



# USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

---

---

Issue No. 597, 20 November 2007

## Articles & Other Documents:

[Nuclear Negotiator Charged With Passing Secrets](#)

[X-Band Radar For Defense](#)

[Iran Was Blocked From Buying Nuclear Materials At Least 75 Times, Group Says](#)

[Combating Nuclear Terrorism: Federal Efforts to Respond to Nuclear and Radiological Threats and to Protect Key Emergency Response Facilities Could Be Strengthened \(GAO Report\)](#)

[Indian Coalition Wins Political Dispute Over Nuclear Pact](#)

[Deepening China-Iran Ties Weaken Bid To Isolate Iran](#)

[U.S., Russia Plan Plutonium Disposal](#)

[Radiation Detectors for Border Are Delayed Again](#)

[Reports To Rate Iran Nuclear Compliance](#)

[U.S. To Seek New Sanctions Against Iran](#)

[Homeland Security officials say government unprepared for dirty bomb](#)

[Bush Says N. Korea Talks Show 'Results'](#)

[U.S. Secretly Aids Pakistan In Guarding Nuclear Arms](#)

[Biodefense Lab Causing Qualms](#)

[Ahmadinejad, Chavez Forge Alliance](#)

---

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](mailto: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

Washington Post  
November 15, 2007  
Pg. 20

## **Nuclear Negotiator Charged With Passing Secrets**

Iran's government announced Wednesday that it has charged a former senior nuclear negotiator, Hossein Mousavian, with passing classified information to the West.

The charges appear to be an attempt by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to push back against pressure for a softer nuclear policy and to discredit his growing political opposition.

He has sought to take more direct control of Iran's nuclear negotiations with the United Nations but has faced a backlash from critics, including top conservatives, who say his rejection of compromise has deepened the country's troubles.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/14/AR2007111402532.html>

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

Los Angeles Times

November 15, 2007

## Reports To Rate Iran Nuclear Compliance

*As the U.N. atomic watchdog and the EU prepare studies of Tehran's cooperation, the U.S., Britain and France focus on unknowns.*

By Maggie Farley, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS —The U.N.'s nuclear watchdog is expected to report this week that Iran has mostly cooperated with an investigation of its nuclear program's murky past, but that key questions remain unanswered, diplomats say. The European Union's nuclear negotiator, Javier Solana, is likely to confirm this month that Iran has not suspended uranium enrichment as demanded by the Security Council, opening the door to tougher sanctions.

But without a clear-cut judgment that Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon, the council may find itself in the same position it has been in the last four years: unable to compel Iran to suspend its nuclear program until Tehran can prove it is solely for producing energy.

"Iran may have walked that tightrope well enough to keep things going," said a Western diplomat in Vienna, where the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency is based.

The United States, Britain and France are circulating their own set of questions about Iran's uranium enrichment to highlight how much is unknown about the country's nuclear intentions, past and present, according to the Associated Press, which had obtained the 10-page document.

"We have a whole range of outstanding questions about Iran's nuclear program," Britain's ambassador to the U.N., John Sawers, said Wednesday.

In an effort to show its cooperation before IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei's report, which is expected today, Iran handed over a long-withheld blueprint showing how to shape uranium metal into hemispheres for a nuclear warhead, diplomats said.

IAEA inspectors had discovered the document in 2005 but were permitted only to read it and not take it outside the country. The Iranians have said it was given to them unsolicited by Pakistani scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, known as the father of Pakistan's atomic bomb, who secretly peddled nuclear technology to Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Libya.

Iranian officials said they did not try to manufacture a weapon from the plans. ElBaradei had demanded the document as part of a "plan of work" that requires Iran to answer questions one by one about its two decades of clandestine nuclear development. ElBaradei has said he hopes to finish the inquiry by the end of the year.

Iran also provided information about P1 and P2 centrifuges designed to enrich uranium, said Iran's deputy foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, after meeting with British lawmakers Tuesday in London.

The P2 type, believed to operate with technology provided by Khan, is more sophisticated and can refine uranium two or three times faster than the P1.

Last week, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said that a cascade of 3,000 centrifuges was operating and that Tehran's nuclear program was irreversible. If the cascade is functioning properly, it can enrich enough uranium for a bomb in about a year, scientists say, though U.S. intelligence estimates put Iran between four and seven years away from constructing a complete weapon.

The United States will keep pushing for harsher sanctions, even if the IAEA reports partial cooperation by Iran, Gregory L. Schulte, the U.S. envoy to the IAEA, said Wednesday.

The U.S., Britain and France have been pressing the other two permanent members of the Security Council, China and Russia, to increase targeted penalties on officials and companies involved in the nuclear program unless Iran suspends enrichment.

The Chinese and Russian foreign ministers have visited Tehran in the last two weeks to encourage cooperation with the IAEA. The two countries are key trade partners with Iran.

Although Moscow and Beijing have voted for sanctions against Iran before and have agreed to prepare further penalties in case this month's IAEA and EU reports are negative, they are expected to argue that sanctions would derail Iran's improved cooperation.

"As long as the process moves a bit forward, we should keep on this track," a Chinese diplomat said. "The main thing for the Security Council is to help the IAEA answer these outstanding questions, and we are not convinced that additional sanctions would help."

But the U.S. made it clear that a bit of progress was not what it was seeking.

"Selective cooperation is not good enough," Schulte told reporters in Vienna. "When we read this report and evaluate Iran's cooperation, the standard we will look for is full disclosure and also a full suspension of their proliferation-sensitive activities."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran15nov15.1.5028207.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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

Washington Times

November 15, 2007

Pg. 18

## **X-Band Radar For Defense**

By James T. Hackett

It is 28 stories high, floats on the sea and moves around the oceans under its own power. It carries a radar so powerful it can float off San Diego and track an object the size of a baseball over the East Coast. This engineering marvel is the Sea-based X-Band Radar (SBX), a key component of the national missile defense.

The radar's homeport is Adak in the Aleutian Islands, where it watches for missiles coming from North Korea or elsewhere. On Sept. 28, it was in the North Pacific when it detected and tracked an intercontinental ballistic missile launched from Kodiak Island, Alaska, in a test of the national missile defense system.

The radar was developed and built in the United States and installed in Texas on a high-tech oil-drilling platform, which was modified to carry the radar. It then sailed around South America to Hawaii, where it was further outfitted. Normally, it will be anchored off Adak, but now it is sailing around the Pacific tracking flight tests and participating in exercises to become fully integrated in the missile defense system. The original plan was to base an X-band radar on Shemya Island in the Aleutians, but the advantage of a sea-based version that could go wherever the threat was greatest led to the innovative seagoing design.

The purpose of the SBX is to detect and track ballistic missiles more effectively and provide targeting information to both ground- and sea-based interceptors. The power and precision of its beam improves the ability of the interceptor to distinguish warheads from decoys and other penetration aids.

Anyone who followed the missile defense debate will remember the long and detailed arguments by opponents who claimed it would not work because long-range missiles could carry balloons and other decoys to hopelessly confuse the defense.

Theodore Postol and George Lewis, antimissile defense activists in the humanities department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, spent years promoting the view that missile defense was useless because it could not distinguish warheads from decoys. But in a recent article they admit the much higher resolution of X-band radars makes it possible to distinguish warheads from other objects. X-band radars, working with other sensors, have gone a long way toward solving this problem.

A prototype X-band radar was installed on Kwajalein Atoll in the Pacific in 1998 as the primary fire control radar for the Pacific missile test range. In addition to it and the SBX, four smaller transportable X-band radars are being acquired. The first already is operational in Aomori Prefecture, northern Japan, providing very fast tracking and discrimination of launches from North Korea. Another will be based in southern Japan. Both will support Japan's growing network of land- and sea-based missile interceptors.

The big seagoing version of the X-band radar is a unique example of modern science and engineering. The huge platform that holds the radar is 240 feet wide and 390 feet long, rides on twin keels and is self-propelled like a ship. A crew of 85 lives on board, operating and maintaining both radar and structure. It is stable in high seas and strong winds, which are common at its base in Alaskan waters.

This new technology helps make a missile defense of North America, as well as defenses for our allies in East Asia and Europe, a reality. To hold down the cost of missile defenses in Europe, the X-band radar now at Kwajalein will be moved to the Czech Republic. If Moscow cooperates, that radar could be integrated with one or more Russian early warning radars.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has proposed using Russian radars in Azerbaijan, and Armavir in southern Russia, in an attempt to block U.S. plans to put the X-band radar in Central Europe. Although Russia's early warning radars have different capabilities than the X-band radar and cannot substitute for it, they could work in concert with it and expand the protected area.

In remarks at the National Defense University on Oct. 23, President Bush said Russia is not our enemy and invited Moscow to join a cooperative effort to defend Russia, Europe and the U.S. against the emerging threat of missiles from the Middle East.

As missile and nuclear technology spread to more countries, possibly even to terrorist groups, it is in Russia's own security interest to join Europe and America in creating a common defense. And it is Congress' responsibility to approve the funds needed to base the X-band radar and interceptors in Europe.

*James T. Hackett is a contributing writer to The Washington Times based in Carlsbad, Calif.*

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071115/COMMENTARY/111150006/1012/commentary>

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

Washington Post  
November 16, 2007  
Pg. 22

## **U.S. To Seek New Sanctions Against Iran**

### ***U.N. Report Faults Tehran's Input on Nuclear Program***

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Bush administration plans to push for new sanctions against Iran after the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency reported yesterday that Tehran is providing "diminishing" information about its controversial nuclear program, U.S. officials said.

In a critically timed assessment, the International Atomic Energy Agency said that Iran provided "timely" and helpful new information on a secret program that became public in 2002, but that it did not fully answer questions or allow full access to Iranian personnel. Iran is even less cooperative on its current program, the IAEA reported.

"Since early 2006, the agency has not received the type of information that Iran had previously been providing," the IAEA concluded. "The agency's knowledge about Iran's current nuclear program is diminishing."

The IAEA's report also confirmed that Iran has 3,000 centrifuges in operation, which is the minimum needed to enrich a significant amount of uranium and represents a tenfold increase over last year. Having 3,000 functioning centrifuges is a major technical milestone for Iran. Uranium enrichment can be used to develop peaceful nuclear energy as well as nuclear weapons.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has repeatedly stated in recent months that Tehran has reached that strategic threshold. If all 3,000 centrifuges are working efficiently, Iran could produce a weapon in a year. But the report indicated that the IAEA has no evidence Iran could produce bomb-grade fuel, and most experts think it still faces significant technical problems.

"They have centrifuges, but it's unclear how well they work and how long they would work," said George Perkovich of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. At his confirmation hearings to be director of national intelligence in February, Mike McConnell estimated that Iran would not have a nuclear weapon until 2015. Iran's new chief negotiator, Saeed Jalili, heralded the IAEA's report for proving that "most ambiguities" about Tehran's program have been removed. At a news conference, he said the U.N. agency showed that allegations about Iran trying to subvert a peaceful energy program to develop the world's deadliest weapon are "baseless." Ahmadinejad said the report by IAEA chief Mohammed ElBaradei shows the world that Iran has been "right and the resistance of our nation has been correct."

U.S. arms experts took a middle ground. "ElBaradei wants to focus on the positive in terms of the accounting for the past," Perkovich said. "But in the big strategic picture, the report is wholly negative because Iran is not suspending uranium enrichment. Iran is not only not suspending, but it is spitting in our face by saying they're going to ramp up with the next generation of centrifuges beyond what they had already."

The United States warned yesterday that Iran's failure to fully comply with U.N. mandates -- to suspend enrichment and detail its nuclear program -- is grounds for the United Nations to proceed on a long-delayed resolution imposing new sanctions on the Islamic republic.

"The key thing from the director general's report is that Iran's cooperation remains selective and incomplete," said Gregory L. Schulte, the U.S. envoy to the IAEA in Austria. "So Iran has not met the world's expectation that it would disclose information on both its current and past programs."

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that "partial credit doesn't cut it when you're talking about issues of whether or not Iran is developing a nuclear weapon." White House spokeswoman Dana Perino said the report "makes clear that Iran seems uninterested in working with the rest of the world."

The Bush administration has been counting on two reports this month -- the IAEA's assessment and a report by European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who negotiates with Iran -- to end five months of squabbling among the five veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council about further steps against Tehran. U.N.

resolutions imposing sanctions on Iran, passed in December and March, have been unsuccessful in getting Tehran to comply.

Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns expects to meet with his counterparts from Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany the week after Thanksgiving to work on a third round of Security Council sanctions, he said yesterday. Russia and China have resisted U.S. pressure, mainly to give more time for the IAEA's "work plan" to learn more about Iran's activities through 2002. They also are concerned about their own economic interests and the risk of fomenting wider tension between Iran and the West, according to U.S. and European diplomats.

"We need China to join the effort and agree to have the next meeting," Burns said in an interview. "We're concerned that China's trade has increased significantly with Iran. It's incongruous for China to continue to sell arms to Iran and become Iran's top trade partner. We've advised the Chinese to take a much more resolute role."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/15/AR2007111502309.html>

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

New York Times

November 16, 2007

## **Iran Was Blocked From Buying Nuclear Materials At Least 75 Times, Group Says**

By Warren Hoge

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 15 — Iran has been denied purchases of nuclear-related materials at least 75 times over the past nine years because of suspicions the purchases could have been used for building bombs, according to an international monitoring group.

The denials, most of which have occurred since 2002, have resulted from interventions by members of the 45-nation Nuclear Suppliers Group, an offshoot of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The suppliers group is charged with monitoring trade to make sure that nuclear technology transferred for peaceful purposes is not directed to military use.

Iran is a signatory to the treaty but not a member of the suppliers group.

Made up of technologically advanced countries, the group keeps its data private and meets largely in secret.

The list of trade denials was made available by a diplomat from a country interested in exposing the extent of Iranian efforts to acquire so-called dual-use items that can be converted to weapons production. He made the list available on agreement that neither he nor his country be identified.

According to the suppliers group's mission statement, countries act on an individual basis to block trades that violate export controls devised to maintain international cooperation on peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They have no enforcement power beyond notifying companies that they are in violation of the group's guidelines.

The diplomat said that the 75 denials represented actions by only 7 of the 45 member states. He said this suggested that the real number of denials of sales of dual-use products to Iran was probably much higher.

The list names companies from Australia, Finland, Sweden, the United Arab Emirates and Iran itself that were prevented from carrying out deals because the items being sold were suspected of being militarily useful.

The Iranian end users included the government of Iran and the country's atomic energy organization and power, engineering, petrochemical and oil-refining and gas companies, aircraft industries, schools, universities, engine manufacturers, mineral research centers, a helicopter support company and a plasma physics center.

As the standoff with Iran over its nuclear program has continued, Western diplomats have contended that Tehran uses front companies to receive technology and convert it to weapons production without being detected.

Among the listed items being offered for sale in the blocked deals were nickel powder, petrochemical plant components, compressors, furnaces, steel flanges and fittings, electron microscopes, radiometric ore-sorting machines, valves and tubing, lasers, a rotary drilling rig, a mass spectrometer and a nitrogen production plant.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/16/world/middleeast/16nations.html?\\_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/16/world/middleeast/16nations.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin)

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

GovExec.com

## **Homeland Security officials say government unprepared for dirty bomb**

By Elaine S. Povich

*Congress Daily*



November 16, 2007

Government agencies lack the capability to deal quickly and efficiently with a so-called dirty bomb attack on the United States, members of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Government Management Subcommittee were told Thursday.

"EPA's analysis of the nation's existing radiological laboratory capacity revealed a significant capacity gap," Thomas Dunne, EPA's associate administrator of homeland security, testified. "This capacity gap will result in a lack of timely, reliable and interpretable data and will delay national and local response and consequence management activities."

A recent investigation by the House Science Committee found that the United States has a shortage of laboratories to test individuals exposed to radiation after a dirty bomb attack.

Asked by Sen. Norm Coleman, R-Minn., what needs to be done, Dunne said the labs "are not going to stay in business unless there's some revenue involved."

He said there are fewer incidents that call for radiological labs and decontamination equipment outside of an attack, intimating that if the government wants the capability in place, it will have to pay for it.

Dunne said that storage capacity for contaminated soil, water and other debris is limited as well.

"We need to improve storage; it just doesn't exist," he said. "Nobody's going to build these things unless there's a reason," he said.

Radiological countermeasures, like drugs that would work to decontaminate people's bodies if they had ingested radiation, also are years away.

Richard Hatchett, associate director for radiation countermeasure research and emergency preparedness at the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Disease, said such countermeasures are in the "early stages of development and face a long road before they are available" to the public.

The testimony did not serve to make Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Government Management Subcommittee Chairman Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, feel confident.

He said it was not a question of "if" a dirty bomb attack comes, but "when."

"We must be prepared for such an eventuality," Akaka said, about a dirty bomb, citing the lack of coordination by government agencies in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

[http://govexec.com/story\\_page.cfm?articleid=38604&dcn=todaysnews](http://govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=38604&dcn=todaysnews)

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

## **Combating Nuclear Terrorism: Federal Efforts to Respond to Nuclear and Radiological Threats and to Protect Key Emergency Response Facilities Could Be Strengthened**

by Gene Aloise, director, natural resources and environment, before the Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management, the Federal Workforce, and the District of Columbia, Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

GAO-08-285T, November 15.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-08-285T>

Highlights - <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d08285high.pdf>

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

Washington Times

November 17, 2007

Pg. 2

## **Bush Says N. Korea Talks Show 'Results'**

By Jon Ward, Washington Times

President Bush defended negotiations over North Korea's nuclear program yesterday, saying they have been effective, but he added that the communist regime must give a full declaration of its nuclear activities before the end of the year.

Some regional analysts said the president's remarks indicate that the Bush administration has decided not to move forward with talks unless North Korea discloses a role in helping Syria build nuclear facilities.

"The six-party talks have delivered measurable results," Mr. Bush said, referring to the negotiations among North Korea, the U.S., South Korea, Japan, Russia and China.

Mr. Bush, speaking from the White House alongside Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda during a joint statement, said that although North Korea has begun to shut down its Yongbyon reactor, "hard work remains to be done."

"North Korea has agreed to provide a full declaration of all its nuclear programs and proliferation activities by the end of this year," Mr. Bush said. "Full declaration is one of the next steps North Korea must take to keep the six-party talks moving."

Richard C. Bush, director of the Center for Northeast Asian Studies at the Brookings Institution, said the president appeared to be "laying down a marker."

"I'm not sure that North Korea has agreed to provide a full declaration of its proliferation activities," Richard Bush said. "I suspect that the words 'proliferation activities' are code for the Syria program, and we have decided we need an explanation of what was going on in Syria in order to close any deals."

An Israeli air strike on Sept. 6 in Syria is suspected to have destroyed a partially constructed nuclear reactor of North Korean design, though the U.S. and Israeli governments have pointedly refused to discuss the strike.

The Syrian government has not admitted that it was building nuclear facilities.

An Oct. 3 document that was agreed upon as part of the six-party talks does say that North Korea "committed not to transfer nuclear materials, technology or know-how."

However, when the document discusses the declaration that North Korea will make, it says it "will include all nuclear facilities, materials and programs." There is no mention of documenting proliferation activities.

At an Oct. 17 press conference, Mr. Bush said that "the issue of proliferation has equal importance with the issue of weaponry, and that North Korea has said that they will stop proliferating, just like they have said they will fully disclose and disable any weapons programs."

A State Department official said the U.S. government is "interested in the North Koreans telling us what they have and what they are doing, so we can know what they are telling us they're going to stop."

The Bush administration has been criticized for signing on to the agreement with North Korea in February, clearing the way for the six-party talks to resume after a long standoff. The president's former ambassador to the U.N., John R. Bolton, and others, have said the agreement is ineffectual.

*Nicholas Kralev contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20071117/NATION/111170046/1002>

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

New York Times  
November 17, 2007  
Pg. 8

## **Indian Coalition Wins Political Dispute Over Nuclear Pact**

By Somini Sengupta

NEW DELHI, Nov. 16 — The government's Communist allies gave Prime Minister Manmohan Singh significant breathing room on Friday to push ahead in pursuing a landmark nuclear accord with the United States.

The Communists, who have vigorously opposed the accord, said they would allow the government to go ahead with talks with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations monitoring group, which must give its blessings before India can gain access to nuclear technology on the world market.

Mr. Singh has pushed for the accord at great cost to his government, which has come under fiery criticism from both right and left. The rightist Bharatiya Janata Party denounced the deal as a threat to India's nuclear weapons program, while the Communists objected to it on the ground that it would deepen ties with the United States.

Mr. Singh's government relies on the four Communist parties to maintain a majority in Parliament, and last month, in a sting to the White House, Mr. Singh conceded publicly that he would not allow the government to fall in order to save the deal, which is considered the centerpiece of a new amity between India and the United States.

But after a closely watched meeting on Friday, the Communists gave the government the go-ahead, and the government, which has said the deal does not require a vote in Parliament, agreed to consult a committee before entering into any binding agreements with the global agency.

Domestic politics seems to have tempered the stand of both sides.

The main leftist party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has in recent weeks come under growing criticism in one of the two states it controls, West Bengal, over its handling of a local peasant rebellion.

The ruling Congress Party appears hesitant to force a confrontation with its leftist allies before a crucial state election in Gujarat, which is ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Still, it remains unclear whether the opening provided by the Communists will give India the time it needs ultimately to get the deal through the United States Congress before the presidential campaign season intensifies, potentially making it harder to get bipartisan legislation passed.

Privately, American officials, who admit to being shocked by the Indian back-stepping, have made it known to New Delhi that its reluctance to advance on the deal could cost the country dearly, on everything from military cooperation to American support for its bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council.

Strobe Talbott, a deputy secretary of state in the Clinton administration and now president of the Brookings Institution, said chances of getting the deal through the Congress would diminish over time and make it difficult to negotiate a similar deal with a future administration anytime soon, whether Democratic or Republican.

“This has got to happen soon, or it’s going to be on ice for a very long time,” he said from Washington.

Indian government officials for their part privately say that while the delays over the nuclear accord could damage the country’s credibility in the short term, India will remain an attractive long-term partner for the United States.

Trade between India and the United States has grown by 20 percent a year over the last five years, to \$32 billion in 2006, according to the United States Census Bureau.

“Look at the cards we hold, even though we are the losers in this in the short run,” Lalit Mansingh, a retired Indian diplomat, who served in Washington until 2004. “Our economy is growing, it’s a big market for American companies, and there are choices for India.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/17/world/asia/17india.html>

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

New York Times  
November 18, 2007  
Pg. 1

## **U.S. Secretly Aids Pakistan In Guarding Nuclear Arms**

By David E. Sanger and William J. Broad

WASHINGTON, Nov. 17 — Over the past six years, the Bush administration has spent almost \$100 million on a highly classified program to help Gen. Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan’s president, secure his country’s nuclear weapons, according to current and former senior administration officials.

But with the future of that country’s leadership in doubt, debate is intensifying about whether Washington has done enough to help protect the warheads and laboratories, and whether Pakistan’s reluctance to reveal critical details about its arsenal has undercut the effectiveness of the continuing security effort.

The aid, buried in secret portions of the federal budget, paid for the training of Pakistani personnel in the United States and the construction of a nuclear security training center in Pakistan, a facility that American officials say is nowhere near completion, even though it was supposed to be in operation this year.

A raft of equipment — from helicopters to night-vision goggles to nuclear detection equipment — was given to Pakistan to help secure its nuclear material, its warheads, and the laboratories that were the site of the worst known case of nuclear proliferation in the atomic age.

While American officials say that they believe the arsenal is safe at the moment, and that they take at face value Pakistani assurances that security is vastly improved, in many cases the Pakistani government has been reluctant to show American officials how or where the gear is actually used.

That is because the Pakistanis do not want to reveal the locations of their weapons or the amount or type of new bomb-grade fuel the country is now producing.

The American program was created after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, when the Bush administration debated whether to share with Pakistan one of the crown jewels of American nuclear protection technology, known as “permissive action links,” or PALS, a system used to keep a weapon from detonating without proper codes and authorizations. In the end, despite past federal aid to France and Russia on delicate points of nuclear security, the administration decided that it could not share the system with the Pakistanis because of legal restrictions.

In addition, the Pakistanis were suspicious that any American-made technology in their warheads could include a secret “kill switch,” enabling the Americans to turn off their weapons.

While many nuclear experts in the federal government favored offering the PALS system because they considered Pakistan’s arsenal among the world’s most vulnerable to terrorist groups, some administration officials feared that sharing the technology would teach Pakistan too much about American weaponry. The same concern kept the Clinton administration from sharing the technology with China in the early 1990s.

The New York Times has known details of the secret program for more than three years, based on interviews with a range of American officials and nuclear experts, some of whom were concerned that Pakistan’s arsenal remained



vulnerable. The newspaper agreed to delay publication of the article after considering a request from the Bush administration, which argued that premature disclosure could hurt the effort to secure the weapons. Since then, some elements of the program have been discussed in the Pakistani news media and in a presentation late last year by the leader of Pakistan's nuclear safety effort, Lt. Gen. Khalid Kidwai, who acknowledged receiving "international" help as he sought to assure Washington that all of the holes in Pakistan's nuclear security infrastructure had been sealed.

The Times told the administration last week that it was reopening its examination of the program in light of those disclosures and the current instability in Pakistan. Early this week, the White House withdrew its request that publication be withheld, though it was unwilling to discuss details of the program.

In recent days, American officials have expressed confidence that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is well secured. "I don't see any indication right now that security of those weapons is in jeopardy, but clearly we are very watchful, as we should be," Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a Pentagon news conference on Thursday.

Admiral Mullen's carefully chosen words, a senior administration official said, were based on two separate intelligence assessments issued this month that had been summarized in briefings to Mr. Bush. Both concluded that Pakistan's nuclear arsenal was safe under current conditions, and one also looked at laboratories and came to the same conclusion.

Still, the Pakistani government's reluctance to provide access has limited efforts to assess the situation. In particular, some American experts say they have less ability to look into the nuclear laboratories where highly enriched uranium is produced — including the laboratory named for Abdul Qadeer Khan, the man who sold Pakistan's nuclear technology to Iran, North Korea and Libya.

The secret program was designed by the Energy Department and the State Department, and it drew heavily from the effort over the past decade to secure nuclear weapons, stockpiles and materials in Russia and other former Soviet states. Much of the money for Pakistan was spent on physical security, like fencing and surveillance systems, and equipment for tracking nuclear material if it left secure areas.

But while Pakistan is formally considered a "major non-NATO ally," the program has been hindered by a deep suspicion among Pakistan's military that the secret goal of the United States was to gather intelligence about how to locate and, if necessary, disable Pakistan's arsenal, which is the pride of the country.

"Everything has taken far longer than it should," a former official involved in the program said in a recent interview, "and you are never sure what you really accomplished."

So far, the amount the United States has spent on the classified nuclear security program, less than \$100 million, amounts to slightly less than one percent of the roughly \$10 billion in known American aid to Pakistan since the Sept. 11 attacks. Most of that money has gone for assistance in counterterrorism activities against the Taliban and Al Qaeda.

The debate over sharing nuclear security technology began just before then-Secretary of State Colin L. Powell was sent to Islamabad after the Sept. 11 attacks, as the United States was preparing to invade Afghanistan.

"There were a lot of people who feared that once we headed into Afghanistan, the Taliban would be looking for these weapons," said a senior official who was involved. But a legal analysis found that aiding Pakistan's nuclear weapons program — even if it was just with protective gear — would violate both international and American law. General Musharraf, in his memoir, "In the Line of Fire," published last year, did not discuss any equipment, training or technology offered then, but wrote: "We were put under immense pressure by the United States regarding our nuclear and missile arsenal. The Americans' concerns were based on two grounds. First, at this time they were not very sure of my job security, and they dreaded the possibility that an extremist successor government might get its hands on our strategic nuclear arsenal. Second, they doubted our ability to safeguard our assets."

General Musharraf was more specific in an interview two years ago for a Times documentary, "Nuclear Jihad: Can Terrorists Get the Bomb?" Asked about the equipment and training provided by Washington, he said, "Frankly, I really don't know the details." But he added: "This is an extremely sensitive matter in Pakistan. We don't allow any foreign intrusion in our facilities. But, at the same time, we guarantee that the custodial arrangements that we brought about and implemented are already the best in the world."

Now that concern about General Musharraf's ability to remain in power has been rekindled, so has the debate inside and outside the Bush administration about how much the program accomplished, and what it left unaccomplished. A second phase of the program, which would provide more equipment, helicopters and safety devices, is already being discussed in the administration, but its dimensions have not been determined.

Harold M. Agnew, a former director of the Los Alamos weapons laboratory, which designed most of the United States' nuclear arms, argued that recent federal reluctance to share warhead security technology was making the world more dangerous.

“Lawyers say it’s classified,” Dr. Agnew said in an interview. “That’s nonsense. We should share this technology. Anybody who joins the club should be helped to get this.”

“Whether it’s India or Pakistan or China or Iran,” he added, “the most important thing is that you want to make sure there is no unauthorized use. You want to make sure that the guys who have their hands on the weapons can’t use them without proper authorization.”

In the past, officials say, the United States has shared ideas — but not technologies — about how to make the safeguards that lie at the heart of American weapons security. The system hinges on what is essentially a switch in the firing circuit that requires the would-be user to enter a numeric code that starts a timer for the weapon’s arming and detonation.

Most switches disable themselves if the sequence of numbers entered turns out to be incorrect in a fixed number of tries, much like a bank ATM does. In some cases, the disabled link sets off a small explosion in the warhead to render it useless. Delicate design details involve how to bury the link deep inside a weapon to keep terrorists or enemies from disabling the safeguard.

The most famous case of nuclear idea sharing involves France. Starting in the early 1970s, the United States government began a series of highly secretive discussions with French scientists to help them improve the country’s warheads.

A potential impediment to such sharing was the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, which bars cooperation between nations on weapons technology.

To get around such legal prohibitions, Washington came up with a system of “negative guidance,” sometimes called “20 questions,” as detailed in a 1989 article in *Foreign Policy*. The system let United States scientists listen to French descriptions of warhead approaches and give guidance about whether the French were on the right track. Nuclear experts say sharing also took place after the cold war when the United States worried about the security of Russian nuclear arms and facilities. In that case, both countries declassified warhead information to expedite the transfer of safety and security information, according to federal nuclear scientists.

But in the case of China, which has possessed nuclear weapons since the 1960s and is a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the Clinton administration decided that sharing PALS would be too risky. Experts inside the administration feared the technology would improve the Chinese warheads, and could give the Chinese insights into how American systems worked.

Officials said Washington debated sharing security techniques with Pakistan on at least two occasions — right after it detonated its first nuclear arms in 1998, and after the terrorist attack on the United States in 2001.

The debates pitted atomic scientists who favored technical sharing against federal officials at such places as the State Department who ruled that the transfers were illegal under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and under United States law.

In the 1998 case, the Clinton administration still hoped it could roll back Pakistan’s nuclear program, forcing it to give up the weapons it had developed. That hope, never seen as very realistic, has been entirely given up by the Bush administration.

The nuclear proliferation conducted by Mr. Khan, the Pakistani metallurgist who built a huge network to spread Pakistani technology, convinced the Pakistanis that they needed better protections.

“Among the places in the world that we have to make sure we have done the maximum we can do, Pakistan is at the top of the list,” said John E. McLaughlin, who served as deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency at the time, and played a crucial role in the intelligence collection that led to Mr. Khan’s downfall.

“I am confident of two things,” he added. “That the Pakistanis are very serious about securing this material, but also that someone in Pakistan is very intent on getting their hands on it.”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/18/washington/18nuke.html>

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

Washington Post  
November 18, 2007  
Pg. 20

## **Deepening China-Iran Ties Weaken Bid To Isolate Iran**

*Tehran Increasingly Important in Beijing’s Energy Quest*

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

The rapidly growing relationship between Iran and China has begun to undermine international efforts to ensure that Iran cannot convert a peaceful energy program to develop a nuclear arsenal, U.S. and European officials say.

The Bush administration and its allies said last week that they plan to seek new U.N. sanctions against Iran, after the International Atomic Energy Agency said Iranian officials had given inadequate answers to questions about the

country's past nuclear activities. But U.S. and European officials now worry more about a Chinese veto than about opposition from Russia, which has previously assisted and defended the Iranian nuclear energy program. U.S. and European officials charged Friday that Beijing is deliberately stalling to protect its economic interests. "China needs to play a more responsible role on Iran, needs to recognize that China is going to be very dependent in the decades ahead on Middle East oil, and, therefore, China, for its own development and its own purposes, is going to need a stable Middle East, and that an Iran armed with nuclear weapons is not a prescription for stability in the Middle East," national security adviser Stephen J. Hadley told reporters Friday. China now gets at least 14 percent of its imported oil from Iran, making it China's largest supplier and the source of as much as \$7 billion worth of oil this year, according to David Kirsch, a manager at PFC Energy. Tehran in turn gets major arms systems from Beijing, including ballistic and cruise missiles and technical assistance for Tehran's indigenous missile program. Dozens of Chinese companies are also engaged in several other industries. On the eve of Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's visit to Tehran last week for talks with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Beijing suggested that it could reject U.S.-orchestrated efforts for a new resolution. "We believe that all parties should show patience and sincerity over this issue, while any sanctions, particularly unilateral sanctions, will do no good," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao. The United States last month imposed its own tough new sanctions against Iran's military, banks and industries, in part out of frustration over stalled efforts to pass a third U.N. resolution. Two earlier U.N. resolutions, passed in December and March, call for further action if Iran does not comply in 60 days with demands that it shut down its uranium enrichment, which can be used both for energy and weapons. The latest U.S. diplomacy has dragged on for six months. But the new Tehran-Beijing relationship is likely to further delay or dilute international diplomacy, because the two powers share a strategic vision, experts say. Both are determined to find ways to contain unchallenged U.S. power and a unipolar world, said Ilan Berman, vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council. China's voracious appetite for energy has cemented the relationship, U.S. experts say. China's oil consumption is expected to grow by about 6 percent over the next two years, analysts have said. "Iran has become the engineer of China's economic growth. It may not be like Saudi Arabia is to the U.S. economy, but it's close," Berman said.

"We're presenting China with an untenable proposition. We're asking them to unilaterally divest from Iran and not offering them energy alternatives. This is not sustainable for policy-makers whose predominant priority is to maintain and expand their country's growth," Berman said. "It's not that we shouldn't ask them to scale back their relationship, but China has put a lot of its eggs in Iran's economic basket, and a sophisticated American strategy would provide alternatives."

China has also announced an interest in helping two Iranian refinery projects, Kirsch said.

After meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda at the White House Friday, President Bush said they had agreed that "a nuclear armed Iran would threaten the security of the Middle East and beyond." The United States and its closest ally in Asia "are united in our efforts to change the regime's behavior through diplomacy," Bush told reporters. "We agreed that unless Iran commits to suspend enrichment, international pressure must and will grow." This week's report by the IAEA confirmed that Iran has reached the technical milestone of 3,000 centrifuges, which could produce enough highly enriched uranium to make a nuclear weapon in a year, if all are working. Many experts believe Iran is still facing technical difficulties with its centrifuges, however.

*Staff writers Peter Baker and Michael Abramowitz contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/17/AR2007111701680.html>

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

Baltimore Sun  
November 19, 2007  
Pg. 1

## **Biodefense Lab Causing Qualms**

*Some Fort Detrick neighbors air concerns*

By Timothy B. Wheeler, Sun reporter

FREDERICK--Construction is already under way on a new \$1 billion biodefense research center at Fort Detrick, but some neighboring residents - and at least one elected official - are questioning how safe it is to expand laboratories working with dangerous disease agents such as Ebola and smallpox in the midst of the densely populated Frederick community.

Fort Detrick, which has been working with deadly pathogens since World War II, is an economic engine for Frederick County and has enjoyed staunch support from local business and political leaders for decades.

But now, some residents are uncomfortable with the federal government's post-Sept. 11 push to expand mystery-shrouded work with exotic diseases and biological agents on the Army post.

At the behest of one of its members, the Board of County Commissioners plans to give the public a chance to air its concerns at a forum at 7 o'clock tonight at Frederick City Hall.

"We've had Fort Detrick forever. I think some people feel almost disloyal by speaking up," said County Commissioner David P. Gray, who acknowledged that he appears to be alone among local public officials in questioning the Detrick buildup.

But, he added, "This is a big change coming here. It has its dangers. People ought to know more about it."

The National Interagency Biodefense Campus has been in the works since 2002, when the Bush administration and Congress called for concentrating various federal agencies' biological agent research at Fort Detrick, where such work has been done for years.

A "biodefense analysis and countermeasures center" for the Department of Homeland Security has been under construction since last year, with completion expected next year. A new lab for the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, an arm of the National Institutes of Health, is due to be finished by 2009.

The third major lab facility is to be a partial replacement and expansion of the existing U.S. Army Medical Research Institute for Infectious Diseases. The final environmental impact statement assessing the potential harm - and benefits - of the project was finished late last year. Ground is expected to be broken in another couple of years. But some residents, several of them outspoken peace activists, have challenged the adequacy of the environmental study.

"When these laboratories arrived here, Frederick was a Podunk little town," said Beth Willis, a former federal contractor who has lived here since 1975. "We're a big city now. At what point do you re-evaluate should this be in a different location?"

With 7,900 people working there, Fort Detrick already is Frederick County's largest employer. With the biodefense campus and expansion of another base tenant, the National Cancer Institute, the work force is projected to grow by 1,425 in the next few years.

Studies have been prepared over the past four years of the environmental impact of each of the three research centers, which will be grouped on about 200 acres of the 1,200-acre installation on the northern end of the city. Despite those studies, and the public meetings held as part of them, some residents remain uneasy.

"Exactly what are they going to be doing?" asked Fran Locke, 57, a retired Hood College administrator who lives with her husband in a neat rancher just outside the base fence. "How well is security going to be maintained? What are their provisions for in case of an episode?"

Her husband, Ray Locke, 66, said he used to work at Detrick for a contractor that sterilized the waste generated in the biosafety labs. Looking across his backyard to the base from his kitchen window, he said they occasionally get whiffs of superheated, sterilized grain that is fed to the research animals on base. He wondered whether that means their house would be downwind if a disease organism does leak out.

"It's the wrong location, in the middle of things," Ray Locke said of the new biodefense lab.

It's unclear whether anyone from the Army will attend or respond later to the residents' questions and concerns. Base officials declined to be interviewed for this article.

"Because we already provided numerous opportunities for the public to comment and provide input during the EIS [environmental impact statement] process, we see no need to participate in another public meeting," a base spokeswoman, Sarah Maxwell, wrote in an e-mail.

The Army's environmental study concluded that risks to the surrounding community from expanding the work with dangerous organisms would be "negligible" because of safety measures designed into the buildings and precautions followed by the workers.

But last month, the Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan investigative arm of Congress, warned that there would be increased risks of an accident or terrorism associated with the proliferation of government, university and private labs set up to handle virulent pathogens.

Some Frederick residents want the county to go to court to block construction, arguing that the federal government did not give adequate consideration to building the new labs somewhere less populated. They point to similar lawsuits, still pending, filed in Massachusetts against a biosafety lab at Boston University.

Jan H. Gardner, president of the Board of County Commissioners, said she supports her colleague's quest to air questions about the new labs at the base. But she pointed out that there's still broad support for the work being done at the fort, and she knows people who work there who have assured her that they are not worried about safety. Some of the most serious questions being raised, Gardner added, are beyond her jurisdiction.

"We aren't really the body that makes decisions about expansion of Fort Detrick," she said. "That decision was made by the federal government in the interests of national defense."

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/bal-te.md.detrick19nov19.0.1939796.story>

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

Washington Post  
November 20, 2007  
Pg. 2

## **U.S., Russia Plan Plutonium Disposal**

U.S. and Russian officials announced agreement on how to safely dispose of 34 metric tons of Russian weapons-grade plutonium, overcoming a major hurdle in a joint nuclear nonproliferation effort that at times has been close to falling apart.

The two countries, in a joint statement, outlined a plan in which Russia agrees to modify its fast-neutron reactors so that they can burn the plutonium, yet ensure that additional plutonium will not be produced.

In turn, the United States, which also will dispose of 34 tons of excess plutonium from its weapons program, will continue to help Moscow pay for construction of a plant in Russia to turn the plutonium into a mixed-oxide fuel for the reactors and research a more advanced reactor that could speed up the disposal process.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/19/AR2007111901494.html>

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

Boston Globe  
November 20, 2007

## **Ahmadinejad, Chavez Forge Alliance**

*Promise to work together to end US imperialism*

By Nasser Karimi, Associated Press

TEHRAN - Venezuela's president joined with Iran's leader yesterday in boasting that they are "united like a single fist" in challenging American influence, saying the fall of the dollar is a sign that "the US empire is coming down." Hugo Chávez also joked about the most serious issue the United States is confronting regarding Iran - nuclear weapons - during his meeting with Iranian leader Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. The visit came after a failed attempt by the duo to move the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries away from pricing its oil in dollars. OPEC's weekend summit displayed the limits of Chávez and Ahmadinejad's alliance - their proposal was overruled by other members, led by Saudi Arabia.

But it also showed their potential for stirring up problems for the US and its allies.

Making his fourth trip to Tehran in two years, Chávez has built a strong bond with Ahmadinejad that has produced a string of business agreements and a torrent of rhetoric presenting their two countries as an example of how smaller nations can stand up to the US. "Here are two brother countries, united like a single fist," Chávez said upon his arrival in Tehran, according to Venezuela's state-run Bolivarian News Agency.

"God willing, with the fall of the dollar, the deviant US imperialism will fall as soon as possible, too," Chávez said after a two-hour closed meeting with Ahmadinejad, the Iranian state news agency IRNA reported.

As the dollar weakens, oil prices have soared to \$100 a barrel. Chávez said at the OPEC meeting in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, that prices would more than double to \$200 if the US attacked Iran or Venezuela.

"The US empire is coming down," he told Venezuelan state television, calling the European Union's euro a better option and saying Latin American nations were also considering a common currency.

The leftist leader is a harsh critic of President Bush, while Iran's government is in a standoff with Washington over Tehran's nuclear program. The US accuses Iran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons, which Tehran denies, and Iran has been hit with two rounds of UN sanctions for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment.

Although it is a sensitive issue for his ally, Chávez joked about acquiring his own atomic bombs, apparently seeking to poke fun at the US accusation that Iran is using its nuclear program as a cover to develop nuclear weapons.

According to a Venezuelan state TV report, when a reporter asked about the aims of his visit, Chávez said: "As the imperialist press says, I came to look for an atomic bomb, and I've got it here. If anyone should cross me, I'll fire it." Ahmadinejad did not appear to offer any reaction to the joke when he spoke later.

Chávez has strongly supported Iran's right to have a civilian nuclear program, backing the position of Tehran that its atomic activities are intended solely for the peaceful production of electricity.

"Iran has a right to have nuclear energy for peaceful uses," Chávez said.

[http://www.boston.com/news/world/latinamerica/articles/2007/11/20/ahmadinejad\\_chvez\\_forge\\_alliance/](http://www.boston.com/news/world/latinamerica/articles/2007/11/20/ahmadinejad_chvez_forge_alliance/)

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



Washington Post

## Radiation Detectors for Border Are Delayed Again

By Robert O'Harrow Jr.

Washington Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, November 20, 2007; A01

A \$1.2 billion plan by the Department of Homeland Security to buy a new kind of radiation-detection machine for the nation's borders has been put on hold again, a blow to one of the Bush administration's top security goals.

At the same time, federal authorities are investigating whether Homeland Security officials urged an analyst to destroy information about the performance of the machines during testing, according to interviews and a document. For more than a year, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff and others have told Congress that the costly next-generation machines would sharply improve the screening of trucks, cars and cargo containers for radiological material. In announcing contracts in July 2006 to buy as many as 1,400 of the devices, Chertoff said they were ready to be deployed in the field for research. He recently called their acquisition a "vital priority."

But in the face of growing questions by government auditors, Congress and border officials about the machines' performance, Chertoff has decided that they don't operate well enough and need more work. It could be another year before they are ready, officials said.

In a statement, Laura Keehner, a Homeland Security spokeswoman, said field tests of the advanced spectroscopic portal radiation monitors, or ASPs, at several locations by Customs and Border Protection officials turned up shortcomings that "led to the determination that additional functional capability is needed to meet the operational requirements."

The turnabout is among a series of episodes that have raised questions about the management of the department's Domestic Nuclear Detection Office and its efforts to deploy the promising but highly complex and largely untried machines.

In a Nov. 16 letter to Congress, the director of the DNDO said his staff members were looking into allegations that someone there directed personnel from the National Institute of Standards and Technology, who were helping analyze recent results of testing of the machines, to delete some of the data.

"We have also issued a preservation notice to all personnel who have worked on the ASP program directing them to preserve all documents, e-mail, and memoranda relating to the ASP program," Vayl Oxford, director of the nuclear detection office, wrote to Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee, which has been examining the program.

Russ Knocke, a Homeland Security spokesman, acknowledged that the nuclear detection office had communicated with an analyst at the National Institute of Standards and Technology about the data. But, he said, "we've nearly completed our review, and there is no indication of anything inappropriate."

A senior Homeland Security official who spoke on condition of anonymity said that the e-mail communication focused on protecting sensitive or classified material, not on destroying records to hide them from scrutiny. People familiar with the inquiry said the computers were confiscated. An official at the national institute said he believed the agency had all the test data and reports.

Questions about the detection machines' performance go back more than a year. In June 2006, the nuclear detection office gave a report to Congress that said the machines were effective. Two weeks later, Chertoff announced the \$1.2 billion in contracts as part of a plan to "accelerate the research on and the deployment of a next generation radiation-detection technology." That August, Government Accountability Office auditors alleged that the nuclear detection officials had greatly exaggerated the machines' capabilities in the June report.

The GAO's allegations and other issues spurred Congress to mandate that Chertoff personally certify that the detectors, which cost \$377,000 each, are ready for full-scale deployment and would bring significant improvements in screening compared with existing machines.

Earlier this year, GAO auditors found that Homeland Security officials allowed contractors to conduct "dress rehearsals" and calibrate their machines in anticipation of tests in January and February, a move that auditors said had enhanced the outcome of tests. Those tests were being conducted in part to support Chertoff's certification. The certification was originally set to occur months ago but was delayed after the GAO presented its findings.

GAO officials testified recently that they have had trouble getting more test results from the nuclear detection officials to verify the performance of the machines.

In a statement yesterday, Dingell said the possibility that some of the data may have been destroyed was troubling.

"In the past, when records have been intentionally destroyed to thwart Congressional oversight, it led to severe consequences," he said.

Field testing of the ASPs at several border crossings has turned up problems with the machines, which often could not be operated without the assistance of the vendors. Because of the repeated delays in the project and questions from Congress, only a small portion of the \$1.2 billion has been spent.

A Homeland Security spokeswoman said the department has purchased more than 55 ASPs -- 10 that are used for testing and more than 45 that are not being used.

In July, several days after a Washington Post story about previous problems and delays with the program, Chertoff ordered an independent review of the machines before his certification. "This acquisition is a vital priority for the department," Chertoff wrote to lawmakers.

But on Oct. 19, Chertoff privately decided that he would "postpone certification and production decisions until all issues are resolved," according to a Nov. 2 letter sent to Homeland Security officials by Dingell. Homeland Security officials recently briefed Congress about the change.

Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman (I-Conn.), chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, urged the department "to work quickly to resolve its problems so we can put this technology to work."

Dingell said existing radiation detectors will help protect the country for now. In a statement, he criticized the nuclear detection office's management of the project, suggesting that "it may be time for a new team to run this program."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/11/19/AR2007111901743.html>

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