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

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Washington Post

SAIC to Put Attack-Simulation Tools on the Web

By Doug Beizer

Special to The Washington Post

Monday, January 1, 2007; D04

With the motto "Making the World Safer," the Defense Threat Reduction Agency uses computer models to play out doomsday scenarios, forecasting what might happen if an attack were launched and what could be done to minimize its effects.

The models cover biological, chemical, nuclear and other kinds of weapons.

San Diego-based Science Applications International Corp. won a contract worth up to \$53.9 million from the agency to put modeling and simulation tools on the Web for first responders and government agencies.

The system of computer models, called the Integrated Weapons of Mass Destruction Toolset, has been in development since 2004.

Making the tools adhere to Web-based standards is a key part of the contract, said Michael Chagnon, a senior vice president with SAIC. "So anybody that has a Web browser, a laptop, connectivity and permission would be able to access these tools to do their job. And those types of users would include war fighters or could include civil first responders as well."

The agency builds physics-based models to simulate situations such as particle dispersion. In a nuclear detonation model, for example, conditions such as winds, terrain and the location of the device are taken into account. The model shows how the radiation would spread and indicates how that could affect people.

Similar modeling tools would show how a plume of chemicals might disperse.

"First responders could use that information to determine exactly what type of medical response would be required and the number of people that might be affected," Chagnon said. "So it's being able to publish data that could be of use to others, as well as being able to subscribe to data -- such as weather data updates -- that would enable the toolset to make more up-to-date calculations as well."

War fighters can use the tools to predict the possible effects of various kinds of attacks on U.S. and allied troops and help determine how troops should be moved or what precautions they should take.

The tools run on a suite of classified and unclassified servers. The toolset is also available on a laptop in case a potential user does not have connectivity. The data from that laptop can later be synchronized with the servers.

Under the new contract, SAIC will further refine standards in the toolset's architecture to make it available to a wider variety of computer systems.

"That interoperation with other systems and the ability to share information with other systems is the key to enhancing the value and the utility of the tool suite," Chagnon said.

Doug Beizer is a staff writer with Washington Technology. For news on this and other contracts, go to www.washingtontechnology.com.

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/12/31/AR2006123100801_pf.html

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Philadelphia Inquirer

January 6, 2007

DuPont drops nerve-agent disposal plans

It will not be helping the Army dispose of 4 million gallons of watered-down VX in the Delaware River.

By Troy Graham, Inquirer Staff Writer

Under heavy pressure, DuPont Co. yesterday dropped out of an Army plan to dispose of caustic wastewater from the destruction of the deadly VX nerve agent in South Jersey.

DuPont's decision ends the three-year fight over the plan. Up to four million gallons of treated, watered-down VX would have been shipped by truck or train through four states from a chemical weapons stockpile in Indiana to DuPont's Chambers Works in Deepwater, Salem County. There, it would have been dumped into the Delaware River.

"There will be no VX byproduct dumped in the Delaware River," said U.S. Rep. Robert Andrews (D., N.J.). "This is a real victory for the residents of South Jersey and the health of the Delaware River."

The plan to dispose of the wastewater drew sharp opposition from the public, elected officials and environmentalists. A coalition of environmental groups filed a lawsuit against the Army last year in U.S. District Court, and many of the regulatory issues remained unresolved.

"It's hard to ever know what's the straw that broke the camel's back," said Tracy Carluccio, the deputy director of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit. "All of this was working on DuPont and showed them this was really not in their best interest to move forward."

DuPont said the science involved in treating and disposing of the wastewater was sound, and the plan was safe, but the company recognized that many hurdles remained.

"DuPont has had a successful history of working with New Jersey regulators and communities, and we value those relationships," said Nick Fanandakis, a DuPont vice president and general manager. "However, during the three-year evaluation of the... proposal, it has become increasingly clear to us that the approval process will be lengthy and arduous."

The Army approached DuPont shortly after Sept. 11, 2001, when it was ordered to accelerate the disposal of chemical weapon stockpiles that could be targeted in a terrorist attack, said DuPont spokesman Anthony Farina. In the next three years, DuPont's Chambers Works safely disposed of seven million gallons of wastewater from neutralized mustard gas, he said.

In 2003, the Army proposed a plan to dispose of wastewater from a neutralized VX nerve agent stockpiled at the Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana. That plan sparked outcry from the public and environmentalists. The company held 90 public meetings, revised its proposal, and had the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention review it. Farina said the company won over many skeptics in the process.

"Even with all that support and the traction from all that, it became clear that the regulatory process would be a long one," he said. "I think there was a lot of misinformation about the Newport proposal initially."

Army officials said they would explore all options for the wastewater. Environmentalists have called for the Army to store the wastewater at Newport, rather than trucking it elsewhere for treatment and disposal.

New Jersey's congressional delegation lined up against the Army's plan to bring the wastewater to Salem County. In 2005, Congress required the Army to submit a cost-benefit analysis of the plan, then have the Government Accountability Office review the analysis.

The GAO is supposed to issue its report this month. Farina said he has heard that the GAO would support the Army's position, and that DuPont's decision to back out of the plan had nothing to do with the forthcoming report. Environmentalists said they thought the GAO's report would be bad for DuPont.

"If it was going to be good, do you think they would be dropping it?" asked Jeff Tittel, the director of the New Jersey Sierra Club. "We thought the Army had a lot of nerve to dump on New Jersey. We're glad they lost their nerve."

New Jersey's elected officials praised DuPont's decision.

"This is a decisive victory for the people of New Jersey," Gov. Corzine said. "VX nerve agent is one of the world's most deadly chemical compounds and dumping it in a river never made any sense."

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/16399546.htm>

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Chicago Tribune

January 5, 2007

Kentucky Ready To Fight To Get Weapons Out

But Pentagon says it doesn't have the cash to destroy unused perils from past

By E.A. Torriero, Tribune staff reporter

NEWPORT, Ky. -- For more than 60 years, some of the world's most dangerous weapons have been stored in earth-covered igloos, just a gust of wind away from putting thousands of students at Eastern Kentucky University at risk.

After a quarter-century of protest and debate, the community was eagerly awaiting federal government action to destroy these instruments of mass destruction, with a \$2 billion plant under construction to do the work safely.

But late last year the Pentagon announced it did not have the money to finish the project in time. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are costing so much that the government can't fully fund the destruction of unused weapons from past wars, officials said.

It won't be until at least 2023--and probably later--that weapons here at the Blue Grass Army Depot and at a storage facility in Colorado will be purged of the hundreds of aging tons of nerve agents and mustard gas, some of it stored since World War II. The delay increases the risk of a leak, federal officials concede, and puts a Kentucky county of 80,000 residents in peril for at least a decade longer than anticipated.

"We've been had," said Madison County Judge Executive Kent Clark. "We've been good neighbors with the federal government. We haven't raised hell to embarrass them. And now they turn around and stiff us. People here are mighty upset."

The Kentucky congressional delegation and a consortium of local leaders plan a vigorous fight this month when Congress considers funding proposals and the Pentagon fine-tunes its proposed budget.

"I'm disappointed to see that the Department of Defense is again backsliding on its commitment," Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) said in a recent statement. "I am going to continue to lead the fight to ensure that these heinous weapons are disposed of in a safe and timely manner."

The delays illustrate the government's struggle over ridding the nation of weapons that have become a possible threat to Americans.

So far, 41 percent of the nation's 31,500-ton arsenal of leftover weapons has been destroyed at four other sites--in Oregon, Alabama, Utah and Arkansas. In addition to rockets and other armaments, vats of aging mustard gas have been destroyed in Maryland and nerve agent is being broken down in Indiana.

\$29 billion cost increase

The cost of doing away with the weapons has skyrocketed to at least \$31 billion from \$2 billion projected in 1986. At the current rate, project costs in Kentucky will soar to \$3.9 billion in the next decade, about \$1.4 billion more than if the Pentagon followed its original budgeting timetable.

And watchdog groups say that billions more are likely to be spent because of further delays and problems. New Jersey lawmakers and activists are protesting a federal plan to ship weapon waste there for disposal after the chemicals are neutralized in Indiana and elsewhere. A coalition of environmentalists filed suit in late December seeking to stop the shipping of the waste to New Jersey.

Already, cost problems in Kentucky and Colorado mean that the sites will not likely operate at full capacity, stretching the projects' timetables to long after the U.S. was supposed to comply with international treaties. The U.S. has been under pressure to comply with treaties signed in 1997 to neutralize its stockpile by 2012, although it is likely to receive an extension while showing good faith in continuing the weapons destruction.

"We spent so much time in Iraq looking for weapons of mass destruction that never existed only to give short shrift to the ones in our own country," said Craig Williams, who runs a citizens group that has been battling the government over what to do at disposal sites.

The Kentucky depot houses a pittance of the leftover war weapons--just 1.6 percent of the nation's original arsenal. But it has one of the most powerful combinations of agents remaining in storage.

They include about 30,000 World War II-era projectiles filled with mustard gas. The site also has about 70,000 rockets from the 1960s equipped with warheads of GB and VX nerve agents.

45 steel-enforced igloos

The weapons stored at the Blue Grass Army Depot are in a labyrinth of 45 steel-enforced igloos that are the size of tractor-trailers and packed in mounds of earth. There is also an elaborate security system of alarms, fences, guards and detection monitors.

The biggest risk, though, is leakage. The government reports nearly a dozen leaks in recent years detected by monitors.

The leaks usually involve tiny vapors or minute drips and are quickly repaired, the government says, with none of the gases released into the atmosphere.

Federal monitors concede they do not know how much worse the problems will get if the weapons remain stored for two more decades. More than 200 waterlogged and weathered pallets where the weapons sit were replaced recently because of dangers that the weapons might fall over.

"The greatest risk is in the storage phase, not in the destruction," said Richard Sloan, spokesman for Blue Grass Chemical Activity, the agency responsible for storing the weapons at the depot, which is surrounded by nearby houses, businesses and a university.

"As time goes, the risks continue and no one knows how great they could be," he said.

After a grass-roots effort and one of the longest running battles over weapons disposal in the nation, people are exasperated at the latest twist in a quarter-century saga.

There were fierce debates years ago to get government approval to destroy the weapons. Then came a protracted fight over to how to destroy them.

At other sites, the weapons are incinerated.

But Kentucky residents, fearing the release of hazardous residue into the air, mounted a fight that includes "incineration protest songs."

In 2002, the Pentagon approved a process for Kentucky and Colorado that neutralizes the weapons in a complex chemical plant the size of 10 Wal-Marts. It involves using water and compounds to break down the deadly agent, leaving a non-lethal residue called hydrolysates.

Building on hold

Contractors began laying roads in recent months and laid the groundwork for construction of buildings. But as the government puts the brakes on funding, the building will lag. Plans to hire some 600 workers to run the plant, which at this point would not open until 2014, are in limbo.

"And who knows what other delays we could face due to funding?" said Jim Fritsche, the site project manager. "It's hard to plan with all these unknowns."

Now, after years of infighting, an alliance has formed among grass-roots organizers, elected officials, government agencies and contractors who all want to push the project forward. Congress will consider the Pentagon's curtailed funding proposals in this session.

But given America's other fiscal priorities, people here don't expect much.

"It could get worse," said county executive Clark. "If we go to war with Iran and Korea, we'll never have the money to get these weapons out of here. Our grandchildren will be stuck with this risk."

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/health/chi-0701050173jan05.1.4304559.story>

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China Advises 'Serious Response' By Iran To U.N. Sanctions

By Edward Cody, Washington Post Foreign Service

BEIJING, Jan. 5 -- China told Iran's top nuclear negotiator Friday that Tehran should abandon its defiance of U.N. sanctions and work for a swift return to talks to resolve the standoff over its nuclear program.

The Chinese admonition, conveyed by the official news media, came in a meeting between Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, and President Hu Jintao, who urged a "serious response" to the U.N. sanctions. State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, China's senior foreign policy troubleshooter, gave Larijani a similar message Thursday, the New China News Agency reported.

China's public advice to Iran marked another instance in which Beijing seemed to be following a course parallel to that of the United States on nuclear nonproliferation. Diplomats from the two countries have worked with increasing closeness over the past three years in Chinese-sponsored negotiations to dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

The Bush administration, in tandem with European leaders, has championed tough sanctions to force Iran to back down and reportedly is seeking new measures that would go beyond those already imposed. President Bush said Thursday that he thought it would be difficult to ensure a peaceful world if the Iranian government pushed forward with its research program and eventually equipped its military with nuclear weapons.

Although it has been reluctant to support sanctions in the past, China backed the U.N. Security Council's unanimous resolution of Dec. 23 that imposed sanctions on Iran and called for a suspension of its uranium enrichment program. But the Iranian Foreign Ministry dismissed the resolution as "illegal," President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called it "trash paper" and the enrichment effort has continued apace.

Tang and Hu both reminded Larijani that the resolution passed unanimously, meaning China also voted for it, and said it reflected the concerns of the international community about safeguarding nonproliferation.

"China has always maintained that dialogue and negotiations are the best way to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue," Tang said, according to the news agency.

Larijani, in a news conference, said he had conveyed a letter from Ahmadinejad to Hu. He declined to specify its contents but sought to dispel the notion that Iran and China might be estranged because of China's decision to join the United States and other Security Council members in condemning Iran's nuclear research program.

"Of course, we know who is really behind these sanctions, so we are not blaming anybody for this," he said, alluding to the United States. The growing commercial ties between China and Iran will not be affected, he said, adding, "Countries that have long-term strategic relations will not change them because of tactical issues, and this was a tactical issue."

Larijani said that, in any case, Iran's government is not concerned about the new sanctions, which bar trade in nuclear- and missile-related goods. "The Americans have been carrying out this kind of policy for 27 years," he said, "and it's not had much effect."

Larijani said Iran's case is different from North Korea's because North Korea has developed a nuclear weapon, and "it is not part of our strategy to seek nuclear weapons." He said Iran wants to remain in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty regime, but added, "If we are threatened, that could change."

Larijani dismissed Bush's comments as just one more in a string of U.S. criticisms. If the U.S. leader is genuinely worried about the dangers posed by nuclear weapons in the Middle East, Larijani said, "he should worry about Israel."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/05/AR2007010500443.html>

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Nuclear Talks With N. Korea Expected To Resume

U.S., Allies Hope to Learn Whether Pyongyang Will Accept Suggested Steps Toward Standing Down

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

Six-nation talks on ending North Korea's nuclear program are likely to reconvene this month or next, when the United States and its allies hope to get a clearer sense of whether Pyongyang has any interest in giving up its weapons, U.S. and South Korean officials said yesterday.

South Korean Foreign Minister Song Min Soon, who held talks yesterday in Washington with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, said in an interview that North Korea did not "flatly reject" a number of ideas presented by the United States at the last round of talks, held in December, "even though it did not accept them."

Song would not detail those ideas, but U.S. and Asian diplomats have said the United States laid out steps that Pyongyang could take at the outset to demonstrate progress, including suspending operations at its Yongbyon reactor, readmitting international nuclear inspectors, reporting its nuclear facilities and closing its nuclear testing site.

The push to persuade North Korea to end its programs has been complicated by the fact that Pyongyang conducted its first nuclear test in October. Earlier this week, tens of thousands of North Koreans held a rally in the capital to defend their government's right to have nuclear weapons.

Previously, U.S. officials said they hoped to get a response to those ideas, first advanced at a bilateral meeting in November, at the December talks. But Song said it appeared the North Korean diplomats needed to take the proposals back to Pyongyang for further evaluation. "They are looking at a chance to make a deal, as usual, on their own terms," he said, adding that he did not know whether the differences could be bridged.

At a news conference with Song, Rice said, "There was some good work that was done during the round at the end of December, but really we're going to need to move well beyond that to consider this next round of talks, I think, successful."

Some U.S. officials have suggested that the main interest of the administration in continuing the talks is to convince China, North Korea's main patron, of Pyongyang's intransigence and the need to take forceful action against it.

South Korean news agencies reported yesterday that vehicles and personnel movement had been spotted near the site of North Korea's first test, but U.S. and South Korean officials cast serious doubt on those reports.

"Seoul and Washington are having a close joint-intelligence assessment, but so far we do not have direct indication that there is an imminent test," Song said. He noted that North Korea conducted its last test underground, giving analysts very little time to detect possible preparation.

Song defended South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun for comments late last year, when he suggested that a split between the U.S. State Department and the Treasury Department had led to the rupture of the talks in 2005. Four days before an agreement was reached on principles for North Korean disarmament, Treasury accused a Macau bank of assisting in North Korean counterfeiting. North Korea used the incident to boycott the talks for 13 months and would discuss only that issue when the talks restarted in December.

"With a conspiracy view, you may say [the two departments] were playing games," Roh said. As a result, he added, the statement of principles "was buried the moment it was born."

Song said: "The point of my president's remark was not about some conspiracy but about his frustration, his frustration of nonprogress in the implementation program of the September agreement."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/05/AR2007010501771.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

January 6, 2007

Chief Of U.S. Nuclear-Weapons Program Is Replaced

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON - President Bush has chosen a replacement for the man ousted as head of the government's nuclear-weapons program after reports of embarrassing security breakdowns.

Bush selected Thomas P. D'Agostino, who currently serves as deputy administrator of defense programs at the National Nuclear Security Administration, to succeed Linton Brooks in the top job there on an acting basis.

Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman said Thursday that Brooks would resign within the month. The agency maintains the nuclear-weapons stockpile and oversees the U.S. weapons-research lab.

"I have decided it is time for new leadership at the NNSA," Bodman said.

Brooks, a former ambassador and arms-control negotiator, said he accepted the decision, one he understood was "based on the principle of accountability that should govern all public service. This is not a decision that I would have preferred."

Brooks was reprimanded in June for failing to report to Bodman the theft of computer files at an NNSA facility in Albuquerque, N.M., that contained Social Security numbers and other data for 1,500 workers.

Then in October, hundreds of pages of classified weapons-related documents from the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico were found during a drug raid in the home of a woman who had worked at the lab.

That security breakdown was especially troubling, a department inspector general's report said, because it came after tens of millions of dollars had been spent to upgrade cyber-security at Los Alamos. A new management group also had been put in charge only a few months earlier - also a fallout over the repeated security problems.

The New Mexico lab is one of three major research labs that are part of the nuclear-weapons complex under the NNSA.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/16395416.htm>

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New York Times

January 7, 2007

Pg. 1

U.S. Selecting Hybrid Design For Warheads

By William J. Broad, David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON, Jan. 6 — The Bush administration is expected to announce next week a major step forward in the building of the country's first new nuclear warhead in nearly two decades. It will propose combining elements of competing designs from two weapons laboratories in an approach that some experts argue is untested and risky. The new weapon would not add to but replace the nation's existing arsenal of aging warheads, with a new generation meant to be sturdier, more reliable, safer from accidental detonation and more secure from theft by terrorists.

The announcement, to be made by the interagency Nuclear Weapons Council, avoids making a choice between the two designs for a new weapon, called the Reliable Replacement Warhead, which at first would be mounted on submarine-launched missiles.

The effort, if approved by President Bush and financed by Congress, would require a huge refurbishment of the nation's complex for nuclear design and manufacturing, with the overall bill estimated at more than \$100 billion. But the council's decision to seek a hybrid design, combining well-tested elements from an older design with new safety and security elements from a more novel approach, could delay the weapon's production. It also raises the question of whether the United States will ultimately be forced to end its moratorium on underground nuclear testing to make sure the new design works.

On Friday, Bryan Wilkes, a spokesman for the National Nuclear Security Administration of the Energy Department, said the government would not proceed with the Reliable Replacement Warhead "if it is determined that testing is needed." But other officials in the administration, including Robert Joseph, the under secretary of state for arms control and international security, have said that the White House should make no commitment on testing.

Congress authorized exploratory research for the weapon three years ago, and has financed it at relatively low levels since. But now the costs will begin to increase.

If Mr. Bush decides to deploy the new design, he could touch off a debate in a Democrat-controlled Congress and among allies and adversaries abroad, who have opposed efforts to modernize the arsenal in the past. While proponents of the new weapon said that it would replace older weapons that could deteriorate over time, and reduce the chances of a detonation if weapons fell into the wrong hands, critics have long argued that this is the wrong moment for Washington to produce a new nuclear warhead of any kind.

At a time when the administration is trying to convince the world to put sanctions on North Korea and Iran to halt their nuclear programs, those critics argue, any move to improve the American arsenal will be seen as hypocritical, an effort by the United States to extend its nuclear lead over other countries. Should the United States decide to conduct a test, officials said, China and Russia — which have their own nuclear modernization programs under way — would feel free to do the same. North Korea was sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council for conducting its first test on Oct. 9, and it may be preparing for more, experts said.

Both administration officials and military officers like Gen. James E. Cartwright, head of the Strategic Command, which controls the nation's nuclear arsenal, argue that because the United States provides a nuclear umbrella for so many allies, it is critical that its stockpile be as reliable as possible.

"We will not 'un-invent' nuclear weapons, and we will not walk away from the world," General Cartwright said in a recent interview. "Right now, it is not the nation's position that zero is the answer to the size of our inventory."

"So, if you are going to have these weapons, they should be safe, they should be able to be secured, and they should be reliable if used," General Cartwright said in the interview, conducted before the Department of Energy's decision was announced.

The current schedule, which is subject to change, would call for the president to make a decision in a year or two and, if approved, to begin engineering development by fiscal year 2010 and production by 2012.

The two teams competing to design the weapon, one at Los Alamos in New Mexico, the other at the Livermore National Laboratory in California, approached the problem with very different philosophies, nuclear officials and experts said. Livermore drew on a single, robust design that, before the testing moratorium, was detonated in the 1980s under a desolate patch of Nevada desert. The weapon, however, never entered the nation's nuclear stockpile. The Los Alamos team drew on aspects of many weapons from the stockpile and pulled them together in a novel design that has never undergone testing.

A winner of the competition was to have been announced in November. But federal officials said they had a hard time choosing between the two designs, calling both excellent.

The question now, arms experts said, is whether a mix-and-match approach combining the two will produce a clever hybrid or an unworkable dud. They said the nuclear laboratories, bitter rivals for decades, have never before shared responsibility for designing a weapon.

"There has not been what I would consider a real partnership," said Philip E. Coyle III, a former director of weapons testing at the Pentagon and former director of nuclear testing for Livermore. "In some respects, it's unprecedented." Ray E. Kidder, a senior Livermore scientist who pioneered early arms designs, said the hybrid approach appeared to be based more on the politics of survival for the laboratories than on technical merit.

"It's spreading the wealth," he said. Federal officials, Dr. Kidder added, "tend to do that fairly rigorously so as to keep the labs alive. To foreclose the possibility of closure, they try to divide the work load."

General Cartwright cast that problem differently, saying that it is critical to keep America's "intellectual capital" in producing weapons alive. "We are starting to get to the point where the people who actually have experience designing a weapon are reaching that point at which they will start to leave the industry," he said. "And are we able to attract the minds that we will need to sustain this activity?"

Nonetheless, several nuclear experts expressed doubts about the wisdom of using a design that has never undergone testing, saying future presidents might lose confidence in the arsenal's potency and be tempted to conduct test explosions.

"It's one thing to have all the components working and another to have them all working together," said Raymond Jeanloz, a geophysicist at the University of California, Berkeley, who advises the government on nuclear arms. "To me, that's the key technical issue that has yet to be resolved."

In the few years since its debut, the reliability program has grown from a fringe effort at the nation's nuclear arms laboratories into a centerpiece of the Bush administration's nuclear policy.

Advocates say a generation of more reliable arms would give military commanders the confidence to abandon the current philosophy of holding onto huge inventories of old weapons, and could speed a shrinkage of the American arsenal from some 6,000 warheads to perhaps 2,000 or less.

Critics say a main justification for the program vanished in November when a secretive federal panel known as Jason found that the plutonium "pits" at the heart of many nuclear warheads aged far better than expected, with most able to work reliably for a century or more.

"This research eliminates a major rationale," Lisbeth Gronlund, a nuclear arms specialist at the Union of Concerned Scientists, a private group based in Cambridge, Mass., said in a November statement.

Since that study was revealed, the administration has emphasized other reasons to build a new warhead, especially new, highly classified technologies to make the weapons virtually impossible to use if they fall into unfriendly hands. Other objectives are to simplify manufacturing, reduce toxic byproducts and improve safety of triggering devices.

As a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, the United States and other nuclear weapons states have committed, at least on paper, to the ultimate goal of "the liquidation of all their existing stockpiles" of weapons. But General Cartwright cautioned that much of the criticism of the program was cast in terms of achieving that disarmament, and he said the government's policy, and that of the new warhead program, was to maintain a nuclear stockpile "that would be the smallest practical to maintain its credibility."

He described the nation's nuclear weapons stockpile as "an artifact of the cold war — cold war both in its delivery systems and its characteristics and certainly in its technology."

"We stopped testing a while back. So, from the testing standpoint, we have not been fielding new weapons," General Cartwright said. "From the standpoint of engineering and design, there has been only marginal activity, mostly reacting to the age of components."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/07/washington/07nuke.html>

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Miami Herald
January 7, 2007

Saudi Arabia

Saudis, French Put Pressure On Iran

RIYADH -- The Saudi and French foreign ministers called on Iran to accept international demands on halting its uranium enrichment program, saying Saturday that the Middle East should be free of weapons of mass destruction. Visiting French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy and his Saudi counterpart stressed that diplomacy must be the way to solve Iran's ongoing standoff with the West over its nuclear program.

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/16401768.htm>

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New York Post

January 6, 2007

Pg. 19

Eyeing Iran

Why W's Tapping Admiral to Head Central Command

By Ralph Peters

WORD that Adm. William Fallon will move laterally from our Pacific Command to take charge of Central Command - responsible for the Middle East - while two ground wars rage in the region baffled the media.

Why put a swabbie in charge of grunt operations?

There's a one-word answer: Iran.

ASSIGNING a Navy aviator and combat veteran to oversee our military operations in the Persian Gulf makes perfect sense when seen as a preparatory step for striking Iran's nuclear-weapons facilities - *if* that becomes necessary.

While the Air Force would deliver the heaviest tonnage of ordnance in a campaign to frustrate Tehran's quest for nukes, the toughest *strategic* missions would fall to our Navy. Iran would seek to retaliate asymmetrically by attacking oil platforms and tankers, closing the Strait of Hormuz - and trying to hit oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf emirates.

Only the U.S. Navy - hopefully, with Royal Navy and Aussie vessels underway beside us - could keep the oil flowing to a thirsty world.

In short, the toughest side of an offensive operation against Iran would be the defensive aspects - requiring virtually every air and sea capability we could muster. (Incidentally, an additional U.S. carrier battle group is now headed for the Gulf; Britain and Australia are also strengthening their naval forces in the region.)

Not only did Adm. Fallon command a carrier air wing during Operation Desert Storm, he also did shore duty at a joint headquarters in Saudi Arabia. He knows the complexity and treacherousness of the Middle East first-hand.

STRENGTHENING his qualifications, numerous blue-water assignments and his duties at PACOM schooled him on the intricacies of the greater Indian Ocean - *the* key strategic region for the 21st-century and the one that would be affected immediately by a U.S. conflict with Iran.

The admiral also understands China's junkie-frantic oil dependency and its consequent taste for geopolitical street-crime: During a U.S. operation against Iran, Beijing would need its fix guaranteed.

While Congress obsesses on Iraq and Iraq alone, the administration's thinking about the future. And it looks as if the White House is preparing options to mitigate a failure in Iraq and contain Iran. Bush continues to have a much-underrated strategic vision - the administration's consistent problems have been in the abysmal *execution* of its policies, not in the over-arching purpose.

Now, pressed by strategic dilemmas and humiliating reverses, Bush is doing what FDR had to do in the dark, early months of 1942: He's turning to the Navy.

AS a retired Army officer, I remain proud of and loyal to my service. I realize that the Army's leaders are disappointed to see the CentCom slot go to an admiral in the midst of multiple ground wars. But, beyond the need for a Navy man at the helm should we have to take on Iran, there's yet another reason for sending Fallon to his new assignment: The Army's leadership has failed us at the strategic level.

After Gen. Eric Shinseki was sidelined for insisting on a professional approach to Iraq, Army generals did plenty of fine tactical and operational work - but they never produced a strategic vision for the greater Middle East.

Our Army is deployed globally, but our generals never seem to acquire the knack of thinking beyond the threat hypnotizing them at the moment (the Marines, with their step-brother ties to the Navy, do a better job of acting locally while thinking globally). Perhaps the Army's Gen. Dave Petraeus will emerge as an incisive strategic thinker after he takes command in Baghdad, but his predecessors routinely got mired in tactical details and relied - fatally - on other arms of government to do the strategic thinking.

The reasons are complex, ranging from service culture to educational traditions, but it's incontestable that the Navy long has produced our military's best strategic thinkers - captains and admirals able to transcend parochial interests to see the global security environment as a whole. Adm. Fallon's job is to avoid the tyranny of the moment, to see past the jumble of operational pieces and visualize how those pieces ultimately might fit together.

NOR is the Iran problem the only Navy-first issue facing CENTCOM. As you read this, our ships are patrolling the coast of Somalia to intercept fleeing terrorists - and have been hunting pirates in the same waters for years. China's future development (and internal peace) is tied to dependable supplies of Middle-Eastern and African oil transiting Indian-Ocean sea lanes, as well as to shipping goods along the same routes. In a future confrontation with China, our ability to shut down the very routes we're now challenged to protect would be vital.

Not least because of the botch-up in Iraq, there's a growing sense of the limitations of U.S. ground-force involvement in the Middle East. That doesn't mean we won't see further necessity-driven interventions and even other occupations, only that our strategic planners have begun to grasp that positive change in the region - if it comes at all - is going to take far longer than many of us hoped and won't always be amenable to boots-on-the-ground prodding.

If we can't determine everything that happens in the Big Sandbox, we need to be able to control access to and from the playground - a classic Navy mission.

And in the end the United States remains primarily a maritime power. As Sir Walter Raleigh pointed out 400 years ago, he who controls the waters controls the world.

Gen. Petraeus is going to Baghdad to deal with our present problems. Adm. Fallon is going to the U.S. Central Command to deal with the future.

Ralph Peters' latest book is "Never Quit the Fight."

http://www.nypost.com/seven/01062007/postopinion/opedcolumnists/eyeing_iran_opedcolumnists_ralph_peters.htm

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London Times
Middle East
January 8, 2007

Israel denies nuclear strike plan

DAVID SHARROCK

JERUSALEM Israel denied that it had drawn up secret plans to attack and destroy Iran's uranium enrichment plants with nuclear weapons.

Mark Regev, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, said that Israel wanted the issue of Iranian nuclear ambitions to be resolved diplomatically.

The Sunday Times reported that two Israel air force squadrons had been training to blow up an enrichment plant in Natanz, south of Tehran, using low-yield nuclear "bunker busters". Two other sites would be targeted with conventional bombs, the report claimed, citing Israeli military sources.

Responding to the claims, Mr Regev said: "The focus of the Israeli activity today is to give full support to diplomatic actions."

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,251-2536136,00.html>

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New York Times
January 8, 2007
Pg. 8

Man In The News

Adm. William J. Fallon: An Experienced Naval Officer, And A Diplomat

By Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON, Jan. 7 — The Bush administration's selection of a career naval aviator to be the top commander of American military forces across a region where they are engaged in two ground wars is, at first glance, odd.

A range of military officers at the Pentagon noted that if Adm. William J. Fallon was confirmed by the Senate to the Central Command position, he would be not only the first naval officer to command the region, but also a four-star

officer moving between regional combatant commands. Often, such posts are given as promotions to three-star officers.

Senior Pentagon civilians and military officers said Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates's recommendation of Admiral Fallon, currently in command of all American forces in the Pacific, reflected a wish for seasoned eyes on Afghanistan and Iraq as well as a new focus on regional initiatives to reassure allies and deter adversaries, in particular Iran.

"Because of the importance of this job today, and what we're embroiled in over in that area of operations, this is no time for a learning curve," said Adm. Robert J. Natter, who worked extensively with Admiral Fallon before retiring as commander of the Atlantic Fleet.

"He has broad experience, both diplomatic, with the Japanese, Chinese and South Koreans, and also clearly in the traditional military fields," Admiral Natter said.

The Middle East has a vast land area, to be sure, but also has important waterways that carry world oil supplies and, it is feared, nuclear materials and terrorists.

Whether the mission is interdicting contraband, tracking suspected leaders of Al Qaeda or deterring Iran, many military contingencies in the region rely on warships and warplanes, and not boots on the ground.

Admiral Fallon, who began his military career with a commission through the Navy's Reserve Officer Training Program, as opposed to the more prestigious Naval Academy, has a quarter-century's experience in combat aircraft and extensive time at the negotiating table.

The admiral can be grizzly and tough, as befits a product of New Jersey. But he has consistently taken on assignments where diplomatic skills were as important as the military ones. He surprised some of his colleagues when, in early 2001, he volunteered for the task of delivering an apology to Japanese officials and families of those killed in the accidental sinking of a fishery school ship by an American submarine, the *Greenville*, off the coast of Hawaii.

The final military inquiry had not been completed, and some at the Pentagon argued that an official apology was premature. But the extraordinary visit to Tokyo by Admiral Fallon, then serving as the vice chief of naval operations, the service's No. 2 job, was credited with soothing the feelings of an important ally, and of its people. Another side of Admiral Fallon was on display last month when, as the senior American military officer in the Pacific, he took the unusual and punitive move of canceling a large annual field exercise with the Philippines over a local judge's failure to honor the bilateral treaty governing protections for American military personnel. At the time, Admiral Fallon said he was not sitting in judgment of the guilt or innocence of a marine convicted of rape, but was protecting his forces by demanding that the Philippines adhere to legal obligations.

Admiral Fallon can be expected to pay great attention to the missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, but to leave day-to-day operations to the senior commanders on the ground in Baghdad and Kabul, similar to his current relationship as Pacific regional commander to the four-star Army officer in charge of forces just in South Korea.

William Joseph Fallon was born Dec. 30, 1944, in East Orange, N.J., and raised in Merchantville. He graduated from Villanova University in 1967, and later graduated from the Naval War College and the National War College, and earned a master's degree in international studies from Old Dominion University.

He flew combat missions in the Vietnam War, commanded a carrier air wing in the Persian Gulf war in 1991, and four years later led the naval battle group supporting NATO operations in Bosnia. His senior positions before the Pacific assignment included commander of the Fleet Forces Command and of the Atlantic Fleet.

"This selection sends a clear signal that the administration wants the combatant commander to operate at the '30,000 foot' level, at the geopolitical and geostrategic level, and to foster our relations in the region as opposed to being focused solely on this conflict or that conflict," said Stephen R. Pietropaoli, a retired rear admiral who now serves as executive director of the Navy League.

"Admiral Fallon will have very experienced commanders in charge of operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa," Admiral Pietropaoli added. "But the Central Command commander needs to be above that, looking at how to enhance America's influence throughout his area of responsibility and how to truly work hand in glove with the Department of State to enhance America's image and influence and prestige in that part of the world."

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/08/world/middleeast/08fallon.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Philadelphia Inquirer
January 8, 2007

U.S. And N. Korea To Address Dispute

SEOUL, South Korea - The United States and North Korea have reached a tentative agreement to hold talks on a dispute over U.S. financial restrictions against the North in the week starting Jan. 22, South Korean Foreign Minister Song Min Soon said yesterday.

The financial dispute was the main stumbling block that deadlocked last month's six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear programs. The North insisted that Washington lift the restrictions before disarmament discussions began in earnest.

The United States imposed the curbs against a Macau-based bank holding North Korean accounts in response to the North's alleged involvement in counterfeiting and money laundering. That led to a freezing of North Korean assets at the bank, worth about \$24 million. - AP

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/16406879.htm>

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Washington Times

January 8, 2007

Pg. 13

Newspaper Cites Plans For Iran Nuke Attack

By David Stringer, Associated Press

LONDON -- A British newspaper reported yesterday that Israeli pilots are training to strike as many as three targets in Iran with low-yield nuclear weapons, aiming to halt Tehran's uranium-enrichment program.

Israeli officials swiftly denied the report, which comes amid growing global concerns over an Iranian project that Washington and other governments think is secretly intended to build atomic weapons.

Israel has never confirmed that it has nuclear bombs, although analysts widely think the Jewish state possesses a significant stockpile and U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates referred to an Israeli atomic arsenal during his recent confirmation hearing.

Citing unidentified Israeli military sources, the Sunday Times said plans had been drawn up in Israel for an attack using "bunker-buster" nuclear weapons against atomic facilities at three sites south of the Iranian capital.

The U.S. and its allies suspect Tehran of trying to produce atomic weapons there -- and the issue has taken on greater urgency because of Iranian leaders' statements calling for the destruction of Israel and their recent hosting of a conference questioning the Holocaust.

Though Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has not explicitly ruled out a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, he says the issue should be dealt with diplomatically -- and stresses that an Iranian nuclear bomb would be a problem for the entire world, not just Israel.

Some view Israeli officials' occasional implied threats as a means of pressuring the world community to take action, building on the recent U.N. Security Council decision to impose economic sanctions on Tehran for its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment.

Iran says its nuclear program is solely for peaceful purposes, including generating electricity, and it has called the U.N. move invalid and illegal.

The Sunday Times said Israeli military officials think Iran could produce enough enriched uranium to build nuclear weapons within two years. It said Israeli pilots had made flights to the British colony of Gibraltar while training for the 2,000-mile round trip that would be required to reach the Iranian targets.

Israeli pilots conducted a similar raid on Iraq in 1981, destroying a nuclear facility being built by dictator Saddam Hussein's regime.

But Iran's program may be far more difficult to cripple because it is thought to be distributed over many sites and, in part, deep underground.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20070107-112849-3144r.htm>

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New York Times

January 9, 2007

Pg. 9

Iranian Leader Vows To Resist U.N. Sanctions

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Jan. 8 — Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Monday that Iran would not back down from developing its nuclear program, despite sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council last month.

Ayatollah Khamenei, 67, has the final word on state matters, including nuclear policies.

He was making his first public appearance since rumors spread on several Web sites on Thursday that he had died.

"The Iranian people will definitely not give up their right and the authorities have no right to give up this great achievement," Ayatollah Khamenei said, addressing a crowd in Qum, 82 miles south of Tehran.

The Security Council passed a resolution on Dec. 23 with sanctions intended to curb Iran's uranium enrichment program, which Iran says is for peaceful purposes but the United States and some European nations contend is for the purpose of creating nuclear weapons. The measure bars the trade of goods or technology related to Iran's nuclear program. Enriched uranium can be used for making nuclear fuel but also for making nuclear weapons.

The resolution also gave Iran a two-month deadline to halt the program or face tougher sanctions.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has also brushed off the resolution and vowed that Iran will not suspend the nuclear program.

In his remarks, Ayatollah Khamenei also warned neighboring Arab countries not to join an alliance with the United States and Britain against Iran.

"The nuclear program is a native achievement and is a source of pride for Iran and the Islamic world," Ayatollah Khamenei said.

"If some Arab and Islamic governments think that by joining an alliance with Britain and the United States and imposing sanctions on Iran they can earn the satisfaction of the Zionist regime, they should know that they are making a political blunder," he said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/09/world/middleeast/09iran.html?ref=world>

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Washington Post

N. Korea nuclear test likely: general

By Jon Herskovitz

Reuters

Tuesday, January 9, 2007; 7:04 AM

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea is likely to test another nuclear device, the commander of the U.S. military in South Korea said on Tuesday, but he declined to comment on reports that an explosion was imminent.

South Korean officials have said activity had been spotted near a suspected nuclear test site in North Korea but there was no evidence to suggest Pyongyang was about to test again. The North conducted its first test in October.

"There is no reason to believe that at some time in the future, when it serves their purposes, that they won't test another one," General B.B. Bell told a news conference.

"So I suspect some day they will," Bell said, adding he would not share any intelligence information about a possible test.

The U.S. and South Korean military were fully capable of deterring North Korean aggression, and the combined forces would respond swiftly to thwart any North Korean attack, he said.

North Korea said on October 9 it had successfully conducted a nuclear test, and the isolated state has since repeatedly said it was boosting its deterrent against a possible U.S. attack.

Six-way nuclear talks last month in Beijing made little progress with the United States pushing the North to make concrete steps toward scrapping its nuclear weapons program and Pyongyang calling on Washington to end a crackdown on its international finances.

"DETERRENCE EXERCISE"

The United States denies it has any intention of attacking the North.

Bell said U.S. forces would go ahead with an annual joint military exercise with South Korean troops that involves bringing U.S. troops and armaments into the South.

The drill has been held for years without major incident, but North Korea bitterly denounces the joint exercise as a preparation for an invasion and nuclear war.

"The scheduled exercise is not provocative in any way," Bell said. "This is a routine deterrence exercise."

Bell also called on Seoul to do more in terms of financing to keep the troops ready, prevent a delay in moving U.S. forces out of a major garrison in Seoul and into a base to the south, as well as ensuring a smooth transfer of wartime command.

Seoul and Washington have agreed that between 2009 and 2012 South Korea would gain wartime operational command of its troops, changing an arrangement stemming from the 1950-1953 Korean War.

Bell said the shift could occur as soon as 2009, while the South Korean government is looking more toward 2012. He is sure the two sides will find an acceptable date but cautioned that a firm structure must be established because, with North Korea mounting a large military presence near the border, it may be a matter of moments between the end of the armistice and the start of a crisis.

"The worst thing we could do is within minutes try to transfer command back and forth. This would cause an exploitable seam for military commanders that would be unacceptable."

The United States has about 30,000 troops in South Korea to support the country's 670,000-strong military. North Korea has about 1.2 million troops, most of whom are stationed near the border that divides the peninsula.

(With additional reporting by Jack Kim)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/09/AR2007010900295.html>

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New York Times

A Rotten Smell Raises Alarms and Questions

By SEWELL CHAN

Published: January 9, 2007

It was the odor associated with natural gas — the telltale, unpleasant sulfur scent that typically signals a gas leak. But this time, it was lingering in many areas of Manhattan and northeastern New Jersey, coursing through buildings and leading to fears that it could ignite or that a dangerous chemical had been deliberately released.

Schools and office buildings were evacuated. A subway station was shut, and commuter trains were rerouted.

Government security officials were put on alert. Fire trucks raced through the streets, while Coast Guard vessels patrolled New York Harbor, communicating with tugboats and container ships. Twelve people with complaints of minor illnesses or injuries were taken to hospitals.

The source of the odor? As of last night, city officials still did not know. But it lingered for an hour after first being reported around 9 a.m., leaving New York with another mystery on its hands and more than a few conspiracy theories to sort through.

With anxieties about gas leaks rattling the nerves of the city, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg held a press conference to assure residents that the city's air-quality detectors had found no cause for alarm. He hypothesized that the odor could have been caused by the release of mercaptan, a compound that smells like rotting eggs and is added to natural gas so people can detect and report leaks.

Throughout the day, possible culprits — among them a minor gas leak in Greenwich Village and natural-gas pipelines in northeastern New Jersey — were considered and ruled out.

The olfactory mystery in the New York region was matched by strange activity elsewhere. In Austin, Tex., police cordoned off 10 blocks of the downtown business district early yesterday after more than 60 birds were found dead overnight along Congress Avenue, which leads to the State Capitol. Air testing there failed to find a cause, but preliminary results determined that people were not at risk.

In New York, the piercing odor was the talk of Manhattan, and it called to mind another mystery: the maple syrup odor that people reported smelling on separate days in late 2005 and whose source has never been established. In yesterday's case, several people said they were overcome by the odor.

"I feel faint," said Ivolett Bredwood, a legal assistant who noticed the odor once she stepped off a New Jersey Transit train at Pennsylvania Station around 8:45 a.m. The smell trailed her as she walked to her office, at 99 Park Avenue, which was briefly evacuated. "It's an awful, nasty smell."

The widespread uncertainty and potential for danger led the authorities to take numerous precautions as thousands of reports of the odor flooded into 911 and utility hot lines.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority briefly closed the subway station at 23rd Street and Avenue of the Americas, as well as a control tower at West Fourth Street. Service was temporarily halted on PATH lines terminating at 33rd Street.

The major gas utilities — Consolidated Edison in New York and Public Service Electric and Gas in New Jersey — checked their transmission lines and reported no leaks, changes in pressure or other abnormalities.

The city's Department of Environmental Protection dispatched a mobile laboratory to the West Side with meters to test for ammonia, chloride, cyanide, methane, carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide and volatile organic compounds.

"That's the hardest part, finding the source," said Christopher Haas, a department specialist in hazardous materials.

"Air is very dynamic."

Officials were reluctant to discuss terrorism precautions in great detail, but they said that the city regularly monitors the air with machines that can detect the presence of chemical, biological or radiological substances.

At the Port Authority Bus Terminal, some alarmed passengers thought that their buses had problems. And at the Equitable Center, on Seventh Avenue between 51st and 52nd Streets, air vents were closed to keep the odor out. Two schools were evacuated. Norman Thomas High School in Midtown was emptied for about 50 minutes beginning at 9:30 a.m., while students at Public School 11 in Chelsea were taken to Public School 33 nearby. Jeremy Fleishman, a worker at a computer repair shop in Chelsea, said it smelled as if "somebody left the Bunsen burner on" in chemistry class. By 10:30 a.m., he said, "it mostly dissipated — or maybe we just got used to it." At 980 Avenue of the Americas, a building that was briefly evacuated, a guard, Ralph Supino of Secaucus, N.J., said he called Con Edison but reached only recorded messages. "They were overwhelmed," he said. For some, it seemed logical that the odor was tied to some sort of terrorist plot. At 1250 Broadway, which was also briefly closed, a guard, Miguel Contreras of Irvington, N.J., said that thought raced through his mind when he noticed the smell upon arriving at the bus terminal on his way to work. "You pray to God that everything is fine and it's just a leak somewhere," he said. Adding to the alarm was the strength and duration of the odor, which may have been aggravated by a weather phenomenon known as a temperature inversion. Inversions, which often occur when a warm front moves over a cooler, denser air mass, cause the temperature closer to the ground to be cooler and the air higher up to be warmer — a reversal of the usual pattern. Inversions can trap pollutants and odors, preventing them from being dispersed upward. David Wally, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service's forecast office in Upton, N.Y., said a warm front approached the city between 7 and 8 a.m., making it "very possible" that an inversion trapped the pollutants and gaseous odor closer to the ground. The inversion eroded later in the morning, he said. The city recorded 4,500 more 911 calls than usual between 9 and 11 a.m., with most of the increase in Manhattan. The Fire Department responded to 450 calls, 41 of them for emergency medical assistance. Dr. Kristin E. Harkin, an emergency-medicine physician at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center, said that strong odors can worsen the symptoms of people with chronic respiratory ailments like asthma and emphysema.

Some suspicion fell on New Jersey, given the path of the prevailing winds and the prevalence of chemical and petroleum facilities in the state. Calls about the smell were received in West New York, Weehawken and other places.

In Hoboken, the downtown police headquarters and several office buildings were briefly evacuated, according to Mayor David Roberts, who said he took an anxious call about the smell from his wife.

Jack Burns, coordinator of the Hudson County Office of Emergency Management, in Secaucus, said that officials had ruled out the possibility of a mercaptan spill there. He added, "If it's in New York and people can smell it in western Hudson County, that's a lot of it, whatever it is."

Michael Williams, an accountant in Jersey City, said he delayed taking a smoking break for more than an hour because the odor was so intense. "I didn't want to spark an explosion or anything," he said.

Reporting was contributed by Carla Baranauckas, Ken Belson, Thayer Evans, Cassi Feldman, Kate Hammer, Christine Hauser, David M. Herszenhorn, John Holl, Patrick LaForge, Colin Moynihan, William Neuman, Andy Newman and Ronald Smothers.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/09/nyregion/09smell.html>

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Washington Times

January 10, 2007

Pg. 1

General Sees Another N. Korea Nuclear Test

Hits defense hurdles with Seoul

By Andrew Salmon, Washington Times

SEOUL -- The senior U.S. commander in South Korea said yesterday that North Korea will likely conduct another nuclear test, and he also vented his frustration at a range of issues bedeviling Washington's military alliance with Seoul.

"They have self-proclaimed their possession of nuclear weapons, and there is no reason to believe that at some time in the future, when it serves their purposes, that they won't test another one," Gen. Burwell B. Bell said of North Korea, which detonated a nuclear device on Oct 9. "So I suspect some day they will."

The general, speaking to reporters, declined to discuss whether a test was imminent, citing confidentiality of intelligence.

ABC News last week reported Pyongyang might be preparing for another test. Citing unnamed U.S. defense officials, the network said the moves were similar to steps taken before the October blast.

Top U.S. and South Korean officials have dismissed the speculation, saying there is no indication such a development was imminent.

Gen. Bell also expressed concerns about the relocation of the headquarters of the U.S. forces in South Korea, the transfer of wartime command of South Korean forces to South Korean leadership, and budgetary shortfalls.

"I must admit that I was surprised when I read local press reports that [a South Korean] government official stated the relocation of U.S. forces would not occur until after 2013," he said. "This was news to me, and not at all reflective of the agreement we have with [South Korea] to achieve the move by 2008."

Yongsan garrison, home to 6,500 troops and 8,000 civilians -- family members and defense contractors -- has been a bone of contention in the alliance for years. Talks to relocate the central Seoul base have been ongoing since 1990, but only in 2004 did the two countries sign an agreement to relocate it to the city of Pyeongtaek, 55 miles south of the capital, by 2008.

Construction of the new base is under way, but last month, local press reports, quoting an unnamed South Korean government official, stated the move would be delayed until 2013. Seoul officials have not refuted the reports.

Noting that many U.S. personnel and their families were living in dilapidated facilities at Yongsan, Gen. Bell said that with the move planned, he could not construct new facilities on the current base.

The proposal to transfer wartime command of South Korean forces is caught in a similar timeline dispute. U.S. military officials say the transfer of command can be achieved by 2009, but the South Korean side wants to delay it until 2012.

Gen. Bell said future U.S. force commanders would play a "supporting role" to South Korean commanders, and hinted that the transfer of wartime control of troops needs more serious attention than it has so far received.

"The worst things we can do, within minutes, is to transfer command back and forth," he said. "That would be unacceptable."

Gen. Bell also addressed shortfalls in South Korean financial support to fund the ongoing consolidation of U.S. troops across the Korean Peninsula. The U.S. force in Korea has been shrinking -- from 37,500 troops in 2003, to 29,500 today, and there will be 25,000 in 2008. Most of the troops are moving to new, less intrusive base areas. In negotiations, Seoul had agreed to pay 44 percent of U.S. troops' consolidation costs -- \$886 million. However, what Seoul finally offered was \$772 million, leaving a shortfall of more than \$100 million.

"I'm being put into a bad position, from a policy perspective, of not having the money to do what our two governments told me to do," the general said, adding that he would need to make "significant" cuts in U.S. forces' programs.

Gen. Bell's outspoken tone surprised some analysts.

"Clearly, Washington is expecting Koreans to take greater responsibility for their defense, and behave honorably in the negotiation process as that happens," said Michael Breen, a Seoul-based author of several books about the peninsula and a longtime Korea watcher.

Meanwhile, the overall deterioration in the alliance dismays local conservatives.

"The sharp rise in anti-Americanism here has partly been instigated by North Korean propaganda, but the behavior of our government in the recent two to three years has been rather out of the ordinary in its ability to be diplomatic," said Lee In-ho, a professor at Myongji University.

"Conservatives are concerned here: Even if we are critical of some policy lines pursued by the Bush administration, we do not want to jettison the alliance completely," he said.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20070110-122447-4530r.htm>

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New York Times

January 10, 2007

Pg. 3

U.S. Prohibits All Transactions With A Major Iranian Bank

By Steven R. Weisman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9 — The United States, moving to raise pressure on Iran, on Tuesday barred American financial institutions from doing business with a major Iranian bank after concluding that it had been involved in illicit weapons programs.

The move against Bank Sepah, announced by the Treasury Department, also affected North Korea, which American officials said had used the bank to facilitate payments to a North Korean group that exports missile technologies.

The announcement applies to domestic and foreign branches of American banks, as well as to American citizens working at overseas banks that deal with Bank Sepah anywhere in the world. The department also said that no American bank can transfer dollars to Bank Sepah or its branches and subsidiaries in Rome, London, Frankfurt and Paris.

The Treasury announcement was the second time in the last year that a major Iranian bank had been barred from any dealings with the American financial system. It is the first specific move against an Iranian bank since the imposition of sanctions on Iran by the United Nations Security Council on Dec. 23.

Last year, the United States took similar action against Bank Saderat, another of Iran's major institutions, citing what it said was the bank's involvement in financing terrorism. Both Bank Saderat and Bank Sepah, cited for financial transactions linked to weapons proliferation, are state owned or controlled.

Though the two banks have virtually no direct links to American banks, the designation means that no American bank can help facilitate — by transferring dollars, for example — any transaction between a European bank and Bank Sepah. Thus if an Italian or German bank wanted to supply dollars for a transaction involving Bank Sepah, it would be unable to do so because American banks would be barred from transferring them.

American experts say these steps effectively extend the reach of American law to other countries, though to only a limited degree.

“By taking this action, the United States is putting immense pressure on our allies and trading partners to treat Bank Sepah the same way we do,” said Judith Lee, a partner at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher specializing in sanctions law. “It is an effort to make U.S. actions against Iran extraterritorial.”

European countries have opposed moves by the United States to apply the principle of extraterritoriality, a term referring to cases when American law can affect dealings entirely within another country. But the Bush administration recently has stepped up its use of various laws and directives to press forward with the concept. For example, since oil is traded in dollars, the reach of American directives could be significant, many banking experts say. In theory, Tuesday's action would prevent Bank Sepah from facilitating an oil sale in which dollars are used. Iran has already announced that, because of American directives, it has begun selling oil for euros rather than dollars.

“Bank Sepah is the financial linchpin of Iran's missile procurement network, and has actively assisted Iran's pursuit of missiles capable of carrying weapons of mass destruction,” said Stuart Levey, the Treasury under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence.

Mr. Levey said Bank Sepah had been involved in transactions for Iran's Aerospace Industries Organization and two Iranian missile companies. These three entities were mentioned in the Security Council resolution approved in late December calling on all countries to avoid doing business with various groups in Iran.

Mr. Levey also said the United States had been in touch with authorities in Britain, France, Italy and Germany to discuss the need to persuade local financial institutions to stop doing business with Bank Sepah.

Unlike the United States, Mr. Levey said that European countries, which have not enacted laws like those passed here, “don't have specific authority to act as the United States does” against European banks or businesses engaging in transactions with other banks and businesses linked to terrorism or weapons programs.

Nevertheless, Treasury officials say Treasury Secretary Henry M. Paulson Jr. and Mr. Levey have pressed European authorities and banks to try to isolate both Bank Sepah and Bank Saderat.

Mr. Levey said that the branch of Bank Sepah in Rome had had significant involvement in financial transactions related to Iran's missile program, and that Italian authorities had been alerted to the problem.

There was no immediate comment from the press office of the Italian Embassy in Washington on whether Italy was taking any separate actions in consonance with the United States actions.

When the United States moved against Bank Saderat last year, many banking experts predicted that it was only a matter of time before Washington took action against other financial institutions in Iran.

American officials say already intensive diplomacy has been stepped up after the Security Council resolution adopted in late December as part of a campaign to get Iran to stop enriching uranium in what the West has charged is a clandestine nuclear weapons program.

That resolution ended up being weakened at the request of Russia and China, and some American officials say they need to shift tactics and use other means to exert financial pressure on Iran.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/10/washington/10bank.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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