



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 593, 26 October 2007

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Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

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Four Air Force Colonels Are Relieved Of Command

65 Others Also Punished for Nuclear Error

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

Four Air Force colonels have been relieved of their commands and more than 65 lower-ranking officers and airmen have been disciplined over a series of errors that led to a B-52 flight in August from North Dakota to Louisiana with six nuclear-armed cruise missiles that no one realized were under the plane's wing.

"This was an unacceptable error that resulted in an unprecedented string of procedural failures," Maj. Gen. Richard Y. Newton III, assistant deputy chief of staff for operations, said yesterday in reporting on a six-week Air Force probe. "Our investigation found that there has been an erosion of adherence to weapons handling standards" at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota, where the flight began, and at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, Newton said.

Rep. Ellen O. Tauscher (D-Calif.), chairman of the House Armed Services strategic forces subcommittee, said yesterday that she is "satisfied" with the report and impressed that Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has asked the department's science board to take a wider view.

Newton said the problems began with a breakdown in the formal scheduling process used to prepare the AGM-129 cruise missiles in question for decommissioning. The AGM-129 missiles carry nuclear weapons and have stealth capability. But in March, the Pentagon decided to retire it in favor of an older AGM-86, which can carry nuclear or conventional weapons.

Part of the preparation involved removing the W-80 nuclear warhead and replacing it with a steel dummy on missiles to be flown aboard B-52s to Barksdale for destruction. An electronic scheduling system was employed to keep track of the missiles -- using the identification numbers of racks containing six of them -- so that crews knew which missiles had had their nuclear warheads removed and were ready to be shipped out, several sources said. On the morning of Aug. 29, the loading crew at Minot used a paper schedule that was out of date when they picked up 12 missiles from a guarded weapons storage hangar, six with dummy warheads and six that they did not realize had nuclear warheads.

Newton told reporters the trailer that would carry the pylons to the B-52 arrived early, and its crew did not inspect the missiles as they should have before loading them on the trailer. The driver called the munitions control center to verify the numbers, but the staff there failed to check them.

At the aircraft, the crew that loaded the pylons, one under each wing, failed again to check the missiles, which have a small glass porthole to make clear whether a dummy or nuclear warhead is installed. The next morning, Aug. 30, the plane's navigator failed to do a complete check of the missiles, as required, looking under only one wing and not the one where the nuclear-armed missiles were.

"We hold ourselves accountable to the American people and want to ensure proper corrective action has been taken," Air Force Secretary Michael W. Wynne, who made an inspection trip out to Minot, said yesterday.

Newton said that the 5th Bomb Wing commander at Minot, Col. Bruce Emig, was removed from command, along with his chief munitions officer and the operations officer of the B-52 unit at Barksdale. The munitions squadron commander at Minot was relieved of command shortly after the incident. The flight in question was the sixth of 12 planned ferrying missions, but the rest have been suspended.

Air Force Major Gen. Polly A. Peyer has been asked to examine potential individual culpability, Newton said. He did not rule out other disciplinary action, including courts-martial.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/19/AR2007101902512.html>

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Los Angeles Times

October 20, 2007

Chain Of Errors Blamed For Nuclear Arms Going Undetected

An Air Force inquiry says weapons officers failed five times to check missiles before they were flown across the country to another base.

By Peter Spiegel, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Air Force weapons officers assigned to secure nuclear warheads failed on five occasions to examine a bundle of cruise missiles headed to a B-52 bomber in North Dakota, leading the plane's crew to unknowingly fly six nuclear-armed missiles across the country.

That August flight, the first known incident in which the military lost track of its nuclear weapons since the dawn of the atomic age, lasted nearly three hours, until the bomber landed at Barksdale Air Force Base in northern Louisiana.

But according to an Air Force investigation presented to Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates on Friday, the nuclear weapons sat on a plane on the runway at Minot Air Force Base in North Dakota for nearly 24 hours without ground crews noticing the warheads had been moved out of a secured shelter.

"This was an unacceptable mistake," said Air Force Secretary Michael W. Wynne at a Pentagon news conference. "We would really like to ensure it never happens again."

For decades, it has been military policy to never discuss the movement or deployment of the nuclear arsenal. But Wynne said the accident was so serious that he ordered an exception so the mistakes could be made public.

On Aug. 29, North Dakota crew members were supposed to load 12 unarmed cruise missiles in two bundles under the B-52's wings to be taken to Louisiana to be decommissioned. But in what the Air Force has ruled were five separate mistakes, six missiles contained nuclear warheads.

According to the investigation, the chain of errors began the day before the flight when Air Force officers failed to inspect five bundles of cruise missiles inside a secure nuclear weapons hangar at Minot. Some missiles in the hangar have nuclear warheads, some have dummy warheads, and others have neither, officials said.

An inspection would have revealed that one of the bundles contained six missiles with nuclear warheads, investigators said.

"They grabbed the wrong ones," said Maj. Gen. Richard Newton, the Air Force's deputy chief of staff in charge of operations.

After that, four other checks built into procedures for checking the weapons were overlooked, allowing the plane to take off Aug. 30 with crew members unaware that they were carrying enough destructive power to wipe out several cities.

Newton said that even though the nuclear missiles were hanging on the B-52's wings overnight without anyone knowing they were missing, the investigation found that the Minot's tarmac was secure enough that the military was never at risk of losing control of the warheads.

The cruise missiles were supposed to be transported to Barksdale without warheads as part of a treaty that requires the missiles to be mothballed. Newton said the warheads are normally removed in the Minot hangar before the missiles are assigned to a B-52 for transport.

The Air Force did not realize the warheads had been moved until airmen began taking them off the plane at Barksdale. The B-52 had been sitting on the runway there for more than nine hours, however, before they were offloaded.

Newton did not say what explanation the Minot airmen gave investigators for their repeated failure to check the warheads once they left the secured hangar, saying only that there was inattention and "an erosion of adherence to weapons-handling standards."

Air Force officials who were briefed on the findings said investigators found that personnel lacked neither the time nor the resources to perform the inspections, indicating that the weapons officers had become lackadaisical in their duties.

One official noted that until the Air Force was given the task of decommissioning the cruise missiles this year, it had not handled airborne nuclear weapons for more than a decade, implying that most of the airmen lacked experience with the procedures.

The Air Force has fired four colonels who oversaw aircraft and weapons operations at Minot and Barksdale, and some junior personnel have also been disciplined, Newton said. The case has been handed to a three-star general who will review the findings and determine whether anyone involved should face court-martial proceedings.

Despite the series of failures, Newton said, the investigation found that human error, rather than inadequate procedures, were at fault. Gates has ordered an outside panel headed by retired Gen. Larry D. Welch, a former Air Force chief of staff, to review the Pentagon's handling of nuclear weapons.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-na-nuke20oct20.1.6319353.story>

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Washington Times

October 20, 2007

Pg. 6

Syria

U.N. Nuclear Agency Studies Air-Raid Site

VIENNA, Austria — U.N. specialists have received satellite imagery of the site struck last month by Israeli warplanes and are analyzing it for signs that it might have been a secret nuclear facility, diplomats said yesterday.

One of the diplomats indicated that the photos came from U.S. intelligence. Two others said the images, received by the International Atomic Energy Agency on Thursday, do not at first examination appear to substantiate reports that the target was a nuclear installation.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071020/FOREIGN/110200038/1003&template=nextpage>

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Washington Post
October 21, 2007
Pg. 16

Iran's Nuclear Negotiator Resigns

Ahmadinejad Seen Asserting Control

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

Iran yesterday announced the resignation of its chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, a move that signals deepening internal divisions on the eve of critical international talks about its nuclear program.

The announcement may indicate that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is trying to gain control of Iran's nuclear policy and that the country is preparing to take an even tougher line in negotiations, according to analysts and European officials familiar with the talks.

Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and a former presidential candidate, had supported negotiations to try to defuse growing tensions. But he had faced increasing challenges from Ahmadinejad, who has vowed repeatedly that Iran will not bow to international pressure.

At talks with European negotiators in Rome on Tuesday, Larijani will be replaced by Saeed Jalili, a mid-level Foreign Ministry official described by Iranian analysts and media as one of Ahmadinejad's closest friends. Iranian government spokesman Gholam Hossein Elham said the shift meant little. "Iran's nuclear policies are stabilized and unchangeable. Managerial change won't bring any changes in policies," he told reporters at his weekly news conference.

But European officials and Iranian analysts say Larijani's resignation is widely being seen as a boost for Ahmadinejad's defiant position, which in the short term could set back talks with Britain, France and Germany on behalf of the United States and the United Nations.

In the longer term, however, the move could hurt Iranian hard-liners, because their failure in negotiations could rally support for a long-stalled new round of punitive sanctions against the country, European officials suggested.

"They're not united. There are controversies. Some are thinking about the consequences, which is what we want to happen," said a European official familiar with the negotiations.

The United Nations has already imposed two rounds of sanctions against Iran for its failure to suspend uranium enrichment, a process used for peaceful nuclear energy that can be subverted to make a bomb. Larijani negotiated a deal to answer questions about an 18-year period in which Iran did not fully inform the U.N. watchdog agency about its nuclear program. The big issues, however, concern Iran's current activities.

Differences between Larijani and Ahmadinejad became visible in March 2006 as the president increasingly encroached on Larijani's areas of responsibility, according to Iran watchers and European officials.

The two men had a public spat in April 2006, when Larijani said Iran was ready for talks with the United States about Iraq, but then was contradicted by Ahmadinejad. A year passed before the first U.S.-Iranian talks began in Baghdad.

"Larijani had resigned repeatedly," Elham said. "Finally, the president accepted his resignation."

But the differences run deeper, analysts and European officials said. The split at the top was evident this month when Hassan Rohani, Larijani's predecessor at the National Security Council, lashed out at Ahmadinejad for positions that he said had hurt Iran.

"Today in the international arena, we are now more than ever under threat. A country's diplomacy is successful when it doesn't allow the enemy to find more allies against it. Unfortunately, our enemies are increasing," Rohani said in a speech, noting France's new alliance with the United States on Iran.

Other prominent Iranians, including former presidents Mohammad Khatami and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, also have questioned some of Ahmadinejad's policies.

Ahmadinejad has shown disdain for the talks. "Some losers go and tell [the West] they want to negotiate, and the enemies, because they are trapped in a deadlock, welcome them," he reportedly said recently.

Jalili served as director general in the office of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in 2001. As a deputy minister, he was known as Ahmadinejad's man in the Iranian Foreign Ministry, according to diplomats who have met him.

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New York Post
October 21, 2007

The Best Of Frenemies

Don't Be Fooled By Last Week's Summit: Russia And Iran Are Wary Allies

By Amir Taheri

The way the Iranian media narrate it, Russian President Vladimir Putin's visit to Tehran last week represented a decisive coup for the Islamic Republic in its duel with the United Nations' Security Council over the nuclear issue. There is no doubt that the trip was important. Putin became the first head of state from the five veto-holding members of the Security Council to visit Tehran since 1978. He is also the first post-Soviet Russian leader to make the trip. (However, his was not the first visit to Iran by a Russian leader since Josef Stalin's for the Tehran Allied summit, as the Western media have suggested. Two Soviet presidents, Leonid Brezhnev and Nikolai Podgorny, visited Iran in the 1960s and 1970s.)

The visit helped President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad counter his critics' claim that his aggressive foreign policy has produced economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to read too much into a visit that may have had more to do with Russia's domestic politics, on the eve of the general election, than with the dispute between the Islamic Republic and the Security Council.

A closer look at the visit might show that it was more important for what didn't happen than for what did. To start with, Putin refused the Iranian offer to transform the event into a state visit which would have include paying tribute to Ayatollah Khomeini in his mausoleum, visiting the Cemetery of the Martyrs and addressing the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

Putin insisted the visit take place within the framework of the summit of the five nations bordering the Caspian Sea. In other words, he was coming to a specific conference rather than visiting the Islamic Republic.

The visit lasted some 36 hours, much of it spent at the summit or on Putin's separate meetings with the leaders of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan who were also attending.

The summit itself turned out to be failure. It did not achieve agreement on the status of the Caspian Sea, the precondition for the long-term development of its energy and marine resources. Worse still, from the point of view of Iran's national interests, Putin and his entourage revived the treaties of 1921 and 1940, signed under duress between Iran and the now defunct USSR.

The late Shah had denounced both treaties, which in effect allowed Russia to send troops into Iran whenever it so wished, without, however, formally canceling them. Khomeini's revolutionary regime went further and announced the formal cancellation of both treaties in 1979. Under the treaties, the Caspian Sea is seen as a Russian lake in which Iran is granted restricted rights at Moscow's pleasure.

Ibrahim Yazdi, who briefly served as Khomeini's Foreign Minister in 1979, described the two treaties as "imperialistic diktat that our revolution has consigned to the thrash can of history."

Putin's revival of the treaties, in spirit if not in the letter because the USSR no longer exists, was a high price that Ahmadinejad agreed to pay for the Russian leader's visit. Nor did Iran succeed in committing Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan to building oil and gas pipelines for the export of their energy resources through Iranian territory. All three prefer other routes passing through China, to the east, and Georgia and Turkey to the west of the Caspian Basin.

There had been some expectation that Putin might produce a diplomatic rabbit out of his hat by offering a compromise on the nuclear issue. Had he done so he would have muddied the waters, helped Ahmadinejad to make dilatory maneuvers, and divided the Security Council. A Russian "compromise formula" would have dovetailed with the IAEA chief Muhammad El-Baradaei's private diplomacy, also aimed at muddying the waters to help Tehran avoid further sanctions.

In the event, there was no magic formula from Putin. "He didn't say anything on the subject," Ahmadinejad told reporters.

German sources claim that it was Chancellor Angela Merkel who warned Putin against lone-ranger antics. (Merkel met Putin hours before the latter flew to Tehran.) French sources claim it was President Nikolai Sarkozy who steered the Russian leader away from free-lance diplomacy. (Sarkozy and Putin met a week before the latter's Tehran visit.) Whatever the reason, Putin did not break ranks with the United States and its European allies on Iran's nuclear ambitions. Tehran is still required to stop its uranium enrichment program or face further sanctions. To drive that point home, Putin told his Iranian interlocutors that the Bushehr project, Iran's first and so far only nuclear power plant, couldn't be completed until "other issues are resolved."

He renewed Russia's commitment to building the plant but made it clear that Moscow, not Tehran, would set the timetable for making it operational.

There was another disappointment for Ahmadinejad: he did not get an invitation for a state visit to Moscow - a sign that Putin is not prepared to treat the Iranian firebrand as a friend.

Putin's forcefully expressed opposition to military action against the Islamic Republic was music to Ahmadinejad's ears. However, the fact is that, outside a few American media outlets for conspiracy theories, no one is envisaging such action against Iran. Everyone, including Putin, knows that the military option would not be considered until all diplomatic possibilities have been exhausted.

Putin went to Tehran because he wanted to heighten his image as international statesman and peacemaker at a time that his party is facing a decisive election. He also needed to be present at the Caspian summit because the Islamic Republic is Russia's only friend in the region. Russia and the Islamic Republic need each other to slow down the seemingly inevitable take-over of the Caspian by the Western powers through Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan.

One of Putin's main ambitions is to restore at least part of Russia's presence and prestige in the Middle East and Central Asia. Without the Islamic Republic, however, Russia would have no chance in either Iraq or Afghanistan. Syria, long a client of the USSR, has also become a satellite of the Islamic Republic. Moscow and Tehran also share a concern over NATO's expansion into Transcaucasia and US plans to build an anti-missile shield in eastern Europe. Putin hopes to use the Islamic Republic as part of a strategy aimed at preventing the US from shaping the new status quo in the Middle East. However, this does not mean that he endorses Ahmadinejad's ambition to become the leader of a new global "Islamist-Progressist" front against the U.S. Putin knows that a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic based on a messianic anti-West ideology would be as much of a mortal threat to Russia, which is after all part of the western civilisation, as it is against anyone else. Putin thinks that if and when the Islamic Republic goes too far, the U.S. will deal with it. In the meantime, Russia's interest is to encourage Tehran's anti-Americanism. This is a typically KGB-style of conducting strategy.

http://www.nypost.com/seven/10212007/postopinion/opedcolumnists/the_best_of_frenemies.htm

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Boston Globe
OPINION/IDEAS

Bug bomb

Why our next terrorist attack could come on six legs

By Jeffrey A. Lockwood

October 21, 2007

THE TERRORISTS' LETTER arrived at the office of the mayor of Los Angeles on Nov. 30, 1989. A group calling itself The Breeders claimed to have secretly imported, bred, and released the Mediterranean fruit fly in Los Angeles and Orange counties. And they threatened to expand the attack into the San Joaquin Valley, a major center of California agriculture.

The "Medfly" had appeared that August in survey traps not far from Dodger Stadium, and officials were spraying in an effort to get rid of it. The pest attacks 300 different fruits, vegetables, and nuts, reducing plant tissue to a maggoty pulp that rots and falls to the ground. An established infestation would bring widespread destruction and mean that produce could no longer be shipped out of state, potentially costing 132,000 jobs and \$13.4 billion in lost revenues. Eventually the infestation ended, after heavy spraying. There is still debate about whether ecoterrorists stoked the Medfly infestation, but the panic the episode engendered suggests that The Breeders were flirting with a powerful weapon.

One of the cheapest and most destructive weapons available to terrorists today is also one of the most widely ignored: insects. These biological warfare agents are easy to sneak across borders, reproduce quickly, spread disease, and devastate crops in an indefatigable march. Our stores of grain could be ravaged by the khapra beetle, cotton and soybean fields decimated by the Egyptian cottonworm, citrus and cotton crops stripped by the false codling moth, and vegetable fields pummeled by the cabbage moth. The costs could easily escalate into the billions of dollars, and the resulting disruption of our food supply - and our sense of well-being - could be devastating. Yet the government focuses on shoe bombs and anthrax while virtually ignoring insect insurgents.

Indeed, a great strategic lesson of 9/11 has been overlooked. Terrorists need only a little ingenuity, not sophisticated weapons, to cause enormous damage. Armed only with box cutters, terrorists hijacked planes and brought down the towers of the World Trade Center. Insects are the box cutters of biological warfare - cheap, simple, and wickedly effective.

"I can write for you on a postcard a series of different ways to paralyze the agriculture industry of the United States, where we have no possibility of being able to respond," said Geoff Letchworth, the former director of the US Department of Agriculture's Arthropod-Borne Animal Diseases Research Laboratory.

Insects have always carried the potential for great human catastrophe. In the 14th century, 75 million people succumbed to a flea-borne pandemic of bubonic plague. But few people realize that the Black Death arrived in Europe after the Mongols catapulted flea-ridden corpses into the port city of Kaffa. From there, the people fled and carried bacteria, rats, and fleas throughout the Mediterranean.

And it was lice, not Western armies, that nearly broke the back of the Soviet Union when typhus sickened 30 million people and killed 5 million Russians after World War I. In 1919 Lenin pronounced, "Either socialism will defeat the louse, or the louse will defeat socialism" - and the insect nearly won.

Seeing the potential, military strategists have been keen to conscript insects during war. In World War II, the French and Germans pursued the mass production and dispersion of Colorado potato beetles to destroy enemy food supplies. The Japanese military, meanwhile, sprayed disease-carrying fleas from low-flying airplanes and dropped bombs packed with flies and a slurry of cholera bacteria. The Japanese killed at least 440,000 Chinese using plague-infected fleas and cholera-coated flies, according to a 2002 international symposium of historians.

During the Cold War, the US military planned a facility to produce 100 million yellow-fever-infected mosquitoes a month, produced an "Entomological Warfare Target Analysis" of vulnerable sites in the Soviet Union and among its allies, and tested the dispersal and biting capacity of (uninfected) mosquitoes by secretly dropping the insects over American cities.

Americans largely believed that only underdeveloped nations had to worry about insect-borne diseases until the summer of 1999, when West Nile virus arrived. A natural experiment in entomological warfare unfolded as public-health agencies scrambled to explain and then control a debilitating disease. In the next seven years, the technological might of the United States could not keep mosquitoes from carrying a disease across the nation to sicken nearly 7,000 people and kill 654 victims. Lacking a coherent, national infrastructure for pest management, local agencies wasted time, money, and supplies, spraying insecticides on harmless mosquitoes and missing windows of opportunity for effective control.

West Nile virus is only the tip of the pathogenic iceberg. We are vulnerable to yellow fever, malaria, dengue fever, and various forms of encephalitis. Add to this list diseases carried by the eight-legged relatives of insects. Tick-borne Lyme disease can be a terrible affliction, but far worse would be Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, which causes massive internal bleeding and kills one-third of its victims. The virus is transmitted by various ticks with close cousins in the United States.

But given our losing battle against West Nile virus, the greatest concern is its African cousin, Rift Valley fever. Originally found in 1931, the viral disease caused abortions in pregnant livestock while young animals suffered 10 to 70 percent mortality. In 1977, a virulent strain appeared that is able to invade the human nervous system. Of 200,000 Egyptians who fell ill, some 2,000 lost their eyesight and 598 died of encephalitis. An outbreak in Kenya that killed 118 people just nine months ago makes clear that this disease is here to stay. Every region in the United States has a mosquito species capable of carrying this disease.

Nor would it be difficult to introduce Rift Valley fever, according to Charles Bailey, director of the National Center for Biodefense at George Mason University. A person with \$100 worth of supplies, a set of simple instructions, and a plane ticket from an afflicted African nation to the United States could introduce the disease with virtually no chance of being caught, he said.

Americans are understandably worried about disease, and terrorists would relish the opportunity to introduce deadly pathogens. But our enemies are also keenly aware that we take our wealth as seriously as our health. The World Trade Center was chosen as an icon of the nation's economic prosperity. Yet agriculture accounts for a trillion dollars in economic activity and one in every six jobs in the United States. Barns, more so than office buildings, affirm the nation's cultural identity.

An entomological attack would not deplete America's pantries, but it could go a long way to emptying our wallets. In economic terms, the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, resulted in direct losses of \$27.2 billion. The Asian long-horned beetle, which arrived in 1996, together with the emerald ash borer, which was found in 2002, have the potential to destroy more than \$700 billion worth of forests, according to the USDA.

Consider the maize borer, a native of India, Thailand, and East Africa that produces seven generations per year. If this pest arrives, the USDA predicts that it would infest cornfields from the Eastern seaboard, across the Gulf Coast, into the Pacific Northwest. With crop losses of 88 percent in other countries, hundreds of millions of dollars of crops are at risk - along with our energy independence as the United States shifts to ethanol-based fuels.

Insect carriers of plant diseases keep orchardists awake at night. A bacterial ailment called citrus variegated chlorosis is carried by a leafhopper, and the disease wiped out 50 million trees in Brazil. The vector is already in Florida; the only missing ingredient is an infusion of the pathogen. What would be the cost of such insect-borne

diseases? If an outbreak decimated enough orchards to reduce sales of orange juice by 50 percent for a period of five years, the US economy would lose \$9.5 billion - the approximate cost of rebuilding the towers of the World Trade Center from scratch.

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Kadlec, staff director for the US Senate Subcommittee on Bioterrorism and Public Health, has developed scenarios in which saboteurs conscript local insects to inflict \$1 billion in damage to the American wine industry and to infest Pakistan's cotton crop, thereby crippling the country's economy and destabilizing a vital US ally in its efforts to combat terrorism.

"We've thought about car bombs and nuclear materials," Kadlec said. But "we haven't thought about weapons that are in the terrorists' domain and endemic to where they are living."

It could also be devastating to reverse the eradication of the boll weevil and other historic successes of pest management. For example, the reestablishment of the screw worm fly - its maggots feed on the tissues of living animals - could result in hundreds of millions in agricultural losses. According to the National Research Council, a bioterrorist could spread this pest across the United States for the cost of a bribe, a few quart jars, an airline ticket, and a rental car.

Sonny Ramaswamy, head of Kansas State University's department of entomology, is leading a study in which the accidental arrival of the soybean aphid - a yellowish insect that sucks the sap from plants and transmits viral diseases - shows what might happen with a pest released by bioterrorists. Since the insect's arrival in 2000, it has spread at a rate of a half-mile per day, infesting fields from the Dakotas to Virginia within four years.

"It wouldn't be as spectacular as the World Trade Center," said Ramaswamy, "but it would be more insidious."

Warnings that American agriculture was at risk of a terrorist attack began before 9/11. In June 2000, Jonathan Ban, a research associate at the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute, published an analysis that maintained that given the value of US agriculture, the federal government had been "slow to realize their vulnerability to attack." In 2003, well after 9/11, the NRC released *Countering Agricultural Bioterrorism*, a scathing report of America's vulnerability that concluded that the federal effort was "insufficient for effectively deterring, preventing, detecting, responding to, and recovering from agricultural threats."

Since then, the government has moved backward, cannibalizing the USDA in order to feed resources into the Department of Homeland Security. In 2003, the White House moved 2,000 inspectors from the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - the branch of the USDA responsible for detecting and suppressing invasive pests - to DHS Customs and Border Protection. A Government Accountability Office report released this fall revealed that a majority of the inspectors who were assigned to DHS say their ability to protect agriculture has been compromised by low morale, training deficiencies, equipment shortages, and manpower shortfalls. Nothing gets a lower priority than agriculture in the DHS hierarchy of concern.

The US government's stacking of its defenses along the borders is an egregious strategic error. The better model is that of public health. Rather than hoping to stop every sick traveler from entering the country, we stockpile vaccines, train health professionals, and educate the public (although not nearly to the extent that would make sense). It will never be possible to thoroughly inspect more than a tiny fraction of the 1.4 million planes, ships, and vehicles that enter this country each year. The best approach to deterring and responding to an attack is to have flourishing human and agricultural health systems that can detect and quash whatever comes.

For agriculture, such a system should begin with educational programs and trained observers capable of recognizing new pests. When a novel insect is found, the nation needs specialists who can make a rapid and definitive identification: The nationwide shortage of medical entomologists, noted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the aftermath of the West Nile outbreak, must be addressed.

There should also be stockpiles of chemicals or the industrial capacity to respond rapidly to high demand. Likewise, we need the capacity to mobilize aerial applicators, who increasingly struggle to stay in business.

Finally, after the initial response the nation must have the ability to move quickly and effectively from chemical control to more sustainable practices, such as biological control with carefully selected natural enemies. These measures are consistent with the NRC's 2003 report, and have been known to specialists for years. Unfortunately, the federal government has downsized agricultural extension (the USDA's education and applied research function), underfunded diagnostic services, and otherwise failed to develop the surge capacity needed to respond.

An effective pest-management infrastructure would pay for itself. Even without help from terrorists, new pests will infiltrate our borders. In the last century, an estimated 553 nonnative organisms settled in the United States, and two-thirds were insects. The 43 insect species for which economic analyses have been conducted account for \$93 billion in losses.

Americans tend to think in terms of the short-term spectacle and heroic saviors of Hollywood action movies. Our disconnection from the natural world has led us to believe that risk and benefit unfold at a blistering pace. But even prolific and mobile insects take years to spread across the country. Some take decades. The gypsy moth arrived in 1868 and is still moving westward. For a terrorist group with patience, a slow motion disaster in ecological time

would be a perfect tactic against an enemy that thinks in terms of days or months but would, nonetheless, suffer across generations.

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http://www.boston.com/news/globe/ideas/articles/2007/10/21/bug_bomb/?page=full

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New York Times

October 22, 2007

Pg. 8

Cheney, Like President, Has A Warning For Iran

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg

LANDSDOWNE, Va., Oct. 21 — Vice President Dick Cheney issued a pointed warning to Iran on Sunday, calling the government in Tehran “a growing obstacle to peace in the Middle East” and promising “serious consequences” if the government there does not abandon its nuclear program.

The remarks, just days after President Bush suggested that a nuclear-armed Iran could lead to “World War III,” amounted to Part II of a one-two punch from the administration at a moment when it is trying to persuade its allies in Europe to impose stiffer sanctions on Tehran. Those efforts grew more complicated on Saturday when Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator resigned on the eve of crucial talks with Europe.

“The Iranian regime needs to know that if it stays on its present course, the international community is prepared to impose serious consequences,” Mr. Cheney said, without specifying what those might be. “The United States joins other nations in sending a clear message: We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon.”

Mr. Cheney delivered his warnings during a wide-ranging foreign policy speech to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a research organization. During the 35-minute talk, he also took aim at Syria, accusing Damascus of using “bribery and intimidation” to influence the coming elections in Lebanon, and he presented the case for the administration’s muscular approach to investigating suspected terrorists.

But Mr. Cheney reserved his harshest language for Iran. Calling it “the world’s most active state sponsor of terrorism,” he said, “our country, and the entire international community, cannot stand by as a terror-supporting state fulfills its most aggressive ambitions.”

That language is not radically different from what Mr. Cheney has used in the past. But people at the conference said that, placed in the context of Mr. Bush’s remarks, it represented a significant step toward increasing pressure on Iran. The speech seemed to lay the groundwork for the threat of military action — either because the administration actually intends to use force or because it wants to use the threat of force to prod Europe into action.

“This week we heard a significant ratcheting up of the rhetoric,” said Dennis Ross, who served as a Middle East envoy for President Clinton and the first President Bush and is now a scholar at the Washington Institute. Repeating Mr. Cheney’s remark about serious consequences, he said those were “strong words” with “serious implications.”

Mr. Bush has repeatedly said the administration would not “tolerate” a nuclear-armed Iran. But during a news conference on Wednesday, the president went further, saying of Iran: “If you’re interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon.”

That distinction — having the knowledge to make a nuclear weapon, as opposed to actually having a weapon — is one the administration has not made in the past. David Makovsky, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute who moderated a panel discussion before and after Mr. Cheney’s speech, said the vice president also seemed to draw a new red line when, instead of saying it is “not acceptable” for Iran to have a nuclear weapon, he said the world “will not allow” it.

“The first is a condition,” Mr. Makovsky said. “The second is a commitment.”

In an interview on Friday, the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, made it clear that he thought immediate attacks inside Iran would be a bad idea, while warning Tehran not to “mistake restraint for lack of commitment or lack of concern or lack of capability.”

The United Nations Security Council has already imposed sanctions on Iran and called on the government in Tehran to abandon its program to enrich uranium, and Iran has defied those sanctions. Now the United States is beginning to examine even tougher economic penalties, including a far broader cutoff of bank lending and technology to Iran than in the past.

Since 2005, Iran has taken a two-pronged approach toward the West, allowing its chief negotiator, Ali Larijani, to engage in talks with Europe and the International Atomic Energy Agency while the country’s president, Mahmoud

Ahmadinejad, says there is no room to negotiate. Mr. Larijani has been viewed as more moderate than Mr. Ahmadinejad. Mr. Larijani resigned Saturday and is being replaced by more of a hard-liner. The Bush administration, for its part, seems to be making an appeal directly to the Iranian people in the hope that they will rise up against the Ahmadinejad government. The White House wants to avoid any perception that it would use military force to bring about a change in government but has made clear that it would be only too happy if the Iranians brought it about themselves.

Mr. Bush said Wednesday that he intended to continue to pursue a policy of isolating Iran with the hope that “at some point in time, somebody else shows up and says it’s not worth the isolation.”

Mr. Cheney echoed that theme. “The spirit of freedom is stirring in Iran,” he said, adding, “America looks forward to the day when Iranians reclaim their destiny, the day that our two countries, as free and democratic nations, can be the closest of friends.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/22/washington/22cheney.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Washington Post
October 22, 2007
Pg. 20

Former Nuclear Negotiator To Attend Key Talks In Rome

A Foreign Ministry official said Sunday that Iran's former nuclear negotiator, considered a relative moderate, would attend talks in Rome this week even though he has left his post.

Officials on Saturday announced that Ali Larijani had resigned as Iran's top nuclear negotiator and would be replaced by Saeed Jalili, a loyalist to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

But Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad-Ali Hosseini said Sunday that Larijani would attend critical talks in Rome on Tuesday with European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

Larijani was considered a voice of pragmatism by those monitoring Western efforts to curb Iran's nuclear enrichment program, which U.S. officials contend is a cloak to build atomic weapons.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/21/AR2007102101628.html>

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GlobalSecurityNewswire.org
October 22, 2007

Senior U.S. General Sees High Nuclear Threshold

By Elaine M. Grossman, Global Security Newswire

WASHINGTON — A top-ranking officer at the U.S. Defense Department said last week he believes that virtually no U.S. president would use a nuclear weapon in conflict, even if it were a bomb variant with very limited destructive power (see GSN, April 4, 2006).

In his first wide-ranging interview since becoming vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marine Corps Gen. James Cartwright also told Global Security Newswire he thinks a new generation of conventionally armed, long-range weapons could substitute for nuclear arms in a sizable portion of the U.S. military's global targeting plan. As the first Marine to lead U.S. Strategic Command — a three-year assignment he concluded in early August — Cartwright initiated several sweeping changes, among them the assumption of expanded responsibilities and the delegation of some of his own command authority to an array of subordinate organizations (see GSN, Dec. 2, 2005). Having spent his career as a naval aviator, well outside the traditional fraternity of nuclear weapons officials and scholars, he also questioned the validity today of strategies developed during the Cold War. For starters, he replaced the focus on land-, sea- and air-based nuclear weapons with the idea of a “new triad” composed of nuclear and conventional offensive strike systems; active and passive defenses; and a military infrastructure capable of responding to atomic attacks.

Now Cartwright is in an even stronger position to turn some of his iconoclast views into U.S. military policy. As vice chairman, he leads a top military panel that reviews Pentagon plans for new weapon systems and capabilities, which will offer him a broad “opportunity to look at alternatives,” the general said.

During the Oct. 18 interview at his Pentagon office, Cartwright weighed in on a perennial debate over the possibility that very low-yield nuclear weapons should be developed that, if used, might limit unintended damage or the spread of radiation.

“People who have to be accountable for using these weapons do so with a great deal of consideration,” he said.

“And the yield ... I don’t think that’s as critical of an attribute as some would make it out to be.”

Cartwright called the notion of a temptingly low-yield weapon — generally defined as 1 to 10 kilotons — a “good academic argument,” one “that deals more with the ‘what if.’”

Theoretically, if a “grave” threat to the United States emerged that could be deterred only by a low-yield nuclear weapon, the general might be persuaded to support its development, he said. However, to date, “I haven’t seen anything that approaches that,” Cartwright said.

He acknowledged that a number of policy advocates — some of whom were appointed by President George W. Bush to positions at the Defense and Energy departments — have seriously pondered the merits of using nuclear weapons.

“But none of them have had the responsibility or the accountability” to launch such weapons, Cartwright said. “I don’t want to put myself in the shoes of a president, but who is not going to take [as] incredibly serious the use of a nuclear weapon?”

For those who are accountable, he added, “it is not just a little bit [of] a weapon of mass destruction. It is a weapon of mass destruction. It is going to change not just that country’s future, but all of our futures when we start using these things, big or little.”

Early in his tenure as head of Strategic Command, the general said he was determined to build long-range conventional weapons that might offer a U.S. president a more viable alternative to nuclear weapons under certain circumstances.

“My priority is not reduced yield,” Cartwright told a reporter in April 2005. “It’s to take the accuracy to the point where conventional can substitute for nuclear. That’s my first priority.”

Cartwright’s primary concern ultimately became a front-burner Pentagon effort to modify a small number of submarine-launched, nuclear-armed missiles to carry conventional warheads. Congress has largely rejected the idea of a conventional Trident D-5 missile. However, many lawmakers have expressed support for the general idea of building non-nuclear “prompt global strike” weapons capable of hitting an urgent target anywhere around the world within 60 minutes of a launch order (see GSN, Oct. 10).

National security experts have said targets for which prompt global strike weapons might be most useful could include a terrorist located temporarily at a safe house or a rogue nation’s nuclear missile being readied for launch. Cartwright noted last week that such weapons, once built and deployed, should be employed only sparingly, in part because they would be expensive. The project to install just 96 conventional warheads on 24 Trident missiles had an estimated price tag of \$503 million.

“This is a very expensive round,” Cartwright said. “This is not replacing a squadron of F-16s. ... Its value is the deterrent value. So you want to be very selective about how you might use this.”

Still, the general anticipates a day when precise, long-range conventional weapons could assume a growing part of the nation’s targeting plan.

“I believe there is a large target set out there for which we can go at with conventional,” Cartwright said. “In some cases, the conventional is good enough for all levels of warfare. In some cases, you may want to have a choice between conventional and nuclear.”

While current concepts for conventional long-range weapons largely employ “kinetic” warheads — those whose destructive force relies on mass, speed and precision — the general said follow-on arms might also include an explosive element for greater utility against hard-to-get targets.

“If you add explosives in the future, you can come up with intermediate steps of higher energy but still substantially below the nuclear threshold,” Cartwright said. “You may have some of these that you are trying to [launch] into hardened structures. You may have some that are designed to go against soft and dispersed activities, whether they be formations or they be groups of buildings or whatever. ... But you may want more than one choice.”

Before the president can reach for long-range conventional weapons as an alternative to nuclear arms, though, the concept must be proven, Cartwright acknowledged.

“You have to ... demonstrate the capability so that it’s credible,” he said.

U.S. policy-makers must assess how strong of a deterrent to unwanted adversary actions such a conventional capability might pose, Cartwright explained. “What does it deter and how much of the larger energy equation do you need vs. the smaller energy equation?” he asked.

The general said the rapid spread of ballistic missiles to nations around the world underscores the pressing need for a more usable — or, in his words, more “credible” — deterrent than nuclear weapons currently offer a U.S. president.

“The proliferation of short- and medium-range ballistic missiles — independent of what’s on top of them — [changes] the calculus because they act so quickly” in conflicts with neighboring nations, Cartwright said.

In past generations, world powers had ample time to react to regional skirmishes, saying in effect, “OK, you shot at your neighbor. I’m going to sail my armada and I’ll be there in a month,” in Cartwright’s words.

Now, he said, "it's over in minutes."

With new conventionally armed, long-range missiles in hand, the United States might "get inside the time line," delivering "an offensive punch to say, 'Stop it.' And convince them, persuade them, that 'stop it' is the answer and now let's talk, rather than just level the place."

http://www.nti.org/d_newswire/issues/2007_10_22.html#58872303

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REUTERS

Nuclear talks begin in Rome with Iran defiant

Tue Oct 23, 2007 1:32pm EDT

By Robin Pomeroy and Phil Stewart

ROME (Reuters) - Iran will not retreat "one iota" from its nuclear program, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Tuesday, as his new chief negotiator met Western diplomats for the first time.

Analysts say the appointment of Saeed Jalili on Saturday might signal that Tehran is hardening its line on a program the West fears could be aimed at making nuclear bombs.

Just before talks with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana began in Rome at 1600 GMT, Iranian officials said policy was unchanged and Ahmadinejad rejected calls to suspend uranium enrichment -- the key U.N. Security Council demand.

"We are in favor of talks but we will not negotiate with anyone about our right to nuclear technology," Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by Iranian state television during a trip to Armenia. "Iran will not retreat one iota."

Jalili was joined by his predecessor as secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, who was quoted by Iranian media as saying nuclear policies "don't change with a change in the secretary of the council or even presidents".

Jalili himself said that on the nuclear issue "there is a consensus in our country".

Iran's refusal to halt work that can be used to make fuel for power plants or, if it wants, material for warheads, has prompted two sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown told a news conference that Iran was in breach of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"We take very seriously what Iran is proposing and we are prepared to use the methods that we have used and diplomatic sanctions to deal with this," he said in London.

"And I do not rule out anything."

Israeli premier Ehud Olmert, speaking alongside Brown, said economic measures were "not sufficient" and sanctions should be tightened "up to where Iran stops its nuclear program".

SANCTIONS?

World powers have agreed to delay further penalties on Iran at least until November to see if Iran cooperates with U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, and to await a report by Solana.

Tehran insists its nuclear program is aimed at producing electricity so it can preserve more of its massive oil and gas reserves for export.

Solana's spokeswoman, Cristina Gallach, said his mandate remained unchanged -- to explore the scope for entering formal negotiations with Iran on international requests that it halt sensitive nuclear activities.

Solana had been in touch with U.S., Russian and Chinese officials in "intensive preparations" for the talks, she said. A U.S. official said Solana would make a "similar offer" to the proposal by Russia's Vladimir Putin, whereby foreign powers build Iran a civil nuclear system for electricity but without access to "more sensitive" aspects of nuclear technology.

"We've offered diplomacy, they keep rejecting diplomacy, so I really think the ball is in their court," U.S.

Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns said in New York.

Another senior U.S. diplomat welcomed growing European support for a new round of sanctions against Iran.

"We think the pressure on Iran should grow, especially if it continues to defy the international community," U.S.

Assistant Secretary of State Daniel Fried told Reuters. "The French, the Germans, the British are all behind this very strongly."

He said in Berlin that Security Council backing for a third sanctions resolution might meet Russian opposition.

But British Foreign Secretary David Miliband said in Washington he was confident both Russia and China would support a third round of U.N. sanctions.

"I don't accept that we don't know what the next step is and that the international community will somehow fragment," Miliband told reporters.

U.S. President George W. Bush has said a nuclear-armed Iran could lead to a third world war. France is pushing for stronger European Union sanctions against Tehran, as well as for further U.N. measures.
(Additional reporting by Parisa Hafezi and Zahra Hosseinian in Tehran, Mark John in Brussels, Jeffrey Heller in London, Claudia Parsons in New York and Louis Charbonneau in Berlin)
<http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSL2263535020071023>

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Project Bioshield: Actions Needed to Avoid Repeating Past Problems with Procuring New Anthrax Vaccine and Managing the Stockpile of Licensed Vaccine.

GAO-08-88, October 23.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-08-88>

Highlights - <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d0888high.pdf>

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Project BioShield: Actions Needed to Avoid Repeating Past Mistakes,

by Keith A. Rhodes, chief technologist, before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

GAO-08-208T, October 23.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-08-208T>

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Washington Post
October 24, 2007
Pg. 3

Administration Diverges On Missile Defense

Bush Pushes for System in Europe; Gates Urges 'Definitive Proof' of Iranian Threat

By Michael Abramowitz and Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writers

President Bush said yesterday that a missile defense system is urgently needed in Europe to guard against a possible attack on U.S. allies by Iran, while Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates suggested that the United States could delay activating such a system until there is "definitive proof" of such a threat.

The seemingly contrasting messages came as the Bush administration grappled with continuing Russian protests over Washington's plan to deploy elements of a missile defense system in Eastern Europe. The Kremlin considers the program a potential threat to its own nuclear deterrent and has sought to play down any threat from Iran.

Both Bush and Gates affirmed that they want to proceed with deployment of the system, including 10 antimissile interceptors in Poland and a radar-tracking facility in the Czech Republic projected for completion in 2012. Bush cited Iran's development of ballistic missiles that could strike Israel and Turkey, and said Tehran is also developing missiles that could strike NATO countries.

"The need for missile defense in Europe is real, and I believe it's urgent," Bush said in his remarks at the National Defense University. "Today," he added, "we have no way to defend Europe against the emerging Iranian threat, so we must deploy a missile defense system there that can."

At a separate appearance in Prague, Gates suggested that Russian concerns could be allayed by delaying operation of the Eastern European system until the Iranian missile threat to Europe materialized. "We have not fully developed this proposal," Gates said, "but the idea was we would go forward with the negotiations, we would complete the negotiations, we would develop the sites, build the sites, but perhaps would delay activating them until there was concrete proof of the threat from Iran."

White House officials said that there was no daylight between Bush and Gates, saying that Gates is committed to the system but is looking for ways to address the Russian objections. White House spokesman Gordon Johndroe said there is no doubt that "the program will go forward."

In his speech yesterday, Bush discussed his efforts to combat international terrorism and rogue states and emphasized missile defense, an initiative he sees as a major legacy. Since taking office, Bush has declared operational a system meant to destroy incoming nuclear warheads that has not been completely tested -- provoking criticism from defense and arms control experts who question its cost-effectiveness.

Bush initially depicted the system as meant to counter a missile threat from North Korea but lately has emphasized the threat from Iran, which the administration says is trying to develop a nuclear weapon. The White House has disputed suggestions that it is trying to lay the groundwork for military strikes, saying that Bush is focused on diplomatic efforts to halt Iran's activities -- which Tehran says involve nuclear energy, not weaponry.

U.S. officials say the 2012 deployment date is meant to precede Iran's projected development of nuclear weapon and its development of a long-range ballistic missile capability by 2015.

Yesterday, Bush said the intelligence community assessed that Iran could do it "before 2015," but he said Tehran would need foreign assistance.

A July report by the Congressional Research Service said that, as of mid-2007, "Iran has only flight-tested one medium-range missile, the single-stage Shahab-3, having a range of 1,300-2,000 kilometers," or about 1,200 miles. CRS also noted that many experts disagree with the U.S. assessment of Iran's capabilities.

"The international security policy and ballistic missile proliferation community argue that evidence of an Iranian ICBM program is scant and unconvincing," the CRS reported. Russian President Vladimir Putin has also expressed skepticism, and the Iranians said they dropped development of an ICBM, the CRS reported.

U.S. lawmakers this year voted indirectly to delay the missile interceptor site deployment in Poland. As Bush acknowledged yesterday, about \$139 million has been cut from the fiscal 2008 Pentagon budget request, money that was to pay for preliminary preparation of the Polish site.

"Missile defense is a vital tool for our security, it's a vital tool for deterrence and it's a vital tool for counterproliferation," Bush said. "Despite all these benefits, the United States Congress is cutting funding." Further obstacles loom in Poland, where the liberal Civic Platform party won recent elections. It had pledged to withdraw Polish troops from Iraq and to renegotiate the deal permitting installation of the U.S. missile interceptor field. Polls of Polish people have regularly found that a majority disapprove of the U.S. interceptor base. The U.S. system plans to use a ground-based interceptor that will not be tested before 2011. The European interceptor will be a two-stage version of a larger missile that has been problematic for the Pentagon's Defense Missile Agency.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/23/AR2007102300706.html>

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Los Angeles Times
October 24, 2007

U.S. May Delay Activating Missile Shield

In hopes of reversing Russia's opposition to the planned system in Eastern Europe, Defense chief Gates proposes waiting until there is 'concrete proof' of an Iranian threat.

By Peter Spiegel and James Gerstenzang, Los Angeles Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — In a bid to win Russian support for a controversial U.S. missile defense system in Eastern Europe, the United States has proposed delaying its activation until there is concrete intelligence that Iran has long-range missiles, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Tuesday.

Gates made the offer directly to senior Russian officials during a visit to Moscow last week, but chose to publicize it on the same day President Bush highlighted the threat of Iran's missile program, which the president said may enable Tehran to strike the U.S. mainland by 2015.

The Eastern European system faces strong objections from Moscow, which fears it could also be used against Russia's nuclear missiles, and from the Democratic-led Congress, which has cut funding for the program's construction. Voters in Poland and the Czech Republic, where the system is to be based, are also overwhelmingly opposed.

Bush said Tuesday that Iran tested ballistic missiles just less than a year ago that were capable of reaching Israel, Turkey and U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf. Iranian officials, he added, have said they are developing missiles with a 1,200-mile range, which would allow Tehran to strike North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies in Eastern and Southern Europe, and U.S. intelligence assessments indicate that Iran could deploy a longer-range intercontinental ballistic missile by 2015.

"Today we have no way to defend Europe against the emerging Iranian threat, and so we must deploy a missile defense system there that can," Bush said in a speech at the National Defense University, a school for senior military officers in Washington.

Under current plans, construction would begin on the system next year and it would be activated by 2013, just ahead of the projected completion of the Iranian program. "The need for missile defense in Europe is real and I believe it's urgent," Bush said.

Although the intelligence estimate that Iran could have an ICBM by 2015 has been public for several months, the two messages -- Bush's warning on the Iranian threat and Gates' on the U.S. willingness to placate Russian fears -- suggested a level of urgency had entered the administration's calculations.

U.S. officials familiar with the offer to the Russians said it would not give Moscow a veto over the system's deployment and that American officials would continue negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic, despite Russia's insistence that those talks cease.

But according to one senior U.S. official involved in the talks with the Russians, the U.S. would "reconsider the timeline" for construction if Iran's schedule falls behind current intelligence estimates, including the possibility of a delay in switching on the system until the ICBM threat becomes more concrete.

"They had said in some of our discussions: 'We know it's directed against us, because even if the Iranians immediately did everything you wanted, you would still build it,' " the administration official said. "And we said: 'Actually, there are other threats that may emerge, but the urgency and the timeline is based on our sense of what Iran is doing.' "

Gates, traveling Tuesday in the Czech Republic, said the plan was still in the conceptual phase and that no details had been presented to the Russian government.

"The idea was we would go forward with the [Polish and Czech] negotiations, we would complete the negotiations, we would develop the sites, build the sites, but perhaps would delay activating them until there was concrete proof of the threat from Iran," Gates said in Prague, the Czech capital.

In public, Russian President Vladimir V. Putin has remained implacable, and the Bush administration now faces another hurdle with the weekend victory of the opposition Civic Platform party in Polish parliamentary elections. The Polish and Czech parliaments must approve the U.S. system, and Civic Platform has expressed more skepticism about it than the outgoing Law and Justice Party, arguing during the campaign that the government had not demanded enough from the U.S. in return for allowing it to base 10 interceptor missiles on Polish soil.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-shield24oct24,1,4364743.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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New York Times
October 24, 2007

Bush Stands By Plan For Missile Defenses

By Steven Lee Myers

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23 — President Bush on Tuesday strongly defended plans to build missile defenses in Europe, arguing that Iran posed an urgent threat to some NATO allies. He also chided the Democratic-controlled Congress for cutting spending that he called "vital to the security of America."

"The need for missile defense in Europe is real, and I believe it is urgent," Mr. Bush said, speaking at the National Defense University here. "Iran is pursuing the technology that could be used to produce nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles of increasing range that could deliver them."

Mr. Bush's remarks — part of a broad defense of the administration's national security strategy after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks — came only 11 days after his secretaries of state and defense went to Moscow and discussed ways to ease Russia's concerns over the deployment of missile defenses in Poland and the Czech Republic.

While Mr. Bush invited Russian cooperation, he also made it clear that the administration intended to proceed with building missile sites as part of a plan to deploy the interceptor missiles in several years. His tone appeared more hawkish than that of Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, who had said earlier in the day in Prague that while the United States wanted the deployment to move forward, the missiles might not be activated immediately after being deployed.

"We have not fully developed this proposal," Mr. Gates said, appearing with the Czech prime minister, Mirek Topolánek, "but the idea was we would go forward with the negotiations, we would complete the negotiations, we would develop the sites, build the sites, but perhaps delay activating them until there was concrete proof of the threat from Iran."

At the meetings in Moscow, on Oct. 12 and 13, the Russians called for the United States to freeze the planned deployment of the missiles in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic. While Mr. Gates and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice ruled that out, the two countries did agree to share information about potential threats from Iran.

Mr. Bush would like to make missile defense a defining legacy of his presidency, though critics say the initial system, with a limited number of missile interceptors in Alaska and California, remains unproven. Missile defense has been a core of Republican ideology since Ronald Reagan proposed what came to be known as the “Star Wars” program in 1983, and it remains hugely popular among the Republican candidates vying to succeed Mr. Bush. “We should move as quickly as we can to build missile defense,” Rudolph W. Giuliani said during the Republican candidates’ debate on Sunday night in Orlando, Fla. Senator John McCain said that the objections of President Vladimir V. Putin were not an obstacle to deploying a system, but rather a justification of it. “This is a dangerous person, and he has to understand that there’s a cost to some of his actions,” Mr. McCain said. “And the first thing I would do is make sure that we have a missile defense system in place” in Poland and the Czech Republic.

The Democratic presidential candidates, by contrast, have rarely discussed it and, when they do, usually criticize it for soaking up resources that might be better spent on more pressing threats or domestic needs.

Mr. Bush suggested that missile defenses would be a deterrent the same way that an overwhelming capacity for nuclear retaliation once was with the Soviet Union.

“A terrorist regime that can strike America or our allies with a ballistic missile is likely to see this power as giving them free rein for acts of aggression and intimidation in their own neighborhoods,” he said. “But with missile defenses in place, the calculus of deterrence changes in our favor. If this same terrorist regime does not have confidence their missile attack would be successful, it is less likely to engage in acts of aggression in the first place.” In speaking at the National Defense University, Mr. Bush was returning to the place where he first pledged to build a national missile defense more than six and a half years ago. But critics questioned the urgency of the threat, and even Mr. Bush said that intelligence agencies did not believe that Iran could build a ballistic missile capable of striking the United States before 2015 — and then only with foreign assistance.

“There are a lot of ifs, ands and buts,” Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association in Washington, said of Iran’s missile abilities.

The administration hopes to reach agreements by year’s end with Poland and the Czech Republic and to break ground on the missile sites before Mr. Bush leaves office.

Mr. Bush raised the issue again now, aides said, to fend off Congressional efforts to cut spending, which he said would delay the deployments in Europe “for a year or more.” Mr. Bush, who the day before asked Congress to approve \$196 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and other programs, complained that Congress was proposing cutting \$290 million from the \$8.9 billion he proposed for missile defense in the current fiscal year. Representative Ellen O. Tauscher of California, a Democrat, dismissed Mr. Bush’s criticism. She said there was bipartisan support for defenses focused on more immediate threats of shorter-range missiles that could strike American allies or forces in the Middle East and Europe.

“There’s no need for us to rush ahead to deal with an emerging threat,” she said, referring to Iran’s possible development of intercontinental missiles, “when we have such gaps now for the current threat.”

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/24/washington/24prexy.html?_r=1&ref=washington&oref=slogin

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Washington Post

Photographs Said to Show Israeli Target Inside Syria

By Robin Wright and Joby Warrick

Washington Post Staff Writers

Wednesday, October 24, 2007; Page A01

Independent experts have pinpointed what they believe to be the Euphrates River site in Syria that was bombed by Israel last month, and satellite imagery of the area shows buildings under construction roughly similar in design to a North Korean reactor capable of producing nuclear material for one bomb a year, the experts say.

Photographs of the site taken before the secret Sept. 6 airstrike depict an isolated compound that includes a tall, boxy structure similar to the type of building used to house a gas-graphite reactor. They also show what could have been a pumping station used to supply cooling water for a reactor, say experts David Albright and Paul Brannan of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS).

U.S. and international experts and officials familiar with the site, who were shown the photographs yesterday, said there was a strong and credible possibility that they depict the remote compound that was attacked. Israeli officials and the White House declined to comment.

If the facility is confirmed as the site of the attack, the photos provide a potential explanation for Israel's middle-of-the-night bombing raid.

The facility is located seven miles north of the desert village of At Tibnah, in the Dayr az Zawr region, and about 90 miles from the Iraqi border, according to the ISIS report to be released today. Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector, said the size of the structures suggested that Syria might have been building a gas-graphite reactor of about 20 to 25 megawatts of heat, similar to the reactor North Korea built at Yongbyon.

"I'm pretty convinced that Syria was trying to build a nuclear reactor," Albright said in an interview. He said the project would represent a significant departure from past policies. ISIS, a nonprofit research group, tracks nuclear weapons and stockpiles around the world.

Israel, which has nuclear weapons of its own, has not said publicly what its warplanes hit or provided justification for the raid. Syria has denied having a nuclear program. But beginning construction of a nuclear reactor in secret would violate Syria's obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which requires all signatories to declare their intent when such a decision is made, according to sources at the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

The new report leaves many questions unanswered, such as what Syria intended to use the unfinished structures for and the exact role, if any, of North Korea in their construction. Also unclear is why Israel chose to use military force rather than diplomatic pressure against a facility that could not have produced significant nuclear material for years. The new details could fuel debate over whether Israel's attack was warranted.

Albright acknowledged the difficulties of proving what the site is, in part because the roof was put on at an early stage, blocking views of the foundation and obscuring any potential reactor components. In construction of other types of nuclear reactors, the roof is left off until the end so cranes can move heavy equipment inside.

Some nuclear experts urged caution in interpreting the photos, noting that the type of reactor favored by North Korea has few distinguishing characteristics visible from the air. Unlike commercial nuclear power reactors, for example, a North Korea-style reactor lacks the distinctive, dome-shaped containment vessel that prevents the release of radiation in the event of a nuclear accident.

"You can look at North Korea's [reactor] buildings, and they look like nothing," said John E. Pike, a nuclear expert and director of GlobalSecurity.org. "They're just metal-skinned industrial buildings." The proximity of the building to a water source also is not significant by itself, Pike said.

But Brannan, of ISIS, combed through a huge amount of satellite imagery to find a site along the Euphrates that matches a reactor's specifications as well as descriptions of the attack site. The compound's distance from populated areas was a key detail, since reactors are usually isolated from major urban populations.

The site is also close to an irrigated area, which would explain statements by some officials privy to details of the attack that the facility was located near orchards. A small airstrip about two miles away could have been used to transport personnel to the site.

U.S. and foreign officials tracking the incident said that Syria is presently trying to remove remaining structures at the site.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has acquired its own aerial photographs but has not finished analyzing them, according to an IAEA source.

In an interview published yesterday, IAEA director and Nobel Peace laureate Mohamed ElBaradei expressed anger at the Syrians, Israelis and foreign intelligence agencies for not providing information about a suspected nuclear program.

"We have said, 'If any of you has the slightest information showing that there was anything linked to nuclear, we would of course be happy to investigate it,'" he told the French newspaper Le Monde. "Frankly, I venture to hope that before people decide to bombard and use force, they will come and see us to convey their concerns."

ElBaradei also said an airstrike could endanger efforts to contain nuclear proliferation.

"When the Israelis destroyed Saddam Hussein's research nuclear reactor in 1981, the consequence was that Saddam Hussein pursued his program secretly. He began to establish a huge military nuclear program underground," he said. "The use of force can set things back, but it does not deal with the roots of the problem."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/23/AR2007102302577.html>

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Washington Times

October 25, 2007

Pg. 14

Syrian Structure Resembles Reactor

CAIRO (AP) — Commercial satellite images show construction in Syria that resembles the early stages of a small North Korean-model nuclear reactor, a report said yesterday, speculating that it was the site hit last month by an Israeli air strike.

The photos, taken nearly a month before the Sept. 6 strike, show a tall boxlike building near the Euphrates River that the report said was similar in shape to a North Korean 5-megawatt reactor building in Yongbyon. It cautioned that the Syrian building was "not far enough along in its construction to make a definitive comparison." The photo also shows a smaller building that the report says appears to be a pump station, which would be needed to provide water to cool a reactor.

The report was written by David Albright, a former U.N. nuclear inspector and now head of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security, and researcher Paul Brannan.

In Damascus, a Syrian Foreign Ministry official denied that the satellite photos in the report showed a nuclear reactor.

Syria has repeatedly denied that it is building a nuclear facility, and President Bashar Assad has said that Israel bombed an "unused military building" in the raid.

The Israeli air strike has been shrouded in mystery. Israel has been secretive about the incident, only recently relaxing censorship to allow Israel-based journalists to report that its aircraft attacked a military target deep inside Syria.

The report offered no evidence that the site shown in the photos was the one hit by Israel. The photo was taken Aug. 10 by the private satellite imagery firm DigitalGlobe, and the report did not say whether images of the site after the strike were available.

An image published in the report shows a tall, square building in the desert about 750 yards from the Euphrates River, near the town of Deir al-Zour, 250 miles northeast of Damascus.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071025/FOREIGN/110250056/1003>

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USA Today
October 25, 2007

U.S. lacks labs to test for 'dirty bomb' contamination

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. has a shortage of laboratories to test the thousands of people who might be exposed to radiation if a "dirty bomb" detonated in a major city, according to a recent congressional investigation. The federal government established 15 disaster scenarios for federal, state and local officials to plan for, including one in which a dirty bomb goes off in a major downtown area and potentially exposes 100,000 people to radioactive materials.

A dirty bomb would contain some radioactive material that could cause contamination over a limited area but not create actual nuclear explosions.

Should this happen in real life, the nation would not be able to quickly conduct tests for these people, because there are few labs capable of doing so in the country; and the tests available only address six of the 13 radiological isotopes that would likely be used in a dirty bomb, according to the report prepared for the House Committee on Science and Technology. Instead, it would take four years to complete all these tests, according to the report to be released Thursday.

"I had hoped since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that our government had smart people lying awake at 3 o'clock in the morning, trying to think through everything that terrorists could be dreaming of, every kind of attack they could be dreaming of, and trying to think of ways to prevent it and to respond to it if it does happen," said Rep. Brad Miller, D-N.C. "Learning how poorly prepared we are for a dirty bomb, a radiological attack, makes me think that that's not happened."

Miller is chairman of the subcommittee holding a hearing on the report's findings.

The report acknowledges that this type of dirty-bomb scenario would probably not cause massive casualties, but Miller said four years is too long to wait for results of whether people are contaminated.

"I can't imagine a parent, who is told that their child can be tested for cesium in two-and-a-half more years, is going to be reassured to hear that their child probably won't die," Miller said.

The report on radioactive testing offered this example of the deficient lab capabilities in the U.S.:

When a former Russian KGB agent was poisoned with polonium-210 last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified 160 U.S. citizens who were staying at the same hotel where the Russian was poisoned or eating at the same restaurant and were potentially exposed. But the CDC found only one laboratory in the U.S. that was qualified and able to conduct analysis for exposure to the radioactive material.

Ultimately, 31 samples were tested, and it took seven days to test each one. The Energy Department has labs capable of doing a polonium analysis, but those labs do not meet legal standards for testing set by CDC.

According to the report: "The public outcry for detailed clinical health assessments confirming their lack of radiological contamination is likely to be tremendous."

Similarly, officials recently said the nation is ill-equipped to quickly track down the make and origin of nuclear materials.

If terrorists use such a radioactive device to attack the U.S., people would immediately want to know who is responsible, and it could take months to analyze and identify nuclear material, counterproliferation officials said earlier this month.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2007-10-25-dirty-bombs_N.htm

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Reuters.com

October 25, 2007

Gates: US Gone As Far As Possible With Russia On Shield

OVER THE NORTH SEA (Reuters) - The United States has gone as far as it can to win Russia's cooperation on a missile shield in Europe, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates said on Thursday after offering to put the system in a stand-by mode.

"I think we've leaned about as far forward as we can," Gates told reporters on a U.S. military aircraft en route to Washington. "We've offered a lot and my view is now I want to see some movement on their part."

Washington wants to place missile defense assets in the Czech Republic and Poland as part of shield to defend against missiles from "rogue states" such as Iran and North Korea. But Moscow says the system threatens Russian security.

Gates on Tuesday said the United States had proposed to build the sites but place them in a stand-by mode pending proof of a missile threat. He said that was offered to the Russians in a bid to ease Moscow's opposition and encourage its cooperation.

He also said Washington offered to give Russia some presence at the sites, to promote transparency.

"I think the question is whether the Russians are serious about partnering with us, or whether this is merely a pose to try and stop us from going forward with the Czech Republic and Poland," Gates said.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idUSPER56938720071025>

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Washington Post

October 26, 2007

Pg. 17

Iran Sanctions Are Meant To Prevent War, Bush Aides Say

By Michael Abramowitz and Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writers

In approving far-reaching, new unilateral sanctions against Iran, President Bush signaled yesterday that he intends to pursue a strategy of gradually escalating financial, diplomatic and political pressure on Tehran, aimed not at starting a new war in the Middle East, his advisers said, but at preventing one.

Bush believes Tehran will not seriously discuss limiting its nuclear ambitions or pulling back from its involvement in Iraq unless it experiences significantly more pressure than the United States and the international community have been able to exert so far, according to administration officials and others familiar with the president's thinking.

With yesterday's actions, which included the long-awaited designations of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a proliferator of weapons of mass destruction and of the elite Quds Force as a supporter of terrorism, Bush made clear that he is willing to seek such leverage even without the support of his European allies.

"The president does not want to be stuck -- and doesn't want his successor to be stuck -- between two bad choices: living with an Iranian nuclear weapon or using military force to prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons," said Peter D. Feaver, who recently left a staff position on the National Security Council. "He is looking for a viable third way, negotiations backed up by carrots and sticks, that could resolve the Iranian nuclear file on his watch or, failing that, offer a reasonable prospect of doing so on his successor's watch."

Even so, the administration's actions yesterday immediately rekindled fears among Democrats and other countries that the administration is on a path toward war. Bush's charged rhetoric in recent months, including a warning that Iran could trigger a "nuclear holocaust," and his close consultations with hard-liners -- such as former Commentary editor Norman Podhoretz -- have led many outside the White House to conclude that the president will order airstrikes to eliminate any Iranian nuclear capability.

"The choice of words has given rise to concerns about just how serious the president is about stopping Iran from crossing the nuclear threshold on his watch," said Suzanne Maloney, an expert on Iran.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd (D-W.Va.) said in a statement yesterday that Bush's action "not only echoes the chest-pounding rhetoric which preceded the invasion of Iraq in 2002, but also raises the specter of an intensified effort to make the case for an invasion of Iran."

Iran dismissed the sanctions as meaningless. "The hostile policies of America against the respectful Iranian nation and our legal organizations are against international regulations and have no value," Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini said yesterday. "Such policies have always failed."

Both publicly and privately, White House and other administration officials have expressed frustration over the talk of war, emphasizing that Bush remains convinced that his strategy of nonmilitary pressure can work. They described yesterday's actions as essential to that approach.

"This decision today supports the diplomacy and in no way, shape or form does it anticipate the use of force," said Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns, a key administration player on Iran. "Now, the president has never taken that option off the table and quite rightly so, but we are clearly on a diplomatic track, and this initiative reinforces that track."

The new sanctions, announced jointly by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr., mark the first time that the United States has tried to punish another country's military. It is the broadest set of punitive measures imposed on Tehran since the 1979 takeover of the U.S. Embassy there, and includes a call for other countries and companies to stop doing business with three Iranian banks.

The bank measures could emerge as the most significant step taken yesterday because the financial institutions targeted -- Bank Melli, Bank Mellat and Bank Saderat -- are among Iran's largest. The first two have helped finance Iran's proliferation program, and Saderat is being cited for helping finance terrorism, according to U.S. officials. The United States had originally hoped to get at least some of the measures against Iran's military -- particularly the Quds Force -- and Iran's financial institutions into a tough U.N. resolution to heighten global pressure on Tehran. Two earlier resolutions, passed in December and March, were tepid in sanctioning individuals and a bank linked to the proliferation of nuclear technology.

The administration has become frustrated with European allies and veto-wielding U.N. members. Russia and China have balked at approving a new resolution until two reports, by International Atomic Energy Agency head Mohamed ElBaradei and the European Union's Javier Solana, are submitted next month. Washington sought a new resolution in June.

The European Union met on Oct. 15 and agreed to impose sanctions outside the U.N. context. But even allies who have led the diplomacy -- Britain, France and Germany -- have been reluctant to join the United States in using broad measures.

While the White House has long been obsessed with Iran's potential to develop nuclear capability, the president has become increasingly angry with Tehran because of the training, rockets and explosives it provides to Shiite extremists who are targeting U.S. troops and facilities in Iraq.

Whether Bush will break from diplomacy and employ force is the great unknown, given his propensity to mix combative rhetoric with assertions that he is looking for a peaceful solution. Many of those who support continued diplomacy take heart from what they believe to be the skepticism of key advisers, including Rice and Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, about the usefulness of force.

Some Iran experts voice worry that the president is paying heed to figures such as Podhoretz, who has made little secret of his desire for a military strike. "There's no doubt that the president has very strong views on Iran, that these views are obviously formed by the most hard-line position that sees Iran as an extremely Messianic state that is bent on destruction of the world," said Vali R. Nasr, a professor at Tufts University. "He is eager to deal with that threat to the world before he leaves office, and he sees that as part of his legacy."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/25/AR2007102502606.html>

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New York Times

October 26, 2007

News Analysis

U.S. Plays Its 'Unilateral' Card On Iran Sanctions

By Helene Cooper

WASHINGTON, Oct. 25 — In announcing sweeping new sanctions against an elite unit of the Revolutionary Guard Corps in Iran, Bush administration officials took pains to offer assurances on Thursday that at least for now, the United States is not going to war with Iran.

“We do not believe that conflict is inevitable,” said R. Nicholas Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs. “This decision today supports the diplomacy and in no way, shape or form does it anticipate the use of force.”

The move designated the Quds force of the Revolutionary Guard and four state-owned Iranian banks as supporters of terrorism, and the Guard itself as an illegal exporter of ballistic missiles. The decision thus raised the temperature in American’s ongoing confrontation with Iran over terrorism and nuclear weapons.

But it also reflected some caution by an administration that has also accused the Quds force of aiding Shiite militia attacks on American soldiers in Iraq, and has even detained some Quds force members there, but has resisted calls for retaliatory strikes inside Iran.

“This is a warning shot across the bow, not that the U.S. is going to invade Iran, but that Iran has pushed the level of escalation, particularly inside Iraq, to unacceptable levels,” said Anthony H. Cordesman, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. “In many ways, this kind of warning is more a demonstration of restraint than a signal that we’re going to war.”

Still, after 18 months in which the administration has touted the virtues of collective action against Iran by the United States and its allies, the sanctions are a major turn toward unilateralism.

The shift represents a tacit acknowledgment that the diplomatic strategy pressed most vigorously by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has been ineffective, and it prompted fresh criticism on Thursday from Russia: “Why make the situation worse, bring it to a dead end, threaten sanctions or even military action?” President Vladimir V. Putin asked, in a report by Agence France-Presse.

The administration clearly hopes to enlist allies around the world in its new, tougher stance — in part because the United States, having maintained its own stiff sanctions against Iran since the Islamic revolution in 1979, does not have much leverage left itself.

The administration hopes its influence can turn Iran into a political and economic pariah from which more foreign institutions will shy away.

The sanctions will “provide a powerful deterrent to every international bank and company that thinks of doing business with the Iranian government,” Ms. Rice said.

Yet officials acknowledged that past attempts to enlist allies in limiting their business ties to Iran have come up short. In each instance, they acknowledged, some other countries have partly offset the sanctions.

China, for instance, has increased trade with Iran in the past year, Mr. Burns said. And analysts pointed out that Russian, Indian, European and even Canadian companies continued to do business with many different sectors of the Iranian economy, particularly its all important oil and natural gas industries.

Ms. Rice maintained that American officials would continue to work with their European, Russian and Chinese counterparts to come up with a new set of United Nations Security Council sanctions to rein in Tehran’s nuclear ambitions.

But she also said she would be willing to “meet with my Iranian counterpart anytime, anywhere,” as long as Iran first suspended its nuclear activities, a longstanding American precondition for such talks.

But Iran has shown no sign that it is remotely interested in complying with the Security Council demand that it suspend its uranium enrichment.

Indeed, Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator, Ari Larijani, whom American officials viewed as a moderate, quit last week and was replaced by Saeed Jalili, who is believed to be a supporter of Iran’s conservative president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The United States is not accusing the entire Revolutionary Guard Corps of being a terrorist organization, a step advocated by Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, who voted in favor of such a measure last month and has since come under attack from antiwar members of her Democratic party. Some conservatives in the administration had also pushed for the broader declaration.

But Thursday’s announcement is still an ambitious attempt to squeeze the upper echelons of the Iranian government, including the Ministry of Defense. It is the first time that the United States has tried to use the terrorist label and the sanctions associated with it to isolate or punish another country’s military.

In Tehran, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, Mohammad Ali Hosseini, shrugged off Washington’s announcement, saying America’s hostile policies ran counter to international regulations and were “doomed to fail,” the official news agency IRNA reported.

Mr. Hosseini said the United States produced nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and had supported what he called terrorist groups. He called the Bush administration’s accusation that Iran was arming Shiite militias in Iraq “ridiculous.”

Israel, on the other hand, welcomed the announcement. Sallai Meridor, Israel’s ambassador to the Washington, called it “a major diplomatic step in the effort to prevent Iran — a global menace and leading sponsor of terrorism — from obtaining nuclear weapons, which threatens international peace and security.”

Four state-owned Iranian banks, Bank Melli, Bank Mellat, Bank Saderat and Bank Kargoshaee, were also cited as supporters of terrorist groups for their activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Middle East.
Nazila Fathi contributed reporting from Tehran.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/26/washington/26assess.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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New York Times

October 26, 2007

Photos Show Cleansing Of Suspect Syrian Site

By William J. Broad and Mark Mazzetti

New commercial satellite photos show that a Syrian site that Israel bombed last month no longer bears any obvious traces of what analysts said appeared to have been a partly built nuclear reactor.

Two photos, taken Wednesday from space by rival companies, show the site near the Euphrates River to have been wiped clean since August, when imagery showed a tall square building there measuring about 150 feet on a side.

The Syrians reported an attack by Israel in early September, which the Israelis have not confirmed. Senior Syrian officials continue to deny that a nuclear reactor was under construction, insisting that what Israel hit was a largely empty military warehouse.

But the images, federal and private analysts said Thursday, suggest that the Syrian authorities rushed to dismantle the facility after the strike, saying its removal could be interpreted as a tacit admission of guilt.

"It's a magic act — here today, gone tomorrow," said a senior intelligence official. "It doesn't lower suspicions; it raises them. This was not the long-term decommissioning of a building, which can take a year. It was speedy. It's incredible that they could have gone to that effort to make something go away."

Any attempt by Syrian authorities to clean up the site could make it harder for international weapons inspectors to determine the exact nature of the activity there. Officials from the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna have said they are analyzing the satellite images and ultimately want to inspect the site in person.

David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a private group in Washington that this week released a report on the Syrian site, said Thursday that the building's removal was inherently suspicious. "It looks like Syria is trying to hide something and destroy the evidence of some activity," Mr. Albright, a former United Nations weapons inspector, said in an interview. "But it won't work. Syria has got to answer questions about what it was doing."

American officials still refuse to publicly confirm that the satellite photos show the site that Israel bombed. But the senior intelligence official said it was indeed the same location.

Gordon D. Johndroe, a White House spokesman, declined to comment on the satellite pictures.

A reactor of the size of what analysts believe Syria was building would have been able to make enough plutonium to fuel about one nuclear weapon a year. But removing the plutonium from spent fuel rods would require a reprocessing facility for which analysts have reported no evidence.

Satellite images of the Syrian site were released by DigitalGlobe, in Longmont, Colo., and SPOT Image Corporation, in Chantilly, Va. They show a smooth, unfurrowed area where the large building once stood.

"It's clearly very suspicious," said Joseph Cirincione, an expert on nuclear proliferation at the Center for American Progress in Washington. "The Syrians were up to something that they clearly didn't want the world to know about." Mr. Cirincione said the photographic evidence "tilts toward a nuclear program," but did not prove that Damascus was building a reactor. Besides, he said, even if Syria was developing a nuclear program, it was still years away from being operational and thus not an imminent threat.

The desolate Syrian site is situated on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River some 90 miles north of the Iraqi border and seven miles north of the desert village of At Tibnah. An airfield lies nearby.

The new images, in addition to revealing the removal of the tall building, show still standing a secondary structure and what could be a pumping station on the Euphrates. Analysts suspect the pumping station was for cooling the reactor.

The building was said by analysts to have been modeled on a design used by the North Koreans, whose building is a few feet larger than the Syrian building that vanished.

Mr. Albright called the Syrian site "consistent with being a North Korean reactor design."

In an interview last week with The Dallas Morning News, Imad Moustapha, the Syrian ambassador to the United States, denied that his country was trying to build a reactor.

"There is no Syrian nuclear program whatsoever," he said. "It's an absolutely blatant lie."

Later in the interview he added, "We understand that if Syria even contemplated nuclear technology, then the gates of hell would open on us."

Even some outside experts who were skeptical that Syria might be developing a nuclear program expressed surprise at the striking difference in the satellite photos taken some two months apart.

A spokesman for the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, which monitors nuclear sites around the globe and has begun discussions with Syrian authorities, said the agency had no comment on the new images.

Other countries — including Iraq after the Persian Gulf war and Iran in 2003 and 2004 — have bulldozed buildings suspected of clandestine nuclear activity.

The Institute for Science and International Security, Mr. Albright's group, released a report analyzing the new DigitalGlobe image. The building, it said, had been "completely removed and the ground scraped."

The comparison of August and October images, it said, "effectively confirms that this site was indeed the target of the Israeli raid" in September.

The report said tractors or bulldozers could be seen where the suspected reactor building once stood, as well as scrape marks on the ground. It added that the dismantling and removal of the building "at such a rapid pace dramatically complicates any inspection of the facilities."

The report said Syria had an obligation to inform the International Atomic Energy Agency of its decision to construct any new nuclear facility. It added that weapons experts were now debating whether Syria would have violated its safeguards agreement with the agency if it started clandestine work on a nuclear reactor.

Syria signed an agreement with the agency in 1992 and is obligated, the report said, under that accord to report on its nuclear plans and developments to the Vienna agency, which is an arm of the United Nations.

"An important question," the report said, "is whether Syria may be in violation of its agreements."

If the atomic energy agency found Syria in violation of its responsibilities, it could refer the matter to the United Nations Security Council for possible sanctions, as has recently occurred in the case of Iran and its suspected nuclear weapons program.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/26/world/middleeast/26syria.html?ref=world>

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Washington Post

October 26, 2007

Pg. 8

Envoy Warns Of N. Korea Deal Fallout

Ambassador to Japan Cables Bush to Outline Concerns Over Relations With Tokyo

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

J. Thomas Schieffer, the U.S. ambassador to Japan, sent President Bush an unusual private cable this week warning that the pending nuclear deal with North Korea could harm relations with Japan. He also complained that the U.S. Embassy had been left in the dark while the deal -- which could include North Korea's removal from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism -- was negotiated by top State Department officials.

Schieffer's cable was described by sources who had read it. Both Schieffer and the White House acknowledged the existence of the cable, which was numbered Tokyo 004947, but they declined to discuss it in detail.

"Communications between myself and the President are privileged," Schieffer said in an e-mailed statement Wednesday night. "I never discuss them with others."

Schieffer's cable appears to be another sign of the unease in some parts of the administration over the North Korea agreement, which sets out a step-by-step process of disabling and accounting for North Korean nuclear programs, in exchange for incentives and economic assistance from the United States and North Korea's neighbors. Pyongyang has long sought removal from the list of state sponsors of terrorism, but Japan has insisted that North Korea first provide details on the abductions of Japanese citizens by the reclusive nation during the 1970s and '80s.

Ambassadors generally do not send diplomatic cables directly to the president, but Schieffer has unusual status as a longtime friend of Bush's. He was an investor in the partnership that -- along with Bush -- purchased the Texas Rangers baseball team in 1989. He is also the brother of CBS broadcaster Bob Schieffer.

J. Thomas Schieffer was ambassador to Australia in Bush's first term and then was given the high-profile post of Tokyo envoy in the second term.

The North Korea deal has come under attack from conservatives, especially Republicans on Capitol Hill, but Schieffer is a Democrat who served three terms in the Texas House of Representatives. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has made the six-nation accord one of her top priorities, having persuaded the president to put the agreement on a fast track earlier this year.

In his cable, sources said, Schieffer stressed that he does not believe that Japanese interests should dictate U.S. policy toward North Korea. But he warned the president that rumors were flying in Tokyo that the talks on removing North Korea from the terror list were progressing rapidly, which he suggested could potentially harm U.S. relations

with its closest ally in the Pacific. He noted that Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill had assured him that North Korea needed to first show substantial progress on the abduction issue before any action was taken, but Schieffer said he was seeking direction and clarification in part because the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo appeared cut out of the process.

"Ambassador Schieffer was clarifying what he sees on the ground and that the abduction issue was something we need to continue to emphasize in the six-party talks," said National Security Council spokesman Gordon Johndroe. The new Japanese prime minister, Yasuo Fukuda, will visit Washington in the coming weeks, Johndroe added. During that meeting, "President Bush will reiterate our commitment to help Japanese efforts to resolve the abduction issue with North Korea," he said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/25/AR2007102502686.html>

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REUTERS UK

Britain prepared to consider more Iran sanctions

Tue Oct 23, 2007 6:25pm BST

By Jeffrey Heller

LONDON (Reuters) - Prime Minister Gordon Brown said on Tuesday he was prepared to consider more sanctions against Tehran and that the world was at risk from its nuclear ambitions.

"We are ready and will push for further sanctions against Iran," he told a news conference after talks with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert.

Iran's refusal to halt work that can be used to make fuel for power plants or, if it wants, material for warheads, has prompted the U.N. Security Council to impose two sets of sanctions.

Olmert said he supported the British stance and hoped the European Union's foreign policy chief Javier Solana would echo the message when he met his new Iranian counterpart Saeed Jalili later on Tuesday.

"Economic sanctions are effective ... but they are not sufficient. So there should be more," he told the same news conference.

He said the sanctions should reach the point "up to where Iran stops its nuclear programme".

Iran's chief negotiator Ali Larijani resigned on Saturday before talks in Rome due on Tuesday with Solana.

The West suspects Iran of working to make its own atomic bomb and wants it to halt the nuclear programme. Tehran says its programme is peaceful and has vowed to go ahead with it.

"I think there is a new axis which hasn't been as powerful as it is now, with the United States, Great Britain, and France as its spearhead ... to lead this campaign (against Iran) that is so crucial," Olmert said at a later meeting in London.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said on Tuesday his country would not retreat "one iota" from its nuclear programme.

"We are in favour of talks but we will not negotiate with anyone about our right to nuclear technology," Ahmadinejad was quoted as saying by Iranian state television during a trip to Armenia. "Iran will not retreat one iota."

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUKL2327173020071023>

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