



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 595, 8 November 2007

Articles & Other Documents:

[Feds list chemicals that can be misused](#)

[Gulf Arabs offer to provide uranium to Iran: report](#)

[Bahrain Prince Says Iran Developing Nuclear Arms](#)

[No Evidence Of Iranian Nuclear Program, Experts Say](#)

[All Still Quiet On The Syria Bombing](#)

[US, China Defense Leaders Discuss Iran](#)

[North Korea Reactor Being Disabled](#)

[ONE-ON-ONE WITH IRAN'S OPPOSITION](#)

[N. Korea Still Seen As Threat In Region](#)

[U.S. stages 1st dual-missile intercept test in space](#)

[Report: N. Korea disablement to begin Monday](#)

['Curveball' Spun Tales To Gain Asylum](#)

[Gates To Press China On Iran Nukes](#)

[How To Rein In Iran Without War](#)

[US To Push China's Hu On Iran Sanctions](#)

[China Tells U.S. It Opposes A Nuclear-Armed Iran](#)

[Gates Cautious On North Korean Threat](#)

[South Korean Says North Still Threat](#)

[Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal A U.S. Worry](#)

[US fears Israeli strike against Iran over latest nuclear claim](#)

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

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

The following articles, papers or documents do not necessarily reflect official endorsement of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or other US government agencies. Reproduction for private use or commercial gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. All rights are reserved

Yahoo! News
Associated Press

Feds list chemicals that can be misused

By EILEEN SULLIVAN, Associated Press Writer

Thu Nov 1, 10:03 PM ET

The average chicken farmer does not have enough chemicals to make his farm a terrorist target, but many fertilizer wholesalers and paper mills do — and they'll have to tell the government about it as part of new anti-terrorism measures.

On Friday, the Homeland Security Department plans to release a final list of chemicals that businesses must report to keep dangerous materials out of the hands of terrorists. It's part of new authority Congress gave the department to keep an eye on places where hazardous chemicals are kept.

An original list of 344 chemicals — some with specific weight thresholds — was proposed in April and caused an uproar among businesses that had assumed they would be exempt from such terror-related reporting laws. If a facility has a chemical on the department's list, it has to fill out an online form that the Homeland Security Department will use to decide whether the chemical poses enough of a terrorist risk that the facility's security measures should be regulated.

Many chicken farms, for example, keep more than 7,500 pounds of propane, the threshold on the original list. But a new reporting threshold of 60,000 pounds for propane exempts them.

Colleges and universities that keep chemicals in many of their laboratories were spun up over the proposed list as well. The final list will only affect universities that carry large amounts of a certain chemical and small amounts of chemicals that could be used as weapons.

However, just because a business is required to fill out the government's online questionnaire does not necessarily mean that they'll be regulated by the government, said a Homeland Security official who spoke on the condition of anonymity, because the final list had not yet been published.

"Once we assess that they have large amounts of chemicals of consequence, then what we will do is work with them on a plan so that they can secure a facility," the official said.

The potential to use certain chemicals as weapons is one of the reasons the government came up with the list. For example:

_Hydrogen peroxide, commonly used to bleach paper, can also be used in liquid explosives — the weapon of choice in at least two foiled terror plots. Those plots led to prominent airport security measures, including restrictions on how much liquid passengers can carry on planes and the screening of shoes.

_Ammonium nitrate, used in most fertilizers, has been a main ingredient in bombs used in attacks across the world. The 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, which killed 168 people, involved 2 tons of ammonium nitrate.

_Chlorine, which is generally used as a disinfectant, has been a popular explosive ingredient in attacks in Iraq.

As a result, businesses with more than 500 pounds of chlorine that could potentially be stolen, and businesses with 2,500 pounds of chlorine that could be hazardous if released, will be subject to reporting requirements.

Most businesses with these amounts of chlorine are water treatment facilities or specialty chemical manufacturers, said Scott Jensen, spokesman for the American Chemistry Council, which represents about 90 percent of the nation's chemical makers.

Facilities with at least 2,000 pounds of ammonium nitrate used in fertilizers that could be easily stolen and potentially used to make a bomb must also fill out the online forms. These include producers and wholesalers, according to the Fertilizer Institute, a Washington-based trade group.

And businesses that have hydrogen peroxide at a 35 percent concentration will also be subject to regulations. Many paper mills and water treatment facilities use this grade of hydrogen peroxide, Jensen said.

Dropped from the list entirely were acetone and urea. Acetone is commonly used in nail polish remover, and urea is used in fertilizer.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071102/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/terror_chemicals_1

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

USA Today

November 2, 2007

Report: N. Korea disablement to begin Monday

TOKYO (AP) — A team of U.S. experts will begin disabling North Korea's nuclear facilities Monday, the top U.S. envoy to nuclear disarmament talks with Pyongyang said, marking the biggest step the communist country has ever taken to scale back its atomic program.

Christopher Hill said the U.S. aimed to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula while President George W. Bush is still in power, and that North Korea — one of the world's most isolated countries — appeared to be opening up.

"I'd like to see us get through this in the current U.S. administration," Hill told a press conference in Tokyo. "We started this process, and I'd like to see us finish it."

The North shut down its sole nuclear reactor at Yongbyon in July, and promised to disable it by year's end in exchange for energy aid and political concessions from other members of talks on its nuclear program: the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea and Russia.

Disabling the reactor at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang, would mark a further breakthrough in efforts to convince the North to scale back its nuclear program. The country conducted its first-ever nuclear test in October of last year.

"By Monday morning, they will begin their work," Hill said, referring to the U.S. team that arrived in Pyongyang on Thursday. "It's a very big day because it's the first time it's actually going to start disabling its nuclear program," he said.

Hill said the U.S. hoped to disable North's uranium enrichment program by the end of the year, not just its plutonium-production facilities at Yongbyon.

"By the end of the year ... we hope to have arrived at an important milestone, where there is a complete disablement of the Yongbyon facilities, a full list of additional facilities for disablement, and that uranium enrichment is also resolved to mutual satisfaction," Hill said.

Hill also said the U.S. remained worried over the alleged transfer of nuclear technology and materials from North Korea to countries like Syria. Last month, a news report said Israeli strikes in Syria had targeted a partially built nuclear reactor, made with North Korean help, citing U.S. and foreign officials.

Still, North Korea appeared to be opening up through the regional engagement over its nuclear program, Hill said, pointing to a flurry of diplomatic activity by Pyongyang in recent months.

The North has opened or restored relations with five countries since July, and senior officials have visited Russia, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Middle East — a rare burst of international activity by one of the world's most isolated nations.

"As they participate in the six-party process, I think there is a desire to overcome their isolation," Hill said. He warned, however, the process would be slow.

The envoy said U.S. lawyers were working with the North to prepare to remove it from a U.S. list of states sponsoring terrorism, but that Pyongyang ultimately needed to meet requirements stipulated under U.S. law.

Taking Pyongyang off the terror list, long a key demand of the North, was one of a series of economic and political concessions offered for the country to disable its nuclear reactor that produces plutonium for bombs.

He reiterated, however, the U.S. would not strike North Korea from the list — or form diplomatic ties — without the regime's full denuclearization.

Meanwhile, Hill stressed that disarmament was just the first step, and he expected further progress toward the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula to begin immediately after the Dec. 31 deadline.

"I need to make sure that dismantlement and abandonment phase starts on January 1, or maybe January 2," Hill said.

"From disabling we will go on a seamless continuum toward dismantlement, that is taking these facilities apart and making sure they are never again used for the purpose they were used for before."

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2007-11-02-northkorea-nuclear_N.htm?csp=34&loc=interstitialskip

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

Reuters

November 1, 2007

Gulf Arabs offer to provide uranium to Iran: report

DUBAI (Reuters) - U.S.-allied Gulf Arab states are willing to set up a body to provide enriched uranium to Iran to defuse Tehran's stand-off with the West over its nuclear plan, Saudi Arabia's foreign minister told a magazine on Thursday.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries -- Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates -- share Western concerns that Iran's nuclear energy program will lead to it acquiring atomic bombs, a claim Tehran denies.

"We have proposed a solution, which is to create a consortium for all users of enriched uranium in the Middle East," Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal told the Middle East Economic Digest (MEED).

"The U.S. is not involved, but I don't think it (would be) hostile to this, and it would resolve a main area of tension between the West and Iran," he told the London-based weekly.

"(We will) do it in a collective manner through a consortium that will distribute according to needs, give each plant its own necessary amount, and ensure no use of this enriched uranium for atomic weapons," Prince Saud said, according to MEED's Web site.

Prince Saud, speaking on Thursday during a visit to Britain, said Iran was considering the offer, which envisages building a plant in a neutral country.

"We believe it should be in a neutral country -- Switzerland, for instance," said Prince Saud. "Any plant in the Middle East that needs enriched uranium would get its quota. I don't think other Arab states would refuse. In fact ... other Arab countries have expressed a desire to be part of the proposal."

"They (Iran) have responded that it is an interesting idea and they will come back to us. We hope the Iranians will accept this proposal. We continue to talk to them and urge them not only to look at the issue from the perspective of the needs of Iran for energy, but also in the interests of the security of the region."

There was no immediate comment on the proposal from Tehran, which has consistently refused to heed U.N. demands to halt its own nuclear enrichment.

The six Gulf Arab states have announced plans to start their own nuclear energy program, raising concern over an arms race in the world's top oil exporting region.

MEED said that under the plan, the facility would produce nuclear fuel that the consortium would supply to Middle East states seeking to use atomic energy.

Many countries in the region say they are looking to nuclear energy to help them meet growing electricity demand. <http://www.reuters.com/article/newsOne/idUSL0180978220071101?sp=true>

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

Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)

November 3, 2007

'Curveball' Spun Tales To Gain Asylum

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Iraqi defector code-named "Curveball," whose false tales of biological weapons labs bolstered the U.S. case for war, wasn't the prominent chemical engineer he claimed to be and invented stories to help his case for asylum in Germany, a new report says.

"Curveball" is Rafid Ahmed Alwan, who did study chemical engineering but made poor grades and never managed a biological weapons facility, according to CBS' "60 Minutes," which will broadcast a report Sunday describing how Alwan became a secret intelligence source.

Although known publicly only by his code name, Curveball has been repeatedly discredited by investigations of the United States' faulty prewar intelligence and became an embarrassment to U.S. spy agencies.

A presidential intelligence commission found that Curveball, who mostly told his stories to German intelligence officials who passed them on to the U.S., was a fabricator and an alcoholic.

"60 Minutes" reports that Alwan arrived at a German refugee center in 1999 and began spinning his tales of a facility making mobile biological weapons in an effort to gain asylum. The ploy apparently worked, and Alwan is thought to be living in Germany today under an assumed name.

Although German intelligence officials warned the CIA that Curveball's claims of mobile bioweapons labs were unreliable, and U.N. inspectors determined before the war began in 2003 that parts of his story were false, the Bush administration continued to promote the existence of such mobile labs for months after the invasion, until it was widely accepted that they could not be found.

<http://www.azstarnet.com/allheadlines/209656.php>

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

Washington Times

November 3, 2007

Pg. 7

Bahrain Prince Says Iran Developing Nuclear Arms

By Combined Dispatches

LONDON — Bahrain's crown prince, in interviews to British newspapers published yesterday, said Iran is developing atomic weapons or the capability to do so.

This is the first time an Arab state in the Persian Gulf has openly accused Tehran of lying about its contentious nuclear plan, the Times of London said.

"While they don't have the bomb yet, they are developing it, or the capability for it," Sheik Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa told Times correspondents in the Bahrain capital Manama.

He urged a diplomatic solution to the standoff between the West and Bahrain's close neighbor, and warned that "the whole region" would be drawn into any military conflict.

"We need to be very well aware that this could escalate. And we think that is not advisable," the Daily Telegraph quoted him as saying.

Bahrain is a Sunni Muslim-ruled dynasty with a population that is 60 percent Shi'ite, the same branch of Islam that dominates Iran.

"I want to see the region being fully consulted," the Independent quoted the crown prince as saying. "We were not fully consulted when the Iraqi regime was removed."

"Iran is an even bigger issue. ... We want to be part of any arrangement that deals with Iran. We don't want to wake up one day and suddenly find our skies darken and sirens blaring on every street."

During a state visit to Britain this week, Saudi officials discussed the possibility of creating a Middle East consortium of users of enriched uranium, the British Foreign Office said yesterday.

The proposal is to build a uranium enrichment plant in a neutral country to supply the region's states, including Iran, with reactor fuel for nuclear energy programs.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal told London's Middle East Economic Digest that the plan had been proposed to Iran's government, which said it would consider the proposal.

However, the Iranians previously ignored a similar offer from Russia — to host Iran's uranium enrichment facilities on its territory to allay Western concerns about monitoring.

Bahrain hosts the U.S. Fifth Fleet, the main American carrier battle group tasked with securing the Strait of Hormuz through which much of the world's oil supplies must pass.

Despite already being under U.N. sanctions, Tehran refuses to suspend its uranium enrichment program, which the West fears to be a cover for atomic weapons development, a charge Iran denies.

Yesterday, six world powers agreed to push ahead with a third round of tougher sanctions against Iran unless a U.N. watchdog agency reports later this month that Tehran has tried to address their concerns about its nuclear program.

Senior officials from Britain, France, Germany, the U.S., Russia and China will meet again on Nov. 19 to assess reports from Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and from European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071103/FOREIGN/111030029/1003/foreign>

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

Yahoo! News

Sun Nov 4, 3:34 AM ET

Gates To Press China On Iran Nukes

By LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press Writer

EN ROUTE TO BEIJING (AP) -- Robert Gates, making his first visit to China as defense secretary, is expected to press the Chinese to do more to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear capabilities.

Before he left Saturday for the trip, Gates made it clear that he is pursuing a closer alliance with China, and said he doesn't see the communist giant as a military threat.

But at the same time, senior defense officials said the Pentagon is still frustrated by China's failure to be more open about its military ambitions. And Gates will probably push China to better explain its anti-satellite test early this year.

In January, a Chinese missile shattered a defunct Chinese weather satellite, drawing immediate criticism from the U.S. and other countries, who questioned China's commitment to peaceful development in space. Since then, U.S. officials have struggled to get better answers from the Chinese about it.

Both the U.S. and China are touting the Gates visit as a major event, aimed at improving the two countries' military relationship and building trust between them.

In a series of annual reports, the Pentagon has voiced growing concern about China's increased military might and its reluctance to reveal why its annual defense budget has ballooned in recent years.

China raised its military budget by 17.8 percent to about \$45 billion this year, the largest annual increase in more than a decade. But U.S. officials believe the spending is even greater than that, and have repeatedly called for greater transparency by the Chinese.

Derek Mitchell, senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said it appears Gates is taking a different approach to his China visit than his predecessor, Donald Rumsfeld, took.

"Rumsfeld had no problem accentuating the differences between the two sides," Mitchell said. "Gates is much more moderate, and he's talking more moderately in public."

Mitchell said that while a less aggressive manner may be helpful, "you certainly need to deal with China from a point of strength."

"You can't just jawbone it and allow the Chinese to say, 'Just be patient, we're working on it,'" he said. "Too much patience with the Chinese will get you nowhere."

Gates is scheduled to meet with a number of top Chinese leaders, including President Hu Jintao.

Senior defense officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the meetings have not yet taken place, said Gates is likely to bring up the Iranian issue.

"We think China could do more on Iran," said one of the officials, adding that the U.S. and China have a common responsibility to do what is necessary to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear capability.

The U.S. is looking for China to recognize that weapons it sells to Iran have shown up in other countries -- such as Iraq. "There is clear evidence that the Chinese can't trust Iran to behave responsibly with any weapons that they sell them," said the official. "That, in our view, should lead China to the conclusion that they shouldn't sell any weapons to Iran."

Gates' visit to China kicks off a three-country Asia tour, which will also include stops in South Korea and Japan.
http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071104/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/gates_3

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

Miami Herald
November 4, 2007

No Evidence Of Iranian Nuclear Program, Experts Say

Experts say there is no conclusive evidence that Iran is developing a nuclear-weapons program.

By Jonathan S. Landay

Despite President Bush's claims that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons that could trigger "World War III," experts in and out of government say there's no conclusive evidence that Tehran has a nuclear-weapons program.

Even his own administration appears divided about the immediacy of the threat.

While Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney speak of an Iranian weapons program as a fact, Bush's point man on Iran, Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns, has attempted to ratchet down the rhetoric.

"Iran is seeking a nuclear capability . . . that some people fear might lead to a nuclear-weapons capability," Burns said in an interview Oct. 25 on PBS.

"I don't think that anyone right today thinks they're working on a bomb," said another U.S. official, who requested anonymity because of the issue's sensitivity.

Outside experts say the operative words are "right today."

They say Iran may have been actively seeking to create a nuclear-weapons capacity in the past and still could break out of its current uranium-enrichment program and start a weapons program.

They, too, lack definitive proof, but cite a great deal of circumstantial evidence.

Overstatements?

Bush's rhetoric seems hyperbolic compared with the statements by his senior aides and outside experts.

"I've told people that if you're interested in avoiding World War III, it seems like you ought to be interested in preventing them [Iran] from having the knowledge necessary to make a nuclear weapon," he said Oct. 17 at a news conference.

"Our country, and the entire international community, cannot stand by as a terror-supporting state fulfills its grandest ambitions," Cheney warned on Oct. 23. "We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon."

Bush and Cheney's allegations are under close scrutiny because their similar allegations about an Iraqi nuclear program proved to be wrong.

Nevertheless, there are many reasons to be skeptical of Iran's claims that its nuclear program is intended exclusively for peaceful purposes, including its dealings with a Pakistani dealer in black-market nuclear technology and the fact that it concealed its uranium-enrichment program from a U.N. watchdog agency for 18 years.

"Many aspects of Iran's past nuclear program and behavior make more sense if this program was set up for military rather than civilian purposes," Pierre Goldschmidt, a former U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency deputy director general, said in a speech Oct. 30.

No hard evidence

If conclusive proof exists, however, Bush hasn't revealed it. Nor have four years of IAEA inspections.

"I have not received any information that there is a concrete active nuclear-weapons program going on right now," IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei asserted in an interview Oct. 31 with CNN.

"There is no smoking-gun proof of work on a nuclear weapon, but there is enough evidence that points in that direction," said Mark Fitzpatrick of the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies, a former deputy assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation controls.

New light may be shed when the IAEA reports this month on whether Iran is fulfilling an August accord to answer all outstanding questions about the enrichment program it concealed from the U.N. watchdog agency.

Its report is expected to focus on Iran's work with devices that spin uranium hexafluoride gas to produce low-enriched uranium for power plants or highly enriched uranium for weapons.

Iran asserts that it's working only with the P1, an older centrifuge that it admitted buying in 1987 from an international black-market network headed by A.Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

But IAEA inspectors determined that Iran failed to reveal that it had obtained blueprints for the P2, a centrifuge twice as efficient as the P1, from the Khan network in 1995.

Iranian officials say they did nothing with the blueprints until 2002, when they were given to a private firm that produced and tested seven modified P2 parts, then abandoned the effort.

IAEA inspectors, however, discovered that Iran sought to buy thousands of specialized magnets for P2s from European suppliers, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said last year that research on the centrifuges continued.

The IAEA has been stymied in trying to discover the project's scope, fueling suspicions that the Iranian military may be secretly running a P2 development program parallel to the civilian-run P1 program at Natanz.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/548/story/295186.html>

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

Washington Post
November 4, 2007
Pg. B7

How To Rein In Iran Without War

By Jim Hoagland

Iran is working to produce a 20-to-50-pound stockpile of enriched uranium that it can use to build atomic weapons within eight to 10 weeks, once it decides to do so -- and has consistently lied to the United Nations about those efforts.

That headline conclusion is one of two basic points that I draw from a series of private meetings on Iran's nuclear ambitions involving diplomats, leading academic experts, senior military officers and experienced analysts from around the globe. The other: The impressive unity that the Bush administration has established in imposing sanctions on Iran is fraying because of war fears and commercial pressures and temptations.

Held over the course of this year in Europe, China and Russia, these unofficial traveling seminars provide a snapshot of international reaction to the unmistakable effort by Iran to develop nuclear weapons and to the threats by President Bush and Vice President Cheney to prevent that from happening.

The conversations, organized by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), have dealt in mind-numbing detail with Iran's uranium-enrichment program, diplomatic and military options open to the West, and more. In Moscow two weeks ago, I was treated to several hours of explication on precisely how a subclause in a recent Russia-Kazakhstan nuclear power treaty prevents Russia from demanding that Iran forsake enriching uranium on its own territory.

I feel like one of those poor geese on a foie gras farm in Alsace. Perversely, though, this information-stuffing has underlined for me the need to focus on the basic pieces of the complex Iranian mosaic. This is the time not to rush past the obvious -- not to get lost in self-interested political rhetoric, heavy-breathing sensationalist "reporting" about looming invasions or diplomatic flimflams such as the implausible Russian-Kazakh ploy offered in Moscow. It is a month to keep your hand on your wallet, your eye on the cards.

Bush holds talks on Iran with French President Nicolas Sarkozy -- another war-is-an-option fellow -- in Washington and then with German Chancellor Angela Merkel -- a firm waverer on military strikes -- in Crawford, Tex., this week. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin follows up on his mid-October visit to Iran, where he reportedly told the Iranians that he needed some concession from them, and fast, to enable him to keep protecting them from new U.N. condemnation.

And by mid-November, Mohamed ElBaradei, director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will report on whether the Iranians will now admit that they received and then developed P-2 centrifuges and got other nuclear technology from Pakistan, as was reported in this column in 1995 and as the IAEA has charged since 2002.

This is one basic that Bush critics frequently overlook -- in part because it gets lost in the overheated "World War III" rhetoric of the president: The IAEA and the U.N. Security Council have determined that Iran has lied about its nuclear activities and has therefore at least temporarily forfeited its right to enrichment for peaceful purposes. That Iran has gone to great, secretive lengths to create and push forward a bomb-building capability is not a Bush delusion.

But neither is it fantasy to say, as do Russia and China, that the Iranians have had great difficulty in getting their system of 2,952 centrifuges at Natanz, south of Tehran, to work effectively. The scenarios provided to Bush by U.S. and Israeli intelligence some years ago on what date Iran would get the bomb have not been validated. Bush does not face the pressure that he once anticipated for a binary, strike or no-strike, decision before he leaves office. Paradoxically, time is running out on the diplomatic track, where Russia and China are blocking a third round of U.N. sanctions against Iran. This allows Cheney and other hawks to argue that waiting on diplomatic results is a waste of time. Blocking sanctions actually increases the pressure on Bush to move unilaterally and militarily.

China, blithely ignoring the potentially perverse effect of its actions, wants to maintain financial advantage and access to Iran's energy. Chinese participants emphasized that basic point to me at an IISS-sponsored gathering in Beijing in June. China would expect to be compensated if sanctions cost it business -- an attitude that would appall Germany's Merkel, Italy's leaders and other Europeans who have seen their trade with Iran plummet as a result of joining the U.S. financial campaign against Tehran.

The administration has too often pitched the confrontation with Iran as one that Bush alone will decide. Russia, China and Europe should do everything they can to prevent this from becoming necessary. Not backing the new U.N. sanctions brings it a scary step closer.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/02/AR2007110201781.html>

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

Washington Post
November 5, 2007
Pg. 19

All Still Quiet On The Syria Bombing

By Jackson Diehl

It was two months ago tomorrow that Israeli warplanes bombed what Israel and the United States believed was a nascent Syrian nuclear complex along the shore of the Euphrates River. But the political shock waves that should have accompanied that remarkable event -- which was both an audacious act of preemption and a revelation of an apparent Syrian bomb program-- have been bottled up by the decisions of the Israeli government and the Bush administration not to speak publicly about the strike.

Now Israeli and U.S. officials are quietly debating whether to go on the record and allow those shock waves to explode across the Middle East and beyond. At stake are not only Israel's tense relations with Syria, which so far has chosen not to retaliate, but a host of other pressure points: Israeli-Palestinian negotiations; the integrity of the International Atomic Energy Agency; Western leverage over Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad; and -- not least -- the fragile U.S. nuclear bargain with North Korea, which is believed to have aided the secret construction.

For the Israeli government of Ehud Olmert, the decision to suppress news of the strike in September -- including the military censorship of Israel's aggressively free press -- was pretty straightforward. Trumpeting the successful attack not only would have prompted global denunciations of Israel but might have pushed Assad into launching an attack on the Golan Heights or a missile at Tel Aviv. The architect of the attack, Defense Minister Ehud Barak, is a former head of Israel's most elite clandestine commando squad, and he remains convinced that military special operations are best kept secret.

Two months later that calculus hasn't much changed. Barak and Olmert are still worried enough about a Syrian military response to have moved an upcoming military exercise off the Golan; Olmert and other senior officials have been dropping hints about opening political negotiations with Damascus. Olmert knows that full disclosure of the operation would probably blow up the Israeli-Palestinian peace meeting in Annapolis that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice hopes to convene this month. Among other problems, Arab states that Olmert and Rice hope will attend would surely cancel if they were obliged to react to an event that they have so far pointedly ignored.

Outside Jerusalem and the State Department, however, pressure for an official account of the raid -- or more important, for the intelligence that prompted it -- is growing. The International Atomic Energy Agency and its freelancing director, Mohamed ElBaradei, want to investigate the alleged reactor site. The agency's experts have been studying aerial photographs and asking U.S. officials for information. In theory, at least, an IAEA probe could compound the blow suffered by Assad by forcing him to explain -- on pain of possible sanctions by the U.N. Security Council -- whether and how Syria violated its commitments under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. So far the Bush administration has refused to cooperate with ElBaradei, who has all but openly sided with Iran in its attempt to deflect U.N. orders to freeze its uranium enrichment. Having debunked U.S. claims about a reborn Iraqi nuclear program in early 2003, ElBaradei would be certain to seize on any ambiguities in the Israeli and U.S. evidence about the Syrian reactor. If he raised doubts that the project was intended to produce plutonium, both Olmert and the Bush administration would be damaged.

There is, however, a petitioner much tougher to resist than the IAEA director: Republican representatives who are demanding that "every member of Congress be briefed on this incident, and as soon as possible," as Reps. Peter Hoekstra and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen put it in a recent Wall Street Journal op-ed. The two House members were already briefed because of their positions as ranking minority members on the intelligence and Foreign Affairs committees; what they heard evidently convinced them that possible covert collaboration between Syria and North Korea needs to be fully aired and debated before the United States proceeds with negotiations to end North Korea's bomb program.

Here some Bush administration officials are sympathetic. They have been frustrated by what they describe as the stubborn resistance of Rice to connect what was discovered in Syria to the North Korean disarmament talks. Rice's North Korean point man, Assistant Secretary Christopher Hill, told Congress last month that Pyongyang had been asked to disclose any cooperation with Syria as part of a promised full report on its weapons programs. If it answers the question, North Korea may end up blowing the whistle on Damascus. And if it chooses to lie? Then the pressure on the Bush administration to disclose what it knows about the Israeli raid may become irresistible. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/04/AR2007110401226.html>

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

Yahoo! News
November 6, 2007

US To Push China's Hu On Iran Sanctions

By Jim Mannion
Tue Nov 6, 2:12 AM ET

US Defence Secretary Robert Gates met Tuesday with China's President Hu Jintao amid US hopes of making a case for stronger economic sanctions against Iran.

Gates was wrapping up two days of talks in Beijing that were described by both sides as "candid but friendly" and highlighted US concerns about a rapid Chinese military buildup.

"There are clearly areas of agreement and disagreement," Gates said in introductory remarks as he sat down with Hu in Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

"Talking about both is good for the relationship, and I think as a result of our conversation we have opportunities to expand the military-to-military relationship."

Hu said, via an interpreter, that the talks in Beijing would "be conducive to deepen trust between us and further development of state-to-state relations."

The US defence secretary made no apparent headway on an appeal for Chinese support for sanctions against Iran over its nuclear programme in his talks here Monday, when he was told China preferred diplomatic dialogue to economic pressure.

But a senior US defence official told reporters that in the meeting with Hu he would push for further discussions on Iran.

"That's when you really get some of your real answers in a sense, and the highest quality of discussions really," the official said.

"I would hope that on Iran we would get a stronger understanding of the importance of using all the tools of diplomacy, not just discussions but also sanctions and pressure, because just talking is not going to get us very far with Iran," he said.

China has joined Russia, also a veto-wielding permanent member of the UN Security Council, in opposing a further round of UN economic sanctions to step up the pressure against Tehran, which has defied international demands that it halt its uranium enrichment programme.

Washington charges that Iran is seeking to develop nuclear weapons, but Tehran insists its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only.

Gates also assured Hu that the US government is "categorically" opposed to any moves by Taiwan towards independence.

"I restated our position that we're categorically opposed to any efforts by anyone to unilaterally change the status quo," Gates told reporters after his talks with Hu.

"I basically reiterated that the US government has been quite clear in its messages to Taiwan not to change the status quo," he said, citing Chinese fears of "de jure independence" for Taiwan.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war, and while the island has since governed itself, Beijing considers it part of its own territory awaiting reunification.

Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian is pushing for a referendum next year on launching a fresh bid for United Nations membership using the name Taiwan, rather than the official "Republic of China".

Proliferation of Chinese missile technology and conventional weapons sales to Iran also was on the list of concerns Gates planned to raise during his visit.

After his talks Monday with Chinese Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan, Gates emphasised the need for greater clarity from Beijing about a rapid military build-up that US officials believe is altering the region's balance of power.

"I raised with Minister Cao the uncertainty over China's military modernisation, and the need for greater transparency to allay international concerns," Gates said at a joint news conference.

"China's increasing political and economic stature calls for this country to take on a greater share of responsibility for the health and success of the international system."

He said he raised US concerns about a Chinese anti-satellite test in January but received no response.

Nevertheless, Gates said there was common ground on how their two militaries could work more closely together.

"We discussed the value of deeper dialogue on our respective strategic modernisation programmes, and the importance of discussing in greater depth and greater detail nuclear policy, strategy and programmes on both sides," he said.

"This is part of the agreement to deepen the dialogue we've had. I believe that this will provide the opportunity at least for us to address the issues of transparency that we've discussed in the past."

The underlying US aim in seeking such a dialogue is to avoid a miscalculation between the two nuclear powers, a senior US defence official said.

China has said its annual military budget rose 17.8 percent this year to 45 billion dollars. But the Pentagon believes China's military spending is as high as 125 billion dollars a year.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20071106/pl_afp/chinausmilitarygates_071106070414

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

Yahoo! News

November 6, 2007

US, China Defense Leaders Discuss Iran

By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press Writer

Tue Nov 6, 12:35 AM ET

Defense Secretary Robert Gates and his Chinese counterpart agreed to work together to steer Iran away from its nuclear ambitions in talks that Chinese President Hu Jintao described Tuesday as "very candid and friendly."

Gates agreed with Hu's assessment. Gates and Hu spoke briefly with reporters before they met Tuesday morning for a discussion which, Gates later revealed, did not involve Iran.

"The flow of the conversation was such that we really spent all of our time on our military relationship and Taiwan," Gates told reporters during a tour of Beijing's Forbidden City. Taiwan and China split amid civil war in 1949, although China still claims the island as part of its territory.

After a 90-minute meeting Monday with Chinese Defense Minister Cao Gangchuan, Gates said he and Cao "agreed that it is important to pursue efforts to persuade the Iranian government to change their behavior and their policies peacefully, through diplomatic means."

And, with a nod to China's reluctance to support greater economic sanctions against Iran, Gates said he stressed to Cao the importance of using such pressure to convince the Iranian government "to make different choices." Tehran is suspected of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, something it denies.

U.S. defense officials, describing Gates' meeting with Cao on condition of anonymity because it was private, said the U.S. delegation was pleased with the quality of the discussion about Iran. The Chinese, they said, were "very strong" in saying that they are united in opposing a nuclear-armed Iran.

Hu said Tuesday that he understood that Gates and Cao "had a very candid and friendly discussion that will be conducive to the building of a deeper trust between us."

Before Gates' meeting with Hu, the defense officials said they were hoping for a stronger statement from the Chinese leader on the use of sanctions and other pressure against Iran.

But Gates said Iran did not come up with Hu on Tuesday because "I didn't feel the need to bring it up again."

However, the defense secretary said he hoped his meeting with Hu will lead to "a longer-term dialogue about ... the threat of nuclear proliferation."

The U.S. has repeatedly raised concerns that the Chinese are providing conventional weapons and other dual-use technologies that can have nuclear applications to countries like Iran, Cuba and Venezuela. Some weapons sold to Iran have surfaced in Afghanistan and Iraq, prompting the Pentagon to call for the Chinese to better control their sales to Iran.

This is Gates' first trip to China since taking over as Pentagon chief nearly one year ago, and it is the fourth visit by a U.S. defense secretary in the past decade.

Carefully worded statements by both Gates and Cao signaled greater dialogue between the United States and the communist giant — a significant improvement over the past decade. But they also hinted at little tangible progress in the Pentagon's press for greater transparency in China's military expansion, and better explanations about its burgeoning defense budget.

Asked if Cao had provided any more information about the anti-satellite test the Chinese conducted in January, Gates wryly responded, "I raised our concerns about it and there was no further discussion."

There have been lingering questions about the test, in which a Chinese missile shattered a defunct Chinese weather satellite. The test drew immediate criticism from the U.S. and other countries, who questioned China's commitment to peaceful development in space.

Gates said he "raised with Minister Cao the uncertainty over China's military modernization, and the need for greater transparency to allay international concerns."

"China's increasing political and economic stature calls for this country to take on a greater share of responsibility for the health and success of the international system," said Gates, standing next to Cao at a press briefing after their meeting.

Cao, speaking through an interpreter, described the session as pragmatic, candid and productive. Asked to detail specific results from the meeting, Cao said China agreed to participate in a joint Navy exercise with the U.S. "at a proper time." And he said China will cooperate more in accounting for U.S. prisoners of war from the Korean War. China's military budget increased by about 17.8 percent to about \$45 billion this year, the largest annual increase in more than a decade. And Pentagon officials have suggested the spending may be somewhat higher than that.

Gates said the meeting is part of a move to deepen the dialogue between the two nations. And he added, "Progress in our defense exchanges will largely depend on the choices we make."

Cao indicated there was a bit of movement toward the long-discussed establishment of a military hot line between Beijing and Washington. He said he is supporting efforts to make the technical changes needed so the direct telephone link can be finalized.

Pentagon officials have said the phone line would be an important symbolic move as well as an important connection between the nations when an incident or crisis occurs.

They add, however, that despite positive statements from the Chinese, details continue to bog down the actual establishment of the phone line.

Gates and his senior policy staff met with the Chinese officials at the defense ministry's headquarters, in the midst of a city undergoing massive construction in preparation for next year's Olympic Games.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071106/ap_on_go_ca_st_pe/gates_12

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

Los Angeles Times

November 6, 2007

China Tells U.S. It Opposes A Nuclear-Armed Iran

But Pentagon officials, including Gates, make no headway in Beijing on sanctions or stopping military sales to Iran.

By Julian E. Barnes, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

BEIJING — China's military leadership on Monday assured U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates that it opposes a nuclear-armed Iran.

But to the disappointment of Pentagon officials, on a visit here for talks on a range of military issues between the two countries, it appears the Chinese position on Iran's nuclear development, for now, will be no more than words. Chinese military officials told their American counterparts that they believe "discussion" alone -- as opposed to economic sanctions -- will dissuade Iran from building a nuclear weapon. Gates will make the case for sanctions once more today, when he meets with Chinese President Hu Jintao.

"That is where you get your real answers," said a senior Defense official. "I continue to hope that on Iran we would get a stronger understanding of the importance of using all the tools of diplomacy, not just discussions, but sanctions and pressure. Just talking hasn't gotten us very far with Iran."

Chinese military leaders said nothing of U.S. requests that they stop selling military supplies to Iran.

Iran's nuclear program is one of the most urgent issues for Gates in China. The Iranian issue was raised and the two sides "agreed that it is important to pursue efforts to persuade the Iranian government to change their behavior and their policies peacefully, through diplomatic means," Gates said.

U.S. Defense officials came to China promising to ask questions on a host of tricky issues. They asked China to be more forthright about its military spending. And Gates was asked Monday whether he had received a satisfactory answer about why China shot down a weather satellite in January.

American military officials have said the debris field from the explosion threatened other satellites and could signal the expansion of China's military into space.

"I raised the concerns about it and there was no further discussion," Gates said.

Senior Defense officials said they viewed the Beijing meetings as a step toward prodding the Chinese into more serious and candid conversations about the country's military strategy.

At a news conference with Gates, Chinese Defense Minister Gen. Cao Gangchuan said the U.S. and Chinese navies would conduct a joint exercise, following up on a pair of rudimentary exercises this year. But Cao quickly added that the next exercise would occur "at the proper time."

Pentagon officials also hailed China's embrace of a dedicated hotline between the Pentagon and Beijing's military leadership.

But the Chinese have agreed to establish that communications link in the past -- most recently in June -- only to have plans become ensnared in technical and bureaucratic objections. Comments by Cao left Beijing room to back off from implementing a hotline.

"We will both urge the relevant departments [to] press ahead with their technical consultations and preparations so the agreement can be finalized," Cao said.

The lack of solid agreements on the first day of meetings was less significant than the tone of the talks, U.S. officials said.

"This is not a trade negotiation. This is not us asking for stuff and getting stuff from them at the end of the meeting," the U.S. official said. "But . . . the fact that the secretary of Defense is here frankly discussing these issues with the Chinese is significant."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-gates6nov06.1.5538750.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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

Los Angeles Times

November 6, 2007

North Korea Reactor Being Disabled

U.S. experts plan to make sure it would take a year of work to restart the nuclear weapons-making facility at Yongbyon.

By Associated Press

SEOUL -- A team of U.S. experts has begun disabling North Korea's nuclear weapons-making facilities, U.S. State Department spokesman Tom Casey said Monday.

Casey told reporters in Washington that the disabling of the North's nuclear reactor at Yongbyon "is a positive first step in this process, and we certainly hope to see it continue."

He gave no details about the specific steps the team was taking.

"This is going to be a process that is going to take some time," he said.

The North shut down Yongbyon in July and promised to disable it by year's end in exchange for energy aid and political concessions from other nations participating in talks on its nuclear program: the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea and Russia.

The main U.S. envoy to the talks, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, has said the experts would disable the reactor to a point that would require North Korea to work at least a year to restart it.

Washington hopes that future talks will yield an agreement for North Korea to dismantle the facility entirely, and it wants the nuclear bombs Pyongyang is believed to have built to be confiscated.

The country conducted its first nuclear test detonation in October 2006 and is believed to have enough weapons-grade plutonium to make about a dozen bombs.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor6nov06.1.2387321.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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

Yahoo! News

November 7, 2007

Gates Cautious On North Korean Threat

By Lolita C. Baldor, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea - The threat from North Korea has not been reduced despite its move this week to begin disabling its nuclear facilities, the South Korean defense minister said Wednesday as he wrapped up meetings with Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

Gates was more cautious in his assessment of the threat, however, saying that North Korea has a long way to go on its road to de-nuclearization.

"The North Korean nuclear and conventional threat remains the focal point of our alliance's deterrent and defensive posture," Gates told reporters at a news conference after a day of meetings between defense and military leaders

from South Korea and the U.S. "We are started on a path (to de-nuclearization), but we are far from reaching our destination."

Gates' South Korean hosts were far more critical about their communist neighbor to the North.

"Although it's true that North Korea has begun the process of disabling its nuclear program, we cannot say that the threat from North Korea has reduced tangibly or discernibly," said South Korean Minister of National Defense Kim Jang-soo. "We don't have any intelligence to indicate coming to that sort of conclusion."

Kim said that conclusion is also bolstered by the fact that it is certain that "North Korea is continuing to pursue the acquisition of asymmetrical weapons."

Gates' more diplomatic tone underscores the sensitive nature of the six-nation talks leading to the start this week of North Korea's work to disable three major facilities at the main Yongbyon nuclear complex. And they reflect the U.S. desires to encourage North Korea's de-nuclearization.

The meetings also come in the run-up to elections in South Korea next month. Gates was met with protesters at the hotel Tuesday, representing a faction who would like to see the U.S. more quickly transfer military bases to the South Koreans and give Seoul more responsibility for its own defense.

Gates also declined to assess the likelihood of North Korea being taken off the U.S. list of states that sponsor terrorism, once it disables its nuclear facilities. He would say only that the North will come off the list only after it meets specific criteria.

Sung Kim, the State Department's top expert on Korea, said Tuesday that North Korean officials were being "very cooperative" and that work on disablement had begun at Yongbyon, 60 miles north of Pyongyang. That includes a 5-megawatt reactor that can generate plutonium for bombs, and nuclear fuel fabrication and reprocessing plants.

North Korea conducted its first nuclear test in October of last year. In exchange for disabling the facilities, North Korea would receive economic aid and political concessions.

Gates visit to South Korea is the second stop in a three-country swing through the region. He was in China earlier this week, and will go next to Japan.

During the defense meetings here, Gates also told Kim that, "after more than 50 years, U.S. commitment to the defense of the Republic of Korea is firm and unwavering."

He added that while efforts to improve the alliance are improving, "we still have a lot more work to do."

"It is my expectation that we will continue to play a role in the security of the peninsula for a long time, including past 2012," Gates said.

So far, 23 of the U.S. camps — vestiges of the 1950-53 Korean War — have been transferred as part of a broader plan to have Seoul take over its own wartime command by 2012. There are 40 more to go.

The number of U.S. troops in Korea — which was about 37,500 three years ago — has dipped to 28,000 and will end up at about 25,000 when the consolidation is complete. The South Korean military numbers about 680,000.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20071107/ap_on_re_as/gates_asia_5

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

Christian Science Monitor

ONE-ON-ONE WITH IRAN'S OPPOSITION

A noted dissident says Iran is closer to a nuclear bomb than we think.

By John Hughes

from the November 7, 2007 edition

PROVO, UTAH - The head of the Iranian opposition group in exile that supplied early intelligence on Iran's clandestine nuclear program says President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has engineered a clever disinformation campaign to convince foreign experts that Iran is eight to 10 years away from developing a nuclear bomb. But in fact, she says, the regime is less than two years away from producing such a weapon, as part of its plan to "create an Iranian empire" in the Middle East.

In a wide-ranging weekend telephone conversation from her base of exile in Paris, Maryam Rajavi told me that Mr. Ahmadinejad has purged between 40 and 50 senior military officers who are in disagreement with his plans. She also explained that the resignation of Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, followed dispute between Mr. Larijani and Ahmadinejad over "incentives" Larijani had been prepared to offer his interlocutors in the West. Ms. Rajavi heads the Paris-based National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), whose military arm is the People's Mujahideen of Iran. The Mujahideen are listed as a terrorist organization by the US for its violent tactics. (The group allegedly supported the takeover of the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979.) But in a bizarre twist, some 3,800 Mujahideen fighters who later conducted operations against the Iranian regime from Iraqi territory during the reign of Saddam Hussein are currently being held in benign custody in Iraq by US forces as "protected" persons. The

current Iraqi government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is attempting to prosecute or deport them. Rajavi says this is at the behest of Iran.

Both the NCRI and the People's Mujahideen claim to have substantial underground support in Iran. Though the information of exiled groups about events in their tyrannized homelands has come under acute scrutiny since Iraqi exiles produced questionable data about events in Saddam Hussein's Iraq, the NCRI is credited by US sources with accurately identifying clandestine Iranian nuclear facilities early on.

By interesting coincidence, The Times (London) recently cited Bahrain's Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa as the first Arab leader to directly accuse Tehran of seeking nuclear weapons. "While they don't have the bomb yet, they are developing it, or the capability for it," The Times quotes the crown prince as saying, adding that this is the first time one of Iran's Gulf neighbors has "effectively accused [Iran] of lying about its nuclear programme."

In her weekend conversation, Rajavi was adamant that "military intervention" in Iran by the US or others is not desirable. However, she praised the Bush administration for its recent branding of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist entity. The IRGC, she said, holds key positions in government, dominates much of the economy, controls the nuclear program, and has a major role in drug trafficking. The US government's action against it, she says, is a "clear testament and an indispensable prelude to democratic change in Iran."

Her own program for change in Iran is a combination of accelerated sanctions and political pressure from without and upheaval arising from discontent within. Getting rid of her own organization's "terrorist" label, she argues, would help energize internal critics of the regime. She says support for this is growing among both Republican and Democratic members of Congress. She is heartened by recent efforts of British parliamentarians to persuade the European Union to lift restrictions on Iranian opposition groups and blacklist Iran's Revolutionary Guards. The Guards, she says, are responsible for the torture and execution of many Iranians and are the "center of all the disasters" of the Iranian people. They are also key to Iran's military role in Iraq. According to Rajavi, they use the "Ramezan" garrison and four tactical bases near the Iran-Iraq border to send arms and explosives to Iraq. NCRI has exposed three factories in a very secure area in Tehran that are making roadside bombs to send to Iraq, she adds. In a previous conversation with Rajavi a little more than two years ago, she spoke in Persian, translated into English through an interpreter. On this occasion she spoke in heavily accented English. "I studied English in high school," she said, "but I have been practicing it more." She also speaks French.

As we began our conversation, she reminded me that "everything I warned you about two years ago about Ahmadinejad has come true. He has declared war [on his perceived enemies]."

John Hughes, a former editor of the Monitor, is a professor of communications at Brigham Young University.
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/1107/p09s02-coop.html>

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

New York Times

South Korean Says North Still Threat

By THOM SHANKER

Published: November 8, 2007

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov. 7 — The military threat presented by North Korea has not diminished despite early steps by Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear weapons program, the South Korean defense minister said today.

During a news conference with the visiting American defense secretary, South Korea's minister of national defense, Kim Jang-soo, said there was no clear intelligence that the Communist North had halted its pursuit of "asymmetrical weapons."

"In order for us to change our view of the situation, we would need very real and very tangible military intelligence to that effect," Mr. Kim said. "What is certain is that North Korea is continuing to pursue the acquisition of asymmetrical weapons. We cannot conclude that the threat from North Korea has been reduced."

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, midway through a weeklong series of meetings in China, South Korea and Japan, said the United States "would welcome, and do welcome, the beginning of disablement of nuclear facilities in the North."

Earlier this week a senior State Department expert on Korea said he had confirmation that North Korea had begun to disable its nuclear facilities at the main Yongbyon complex, 60 miles north of Pyongyang.

But Mr. Gates cautioned that much work remains to make certain that North Korea has surrendered its nuclear weapons and its weapons development programs. He said North Korea must offer to disclose all of its nuclear weapons facilities and nuclear weapons activities.

"So there are several steps in this process," Mr. Gates said. "Of course, the object is the denuclearization of North Korea. So we are started on a path, but we are far from reaching our destination."

Sung Kim, the State Department official who visited the Yongbyon complex, said North Korean officials were “very cooperative” and that the effort was “off to a good start.”

North Korea turned off the reactor at Yongbyon in July and pledged to disable it — but not dismantle it — by the end of this year. In exchange, North Korea will receive a number of concessions, including energy assistance, in a deal negotiated with the United States, China, Japan, South Korea and Russia.

The agreement, first reached in February, also grants North Korea a number of political concessions. But Mr. Gates said today that North Korea’s desire to be removed from the American roster of terrorist states would be fulfilled only when the North has met a list of official criteria — implying that such a determination had not yet been made. Mr. Gates, at the conclusion today of annual security talks with South Korea, said that the North Korean conventional and nuclear threat remained “the focal point” of an alliance between Washington and Seoul that he described as “strong and vibrant.”

North Korea has about one million people in its armed forces and conducted its first nuclear detonation in October 2006.

The size of the American military force stationed in South Korea has been slowly diminishing. Three years ago, 37,500 American military personnel were in South Korea, the only permanent base the United States operates on the mainland of East Asia.

One American brigade formerly based in South Korea deployed to Iraq in 2004. The current American presence here is 28,000, a figure that will drop to 25,000 by 2012.

South Korea fields 680,000 in its armed forces, which are among the most modern in Asia.

In 2012, the South Korean military is to take over wartime operational control of its own forces, a command responsibility previously exercised by the American four-star general here.

Underscoring the importance of the alliance with South Korea, Mr. Gates was joined for the meetings here by Adm. Mike Mullen, the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Adm. Timothy Keating, commander of American forces in the Pacific; and Gen. B. B. Bell, the American commander in South Korea.

In advance of the defense secretary’s arrival, senior Pentagon officials made clear that Mr. Gates’s visit was to reaffirm a strong relationship. But these officials also said that Mr. Gates and his delegation were consciously seeking to avoid any statements on national security issues that might influence presidential elections here next month.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/08/world/asia/08gates.html?_r=1&ref=washingt&oref=slogin

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

Los Angeles Times

November 8, 2007

N. Korea Still Seen As Threat In Region

Though the regime is shutting down nuclear facilities, it is pursuing conventional weapons, a S. Korean official says after a meeting with U.S. Defense chief Gates.

By Julian E. Barnes, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

SEOUL — Although North Korea has begun dismantling its nuclear facilities, it remains a threat to the region, South Korea's defense minister said Wednesday.

At a news conference with U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, South Korean Defense Minister Kim Jang-soo said North Korea continued to develop conventional weapons.

"What is certain is that North Korea is continuing to pursue the acquisition of asymmetrical weapons," Kim said.

"Therefore we cannot conclude that the threat from North Korea has been reduced."

North Korea led the agenda in Wednesday's talks, and in a joint statement issued afterward, South Korean and U.S. officials said North Korea was still working on long-range missiles and other weapons. Proliferation of those weapons remains a danger, the statement said.

Gates added that a nuclear and conventional weapons threat from North Korea "remains the focal point" of the U.S.-South Korean alliance.

The Pentagon chief said he welcomed the dismantling of North Korea's nuclear facilities but noted that several steps remain in its denuclearization.

"We are started on a path, but we are far from reaching our destination," Gates said.

Work on disabling three major facilities, including a five-megawatt reactor that generates plutonium, began this week at North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex, 60 miles north of the capital, Pyongyang.

Sung Kim, the U.S. State Department official who visited the Yongbyon site this week, said the North Koreans were very cooperative and predicted the dismantling could be completed by year's end.

Gates is in South Korea for the Security Consultative Meeting, an annual gathering of officials from the two nations. Privately, U.S. military officials said delegates at this year's meetings were trying to avoid major announcements to avoid influencing South Korean elections in December.

About 28,000 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea, down from 37,500 in 2004. The U.S. plans to draw those forces down to 25,000 by 2012, when South Korea will take full control of its military forces from the United States. A small group of protesters opposed to the U.S. troop presence in South Korea jeered Gates on Tuesday as he arrived in Seoul. Gates was asked Wednesday whether further cuts of U.S. forces were possible. He said troop levels would depend on the security situation, but underscored that the U.S. remained committed to South Korea. "It is my expectation that we will continue to play a role in the security of the peninsula for a long time," Gates said. <http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-gates8nov08.1.6456258.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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

Los Angeles Times
November 8, 2007

Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal A U.S. Worry

American intelligence agencies are concerned the weaponry could be diverted amid the nation's political crisis.

By Greg Miller, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Alarmed by the political crisis in Pakistan, U.S. spy agencies have stepped up their scrutiny of the country's nuclear weapons program and directed analysts to reexamine the risk that rising instability could lead to the loss of a nuclear device or material, U.S. intelligence officials said.

The officials emphasized that there was no new intelligence to suggest that Pakistan's tight controls on its nuclear facilities are in any danger of being compromised.

Officials said the effort underway at the CIA and other agencies focuses on identifying scenarios in which further deterioration of the political situation could weaken the Pakistani government's ability to keep track of its weapons, components or even scientists.

"That was one of the things people immediately started asking about" when Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf declared emergency rule in his country Saturday and suspended the constitution, a senior U.S. intelligence official said. "How do we game this out? How might it happen?"

The official spoke on condition of anonymity when discussing internal deliberations.

The scenarios being considered include an attempt by Al Qaeda or another terrorist network to launch an attack on a nuclear site, or a move by a faction of the powerful Pakistani military to gain power by aligning with Islamic militant groups.

Officials said they considered both to be remote possibilities. More realistic scenarios, experts said, involve the risk that rogue scientists or security officials working in Pakistan's nuclear weapons program could seek to take advantage of the turmoil to sell technology, supplies or secrets.

"That is my fundamental worry," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington. "If there is [further] instability, Musharraf is going to have less ability to exercise tight control. Pakistan tends to leak. It has leaked vital nuclear weapons information. It's the nature of the system."

Albright was referring to the illicit network of Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani nuclear scientist who has been held under house arrest in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, since Western intelligence agencies unraveled a vast network he operated that sold nuclear secrets and technology to other countries.

Intelligence officials have testified that though Al Qaeda leaders have repeatedly expressed interest in obtaining nuclear capabilities, there is no indication the terrorism network has succeeded. If Al Qaeda were able to obtain enough fissile material, experts said, it would require only a limited amount of expertise to assemble a powerful bomb.

Pakistan is the only nuclear-armed Muslim nation, and it is fiercely protective of information about its capabilities and the locations of its weapons and facilities.

Most experts believe that Pakistan has produced enough highly enriched uranium for about 50 nuclear weapons or warheads, and that the devices are distributed among half a dozen or more locations. Pakistan also operates a constellation of weapons production facilities where hundreds of kilograms of fissile material are stored.

Experts said security around these sites is extremely tight and multilayered. Pakistan does not use the electronic systems that require the input of access codes to arm warheads, but its weapons are stored disassembled, with key components kept in separate, secure vaults.

Musharraf has improved the security system, centralizing control in a single government agency and putting a special branch of the military known as the Strategic Plans Division in charge of operations and security.

The senior officers in that division are vetted to eliminate candidates with sympathies for Islamic militants, officials said. The division is led by Lt. Gen. Khalid Kidwai, an officer with close ties to U.S. military officials.

"If we started to see things deteriorate, there would be an urgent and immediate effort to reach out to him," said Daniel Markey, a former State Department official who focused on U.S. policy in South Asia. Speaking of the Strategic Plans Division, Markey said, "If there's a safe box within Pakistan's army, this is it."

Musharraf's commitment to securing Pakistan's weapons has contributed to anxiety over what might happen if he were to lose power. Such concerns may help account for U.S. reluctance to impose sanctions or even issue more forceful rebukes to Musharraf for his decision to suspend the constitution.

Because the military is widely considered the most professional institution in the country, U.S. officials and experts said they regard the possibility of a failure of military control over the weapons as highly unlikely.

"You'd have to imagine competing forces within the officer corps at the highest levels," Markey said, "and one of those sides deciding they want to align themselves with the more extreme side of the Pakistani political spectrum." Due to the military's capabilities, most experts also discount the possibility of an attack on a Pakistani nuclear facility by Al Qaeda or other terrorist groups. As a result, the most worrisome scenarios center on insiders in the Pakistani nuclear program, officials and experts said.

In 2001, just weeks before the Sept. 11 attacks, two Pakistani nuclear experts met with Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan to discuss how Al Qaeda should go about building a nuclear device. That meeting, and subsequent efforts by the CIA to track Al Qaeda's pursuit of nuclear weapons, was described by former CIA Director George J. Tenet in a book published last spring.

The experts, Sultan Bashiruddin Mahmood and Chaudhry Abdul Majeed, are believed to be under house arrest in Pakistan, officials said. But intelligence experts worry that the political instability in Pakistan could weaken the country's ability or effort to keep track of scientists and experts who might be inclined to share nuclear secrets out of ideological affinity with extremist groups or simply for profit.

"The control system is only as good as its weakest link," Albright said. "With tight controls and a strong leader you are OK. But if it becomes less stable, you could have fewer constraints and someone may grab an opportunity to steal something and sell it."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-nukes8nov08,1,3301346.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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

REUTERS

U.S. stages 1st dual-missile intercept test in space

Wed Nov 7, 2007 12:05pm EST

By Jim Wolf

The U.S. military destroyed a simulated salvo of two shortrange ballistic missiles more than 100 miles over the Pacific on Tuesday night in the first such simultaneous test in space.

The event marked the 10th and 11th successful ballistic missile intercepts for Lockheed Martin's sea-based Aegis system in 13 attempts, the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency (MDA) said.

"We consider it a simultaneous engagement," agency spokesman Richard Lehner said yesterday. "That means both targets were in flight at the same time, even though they were not intercepted at precisely the same moment."

The Aegis system tested is part of a fledgling, multibillion-dollar U. S. shield designed to thwart nucleararmed missiles fired by potential foes such as North Korea and Iran.

MDA said the test marked the 32nd and 33rd successful "hit-to-kill" intercepts since 2001, but it did not say how many attempts have been made. Hit-to-kill means the targets are destroyed by collision.

Lehner described the drill as "very operationally realistic," partly because a foe probably would attack with more than one missile, he said.

In addition, the crew of the Aegis-equipped guided-missile cruiser Lake Erie did not know when the targets were going to be launched, although they were on alert as they would have been amid heightened tensions, Mr. Lehner said.

Two Standard Missile-3 interceptors built by Raytheon Co were fired from the Lake Erie, which was off the coast of Kauai, Hawaii. The singlestage target missiles — with warheads that did not separate from their booster rockets — were fired within moments of each other from a missile range on Kauai.

"With two targets engaged simultaneously, both the system and the crew are under additional stress, and today, they performed flawlessly," Orlando Carvalho, general manager of Lockheed Martin's related business line, said in a company release.

Earlier Tuesday, U.S. House and Senate negotiators approved \$8.7 billion for missile defense programs, shaving \$185 million from President Bush's request for fiscal 2008, which began Oct. 1. Lawmakers added \$75 million for the Aegis program.

Many experts remain skeptical about U.S. prospects in more complex scenarios, for instance involving long-range missiles, separating warheads and decoys.

The anti-missile shield's backbone, managed by Boeing Co and known as the ground-based mid-course defense, has made intercepts in about half of its 13 or so tries, "all under highly scripted circumstances," said Victoria Samson, an expert at the private Center for Defense Information.

The Japanese guided missile destroyer Kongo, newly equipped with the Aegis ballistic missile defense system, used the test as a training exercise in preparation for the first ballistic missile intercept test by a Japanese ship, due by the end of next month, MDA said.

(Reporting by Jim Wolf, Editing by Gerald E. McCormick)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/domesticNews/idUSN0750720320071107>

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

London Times

November 8, 2007

US fears Israeli strike against Iran over latest nuclear claim

Tom Baldwin in Washington, James Hider in Jerusalem and Francis Elliott, Deputy Political Editor

A claim by President Ahmadinejad that Iran has 3,000 working uranium-enriching centrifuges sent a tremor across the world yesterday amid fears that Israel would respond by bombing the country's nuclear facilities.

Military sources in Washington said that the existence of such a large number could be a "tipping point", triggering an Israeli air strike. The Pentagon is reluctant to take military action against Iran, but officials say that Israel is a "different matter". Amid the international uproar, British MPs who were to have toured the nuclear facility were backing out of their Iran trip.

Even before President Ahmadinejad's announcement, a US defence official told The Times yesterday: "Israel could do something when they get to around 3,000 working centrifuges. The Pentagon is minded to wait a little longer."

US experts say 3,000 machines running for long periods could make enough enriched uranium for an atomic bomb within a year.

Israel responded by serving notice that it would not tolerate a nuclear Iran. "Talks never did, and never will, stop rockets," said Ehud Barak, the Defence Minister, after talks with the security cabinet.

The US and Western allies believe that Iran is using its civilian nuclear programme as a cover for weapon development. Tehran says that it merely wants to generate electricity.

Concern about Israel's intentions has been heightened by its recent air strike on a suspected nuclear plant in Syria. In 1981 Israel destroyed Saddam Hussein's Iraqi nuclear reactor, and as the sole — if undeclared — nuclear power in the region, it now considers Iran the most serious threat to its security. Mr Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map".

Efraim Inbar, of the Begin-Sadat Centre for Strategic Studies in Tel Aviv, said that the figure of 3,000 centrifuges would signal the ability of Israel's arch-foe to produce the nuclear material needed for a warhead. "I wouldn't be surprised if we do something if the international community leaves us alone," he said. "I think we [Israel] are preparing for it. For Israel this is a critical technological moment."

Tehran says it plans to expand its enrichment programme to up to 54,000 centrifuges at Natanz in central Iran, which would amount to industrial-scale uranium enrichment.

Mr Ahmadinejad, speaking yesterday at a rally, said that UN sanctions had failed to halt uranium enrichment. "The world must know that this nation will not give up one iota of its nuclear rights . . . if they think they can get concessions from this nation, they are badly mistaken," he said. He has in the past claimed that Iran succeeded in installing the 3,000 centrifuges at its uranium enrichment facility but yesterday's speech was the first time he had said all of them were now operational.

The International Atomic Energy Authority recently put the figure at closer to 2,000, with another 650 being tested. The IAEA said yesterday: "We will be publishing a report next week. We will not make any comment about this until then." Javier Solana, the EU foreign policy chief, is shortly to report on Iran's willingness to give up uranium enrichment in exchange for political and trade incentives.

In London, at least five members of the Commons Foreign Affairs Committee were refusing to take part in the planned trip to Iran, arguing that it would hand the regime a propaganda coup. The visit, to begin on Sunday, would be the first by a select committee since 15 British Service personnel were held in March. That incident and evidence

that the regime is supporting insurgencies in Afghanistan and Iraq and planning to build a nuclear bomb has strained relations with Britain.

About eight MPs, from all three main parties, are still planning to spend four days in Iran next week.

Eric Illsley, a Labour MP who is one of those to have pulled out, said: "I really don't fancy having pictures of me next to an Iranian nuclear facility beamed around the world."

— Intelligence agencies have begun to vet all foreign postgraduates applying to study sensitive scientific subjects in Britain. The aim is to prevent Iranian students getting expertise in fields related to producing weapons of mass destruction. Sixty Iranians have been refused university places this year.

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/middle_east/article2827787.ece

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