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Chicago Tribune

S. Korea report cites WMD risk from North

By Kwang-Tae Kim

Associated Press

December 30, 2006

SEOUL -- South Korea's Defense Ministry said North Korea is believed to have about 110 pounds of plutonium, enough to produce as many as seven nuclear weapons.

In its biennial defense report, released Friday, the ministry also said the North may be capable of producing biological weapons, including anthrax, and possesses as much as 5,000 tons of toxic agents.

The report described North Korea "as a serious threat, considering the serious nature of its nuclear test and threat of weapons of mass destruction," the ministry said in a statement.

North Korea stoked regional tensions in October when it conducted its first nuclear test, drawing UN sanctions and global condemnation.

Last year the Kim Jong Il regime pledged to dismantle its nuclear program in exchange for security guarantees and aid. No progress has been made in implementing the agreement because of North Korea's objections to U.S.

financial restrictions imposed on the communist country for alleged money laundering and counterfeiting.

During nuclear talks last week, North Korea continued to insist that the U.S. lift the sanctions before it would move

ahead on dismantling its nuclear program.

The report said North Korea has the capability to launch a surprise attack on South Korea without repositioning its troops because about 70 percent of them are south of the capital, Pyongyang.

North Korea "is consistently preparing for war for a long period and is likely to keep this military policy in the future," the report said.

North Korea often accuses South Korea of conspiring with the U.S. to attack it, an accusation denied by Washington.

South Korea is trying to strengthen its defense capability as it prepares to regain wartime operational control of its forces, which have been under the command of U.S.-led United Nations forces since the 1950-53 Korean War. Seoul regained peacetime control of its troops in 1994, but the United States is still supposed to control those forces if a war breaks out. In October, South Korea and the U.S. agreed that Seoul would retake control of its troops sometime between 2009 and 2012.

South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun, who has pursued a foreign policy that is less dependent on Washington, called for the transfer of command, saying the move is long overdue.

About 29,500 U.S. troops are stationed in South Korea as a deterrent against the North. The presence of the troops is a legacy of the Korean War, which ended in a cease-fire rather than a peace treaty.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0612300037dec30.1,4874880.story>

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U.S. News & World Report

December 31, 2006

Closing the Door at the Ports

A flurry of money, research, and law aims to close a gap in the U.S. security net

By Angie C. Marek

Posted Sunday, December 31, 2006

ELIZABETH, N.J.—It didn't take too long after September 11 for Chief Kevin McCabe, the official overseeing screening in the sprawling Port of New York/New Jersey complex here, to realize that his job was about to become *a lot* more stressful. Within months, he was handed an intelligence tip that a container on the way to the port held a so-called dirty bomb made with radioactive material. On the day it arrived, McCabe's team isolated it from 8,000 other container boxes, fed it through a radiation detection machine and an X-ray imager, and then punched holes in its roof to sample the air inside. "It was full of colorful Arabian carpets," McCabe says today, "and that was it." Still, he says officials were "only minutes away" from shutting down the massive port complex.

McCabe's job isn't getting any easier. Nothing's happened yet, but many security analysts believe the smuggling of a nuclear weapon into the United States through a seaport is a very real possibility. The country's 361 commercial ports, meanwhile, have gotten so little funding in the past five years that experts routinely call them the "soft underbelly" of America. In recent months, a flare-up of public indignation over foreign ownership of U.S. port terminals has sparked some major improvements, but further progress is by no means assured, and a host of vulnerabilities remain. With 95 percent of America's imports arriving by sea, there's a lot at stake. "Bomb a seaport," says Joe Curto, an executive vice president of the Maher Terminals here, "and you'll feel it in Iowa supermarkets two days later."

Searching. By any measure, the security challenge is daunting. About 11 million containers arrive by sea each year; U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials closely inspect fewer than 10 percent of them. There have been improvements, though. Prior to 9/11, McCabe says, "every single port was on its own" trying to decide which containers to scrutinize most thoroughly. Customs has since created an automated targeting program that checks the manifests of shipments headed to the United States for anomalies that tag them as "high risk." The Department of Homeland Security has also scooped up 305 radiation monitors once used to detect contaminated scrap metal; today they scan about 83 percent of cargo after it arrives. On a recent morning in Elizabeth, trucks loaded with fresh containers waited in line to exit Maher Terminals. "The only way to drive out," Curto says, "is through those [machines]."

But "we're still pretty far from where we need to be," says Stephen Flynn, a port security expert with the Council on Foreign Relations. One reason: Major security initiatives are still in their infancy. A trusted-shipper program—in which companies boost security in exchange for less customs scrutiny—runs basically on the honor system.

Overworked customs inspectors haven't visited about a third of the companies enjoying benefits, and Flynn says many inspectors "aren't exactly experts" in securing the dense network of factories, distribution centers, and couriers that can handle shipments. Staffing crunches have also undermined a separate program that places U.S. Customs

officials in 48 foreign ports like Shanghai. A 2005 government study found that 28 percent of containers deemed risky enough for foreign inspections weren't even touched.

But there's been a surge of activity on the port security front since February, when public anxiety was stoked by a proposed \$6.8 billion business deal that would have given a firm run by the government of the United Arab Emirates leases to operate terminals in six U.S. ports. The company later agreed to sell the U.S. assets, and American International Group said recently that it had reached a deal to buy them. But the controversy "breathed new life into port security ideas that had seemed dead as a doornail" for months, says a Capitol Hill staffer.

Reform. In September, Congress passed the SAFE Ports Act, which mandates that DHS provide the 22 largest U.S. seaports with enough radiation detectors to scan all containers by 2008. The bill also eases the customs staffing crunch by using contractors to review trusted shippers. "We're also finally giving the ports the money they so desperately need," says Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, a lead SAFE Ports author. The bill requires DHS to hand out \$400 million in port grants in each of the next five fiscal years. Seaports have gotten about \$800 million *total* since 9/11 despite U.S. Coast Guard estimates that \$5.4 billion is needed just for basics like security cameras and protective fencing.

Most experts cite SAFE Ports as the most substantial piece of maritime legislation in years. But a new Congress will have its own ideas. Incoming House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has boasted that she has "even tougher proposals" than the 9/11 commission on port security and plans to push a measure early next year to "screen 100 percent of [maritime] containers long before they reach U.S. shores." Critics say such plans could cost billions. And since current scanning protocols, requiring both radiation and X-ray screening, can take up to 20 minutes per container, pursuing the initiative now could "create massive backlogs," Collins says. The SAFE Ports Act takes a different approach: It requires DHS to try 100 percent inspection in at least three foreign ports next year to learn more. DHS Chief Michael Chertoff said last month that he would launch trial runs in six countries, including Pakistan and Oman. The earliest tests begin in February.

Another issue that could resurface in the new Congress: what to do about America's 750,000 workers who require access to secured areas of U.S. ports. South Carolina Sen. Jim DeMint pushed this fall to have SAFE Ports ban a wide array of felons-including those guilty of rape, kidnapping, and robbery-from working in U.S. ports for seven years after their convictions. The final bill bars only those convicted of treason, espionage, sedition, or acts of terrorism. DeMint says that leaves open the possibility of bribery and smuggling "in a place with a lot of money flowing around, like seaports." A DHS study of New York and New Jersey suggested nearly half of the 9,000 truckers with access to the ports may have criminal records. So implementation of DeMint's proposed standard, almost identical to requirements for aviation screeners, "could be chaos for us," says Curto.

DHS is also running into major snags on an effort to install \$1.15 billion worth of more modern, reliable radiation monitors at U.S. ports by 2011. Chertoff said this summer that DHS had "begun to order the first 80" machines and looked forward to "starting to deploy" equipment this autumn. *U.S. News* has learned, however, that while the machines are out in the field, they've yet to be turned on.

Many say DHS has been slowed by critical reports from the Government Accountability Office. Auditors blasted DHS in October for not including the results of some 7,000 tests on the new monitors in a cost-benefit analysis sent to Congress justifying their purchase. Several tests, according to GAO, found that the most reliable model of the machines now being deployed could detect disguised, highly enriched uranium only 53 percent of the time.

Still, Vayl Oxford, DHS nuclear detection czar, stands by his work. "We tested [monitors] against some scenarios where we didn't *expect* them to find anything," he says. The department has obligated only \$50 million of the \$1.15 billion contract so far, and what Oxford calls "more definitive testing"-in concert with tweaking the machines-will be performed in the next few months. "We're on track," he says. "And I think this country will be a lot better off."

They certainly hope so in the Port Newark portion of the complex. On a recent afternoon there, it was clear why new machines, which are supposed to be able to distinguish between harmful and innocuous radiation, are so desperately needed. In a single hour, a row of 10 current-generation monitors was tripped by two shipments of granite from Italy, another one from India, and traces of radiation left over in one trucker's bloodstream from a heart stress test he took two weeks before. The newer machines are expected to save U.S. Customs 2.2 million work-hours each year by eliminating secondary inspections that must be done with unreliable hand-held nuclear detectors. Still, "I'm confident if a radiological device got in this place," McCabe says, "we'd find it." That's a lot of confidence for a man on the hot seat.

<http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/061231/8port.htm>

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West Tries a New Tack to Block Iran's Nuclear Agenda

By HELENE COOPER and STEVEN R. WEISMAN

Published: January 2, 2007

WASHINGTON, Jan. 1 — The United States and its allies in Europe, in a tacit acknowledgment that sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council in late December are too weak to force [Iran](#) to abandon its nuclear ambitions, have embarked on a new strategy to increase the financial and psychological pressure.

The plan is to use the language of the resolution to help persuade foreign governments and financial institutions to cut ties with Iranian businesses, individuals in its nuclear and missile programs and, by extension, the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps, said Stuart Levey, under secretary of the treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence.

The Guard and its military wing are identified as a power base for President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#).

Under his administration, American officials said, the Guard has moved increasingly into commercial operations, earning profits and extending its influence in Iran in areas involving big government contracts — including building airports and other infrastructure, oil production and the providing of cellphones.

Bush administration officials, who asked not to be identified because they were discussing diplomatic plans, said envoys would soon head abroad to press officials of foreign governments and banks to interpret the Security Council resolution equally aggressively.

The new strategy builds on the Treasury Department's efforts over the past few months to get Western banks to scale back business with Iran or risk running afoul of American laws. In 2006, the European banks Credit Suisse First Boston and UBS said they would not do any new business with Iran.

It is hard to assess how deeply the financial actions may cut, since the most willing parties to the effort — the United States and Europe — have few business dealings with Iran. The United States does have laws that give it considerable leeway to impose financial restrictions on banks and companies doing business in Iran, while European law does not.

That said, Britain is also backing the new push, as is France, although to a lesser extent. Germany, with far more business interests in Iran, is not quite as eager. Japan is not a member of the Security Council, and the country is heavily dependent on the Persian Gulf for oil. But Japanese government officials have recently indicated their willingness to limit some of their business dealings with Iran.

Last month, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation announced that it would not issue any new loans for Iranian projects until Iran resolved the nuclear impasse with the West. In addition, Japan has reduced its stake in an initial \$2 billion deal to develop Iran's largest onshore oil field at Azadegan to 10 percent from the originally agreed 75 percent, citing concern about Iran's nuclear program.

While United States officials have discussed what they are trying to do with their Russian and Chinese counterparts, the belief is that they have gone about as far as they are willing to go with the Security Council resolution that passed Dec. 23. Russia fought to keep certain entities off the list and to keep the list as narrow as possible.

Mr. Levey noted that the resolution cited three people as off limits to outside commercial transactions, and, in another section, prohibited transactions with agencies "owned or controlled" by them. The three, he said, are Maj. Gen. Yahya Rahim Safavi, commander of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps; Gen. Hosein Salimi, who is in charge of the air force branch of the corps; and Ahmad Vahid Dastjerdi, who runs the Aerospace Industries Organization.

Thus, an effort to bar future foreign commercial or government involvement, including bank transactions, affecting missile programs and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard is authorized by the resolution, Mr. Levey said.

"This resolution will be a big step forward in getting governments and financial institutions to pay more attention to Iran's use of deceptive financial practices to facilitate its dangerous conduct and to stop doing business with the I.R.G.C.," Mr. Levey said, referring to the Revolutionary Guard.

The resolution says that "all states" will "take the necessary measures" to bar "financial assistance" and "financial resources or services" related to nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The resolution's appendix cites several government and private groups and 12 people as involved in those programs; interrupting foreign involvement with those groups and individuals is also part of the new campaign.

But American officials have no figures on the value of international business done with those cited in the resolution. The United States and European officials said they had also begun trying maneuvers aimed at undermining the self-assurance of Iranian officials, especially those who travel abroad.

The recent arrests of four Iranian diplomats by American troops in Iraq, the officials said, played into that strategy. Pentagon officials said the Iranians were suspected of transferring improvised explosive devices from Iran to Iraq. Iran complained loudly that the men were diplomats and that their arrest violated accepted diplomatic rules. The diplomats, two of whom American officials said were probably members of the Revolutionary Guard, were eventually released.

But their arrests are “precisely the type of thing that will chip away at their confidence,” one European official said. Most of the Western officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the issue.

Even before the new effort began, the slowdown in international business was already emerging as a problem for Iran, which has vast oil fields but relatively little refining capacity. It imports 43 percent of its gasoline, according to the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, a Washington-based nonprofit group that follows energy issues. In a rare acknowledgment of difficulty, the Iranian oil minister, Kazem Vaziri-Hamaneh, told the ministry’s news agency, Shana, recently that Iran was encountering obstacles in financing oil projects. “Currently, overseas banks and financiers have decreased their cooperation,” Mr. Vaziri-Hamaneh told the agency. Iran is already seeking to secure gasoline imports from its allies, including Venezuela, and shifting some dependency from gasoline to natural gas.

“Definitely, the Iranian economy is suffering a great deal as a result of the economic punishment,” said Gal Luft, the executive director of the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security. But he added that Mr. Ahmadinejad “is not just sitting on his hands and waiting.”

The new strategy comes in part because few believe that the sanctions resolution that passed Dec. 23 has the muscle to sway Iran to abandon its nuclear ambitions, which it insists are focused on energy production, not weapons. The road to sanctions was a tortuous one, filled with wrangling between the United States, which pushed for tough measures, and Russia, which advocated weaker measures.

United States and European officials said they might still try to include tougher sanctions through the United Nations in the months ahead. But they say the West will need to use other measures as well.

Specifically, the United States will press France, Germany, Italy and other European countries to halt credits that encourage doing business in Iran. The German Ministry of Economics, in a credit program called Hermes, says on a Web site that Iran is among “risky markets, which are also growth markets,” identified for such credits.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/02/world/middleeast/02sanctions.html>

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Boston Globe
January 2, 2007
Pg. 1

US Unit Works Quietly To Counter Iran's Sway

Backs dissidents, nearby nations

By Farah Stockman, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON -- For nearly a year, a select group of US officials has been quietly coordinating actions to counter the looming threat of a nuclear-armed Iran, including increasing the military capabilities of Arab allies such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain.

The group, known as the Iran Syria Policy and Operations Group, or ISOG, is also coordinating a host of other actions, which include covert assistance to Iranian dissidents and building international outrage toward Iran by publicizing its alleged role in a 1994 terrorist attack in Argentina, according to interviews with half a dozen White House, Pentagon, and State Department officials who are involved in the group's work.

Pentagon officials involved with the group intend to ask Congress as early as February to increase funding for transfers of military hardware to allies in the Persian Gulf and to accelerate plans for joint military activities. The request, which is still being formulated, is expected to include but not be limited to more advanced-missile defense systems and early-warning radar to detect and prevent Iranian missile strikes.

"There is the perception in the Gulf that Iran is really on the rise," said Emile El-Hokayem, research fellow at the Stimpson Center, a Washington-based think tank. "Washington wants to prepare for a potential show down."

The existence of ISOG reflects an intensification of the Bush administration's planning on Iran. Syria, which has linked itself to Iran through military pacts, is a lesser focus for the group. Its workings have been so secretive that several officials in the State Department's Near Eastern Affairs bureau said they were unaware it existed.

The United States has repeatedly said its policy is not to overthrow the Iranian regime, but one former US official who attended a meeting during ISOG's initial phase eight months ago said in an interview that he got the impression that regime change was a key goal of many of the meetings' participants.

He said that some of the intelligence reports ordered by members of the group were so highly classified that they were accessible to less than a dozen people in the US government, suggesting that some of the group's activities were far from routine.

But interviews with half a dozen current White House, Pentagon, and State Department officials indicated that ISOG's aims are more modest. Several said that as much as they would like to see the regimes in Tehran and

Damascus go, ongoing military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan have limited their range of options. The main goal now, they said, is Cold War style "containment" of Iran in the hopes that Iranians one day will opt to change their own government.

The officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the topic to the press, described ISOG as an inter agency clearinghouse for ideas and strategies to roll back the influence of Iran. Senior officials of the State Department, White House, CIA, Treasury Department, and other agencies meet weekly to report their day-to-day operations.

"It's really more operational, to provide a forum for ongoing interagency group discussions on Iran and Syria, share ideas, and follow things up week after week," said Kate Starr, a National Security Council spokeswoman.

ISOG's work, which focuses on isolating and containing Iran, is consistent with the administration's refusal to reach out diplomatically to Iran and Syria, as the Iraq Study Group has recommended.

"Iran is the key to everything at the strategic level -- the biggest problem we have faced in a long time," said a senior State Department official involved in ISOG, citing Iran's negative impact on Lebanon, Israel, Iraq, Afghanistan, Israel, and the Palestinian territories. "These are all things they are doing because they sense weakness [on the part of the United States]. The best thing for us to project is strength, not 'please talk to us.' "

ISOG was modeled after the Iraq Policy and Operations Group, set up in 2004 to shepherd information and coordinate US action in Iraq. ISOG has raised eyebrows within the State Department for hiring BearingPoint -- the same Washington-based private contracting firm used by the Iraq group -- to handle its administrative work, rather than State Department employees.

Some lower level State Department officials saw the decision to outsource responsibility for scheduling meetings, record keeping, and distributing reports as an effort to circumvent the normal diplomatic machinery and provide extra secrecy for the group.

But State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said BearingPoint was hired for its experience and good work on Iraq. He said that about a dozen BearingPoint contractors work out of the Iraq Policy and Operations Group office on the sixth floor of the State Department, and that a few of them have begun working on the Iran and Syria group.

ISOG is led by a steering committee with two leading hawks on Middle East policy as chairmen: James F. Jeffrey, principal deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, who once headed Iraq policy, and Elliott Abrams, deputy national security adviser for "Global Democracy Strategy." Michael Doran, a Middle East specialist at the White House, steps in when Abrams is away. Elizabeth Cheney, the vice president's daughter, who was the former deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, served as cochairwoman before she took a maternity leave earlier this year.

ISOG is made of five main "pillars," or working groups. The military group explores ways to bolster Arab defenses and create more military cooperation between the Persian Gulf states. The initiative was set into motion in May, when John Hillen, assistant secretary of state for political and military affairs, traveled to the region on his first of a series of trips to the Gulf.

In October, Hillen and Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter W. Rodman, along with National Security Council staff and others, traveled to Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain to discuss ways to beef up the military capabilities of those countries.

US officials also conducted the first naval training exercises in the Persian Gulf designed to intercept weapons shipments to and from Iran, with participation from Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

A second working group deals with "democracy outreach," focusing on the State Department's effort to provide secret financial assistance to dissidents and reformist organizations inside Iran and Syria. It also seeks ways to use scientific exchanges and human rights conferences to learn more about what is happening inside Iran, officials said.

US financing of pro democracy activities in Iran is expected to double in 2008, according to the senior State Department official. In 2006, \$85 million was allocated for such programs.

A third working group focuses on finances and the Treasury Department's efforts to beef up bilateral restrictions on money transfers to and from Iranian banks. A fourth group focuses on Iran's "special relationships" with Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and terrorist organizations. That group has closely followed Iran's alleged role in a 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Argentina.

A fifth working group coordinates media outreach to the people of Iran, Syria, and the region.

http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/01/02/us_unit_works_quietly_to_counter_irans_sway/

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N. Korea escalates 'cult of Kim' to counter West's influence

In a time of famine and poverty, nearly 40 percent of the country's budget is spent on Kim-family deification.

By Robert Marquand | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

North Koreans are taught to worship Kim Jong Il as a god. In a manner unique among nations, the North exerts extraordinary control through deification - a cult ideology of complete subservience - that goes beyond the "Stalinist" label often used to describe the newly nuclear North.

While outsiders can see film clips of huge festivals honoring Mr. Kim, the extraordinary degree of cult worship is not well known, nor that programs promoting the ideology of Kim are growing, according to refugees, diplomats, and others who have visited the Hermit Kingdom.

In fact, in a time of famine and poverty, government spending on Kim-family deification - now nearly 40 percent of the visible budget - is the only category in the North's budget to increase, according to a new white paper by the Korea Institute for International Economic Policy in Seoul. It is rising even as defense, welfare, and bureaucracy spending has decreased. The increase pays for ideology schools, some 30,000 Kim monuments, gymnastic festivals, films and books, billboards and murals, 40,000 "research institutes," historical sites, rock carvings, circus theaters, training programs, and other worship events.

In 1990, ideology was 19 percent of North Korea's budget; by 2004 it doubled to at least 38.5 percent of state spending, according to the white paper. This extra financing may come from recent budget offsets caused by the shutting down of older state funding categories, says Alexander Mansourov of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu.

It has long been axiomatic that the main danger to the Kim regime is internal unrest. That is, Koreans will discover the freedoms, glitter, and diversity of the modern outside world, and stop believing the story of idolatry they are awash in. "It isn't quite realized [in the West] how much a threat the penetration of ideas means. They [Kim's regime] see it as a social problem that could bring down the state," says Brian Myers, a North Korean expert at Dongseo University in Busan, South Korea.

Since the poverty and famine of the late 1990s, everything from CDs and videos, South Korean radio, and cellphone signals from China, new styles and products, and new commercial habits have seeped in, mostly across the Chinese border, in a way that might be called "soft globalization." Such flows feed a new underground system of private business, information, bribery, and trade that exists outside the strict party-state discipline and rules.

Yet rather than accept such penetration as an inexorable threat, Kim is putting up a serious fight to slow and counter it - by increasing his program of cult-worship.

Kim Worship 2.0

Like a computer software firm updating program versions, the North is steadily updating its ideology to make it relevant. This practice of mass control by in-your-face ideology has been laughed off in much of the world, including China. But North Korea is increasing its ideological cult worship. The scope of the current project outdoes even the cult of personality during Mao's Cultural Revolution, according to a 2005 doctoral dissertation by Lee Jong Heon at Chung-Ang University in Seoul. Mr. Lee visited North Korea several times for his research.

After the Oct. 9 nuclear test, for example, banners sprang up over North Korea stating "We are a country with a nuclear deterrent." Kim's test feeds a national pride that is part of the propaganda drilled into Koreans from birth: that Kim alone can fend off the US and Japanese enemies. A US diplomat in Asia says such pride may prohibit Kim from giving up his nuclear program in the current "six party talks" - and those talks stalled again in late December in Beijing.

"The cult of personality campaign is more extensive today than in 1985," says former South Korean foreign minister Han Sung Joo, who visited Pyongyang this past October, and in 1985. "Unlike the Stalin and Mao personality cults, there is a deification and a religious emotional element in the North. The twinned photos of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il are everywhere. Every speech says Kim Il Sung is still alive. I think if I stayed another two weeks, I might even see Kim Il Sung. The country worships someone who is deceased, as if he is alive."

Kim Jong Il has upgraded his deification strategies to strengthen the family cult system. Western reports often detail Korea's unique "juche ideology" - a theology of Kim worship, repeated hourly and daily, reminding Koreans they are insolubly bound to the Kim family and must erase foreign influence from their minds.

Yet *juche* is a subcategory of a far more encompassing umbrella of deification known as *woo sang hwa*, or idol worship. In North Korea, *woo sang hwa* contains all the aspects of cult worship. Kim broke away from orthodox communism, for example, in a program called "our style socialism." While Marxism-Leninism demands fealty to "nation," "party," and "serving the people" - Kim's "our style [Korean] socialism" does no such thing. It makes "family loyalty," with Kim at the head, the supreme good - a major deflection from communism.

During the late 1990s famine, a "Red Banner" campaign for unconditional loyalty and harder toil began. Then came "Kangsong Taeguk" in the late 1990s - a project to push economic and military ideology. This project culminated in

the 1998 Taepodong-1 rocket launches, which thrilled North Koreans, frightened Japan, and started a whole new military mindset in Tokyo.

The North uses "ideology rather than physical control," Lee says, whenever possible. The current variation of the program is called "military first." It is intended to bolster North Korea's nuclear efforts. Military First started as a campaign to support *juche*, and as a slogan designed to remind Koreans that the nation is at war. It came packaged with a rallying cry called "dare to die," say refugees and Kim experts. (There's a dare-to-die pop song, and a dare-to-die movie. Recent internal memos brought by defectors indicate "dare to die" is urged on local officials due to a feeling in Pyongyang that young people aren't showing enough zeal to make such a dare.)

A new military focus

Yet Military First may now be a tool for evolving a significant structural change - a new ruling elite in day-to-day affairs. For years, the North Korean state was ruled by the workers' party. Under Kim Il Sung the party was the driving force in Korea - the main route to achievement and pay. Everyone wanted to join. (Party members in China and Vietnam are 5 percent of the population; a 1998 Korean Central report put Korea's membership at 5 million, or 22 percent, though it may be lower.)

"The outcome of the Military First policy replaces the workers as a main force," says Haiksoon Paik, a North Korean specialist at the Sejong Institute outside Seoul. "North Korea's party has not been functioning as well as it is supposed to ... several positions in the Politburo have not been reappointed. Kim is not depending on the party, but a smaller more streamlined military apparatus. This is due to his politics as a result of the nuclear crisis brought by the Americans."

"Military First is not aimed at building up the military, which is already quite built up and strong," says Lee, whose dissertation is titled, "A Political Economic Analysis of the North Korean Regime." "It is about replacing the old party - First Rice - structure of senior Kim. If the party is unwieldy, the military will control the people on behalf of the leader."

Tellingly, on New Year's Day, Kim Jong Il visited the shrine where his father was interred. He has gone there only four times since he came to power in 1995. Each visit has taken place in a year following major accomplishments. According to South Korean media, for the first time, Kim visited the shrine without party or government officials. This time, only key military officials were in attendance. On Tuesday, North Korean papers heralded the visit, and the Oct. 9 nuclear tests as "an auspicious event in the national history."

Kim-worship in the North is a vivid - and inescapable - spectacle to behold, say visitors. Thousands of giant "towers of eternity" to Kim scatter the landscape. Special "Kimjongilia" crimson begonias are tended in family gardens. Kim's media calls him variously the "Guardian Deity of the Planet," and "Lodestar of the 21st Century." In 2002, Korean mass dances known as Arirang, featured 100,000 flag wavers (and was described in state media as the "greatest event of humankind.") Many loyal Koreans bow twice daily to Kim pictures that sit alone on the most prominent wall of their homes.

Perhaps the most misunderstood aspect of the Korean cult project is its recent veering toward race and ethnic solidarity, say Kim watchers. His main appeal to his people today, a push that rarely gets attention outside the North, is to the racial superiority of a people whose isolation and stubborn xenophobia supposedly makes their bloodlines purer. Mr. Myers notes that festivals of 100,000 flag wavers is not a Stalinist exercise, but a celebration of "ethnic homogeneity." Since the 1990s Kim has more fervently claimed lineage to the first ancient rulers of Korea, a move intended to place him in a position of historical, if not divine, destiny as leader of the peninsula.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0103/p01s04-woap.html>

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Christian Science Monitor
January 4, 2007

How Kim Jong Il controls a nation

By Robert Marquand | Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor
SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

As Kim Jong Il continues to elude efforts to constrain his nuclear program, a grudging regard for the North Korean leader's tactical skills is rising.

Mr. Kim was once thought to be over his head as a leader. But 12 years after the death of his father, Kim Il Sung, the son is showing brilliance as a dictator. Some experts say that Kim, in his own way, may be shrewder than the father who built the nation.

"Kim was in many ways dealt a weaker hand than his father, but he has played it better," says Brian Myers, a North Korea specialist at Dongseo University in Busan, South Korea.

Certainly, Kim has become a skillful player on the world stage. He retains firm hold of the most totalitarian state on earth. His nation has survived an epic famine. Kim has astutely nullified a dawning realization among his people that the world beyond North Korea's borders is a better place. He's even created a new image for himself at home - not as a towering patriarch - but as a figure of sympathy, a beleaguered, America-taunted leader who eats soldier's gruel and deserves care by the masses. He's played a smart propaganda game in South Korea, where some elites admire him as a nationalist torchbearer for "true Korean-ness," and for outwitting the great powers.

Now, Kim has tested a nuclear weapon - the eighth nation to publicly do so - and has developed a ballistic missile program.

"Why shouldn't Kim be seen as extraordinary?" asks Alexander Mansourov of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu. "He's poked his finger in the eye of the US hegemon. He's tested missiles and nukes. At home he's more popular than ever."

Abroad, Kim is seen as enigmatic, reclusive - part fox, part oddball. He's reported to hold all-night parties that serve as loyalty tests. He chain-smokes, loves Ferraris, goes gaga over gourmet food, has 30 homes, wears 12-centimeter high (4.7 inch) platform shoes, kidnaps the occasional South Korean actress, and is crazy about karaoke, James Bond films, and the Internet.

Yet that image, though partly true, is itself propaganda, say former Pyongyang diplomats, high-level defectors, and Korea experts. They say the real Kim is a bit unsure, frightened of China and the US, and may suffer from a learning disability. Kim's sister-in-law told a diplomat that Kim is "often timid." His father may not have offered him much respect.

Not a TV personality

Bradley Martin, author of "Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty," says Kim may suffer from stage fright. Surprisingly for a state leader, especially a "godhead," Kim's voice has been heard only once by the nation, for a total of nine words. "Glory to the heroic soldiers of the People's Army," he said in 1992 at an obscure rally at a military base. Invitations to one state reception noted that one may speak to Kim, but that Kim would "not speak in reply," a Eastern European diplomat remembers. Kim has never appeared live on TV. Even in the period of mourning after the death of his father, the "Great Leader" - when posters stated mystically that "Kim Jong Il is now Kim Il Sung" - there was no fireside chat by Kim junior to his people.

Yet Kim reportedly micromanages the entire country. His state is a hermetically sealed cult that allows no debate; even top generals and their extended families undergo loyalty tests. A half-dozen concentration camps hold 200,000 inmates, a dozen intelligence units spy on the people and each other. North Korea has the world's fifth-largest army. "Everything goes up to Kim, and everything comes down from him. There isn't a whole lot of lateral motion in the North," says Stephen Bradner, a civilian expert in Seoul and longtime adviser to the US military. "We often ask the wrong question. The question is not what North Korea needs, but what Kim Jong Il wants."

"I used to think Kim was irrational and unrealistic," says Lee Jong Heon, who has just published a structural analysis of the North at Chung-Ang University in Seoul. "But when you study his moves, he has kept a grip on the people, and he now heads one of eight nuclear nations. He's been highly rational from his standpoint."

But a busy populist

One side of Kim only now emerging is how closely he stays in touch with the people. The Dear Leader is on the road, working the crowds, a great deal. Studies of Korean media show Kim averages about 150 local visits a year. He may not make live televised speeches, but he's at a school, a factory, a farm, a military base - every three days. (He shows up at a military unit once a week.) This suggests a populist streak.

"When someone you worship comes to your factory, it's a personal connection. We tend to overlook this simple fact," says Mr. Mansourov, who has tracked Kim's appearances. "Kim knows the local leaders, the opinion makers, the local cadres. He's not in a fishbowl. He may be a dictator, but he's also a populist."

Kim also appears today to be intensifying his ethnic nationalist message: Korea is different, special, unique, pure - and must remain so. The message has more affinity with Imperial-era race-based fascism in Japan, than to the Stalinism he's often depicted as emulating, argues Mr. Myers.

"The North may not have plasma TVs and shiny cars, but it has people with character and virtue, that's Kim's message," says Myers. "South Korea is physically and spiritually polluted, misogynistic, occupied by the US, [has been] sold down the river, [and] lets its young people grow soft. The real Korean spirit is being held in trust in the North - that message appeals."

There's another fact often overlooked, say North watchers: Kim is getting older. There may be a new urgency to resolve the nuclear question, to seal his dynasty.

Kim was born "Uri" or George, in Khabarovsk lower Siberia in 1942 or '43 (the date is disputed), in a medicine supply house of the Soviet 88th Reconnaissance Brigade, according to South Korean scholar Suh Dae Sook. Kim Il Sung's guerrilla brigade had been bloodied in Manchuria by the Japanese, and he escaped to Russia with his wife. Young Kim was cared for by Korean and Russian servants. This early mix of foreign contact continued later in

Pyongyang, so Kim never entirely imbibed Korean habits, where "sameness" is prized. He was early an individualist - adopting different hair-styles, dress, shoes, and behavior.

That "difference" has helped set Kim apart. Now he has nuclear capability. Yet the depths of Kim's pride, how he views his place in history, or how he would react in a threatening crisis, is not clear. In the former Soviet Union and China, and presumably in India and Pakistan, nuclear weapons are held by "mediating structures" of party and military decisionmaking committees. But Kim alone controls the dreaded button in the North.

It is unknown if Kim might ever find it "rational" to use his weapons, say experts. For example, might Kim behave like a jilted husband or postal worker who shoots his family or co-workers, then turns the gun on himself? Mostly, it is felt that Kim wants to avoid the fate that befell dictators such as Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania, who was overthrown and killed.

"If we aren't careful, Kim could see using his weapons as rational," argues Mr. Lee.

Army lore in North Korea, in fact, has Kim telling his generals that if "we are ever losing in a war, I will destroy the world if I can. I will not go down quietly," Mr. Martin points out.

Opportunities lost?

Despite Kim's adroit nuclear card playing, Asia watchers say any appraisal must weighed against what Kim might have done with his rule. Fifteen years ago, as the Soviet Union was collapsing, there was genuine hope in Asia that Kim might be a new kind of leader. He might open up the economy, tone down the cult worship, act more like former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. Kim could have created special economic zones as China did. Yet Kim has systematically quashed his own reforms, including those of a brilliant technocrat, Kim Dal Hyon, former deputy prime minister of the economy who experimented with the free market in the Tumen River project.

In one sense, Kim is prisoner to his own fantastic ideology of isolation. To allow outside influences into the regime could snap the spell of his own Oz-like deification, experts say.

"North Korea actually has everything," says Krzysztof Darewicz, a Polish journalist based in Pyongyang during the 1990s. "There's a wealth of valuable minerals, uranium and gold. It is smack-dab in the crossroads of Asia's current economic rise; trade and wealth surround the North. But what has it become? Nothing.

"Kim inherited a nuclear card with no idea what to do next," he adds.

"Kim is one hell of a tactician, but what is his strategy and where will it lead?" asks Martin. "What about his people?"

Kim Facts

North Korea's "Dear Leader" Kim Jong Il ...

- Was born in Siberia in 1942 or 43.
- Is 5-foot, 3-inches tall and wears 12-centimeter (4.7 inch) high platform shoes.
- Has only been heard by North Koreans once, in 1992, in a national broadcast. He said: "Glory to the heroic soldiers of the People's Army."
- Has never appeared speaking live on TV in North Korea.
- Has the world's fifth-largest army.
- Gives his top generals loyalty tests.
- Averages about 150 visits per year to schools, military bases, factories.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0104/p01s03-woap.html>

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New York Times

January 4, 2007

Iran's President Promises More Nuclear Fuel And A Celebration

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Jan. 3 — President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad warned Wednesday that Iran would not back down from its nuclear ambitions and said his country would soon start producing nuclear fuel on an industrial scale.

"Iran has the fuel cycle, and very soon we will push the button on nuclear fuel production for industrial uses," Mr. Ahmadinejad said in a speech in the southern city of Ghotvand in Khuzestan Province, according to the ISNA news agency.

The United Nations Security Council passed a resolution late last month banning the trade of goods and technology that could benefit Iran's uranium enrichment, reprocessing and ballistic missile systems. Enriched uranium can be used for making nuclear weapons or as fuel for nuclear plants.

The resolution gave Iran a two-month deadline to suspend its enrichment program, but Iran says that it has the right to enrich uranium as a member of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

"The Iranian people will not retreat one iota from their rights," Mr. Ahmadinejad vowed Wednesday, adding that Iran would celebrate its nuclear achievements in February, on the 28th anniversary of the victory of the Iranian revolution of 1979.

"The Iranian people have made their decision to continue this path wisely and will not pay attention to empty cries of the materialists and the bullying of the decadent powers," he said.

Other senior officials have also warned that Iran would not surrender in the face of pressure.

Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, an influential cleric and head of the Expediency Council, warned last week that pressing Iran could have consequences.

"This is a very dangerous resolution," he said during Friday Prayer at Tehran University. "They are creating problems for themselves and the region," he said, adding that "many will suffer from the smoke of this fire."

One former nuclear negotiator for Iran, Hossein Moussavian, warned the nation's current negotiators on Wednesday that ignoring the resolution and calling it illegal would not help. He said the resolution could have severe consequences for Iran, ISNA reported. "We can say inside the country that this resolution is illegal, but we have to have a correct understanding of the international community's considerations," he was quoted as saying.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/04/world/middleeast/04iran.html>

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Boston Globe

January 5, 2007

Report: US Sees Signs Of Nuclear Test

North Korea appears to have made preparations for another nuclear test, ABC News reported last night, citing US defense officials. "We think they've put everything in place to conduct a test without any notice or warning," ABC quoted a senior US defense official as saying. The official cautioned that the intelligence is inconclusive on whether North Korea will go ahead with another test, but said the preparations are similar to steps taken by Pyongyang before it conducted its first nuclear test on Oct. 9.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2007/01/05/report_us_sees_signs_of_nuclear_test/

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Washington Post

January 5, 2007

Pg. 7

After Breaches, Head Of U.S. Nuclear Program Is Ousted

By Steven Mufson, Washington Post Staff Writer

Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman has fired the head of the nation's nuclear weapons program, Linton F. Brooks, because of security breaches last year at weapons facilities, including Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Declaring that it was "time for new leadership," Bodman said in a written statement yesterday that he had asked Brooks to leave his post as administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration by the end of the month.

The dismissal comes after embarrassing security lapses, including the Oct. 17 discovery of drug paraphernalia and computer flash drives containing highly classified information in the trailer home of a contractor. The items were found by Los Alamos County, N.M., police officers responding to a domestic dispute call.

That led to a harshly critical report in late November by the Energy Department's inspector general, Gregory H. Friedman, who said that security procedures in key areas at Los Alamos were "nonexistent, applied inconsistently, or not followed."

While Bodman refused to elaborate on his statement, the removal of Brooks also comes as Democrats, determined to hold oversight hearings on the nuclear laboratories' security problems, take control of Congress.

Rep. Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said in a written statement yesterday he was "afraid that it will take more than a new boss to fix the problems, which are far more systemic and pervasive in nature." He added that "the new Democratic Congress will exercise the oversight responsibility . . . to get to the bottom of the dysfunctional nuclear weapons complex's problems."

Brooks, the top nuclear security official since mid-2002, is not an expert on computer security. But he has spent four decades working on national security issues, starting as an officer in the Navy and later dealing with nuclear weapons issues at the Pentagon, National Security Council, Navy, State Department and Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in three Republican administrations.

Brooks said in a statement yesterday, "This is not a decision that I would have preferred, but it was made by a thoughtful and honorable man and is based on the principle of accountability that should govern all public service." In the Bush administration, Brooks has been an advocate of building a new generation of nuclear weapons over the next decade, devising post-Cold War missions for nuclear weapons and modernizing U.S. nuclear weapons facilities, some of which date to the 1940s.

"He was a very intelligent public servant with a great deal of integrity," said Joseph Cirincione, vice president for national security issues at the Center for American Progress, a liberal Washington research group. Cirincione, who strongly disagreed with Brooks, said the security lapses had done little actual harm. "I would feel better if Brooks were being dismissed on policy grounds rather than security grounds."

But the October incident was only the latest of a string of security lapses. Earlier, Brooks had failed to tell Bodman when a computer hacker managed to steal the personnel records and Social Security numbers of 1,500 Energy Department contractors.

The breaches also angered Republican lawmakers. Rep. Joe Barton of Texas, the ranking Republican on the House Energy and Commerce Committee, said yesterday that when the Social Security numbers were stolen "it was critical not only that Brooks move swiftly to counteract this sort of security breach but also that he immediately notify the top officials in his department and the people whose data was lost. Instead, he sat on his hands."

In October, Freidman, the Energy Department inspector general, said that the weaknesses in security procedures were "especially troubling since the department and the National Nuclear Security Administration have expended tens of millions of dollars upgrading various components of the laboratory's security apparatus, including vast expenditures on cyber security."

Bodman had named a department task force to review the inspector general's recommendations and report by Feb. 28.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/04/AR2007010401813.html>

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Washington Times

January 5, 2007

Pg. 3

Sanctions Imposed On Iran, Syria Arms Suppliers

By Bill Gertz, Washington Times

The Bush administration is imposing economic sanctions on Chinese, Russian and North Korean companies for selling missiles and weapons goods to Iran and Syria, administration officials said.

The sanctions were imposed earlier this week on three Chinese state-run companies, three Russian firms and a North Korean mining company under a 2000 arms proliferation law that was renamed Iran and Syria Nonproliferation Act in 2005.

The sanctions ban U.S. government business and support to the companies for two years and block U.S. firms from selling them items that require export licenses.

They are largely symbolic, but U.S. officials have been effective in publicly singling out companies that are engaged in selling arms to rogue states.

The Bush administration has imposed sanctions more than 40 times since 2001 as part of a more aggressive push to stop arms transfers to rogue states or unstable regions of the world.

The law requires the imposition of sanctions on companies, governments and people caught transferring missiles, weapons of mass destruction materials or advanced conventional arms to Iran or Syria.

The officials said the sanctions were imposed after an interagency review of intelligence on transfers that happened within the past two years.

Specific details of the transfers were not released, but officials said they included missile sales to Syria and arms sales and transfers of weapons-related goods to both Iran and Syria.

The sanctions ban the companies from conducting business with U.S. companies for two years and are likely to affect the Russians more than the Chinese and North Korean companies because of the potential to block sales of aircraft-related materials to U.S. manufacturers.

The Chinese companies are the Zibo Chemical Equipment Plant, which has been linked to chemical-weapons sales, the China National Aerotechnology Import Export Corp. and the China National Electrical Import and Export Co.

The Korean Mining and Industrial Development Corp. also was sanctioned for its role in the transfers. An official said the North Korean company, which was linked in the past to air shipments of missiles from North Korea to Iran, is a "serial proliferator."

The new sanctions could affect the six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear program. Until last month, North Korea rejected further talks with five other nations because of what Pyongyang called economic sanctions against a Macao bank that U.S. officials said North Korea was using for money laundering and counterfeiting.

The sanctions also will penalize Russian state-run arms exporter Rosoboroneksport, the officials said. Two other Russian firms, Kolonna Design Bureau and the Tula Design Bureau of Instructment Building, also were sanctioned. A Russian national identified as Alexi Safonov will be sanctioned, too.

Rosoboroneksport signed deals with Syria worth \$9.7 billion in May 2005 that U.S. officials said included high-technology arms such as advanced anti-tanks missiles, some of which were used during the fighting last summer between Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

Israeli forces found Russian-made Kornet and Metis anti-tank missiles in Lebanon, and U.S. officials said the missiles may have been sold to Syria in 2002.

The Russian government exporter also signed a contract last year to sell \$3 billion worth of arms to Venezuela, whose regime has emerged as key regional U.S. enemy.

Rosoboroneksport is run by Sergei Chemzov, a former KGB colleague of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20070104-112337-4050r.htm>

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