clandestine. In the contract, Black River gave an address on I Street in Washington, the intelligence official said. But no business directory lists the company, and employees in the mailroom at the address said they had no records for a company of that name.

Four months after the signing of the contract, American and European authorities seized cargoes of centrifuge parts bound for Libya. "The Tinnings were a source," a former Bush administration official said.

Two other officials credited the Tinnings with helping end the Libyan bomb program. In Libya, investigators found the rudiments of a centrifuge plant and a blueprint for a basic atom bomb, courtesy of Dr. Khan's network. The Bush administration celebrated Libya's abandonment as a breakthrough in arms control.

But the secret lives of the Tinnings began to unravel. The Malaysian police issued a report naming them as central members of Dr. Khan's network. An official of VP Bank Ltd., Traco's business agent in the Virgin Islands, said it ended that relationship in early 2004, when Marco Tinner was exposed.

Under growing pressure, Dr. Khan confessed. His clients turned out to include not only Libya but Iran and North Korea, and his collaborators turned out to be legion.

“We will find you,” Mr. Bush said in February 2004 of Dr. Khan’s associates, “and we’re not going to rest until you are stopped.”

Acts of Sabotage

After the Tinnings were arrested, Swiss and other European authorities began to scrutinize their confiscated files and to conduct wide inquiries. European investigators discovered not only that the Tinnings had spied for Washington, but that the men and their insider information had helped the C.I.A. sabotage atomic gear bound for Libya and Iran. A former American official confirmed the disruptions, saying the technical architect of the operation was “a mad-scientist type” who took pleasure in devising dirty tricks.

An American intelligence official, while refusing to discuss specifics of the sabotage operation or the Tinnings’ relationship with the C.I.A., said efforts to cripple equipment headed to rogue nuclear states “buy us some time and space.” With Iran presumably racing for the capability to build a bomb, he added, “that may be the best we can hope for.”

The sabotage first came to light, diplomats and officials said, when inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency traveled to Iran and Libya in 2003 and 2004 and discovered identical vacuum pumps that had been damaged cleverly so that they looked perfectly fine but failed to operate properly. They traced the route of the defective parts from Pfeiffer Vacuum in Germany to the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, the birthplace of the bomb. There, according to a European official who studied the case, nuclear experts had made sure the pumps “wouldn’t work.”

A more serious disruption involved a power supply shipped to Iran from Turkey, where Dr. Khan’s network did business with two makers of industrial control equipment.

The Iranians installed the power supply at their uranium enrichment plant at Natanz. But in early 2006, it failed, causing 50 centrifuges to explode — a serious, if temporary, setback to Iran’s efforts to master the manufacture of nuclear fuel, the hardest part of building a bomb. (Iran says its nuclear efforts are for electricity, not weapons.)

Gholamreza Aghazadeh, the head of the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization, told a reporter last year that Iranian investigators found that the power supply had been manipulated.

After the episode, he added, “we checked all the imported instruments.”

Discussions With Washington

In 2005, Swiss authorities began asking the United States for help in the Tinner case. Among other things, they wanted information about the Libyan centrifuge program to press charges of criminal export violations. For more than a year, the Swiss made repeated requests. Washington ignored them.

“Its lack of assistance needlessly complicates this important investigation,” David Albright, of the Institute for Science and International Security, a private group in Washington, told Congress in May 2006. Mr. Albright said he had helped Swiss prosecutors write to the State Department.

The Swiss turned to the I.A.E.A. for help in assessing the Tinner cache. European officials said the agency was surprised to find multiple warhead plans and judged that most had originated in Pakistan. The country denied that Dr. Khan had access to nuclear weapon designs and questioned the agency’s conclusions.

In late July 2007, according to Swiss federal statements, the justice minister, Christoph Blocher, flew to Washington for talks with Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence; Alberto R. Gonzales, then the attorney general; and Robert S. Mueller III, the F.B.I. director.

Officially, the statements said, the main topic was “cooperation in the criminal prosecution of terrorist activities.”

But the real agenda was what to do about the Tinnings.

A former Bush administration official said different government agencies had differing views of the case. The State Department wanted the bomb plans destroyed as a way to stem nuclear proliferation, while the C.I.A. wanted to protect its methods for combating illicit nuclear trade.

The C.I.A. also wanted to help the Tinnings. “If a key source is prosecuted,” a former senior official involved in the case said, “what message does that send when you try to recruit other informants?”

American officials discussed a range of possible outcomes with the Swiss and expressed their clear preferences. The best result, they said, would be turning over the family’s materials to the United States. Acceptable would be destroying them. Worst, according to the former administration official, would have been making them public in a criminal trial, where defense lawyers would have probably exposed as much American involvement as possible in hopes of getting their clients off the hook.

A Furor Over Destroyed Files

Last March, Mr. Müller became the examining magistrate in the Tinner case, charged with assessing if a trial was warranted. Soon after, he was quoted as saying the evidence files contained “obvious holes.” Sketchy reports of deleted computer files and shredded documents had been circulating, but he was the first identified official to hint at

a widespread destruction. Then, on May 23, the Swiss president, Mr. Couchepin, revealed that Switzerland had begun a series of extraordinary actions just days after Mr. Blocher, the justice minister, returned from Washington. Swiss citizens are prohibited from aiding foreign spies. But in his statement, the president said that in late August 2007, the government canceled a criminal case against the Tinnars for suspicions of aiding a foreign government. Though unmentioned, the C.I.A. seemed to peer out from his statement.

On Nov. 14, his statement continued, the government decided to destroy “the comprehensive holding of the electronic files and documents” seized from the Tinnars. The most dangerous items, the president said, included “detailed construction plans for nuclear weapons, for gas ultracentrifuges for the enrichment of weapons-grade uranium, as well as for guided missile delivery systems.” International atomic inspectors, he added, supervised the destruction.

Mr. Couchepin said keeping the documents “was incompatible with Switzerland’s obligations” under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and added, “Under all circumstances, this information was not to reach the hands of a terrorist organization or an unauthorized state.”

The statement provoked a political furor. Some politicians and columnists accused Switzerland of surrendering to Washington’s agenda and violating Swiss neutrality. Among the strongest critics was Dick Marty, a prominent Swiss senator. “We could have respected the treaty by avoiding their publication and putting them under lock and key,” he was quoted as saying on Swissinfo, the Web site of the Swiss Broadcasting Corporation. Destroying them, he added, “could lead to the collapse of the legal case.”

Many European officials dismissed the government’s arguments about terrorists and rogue states as empty. “If they had kept the material in federal possession for years, why not keep holding it?” asked Victor Mauer, a senior official at the Center for Security Studies of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. “Their explanation is not convincing.”

An Action’s Repercussions

In an interview, a senior European diplomat familiar with the I.A.E.A. said the destruction could have repercussions far beyond the criminal case.

For one thing, he said, the international atomic agency had been allowed to examine only parts of the archive. He called it “a good sample” and judged that the agency had missed no significant clues. Even so, he said, the agency might “come to regret” its inability to examine the materials further for insights into hidden remnants of Dr. Khan’s network.

And while the Swiss president made much of the proliferation danger, the diplomat insisted that the warhead designs were in many respects sketchy and incomplete. “These are almost like studies — bits and pieces,” he said, adding that they “wouldn’t be enough to let you build a replica.”

So while they might have little or no value for a terrorist with no atomic experience, the plans might prove quite helpful for an ambitious state intent on building a nuclear arsenal. He said the agency had no evidence that Iran had acquired the bomb plans.

The diplomat added that the Swiss had “lots of possibilities” other than destruction. He said they had no legal obligation to destroy the files under the nonproliferation treaty, and could have put them under I.A.E.A. seal in Vienna or Switzerland.

Several European officials speculated that Washington might actually have kept secret copies of the archive. A senior American official said the United States had reviewed the material but declined to say if there were copies. As for the Tinnars, the father was released in 2006, pending legal action. In a brief interview at his home, Mr. Tinnar pleaded ignorance about basic aspects of the criminal case, such as where the authorities kept the materials that had belonged to him and his sons. “The newspapers know more about these things than I do,” he insisted.

Should the case fall apart, the Tinnars would join a growing list of freed associates of Dr. Khan. In June, Malaysia released the network’s chief operating officer, B. S. A. Tahir, saying he was no longer a national security threat. The authorities have kept the Tinnar brothers in jail for fear that they might flee the country. In late May, a Swiss court rejected their bail application, and early this month, the ruling was upheld. But the judges also told the authorities that they could not hold the brothers indefinitely without charging them.

With much of the evidence gone, the magistrate, Mr. Müller, expressed frustration at finding “no answers to the really interesting questions in this case.” He declined to predict how it might turn out.

“At the moment,” he said, “it is impossible to make any schedule, since the case is in many aspects extraordinary.” *Souad Mekhennet contributed reporting from Frankfurt, and Uta Harnischfeger from Zurich.*

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/25/world/25nuke.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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FT.com

N Korea to halt nuclear disablement

By Daniel Dombey in Washington, Song Jung-a in Seoul and Jamil Anderlini in Beijing

Published: August 26 2008 09:30 | Last updated: August 26 2008 18:44

The future of the international effort to eliminate North Korea's nuclear weapons was in doubt on Tuesday night after Pyongyang said it would suspend efforts to disable its nuclear facilities and would consider putting its Yongbyon reactor back into action.

The announcement, which North Korea said was in response to Washington's delay in removing it from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, comes at a time of uncertainty about the so-called "six party" talks on Pyongyang's nuclear programme, which involve US, China, Russia, Japan and the two Korean states.

"Since the US has broken its agreement, we must take counter-measures according to the action-for-action principle," the North's KCNA news agency said, quoting a foreign ministry official.

Pyongyang said it had halted disablement work on August 14 in response to Washington's failure to take it off the terrorism list, a process it says Washington should have completed after North Korea submitted a declaration about its nuclear activities in June.

President George W. Bush notified the US Congress in June of his intention to take Pyongyang off the list, but the US suspended the process this month because of what it said was unsatisfactory co-operation by the North on verification.

US officials say Pyongyang had failed to give an adequate account of its nuclear activities, in spite of a commitment to do so. They add that because of limited access to people, installations and documents, they have been unable to verify North Korea's account of how much plutonium it has produced.

Condoleezza Rice, US secretary of state, sought to calm the dispute on Tuesday by suggesting differences could be worked out. "We actually are in discussions with the North Koreans and I think we'll just see where we come out in a few weeks," she said.

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3a8dc0f4-7349-11dd-8a66-0000779fd18c.html?nclick_check=1

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Washington Post

August 27, 2008

Pg. 6

N. Korea, Angry Over Terror List, Threatens To Rebuild Nuclear Program

By Blaine Harden, Washington Post Foreign Service

TOKYO, Aug. 26 -- Angry that the United States has not removed it from a list of states that sponsor terrorism, North Korea said Tuesday that it has stopped disabling its nuclear reactor at Yongbyon and will consider rebuilding it.

The announcement comes two months after the communist North released long-awaited details of its plutonium program and dynamited the cooling tower at the reactor, moves that prompted the Bush administration to say it would drop North Korea from the terrorism list and lift some trade sanctions.

Since then, though, the United States has declined to take North Korea off the list, citing lack of progress in the North's promise to allow outside experts to verify the scope of its nuclear program.

North Korea halted work on disabling the Yongbyon plant on Aug. 14, according to a statement from the country's Foreign Ministry. Under U.S. law, the Bush administration could have removed North Korea from the terrorism list on Aug. 11.

"North Korea decided to immediately suspend the disablement," said the statement, which was carried by the country's official Korean Central News Agency. It added that the North "will consider soon a step to restore the nuclear facilities in Yongbyon to their original state."

That would take some time. U.S. officials said earlier this summer that the plant had been substantially dismantled under the supervision of outside nuclear technicians and that it would take at least a year to get it running again.

White House spokesman Tony Fratto said the United States "will not take North Korea off the state-sponsor-of-terrorism list until we have a protocol in place to verify the dismantling and accounting for Korea's nuclear program."

"We've been very clear with North Korea that there will be action for action," he said.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in the West Bank city of Ramallah to try to advance the Middle East peace process, played down North Korea's announcement. "We actually are in discussions with the North Koreans," Rice said, according to the Reuters news agency. "And I think we'll just see where we come out in a few weeks." North Korea, which stunned the world in 2006 by exploding a small nuclear device, made a deal last October with the United States to abandon its nuclear program. Pyongyang agreed to start by disabling the Yongbyon plant and declaring the extent of its nuclear program in return for aid and removal from the terrorism list.

That deal, though, has had a number of major hiccups, including a six-month delay in the North's release of the report on its nuclear program. U.S. negotiators, despite criticism from some conservatives in Washington, found ways to keep it from collapsing.

The negotiators did not require the North to make a detailed public accounting of its suspected uranium-enrichment program or suspected sales of nuclear technology to foreign countries, including Syria. Nor did the United States require the North to specify how many nuclear weapons it has made.

But in June, when President Bush agreed to take North Korea off the list, he said that "the United States has no illusions about the regime in Pyongyang" and would insist on verification that its nuclear program had been shut down.

That insistence on a "protocol of verification" before the impoverished North can get off the terrorism list -- and develop relationships with the International Monetary Fund and other lending agencies -- apparently infuriated the leadership in Pyongyang.

"The United States is gravely mistaken if it thinks it can make a house search in North Korea as it pleases just as it did in Iraq," the Foreign Ministry statement said. "North Korea does not care whether it continues remaining on the list of those countries which are disobedient to the United States.' "

Analysts in South Korea said Tuesday's angry statement by the North fits a familiar pattern of negotiation by fist-shaking.

"This is quite an expected reaction from North Korea, given that not much has happened since they symbolically exploded the cooling tower," said Koh Yu-whan, a professor of political science at Dongguk University in Seoul. "From the North Korean perspective, they thrive on crisis to make progress in their favor."

Special correspondent Stella Kim in Seoul and staff writer Dan Eggen in Washington contributed to this report.
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/26/AR2008082600300.html>

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August 28, 2008
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Our View

Anthrax Case Exposes Holes In Security At Weapons Labs

Scientist's odd behavior should have triggered greater scrutiny.

In the year and a half before the deadly anthrax attacks in 2001, Army researcher Bruce Ivins seemed to be coming unglued.

He was taking the powerful anti-depressant Celexa and seeing a psychiatrist and a therapist, who concluded Ivins was afflicted with paranoid personality disorder. In e-mails to someone the Justice Department identifies only as "a friend," Ivins confessed he was struggling with "incredible paranoid, delusional thoughts." In the days before the attacks, Ivins logged unusual late hours in the lab alone, night after night.

Through it all, Ivins, who worked at the Army's Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Md., retained access to one of the most dangerous substances on earth. The FBI recently concluded that Ivins used that access to process anthrax into a powder, pour it into envelopes and mail it to strangers, killing five people, badly sickening 17 and terrorizing the nation. He committed suicide before he was to be indicted.

Assuming Ivins was indeed the anthrax killer, this tragic tale raises a number of troubling questions about security at weapons labs, perhaps the most important of which are: Why wasn't he stopped, or at least caught sooner? And are controls in place to ensure it doesn't happen again?

Admittedly, it's always easier to judge cases like this in hindsight. Ivins was regarded as a gifted researcher with a good work record. It's unclear how much he divulged before the attacks under rules requiring him to report medications and treatment; at the very least, he told officials he was suffering from "anxiety." But there seem to have been enough red flags about his behavior to have warranted a deeper look.

It's also true that if everyone taking an anti-depressant and receiving therapy were barred from their jobs, either the unemployment rate would soar or many people would avoid treatment. Few people, however, work with the sort of deadly toxins routinely used in labs like the one at Fort Detrick. Given the huge risks of even a single incident,

officials should lean in the direction of protecting public safety, even if that means being intrusive in ways that would be inappropriate outside such dangerous workplaces. Supervisors at the Fort Detrick lab have belatedly tightened their procedures to the point that it seems unlikely an Ivins would escape detection today. Unfortunately, similar strict rules don't always apply to the 14,000 or more scientists at hundreds of other public and private labs around the country. Rules require all labs that handle highly dangerous substances such as anthrax to register with the federal government. But security requirements are minimal — essentially a lock on the front door and a written plan. Psychological screening that relies on self-reporting is just as inadequate. If the government were serious, it would mandate strict but simple security steps, such as video surveillance in all labs, a requirement that two people always be present whenever a dangerous substance is handled and unannounced inspections of people leaving a facility. As it is, you can't buy a Slurpee in a 7-Eleven without being under video surveillance, and you can't get into a bank safe deposit box without two keys. Shouldn't standards be at least as tough for labs that handle anthrax and the Ebola virus?

<http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2008/08/our-view-on-pro.html#more>

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Opposing View

Labs Are Safe, Secure

Army has taken steps to protect against external, internal attacks.

By George W. Weightman

For decades, the U.S. Army's groundbreaking medical research programs have developed vaccines and treatments protecting the lives of U.S. soldiers, saving American children suffering from rare diseases and infections, and combating outbreaks and viruses at home and abroad, such as the West Nile Virus and SARS.

We are also working to develop those same treatments to protect Americans and the world against those who would use disease and infection as a weapon of war. It is lifesaving work, critical to our defense.

To learn that one of our own was accused of taking lifesaving research and using that knowledge and expertise to cause death and illness is abhorrent to our values and mission. Army medical research labs lead the nation in safety and security, and we are working even harder to make sure our facilities remain safe from attack, whether from outside our walls or inside our labs.

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren recently organized a Surety Task Force to take another robust look at safety and surety programs.

We are confident we remain a model to be followed. But just as government buildings and airliners got even safer after the Oklahoma City and 9/11 attacks, we know that we, too, need to look at improved ways of countering a new enemy.

That work began immediately after the 9/11 and anthrax attacks. The Army instituted a variety of new and stronger safety and security measures, including a program that more thoroughly examines our employees to ensure their background and reliability.

We may never know all the facts about this case. But we do know that in the seven years since the initial anthrax investigation, not a single similar incident has occurred. The Army continues to challenge itself, keeping pace with new dangers and new enemies and making security tighter and stronger.

Our hearts go out to the victims, especially those who lost their lives. And we are committed to making certain that Army medical research facilities continue to be what they have always been: a model of safety and security, and home to groundbreaking, lifesaving medical research.

Maj. Gen. George W. Weightman is commander of the Army Medical Research and Materiel Command.

<http://blogs.usatoday.com/oped/2008/08/opposing-view-3.html#more>

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List includes terrorism, China

Analysts Debate Nature Of Future National Security Threats

Terrorism, nuclear proliferation and concerns over a rising China should drive the next administration's strategic thinking, but the United States must also prepare for other emerging threats, the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments warns.

The problems are interrelated, affecting homeland defense, and are "different in scale and scope than anything we've faced in the past," Robert Work, CSBA's vice president of strategic studies, said at an Aug. 21 event on future defense strategy held in Washington. These are the "most pressing" issues the country must contend with, he said.

The first is the rise of non-state actors, particularly two movements of concern -- Sunni Salafi-Takfiri extremism, and the Khomeinist Shia brand of this threat, he explained. He said terrorist groups and their state sponsors are a danger to the United States, as well as to the Middle East and South Asia.

The rise of authoritarian capitalist states will also prove to be a growing menace, Work maintained. These states see the global economy as a guaranteed market for their exports and strategic resources, and a means of promoting their domestic stability, he added.

China can most probably compete with the United States on a variety of levels, including technological, economic and diplomatic, he said. Moreover, several cross-cutting coalitions may result if "the China model" begins to replace the Western economic model, putting the United States at a disadvantage over time, Work continued.

"Now, from our perspective, the focus should be on hedging against a more openly hostile or confrontational China," Work told the audience. However, it is not a foregone conclusion that this will occur, he cautioned.

The specter of a proliferated world in which weapons of mass destruction and mass effect proliferate, specifically nuclear weapons, is the third primary threat, he said.

Since adversaries of the United States cannot duplicate the scale of the "U.S. conventional, guided-weapon battle network," they must turn to nuclear weapons, he said.

The three challenges are all connected, Work explained. Consider a scenario where a number of potentially nuclear-armed states have links to Salafi and Khomeinist terrorists, he said. With access to nuclear weapons, these states may perhaps feel "emboldened to all sorts of things," including deterring the U.S. guided-weapons battle network, he warned.

"Loose nukes in Pakistan or Iran . . . could possibly lead to a terrorist possession and an attack on the U.S. homeland. And several major nuclear powers such as China and Russia . . . have ways to curb these current and potential nuclear-armed regional adversaries," Work asserted.

Further complicating matters, energy trends will bind these three problems even closer, he said. This problem is marked by greater demand than available supply, resulting high prices and huge financial transfers to some authoritarian capitalist states, he added.

Work warned China may turn to other Asian countries like Iran to meet its energy needs, spurring potential proxy wars in which Americans battle Chinese or Iranian allies like Hezbollah rather than inter-state wars.

Moreover, he said, a cyber war or biological attack against the U.S. homeland is another huge threat.

The implications of climate change could also hurt the United States, he said.

Despite the CSBA's outline of major challenges facing the country, Work stressed the new leadership must be prepared for "alternate futures."

The "wild mushrooms" scenario, for instance, describes the collapse of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty regime, he said.

"Or, Dr. Strangelove's radical world -- that's where you have a lot of nukes, China's hostile and the long war's going bad," Work told the audience. "It's an extremely dark and very terrible world.

"It's a Wonderful Life' is if everything turns out well. It's not very interesting from a military planner's perspective. Quite frankly, it's boring. But that's what we hope to have," according to Work.

He said the government must carry out war games in each of these different worlds. Since 2004, the CSBA has run a total of almost 1,520 extensive scenarios allowing the organization to test "the sensitivity" of its evolving strategy.

This week during a panel discussion at the Democratic National Convention in Denver, CO, former Navy Secretary Richard Danzig, an adviser to Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Barack Obama (D-IL), cautioned against over-focusing on particular, potential threats such as China, Russia or Islamic terrorism. (See related story.)

But former Defense Secretary William Perry said the gravest national security challenges for a new president are rebuilding ground forces from the lowest state of readiness since the Vietnam war, keeping a new Cold War from emerging, preventing nuclear terrorism, dealing with the energy crisis, and stopping global warming before it becomes irreversible. Each of these problems has gotten worse during the Bush administration and Republican presidential hopeful John McCain (R-AZ) would do more of the same while Obama would provide new direction, Perry argued.

Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress in Washington focusing on U.S. national

security policy, believes the situation with China is not as dire as some may believe.

"That relationship, I think, can be managed," Katulis told *Inside the Pentagon*. "It won't be easy but I think it's certainly a lot easier than some of the other challenges on that [CSBA] list, and the issue of global warming.

"Clearly China is emerging as a power, and how we manage that relationship is important," Katulis admitted. "They do present a threat but I do think there's some opportunity, therefore increased cooperation, particularly on issues like global warming where it doesn't seem like we've even tried with them."

Nor has there been great effort on creating regional security architectures for East Asia, he continued. He acknowledged, however, there has been "piecemeal" cooperation on resolving the problem of a nuclear-armed North Korea.

Either Obama or McCain must pay more attention to the impact of global climate trends on agricultural systems, which will become a greater issue in the next decade, Katulis said.

The "real axis of evil" is not shaping up to be Iraq, Iran or North Korea, but rather global warming, he contended.

He said rising energy prices and increasing food prices "hit people directly in their lives, both Americans and people abroad." Pointing to past riots over food prices in Haiti and other poor countries, he conceded these will evolve into stronger national security threats than the traditional ones, urging the creation of a national security system or a way of managing such problems.

Failed and failing states will be another priority, said Michèle Flournoy, president of Washington-based think tank, the Center for a New American Security.

"I think the number of failing and failed states is going to rise given globalization, given the lack of integration in some countries and given increasing pressures -- whether they're demographic, whether it's competing for strategic resources like energy or water, whether it's climate change affecting a given country," Flournoy told *ITP*.

"So I think threats emanating from state weakness are going to be quite common, in addition to the various threats that we tend to see emanating from states' strength," she concluded. -- *Fawzia Sheikh*

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