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Honolulu Star-Bulletin
February 11, 2007

Floating Radar Completes Pearl Harbor-Alaska Trip

The \$900 million sea-based X-band unit survives storms on its way to its home port

By Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska--A powerful radar to be used as part of the national missile defense program made the trip from Hawaii aboard its oceangoing platform to Alaska waters, where it will remain until mooring facilities can be built.

The \$900 million sea-based X-band radar is the largest radar of its type.

"The main advantage of having one as powerful as this one it can not only track and identify the warhead you are trying to hit, but can distinguish the warhead from any decoys or countermeasures traveling with that warhead,"

Rick Lehner, a spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency in Virginia, said Thursday.

The missile defense program is designed to protect the United States against long-range missile attacks. The radar will be used to identify and track incoming missile targets for interceptor missiles based in Alaska and California. The radar, which looks like a giant golf ball and weighs almost 50,000 tons, departed Pearl Harbor on Jan. 3 after going through sea trials and exercises.

During its trip to Alaska, it survived several winter storms in the Pacific Ocean, encountering waves of more than 50 feet and wind gusts of more than 100 mph, according to the Missile Defense Agency.

The radar, which is bigger than a football field, will be home-ported at Adak in the Aleutian Islands. About 75 crew will be stationed with the radar.

The radar floats on an oil drilling platform that was provided with twin-hulled propulsion and can travel at between 5 and 7 knots. It has the added advantage of being mobile, so it can be used wherever the military needs it, Lehner said.

"We can put it anywhere, in any ocean," Lehner said. However, he said it will remain in the Pacific Ocean.

Several tests are planned for the radar this year. In March the radar will be used to track a missile out of Vandenberg Air Force Base in California to calibrate the radar.

In April or May the radar will be used to track a missile in an intercept test. In the fall, Lehner said, the radar will be used in a test where it will formulate "an intercept solution."

<http://starbulletin.com/2007/02/11/news/story15.html>

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Washington Post

February 12, 2007

Pg. 12

Iran Softens Tone, Declares Readiness To Resume Talks

President and Top Negotiator Reject U.N. Call to Freeze Nuclear Program

By Craig Whitlock and Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Foreign Service

MUNICH, Feb. 11 -- Facing the prospect of broader international sanctions, Iran's president and national security chief on Sunday offered to resume negotiations over their country's nuclear program and eased up on some of the contentious rhetoric of the past, including threats to destroy Israel.

In Munich, Ali Larijani, Iran's top nuclear negotiator, briefly met with European diplomats for the first time since talks collapsed in September and said Iran was willing to return to formal discussions.

He also said his country had "no intention of aggression against any country," adding that Iran "posed no threat to Israel" in particular, despite past vows from Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to wipe Israel "off the map." Meanwhile in Tehran, Ahmadinejad also said that Iran was willing to resume negotiations, although both he and Larijani rejected a condition for talks set by the U.N. Security Council that Iran first freeze its uranium enrichment program. "We are prepared for dialogue but won't suspend our activities," Ahmadinejad said.

In an address commemorating the 28th anniversary of the Islamic revolution that overthrew the shah of Iran, Ahmadinejad said his government had made recent progress in its nuclear development but did not give specifics. Some diplomats and analysts had expected him to announce that Iran had made a breakthrough in its efforts to enrich uranium.

U.S. and European officials expressed doubt about the sincerity of Iran's stated willingness to talk. "Offering to negotiate but saying suspension's off the table raises a real question about the sincerity of what he said," U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Robert M. Kimmitt told reporters in Germany after Larijani's appearance at the Munich Conference on Security Policy, an annual gathering of top defense officials and diplomats from around the world.

In Paris, French Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said it would be "unacceptable" to hold negotiations unless Iran first agrees to freeze its nuclear activities. "We have to be exceedingly clear and very rigorous on this proposition," he said.

Larijani met briefly in Munich with German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief. Although no breakthroughs were reported, it was the first time the two sides had met since talks between Iran and European diplomats broke off last fall over Iran's refusal to end its uranium enrichment program.

Iran insists its nuclear program is for peaceful energy purposes, but U.S. and European officials say Tehran is pushing to develop atomic weapons in violation of international treaties.

On Friday, the International Atomic Energy Agency suspended some technical aid to Iran, which is under a Feb. 21 deadline from the Security Council to stop enriching uranium or face more international sanctions.

With the deadline looming, Iranian officials have sounded less strident of late. Although Ahmadinejad has garnered worldwide headlines for threatening to destroy Israel and for calling the Holocaust a "myth," diplomats and analysts said he has lost domestic political support in recent months and is under pressure to moderate his tone and positions. In Munich, where Hitler and the Nazis first tasted power, Larijani tried to sidestep questions about his government's views on the Holocaust, during which the Third Reich orchestrated the killing of an estimated 6 million Jews and about 5 million other Europeans. It is a crime in Germany to deny that the Holocaust happened.

"There is an overreaction to the matter of the Holocaust," Larijani said. "It's a historical matter. I can't see why such sensitivities are being given to such a simple case."

Larijani also said Iran was a force for regional stability in the Middle East and had no designs on any of its neighbors, including Iraq and Israel. "We pose no threat, and if we are conducting nuclear research and development, we are no threat to Israel," he said.

Instead, Larijani blamed the United States for bringing chaos to the Middle East and South Asia, noting that it had invaded two of Iran's neighbors, Iraq and Afghanistan. He echoed some of the criticism leveled a day earlier in Munich by Russian President Vladimir Putin, who harshly accused the United States of making the world more dangerous than at any point during the Cold War.

In his own speech at the Munich conference Sunday, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates used both humor and pointed remarks to parry Putin's speech. "One Cold War was quite enough," Gates told the audience of about 200 defense and foreign ministers and other officials from about two dozen countries.

Alluding to the fact that both he and Putin are former intelligence officials, Gates said, "I guess old spies have a habit of blunt speaking."

But he added, "I've been to reeducation camp" -- a reference to the four years he spent as president of Texas A&M University before becoming the Pentagon chief.

Gates, who has been defense secretary for just two months, noted that he has accepted an invitation from Putin to visit Russia.

Gates devoted most of his speech to urging NATO members to contribute to the force fighting Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan.

"It is vitally important that the success Afghanistan has achieved not be allowed to slip away through neglect or lack of political will or resolve," Gates said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/11/AR2007021100334.html>

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New York Times
February 13, 2007

In Shift, Accord On North Korea Seems To Be Set

By Jim Yardley and David E. Sanger

BEIJING, Tuesday, Feb. 13 — The United States and four other nations reached a tentative agreement to provide North Korea with roughly \$400 million in fuel oil and aid, in return for the North's starting to disable its nuclear facilities and allowing nuclear inspectors back into the country, according to American officials who have reviewed the proposed text.

While the accord sets a 60-day deadline for North Korea to accomplish those first steps toward disarmament, it leaves until an undefined moment in the future — and to another negotiation — the actual removal of North Korea's nuclear weapons and the fuel that it has manufactured to produce them.

Bush administration officials said they believed that the other nations participating in the talks — China, Japan, South Korea and Russia — would consent to the tentative agreement as soon as Tuesday. The parties still await a final confirmation from the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il. The tentative agreement was forwarded to the respective national capitals Tuesday morning.

In essence, if the North agrees to the deal, a country that only four months ago conducted its first nuclear test will have traded away its ability to produce new nuclear fuel in return for immediate energy and other aid. It would still

hold on to, for now, an arsenal that American intelligence officials believe contains more than a half-dozen nuclear weapons or the fuel that is their essential ingredient.

The accord also leaves unaddressed the fate of a second and still-unacknowledged nuclear weapons program that the United States accused North Korea of buying from the Pakistani nuclear engineer Abdul Qadeer Khan in the late 1990s, in what appeared to be an effort to circumvent a nuclear freeze the North negotiated in 1994 with the Clinton administration.

Negotiations had appeared near collapse on Sunday over North Korea's demands for huge shipments of fuel oil and electricity.

Under the new tentative agreement, the oil and aid for North Korea would be provided by South Korea, China and the United States — meaning that President Bush would need to win Congressional approval. That proved difficult for the Clinton administration, which constantly fought hawks in Congress over providing fuel oil to the impoverished nation under the earlier accord.

Japan has declined to participate in providing oil or aid until it resolves separate issues with North Korea about the abduction of some of its citizens by the North, American officials said.

In Washington on Monday night, administration officials declined to call the first phase of the new agreement a "nuclear freeze." The term has echoes of the Clinton accord, which Mr. Bush had criticized because it failed to force the North to ship its nuclear fuel out of the country before it received significant aid. The officials insisted that the current agreement was different because the North will not receive light-water nuclear reactors, like the ones it was promised in the 1994 agreement, and because the agreement will also be signed by the North's immediate neighbors, including China.

Beijing was the North's ally in the Korean War and its protector for decades, but relations have been strained and the Chinese leadership was apparently pressuring the North to accept the new agreement.

"If they renege on this," said one senior administration official, who would not speak on the record because the deal had not been signed, "they are sticking their fingers into the eyes of the Chinese."

Nonetheless, some administration officials acknowledged that they had concluded that a step-by-step accord was their only choice and that it would be impossible to set a schedule for the North's disarmament without taking initial steps to build trust.

"Everybody had to make some changes to try to narrow the differences," the chief American negotiator, Christopher R. Hill, told reporters as he returned to his hotel at 2:41 a.m. on Tuesday.

Mr. Hill was expected to meet again on Tuesday in Beijing with envoys from China, South Korea, Japan, Russia and North Korea to learn if each nation has approved the deal. He said he had been in frequent contact with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during the late-night negotiations and that he believed the Bush administration would support the agreement. "We feel it is an excellent draft," he said. "I don't think we are the problem."

If Mr. Hill is correct, it marks a major change of course for an administration that has been beset by six years of virulent internal arguments over whether to negotiate with North Korea or squeeze the government of Mr. Kim until it collapses. Hawks in the administration, including many allies of Vice President Dick Cheney, have opposed any deal that would provide aid to the North before it disgorges its arsenal.

Even before the preliminary agreement was signed in Beijing, one of Mr. Cheney's protégés, John R. Bolton, who left his post as American ambassador to the United Nations just two months ago, denounced the accord. "This is a very bad deal," he said on CNN, urging President Bush to reject it. He added that "it contradicts fundamental premises of the president's policy," and he said that it made the administration "look very weak."

Gary Samore, who was the top nonproliferation official in the Clinton White House and who negotiated with North Korea, commended the Bush administration for negotiating an accord with the North, but said: "Unfortunately, it is three years, eight bombs and one nuclear test too late. But better late than never."

Under the details of the deal, as described by American and Asian officials, the \$400 million in aid would be disbursed to the North as it meets its initial commitments, probably over the course of a year. The first of those must be completed in the next 60 days, including the "permanent disablement" of the country's existing nuclear facilities at Yongbyon, its main nuclear complex north of the capital, Pyongyang.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, whose inspectors were kicked out of North Korea four years ago, also would need to be invited back in. And the North would have to prepare a "complete declaration" of all its nuclear facilities, turning that over to all of the parties in the talks and the I.A.E.A.

That would pave the way for a second phase, in which "working groups" would negotiate the details of disarmament, including turning over weapons and fuel. Other groups would explore normalization of relations, a peace treaty formally ending the Korean War, and other economic aid in return for disarmament.

But the disarmament process promises to be enormously complex, far harder than dismantling Libya's comparatively small nuclear complex three years ago. Libya never produced nuclear material. North Korea is believed to have made one or two weapons, or the fuel for them, nearly two decades ago, and perhaps a half-dozen

or more since 2003. But American officials are uncertain exactly how many weapons the North possesses, and in the second phase of the accord, the North would have to explain what it did with the uranium-enrichment equipment that it is said to have purchased from Dr. Khan.

“We don’t know what state that program is in,” one senior official with access to the intelligence information said Monday. “We only know what they appear to have bought,” based in part on Pakistani interrogations of Dr. Khan. United Nations sanctions against North Korea put into place after last year’s nuclear test are expected to remain in effect for the next year, American officials said.

Some experts doubt that the North will ever agree to turn over its weapons, which it considers its main bargaining chip with the West, and Mr. Kim’s only insurance policy against being toppled. “This is a freeze with a promise to negotiate subsequent disarmament,” said Mr. Samore. “And a North Korean promise to negotiate later is pretty worthless.”

Mr. Hill acknowledged that he had a lot of negotiating ahead of him. “This is only one phase of denuclearization,” he said. “We’re not done.”

If the deal is approved, Mr. Hill added, the new working groups could be quickly established while chief negotiators would likely reconvene in Beijing as soon as next month. He said the tentative agreement would create a succession of deadlines that would need to be met as a precondition of the deal.

North Korea had nearly scuttled the negotiations in recent days by insisting on a huge energy aid package. Varying reports in Asia suggested that North Korea had demanded two million tons of heavy fuel oil and two million kilowatts of electricity in exchange for its approval of any new agreement, far less than it got.

Jim Yardley reported from Beijing, and David E. Sanger from Washington.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/13/world/asia/13korea.html?ex=1172120400&en=91ec3a9312d1a780&ei=5070>

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New York Times

February 14, 2007

Pg. 1

News Analysis

Outside Pressures Snapped Korean Deadlock

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 — It is hard to imagine that either George W. Bush or Kim Jong-il would have agreed even a year ago to the kind of deal they have now approved. The pact, announced Tuesday, would stop, seal and ultimately disable North Korea’s nuclear facilities, as part of a grand bargain that the administration has previously shunned as overly generous to a repressive country — especially one that has not yet said when or if it will give up its nuclear arsenal.

But in the past few months, the world has changed for both Mr. Bush and Mr. Kim, two men who have made clear how deeply they detest each other. Both are beset by huge problems, and both needed some kind of breakthrough. For Mr. Bush, bogged down in Iraq, his authority undercut by the November elections, any chance to show progress in peacefully disarming a country that detonated a nuclear test just four months ago could no longer be passed up. As one senior administration official said over the weekend, the prospect that Mr. Bush might leave Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and North Korea more dangerous places than he found them “can’t be very appealing.”

Still, the accord came under fast criticism from right and left that it was both too little and too late.

For years, Mr. Bush’s administration has been paralyzed by an ideological war, between those who wanted to bring down North Korea and those who thought it was worth one more try to lure the country out of isolation. In embracing this deal, Mr. Bush sided with those who have counseled engagement, notably his secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, and her chief negotiator, Christopher R. Hill. Mr. Bush took the leap in the hope that in a few months, he will be able to declare that North Korea can no longer produce fuel for new nuclear weapons, even if it has not yet turned over its old ones.

For Mr. Kim, the nuclear explosion — more of a fizzle — that he set off in the mountains not far from the Chinese border in October turned out to be a strategic mistake. The Chinese, who spent six decades protecting the Kim family dynasty, responded by cutting off his military aid, and helping Washington crack down on the banks that financed the Cognac-and-Mercedes lifestyle of the North Korean leadership.

“As a political statement, their test was a red flare for everyone,” said Robert Gallucci, who under President Clinton was the chief negotiator of the 1994 agreement with North Korea, which collapsed four years ago. “It gave President Bush and the Chinese some leverage.”

Mr. Gallucci and other nuclear experts agree that the hardest bargaining with world’s most reclusive, often paranoid, government remains ahead.

Over the next year, under the pact, the North must not only disable its nuclear reactors and reprocessing facilities, it must lead inspectors to its weapons and a suspected second nuclear weapons program. And to get to the next phase of the agreement, the one that gives “disarmament” meaning, North Korea will have to be persuaded to give away the country’s crown jewels: the weapons that make the world pay attention to it.

But before the administration faces off against Mr. Kim in Pyongyang, it will have to confront the many critics of the deal here at home. As the White House took credit on Tuesday for what it called a “first step,” it found itself pilloried by conservatives who attacked the administration for folding in negotiations with a charter member of what Mr. Bush called the “axis of evil,” and for replicating key elements of Mr. Clinton’s agreement with North Korea. At the same time, Mr. Bush’s advisers were being confronted by barbs from veterans of the Clinton administration, who argued that the same deal struck Tuesday had been within reach several years and a half-dozen weapons ago, had only Mr. Bush chosen to negotiate with the North rather than fixate on upending its government.

In fact, elements of the new decision closely resemble the Clinton deal, called the Agreed Framework. As it did in that accord, the North agrees to “freeze” its operations at Yongbyon, its main nuclear facility, and to allow inspections there. And like that agreement, the new one envisions the North’s ultimately giving up all of its nuclear material.

In two respects, however, the new accord is different: North Korea does not receive the incentives the West has offered — in this case, about a year’s supply of heavy fuel oil and other aid — until it “disables” its equipment at Yongbyon and declares where it has hidden its bombs, nuclear fuel and other nuclear facilities. And the deal is not only with Washington, but with Beijing, Moscow, Seoul and Tokyo.

“We’re building a set of relationships,” Ms. Rice argued Tuesday, saying that the deal would not have been possible if she and President Bush had not been able to swing the Chinese over to their side. Mr. Bush has told colleagues that he believes the turning point came in his own blunt conversations with President Hu Jintao of China, in which, the American president has said, he explained in stark terms that a nuclear North Korea was more China’s problem than America’s.

But the administration was clearly taken aback on Tuesday by the harshness of the critique from the right, led by its recently departed United Nations ambassador, John R. Bolton, who charged that the deal “undercuts the sanctions resolution” against the North that he pushed through the Security Council four months ago.

Democrats, in contrast, were caught between enjoying watching Mr. Bush change course and declaring that the agreement amounted to disarmament-lite. “It gives the illusion of moving more rapidly to disarmament, but it doesn’t really require anything to happen in the second phase,” said Joel Wit, who was the coordinator of the 1994 agreement.

The Bush administration is counting on the lure of future benefits to the North — fuel oil, the peace treaty ending the Korean War it has long craved, an end to other sanctions — to force Mr. Kim to disclose where his nuclear weapons and fuel are stored.

Mr. Bush’s big worry now is that Mr. Kim is playing the administration for time. Many experts think he is betting that by the time the first big deliveries of oil and aid are depleted, America will be distracted by a presidential election.

But Mr. Bush could also end up with a diplomatic triumph, one he needs desperately. To get there, he appears to have changed course. Asked in 2004 about North Korea, he said, “I don’t think you give timelines to dictators and tyrants.”

Now he appears to have concluded that sometimes the United States has to negotiate with dictators and odious rulers, because the other options — military force, sanctions or watching an unpredictable nation gain a nuclear arsenal — seem even worse.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/14/world/asia/14assess.html>

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Washington Post

February 14, 2007

Pg. 11

U.S. Flexibility Credited In Nuclear Deal With N. Korea

By Glenn Kessler and Edward Cody, Washington Post Staff Writers

The six-nation deal to shut down North Korea’s nuclear facility, four months after Pyongyang conducted its first nuclear test, was reached yesterday largely because President Bush was willing to give U.S. negotiators new flexibility to reach an agreement, U.S. officials and Asian diplomats said yesterday.

Ever since the North Korean nuclear crisis erupted in 2002 after the discovery of a clandestine nuclear program, the Bush administration has insisted that North Korea should not be rewarded for its bad behavior -- and many of the U.S. offers have required Pyongyang to give up a lot before it could receive anything in return.

Now Bush has signed off on a deal that accepts North Korea's original position -- a "freeze" of its Yongbyon nuclear facility -- and requires Washington to move first by unfreezing some North Korean bank accounts. The agreement leaves until later dealing with such vexing issues as the dismantlement of the facility, North Korea's stash of weapons-grade plutonium and even North Korea's admission of the nuclear program that started the crisis in the first place.

As a result, the agreement came under attack yesterday, with conservatives labeling it a betrayal and Democrats charging that Bush allowed North Korea to become a nuclear-weapon state without gaining much improvement over a Clinton-era deal that collapsed during Bush's first term. But Bush pronounced himself "pleased" with the accord, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, a prime architect of the accord, said it is just the beginning of a long process. "This is not the end of the story," she said, calling it the result of "patient, creative and tough diplomacy." North Korea has a long history of brinkmanship and breaking international agreements, giving pause even to supporters of this diplomatic effort. Bush privately told a group of visiting North Korea experts in October, shortly after North Korea conducted its test, that he did not think any dictator would give up nuclear weapons but that he still saw no alternative to a diplomatic process. Administration officials say it actually became easier to win an agreement after the test because China, North Korea's main patron, was so shocked and embarrassed by Pyongyang's behavior that it became a driving force in the talks.

This deal came as the administration has struggled for some sort of diplomatic victory and as hard-liners who had opposed concessions -- such as former defense secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and former ambassador to the United Nations John R. Bolton -- have left the administration.

The chief U.S. negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, had over time been viewed with suspicion by administration hawks. But, in recent weeks, he worked closely with a White House aide, Victor Cha, who has conservative bona fides on North Korea. Informal talks Cha had with the North Koreans -- including a chance encounter in the Beijing airport in December -- helped lead to the unusual negotiations Hill and Cha held with North Korean counterparts in Berlin last month, officials said.

Those bilateral talks -- which sketched out the parameters of the final deal -- were personally approved by Bush after he had insisted for four years that he would not allow direct U.S.-North Korean negotiations.

Under the agreement, North Korea will close and "seal" its main nuclear reactor at Yongbyon within 60 days in return for 50,000 tons of fuel oil, as a first step in its abandonment of all nuclear weapons and research programs.

North Korea also reaffirmed a commitment to disable the reactor in an undefined next phase of denuclearization, and to discuss with the United States and other nations its plutonium fuel reserves and other nuclear programs that "would be abandoned." In return for taking those further steps, the accord said, North Korea would receive additional "economic, energy and humanitarian assistance up to the equivalent of 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil."

The pledges -- cited in an agreement reached in Beijing by North and South Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the United States after six days of lengthy negotiations -- marked North Korea's first concrete commitment to implement an agreement in principle, dating to September 2005, to relinquish its entire nuclear program. In the view of U.S. and allied diplomats, they also amounted to a down payment on the establishment of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and of new relations among Northeast Asian countries.

Since the talks began in August 2003, the environment for negotiations has become significantly more dangerous. North Korea exploded a nuclear test device in October and declared itself a nuclear power, giving it a status it did not have four years ago, or even when the agreement in principle was reached in September 2005.

For its part, the United States reiterated an earlier promise to discuss normalizing relations with the Pyongyang government, a long-standing goal of North Korea.

Separately, Hill said, the United States pledged to North Korea and to China, the chair of the six-party process, that it will resolve within 30 days a dispute over U.S. charges that Banco Delta Asia in Macau has been laundering illicit money from North Korea. This represented a retreat for Washington, which had previously insisted that the banking dispute was a law-enforcement matter that should be treated separately from the nuclear diplomacy. The United States is expected to unfreeze as much as a third of \$24 million in North Korean accounts, deeming that money to be legitimate, U.S. officials said.

The accord left for future negotiations the question of what to do with North Korea's declared nuclear weapons, estimated to be as many as 10 bombs from a stockpile of perhaps 50 kilograms of plutonium. In a harbinger of the potential difficulties ahead, the official North Korean news agency said the agreement requires only a temporary suspension of the country's nuclear facilities. "At the talks, the parties decided to offer economic and energy aid equivalent to 1 million tons of heavy fuel oil in connection with the DPRK's [North Korea's] temporary suspension of the operation of its nuclear facilities," it said.

Administration officials stressed that the agreement was an improvement over a bilateral deal reached in 1994 under then-President Bill Clinton, which collapsed after the Bush administration accused North Korea of conducting the clandestine uranium program. Under that agreement, North Korea froze the Yongbyon facility and agreed to "eventually dismantle" it in exchange for fuel oil and light-water reactors. Bush administration officials noted yesterday that the new agreement was signed by all of North Korea's neighbors, which they said would make it more difficult to break. Any suggestion of building light-water reactors for North Korea has been pushed far into the future.

Still, critics and supporters said that they were surprised by the extent of the administration's shift.

"All of us have been arguing -- engage, engage, engage," said John W. Lewis, a Stanford University professor who has repeatedly visited North Korea, most recently in November. "It had to begin with something like this, and it has gone far beyond what any one expected. It is really quite astonishing."

At the conservative Heritage Foundation, analyst Bruce Klingner said in a report that "the Bush Administration will be vulnerable to criticism that it has not only abandoned its principles, but that it did so while allowing North Korea to augment its nuclear weapons inventory." North Korean leader Kim Jong Il "used his characteristic mixture of military provocations, brinkmanship and crisis diplomacy to gain benefits for a return to the status quo ante and promises of future steps," Klingner wrote.

Cody reported from Beijing.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/13/AR2007021300130.html>

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New York Times

February 14, 2007

Pact With North Korea Draws Fire From A Wide Range Of Critics In U.S.

By Helene Cooper and Jim Yardley

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 — The deal that could lead North Korea to shut its main nuclear reactor came under criticism from both ends of the political spectrum immediately after it was announced on Tuesday.

From the right, hardliners argued that the United States should have held out until North Korea agreed to fully declare and dismantle its entire nuclear program.

From the left, Democrats argued that the deal was no better than one they said the United States could have gotten four years ago, before North Korea tested a nuclear bomb.

If the agreement holds — pacts with North Korea have a history of falling through — it could put the United States and Japan on a path toward normalizing relations with the isolated nation, which President Bush identified as part of an "axis of evil" in 2002, and which tested a nuclear device just four months ago.

Under the pact, North Korea agreed to freeze its production of plutonium at its five-megawatt nuclear facility in Yongbyon, and to allow international inspectors to monitor and verify its compliance. In return, the United States, China, South Korea and Russia agreed to provide North Korea with food and fuel aid.

The pact kicks down the road three much tougher issues: complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula; a complete declaration from North Korea of all its nuclear activities; and the future of North Korea's existing plutonium program.

The North would for now hold on to an arsenal that American intelligence officials say may contain as many as a half-dozen nuclear bombs or the fuel to make them.

Still, the deal represented a bureaucratic victory for Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who has pushed for a more diplomatic approach with North Korea than more hawkish administration officials would have liked. In the end, it was Ms. Rice who convinced President Bush to sign onto the pact, administration officials said.

"These talks represent the best opportunity to use diplomacy to address North Korea's nuclear programs," President Bush said in a statement Tuesday morning. "They reflect the common commitment of the participants to a Korean Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons."

The broad criticism demonstrated the awkward place in which the administration has found itself on North Korea. Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. of Delaware, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, said the deal "takes us back to the future."

"The good news is that it freezes in place North Korea's nuclear program," said Mr. Biden, who has declared his intention to run for president. "The bad news is that North Korea's program is more dangerous to us now than it was in 2002, when President Bush rejected virtually the same deal he is now embracing."

From the other end of the spectrum, John R. Bolton, who until December served under Ms. Rice as the United States ambassador to the United Nations, criticized the pact as too weak, telling CNN that it “contradicts fundamental premises” of the administration’s approach to North Korea during the past six years. Mr. Bolton, when in the administration, had argued in favor of a hard-line approach to North Korea.

Asked if she thought there was any substance to Mr. Bolton’s criticism, Ms. Rice said at a news conference in Washington on Tuesday: “No, I don’t.” She added: “I just think he’s wrong.”

According to administration officials, a turning point came on Jan. 17, when Ms. Rice met in Berlin with Christopher R. Hill, an assistant secretary of state who has been the lead American negotiator with North Korea. Mr. Hill was in Germany for meetings with the North Korean representatives; Ms. Rice was making a stop there on her way home from talks with Arab leaders in Kuwait.

According to the officials’ account, Mr. Hill gave Ms. Rice a one-page description of what the North Koreans had agreed to do. Ms. Rice made two telephone calls to Washington — first to Stephen J. Hadley, the national security adviser, and then to President Bush. “Do you think we should proceed on this basis?” Ms. Rice asked President Bush. His reply was yes, the administration officials said.

Still, in the intense negotiations in Beijing that followed, the agreement seemed on the verge of collapse several times, as North Korea sought more aid. So fragile was the tentative accord reached Monday that Ms. Rice said she called Mr. Hill in Beijing, at 4:15 A.M. Tuesday in Washington, to make sure the agreement had held.

Under the deal, the United States and its partner nations agreed to provide roughly \$400 million in various kinds of aid in return for the North starting a permanent disabling of its nuclear facilities and allowing inspectors into the country.

In return, the United States agreed to begin the process of removing North Korea from its designation as a terror-sponsoring state, a step that is bound to meet opposition in Congress. The United States also agreed to discuss with the North, within 30 days, terms for ending financial sanctions.

Of the five countries negotiating with North Korea, Japan — which had been seeking a tougher stance — did not agree to the aid package, saying that it first needs to work out the issue of North Korea’s past abductions of Japanese citizens.

But Japan joined the United States in agreeing to discuss normalizing relations with North Korea, another potentially big step that could begin when Ms. Rice sits down for a meeting with her North Korean counterpart in 60 days as part of a next set of meetings mandated by the pact.

Some experts previously critical of the Bush administration approach praised the accord as a turn to the pragmatic. “We were in a weak bargaining position and the Bush administration deserves credit for achieving a more limited agreement, rather than holding out for a more maximalist, but unachievable, objective,” said Gary Samore, a North Korea expert at the Council on Foreign Relations who helped to negotiate a 1994 agreement the Clinton administration struck with the North.

For her part, Ms. Rice contended that under the terms of the agreement, 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil which North Korea would receive in the first 60 days was an “actually modest” amount; another 950,000 tons of heavy fuel oil would not be forwarded to North Korea until it disabled the reactor and declared all its nuclear programs.

Experts who have followed the long haggling over the North Korean program said there are bound to be problems when the time comes for the North to disclose all of its nuclear facilities and dismantle its program. In perhaps a sign of things to come, North Korea’s state press agency released a statement that described the Yongbyon shutdown as a “temporary suspension.”

In Beijing, Mr. Hill responded quickly. “The North Koreans agreed to shut down their reactors and seal them for the purpose of abandoning them,” he said. “Any action to restart the reactors would be a violation of the agreement.”

Helene Cooper reported from Washington, and Jim Yardley from Beijing.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/14/world/asia/14korea.html>

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Washington Times

February 14, 2007

Pg. 1

Bolton Hits Agreement As 'Bad Signal' To Iran

By Bill Gertz, Washington Times

The deal reached in Beijing on North Korea's nuclear program is being criticized for making too many concessions to the hard-line government that violated a past accord, and gives up key U.S. leverage that blocked illicit financial activities by Pyongyang in the past.

"It is rewarding bad behavior of the North Koreans by promising fuel oil," said former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, John R. Bolton, who emerged as an outspoken critic of the nuclear accord.

"It's a bad signal to North Korea and it's a bad signal to Iran," Mr. Bolton said in an interview, noting that the message to would-be arms proliferators around the world is that "if you hold out long enough and wear down the State Department negotiators, eventually you get rewarded."

Also, giving up financial leverage on North Korea after further talks by agreeing to lift banking sanctions is a "huge" mistake, Mr. Bolton said. "That leverage is what brought them to the table. ... The Chinese were paying them to come to the talks. Now we're paying them."

The Beijing agreement, announced yesterday, involves supplying some \$400 million in aid, including 1 million tons of fuel oil, to the communist regime that set off its first underground nuclear blast in October, despite an agreement since 1994 to freeze its nuclear program.

Under the announced terms of the accord, North Korea will receive an immediate shipment of 50,000 tons of fuel oil in the next two months, with further shipments and other concessions if it then agrees to shut down its nuclear facility at Yongbyon. An additional 950,000 tons of fuel will then be provided.

Problems with interpretation of the accord already surfaced yesterday.

White House press secretary Tony Snow said the agreement requires North Korea to "permanently" disable all nuclear facilities.

However, North Korea's state-run news organ, the Korean Central News Agency, announced the shutdown of reactors at Yongbyon would be "temporary."

Chuck Downs, a North Korea affairs specialist, said the administration's most damaging concession was agreeing to Pyongyang's demand to lift Treasury Department banking restrictions on Banco Delta Asia in Macao that was found to be laundering North Korean counterfeit \$100 bills to finance the regime.

"We had the North Koreans on the ropes" with the banking restrictions, Mr. Downs said. "We're losing all of that real leverage once we open the door to identifying legitimate funds there."

The banking restrictions are to be lifted in 30 days under the accord.

Critics of the agreement also say it is similar to the failed 1994 Agreed Framework that called for North Korea to freeze its nuclear program in exchange for aid. North Korea violated that agreement and then admitted to having a secret uranium enrichment program in 2003. The North Koreans then refused to reveal or end the uranium program. Six-nation talks including the United States, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Russia and China have been under way for several years with limited success. The new accord will implement a September 2005 agreement that called on North Korea to give up its nuclear program.

The Beijing accord contains no reference to the uranium program, only that North Korea has agreed to discuss all its nuclear arms programs in further talks.

"The danger of this kind of agreement is that it's a charade, it's a hollow agreement," Mr. Bolton said. "And it will give people the illusion of security when it won't actually produce it. And even worse, it will say to countries like Iran and other would-be proliferators, if you have just have enough patience, if you just have enough persistence, you'll wear the United States down. They'll give up on point after point after point."

Henry Sokolski, a former defense official in former President George Bush's administration, said the concessions made to North Korea likely will undermine efforts to prompt Iran to limit its nuclear program.

"It is going to be harder to get everybody to be tough on Iran to the extent that we push this diplomatic effort on North Korea," Mr. Sokolski said.

"The Bush administration thinks it can succeed where Clinton administration failed because it can be trusted and is more vigilant," Mr. Sokolski said. "All of this remains to be seen. It's not a sure thing. This, again, is 'Trust us.'"

The accord will lead to more talks with the North Koreans and the other five parties but the prospect of reaching actual nuclear disarmament is slim, he said. "If what you want is more talks, this is indeed a major success," Mr. Sokolski said. "As for disarming the North Koreans, you'd be crazy not to be a skeptic."

South Korea will be required to pay for most of the aid to North Korea, thus locking Seoul into its current pro-North Korea policy, which has been a problem for the United States in the past, Mr. Sokolski said.

South Korea's Chosun Ilbo newspaper stated in an editorial the agreement has no mechanism for preventing North Korea from restarting its nuclear program and that South Korea will "bear a much higher portion of the burden."

China, which has close ties to North Korea, also will head one of the five working groups set up under the agreement and will be in charge of overseeing the nuclear dismantlement, raising questions about whether verification is possible.

In China, official state-run press praised the diplomatic breakthrough but some experts voiced skepticism. Shi Yinhong, a specialist at the People's University in Beijing, told the Deutsche Presse-Agentur news service that "we should not read too much into" the agreement.

North Korea's motives are not clear "because now we do not have any evidence or logic to convince us that [North Korea] has set the course of denuclearization and why it would choose this course at this moment," Mr. Shi said. Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control, also said the announced agreement "looks a lot like 1994."

"It strikes me that the North Koreans really haven't changed their position significantly, while we have," Mr. Milhollin said. "All the concessions are from our side. It's hard to see any concessions on their side."

The White House sought to put the best face on the weaknesses of the agreement. Asked what happens if North Korea violates it, Mr. Snow told reporters, "Well, if the North Koreans cheat on the agreement, they are still liable to Chapter VII sanctions under U.N. Security Council resolutions."

Mr. Snow also said the agreement is structured so that if North Korea fails to take steps to close current facilities and reveal all nuclear operations, "they're not going to get the full benefit of potential diplomatic or economic relations until they, in fact, demonstrate that they're up to performing."

"The people of North Korea are the most oppressed people on the face of the earth, and through this agreement the administration is giving \$400 million for 90 days of promises," Mr. Downs said, noting that North Korea already promised in the past to give up its nuclear programs and failed to do so.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20070214-120013-3871r.htm>

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San Francisco Chronicle

February 13, 2007

Pg. 11

Los Alamos Scientist Criticizes Federal Approach To Arsenal

By James Sterngold, Chronicle Staff Writer

Los Alamos, New Mexico -- With the Bush administration and Congress fighting over how to rebuild the nuclear weapons complex, one of the country's top weapons designers said he believes it is time for the United States to consider a radical shift in policy that would ultimately eliminate the nuclear arsenal.

Joseph Martz, leader of a team designing a new generation of warheads at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, said in a series of interviews last week that he is troubled by how the debate on nuclear weapons policy in Washington is focused narrowly on the number of weapons needed for the future, and how they would be built, rather than on how to eradicate them entirely.

Lab officials originally refused to give Martz permission to be interviewed for this article. Martz, however, said he decided to speak anyway in order to press ideas that he believes can reduce the risk of nuclear war and carve out a central role for the weapons labs, which have been threatened with budget cuts. Martz emphasized that he was expressing only his personal views and not those of the lab. But his comments still represent the first time in recent years that a senior scientist inside the weapons program has proposed making disarmament a concrete policy goal. Martz said the discussion in Washington needs to reflect technological breakthroughs found in two prime areas: the weapons maintenance program, known as stockpile stewardship, and the new weapon design initiative called the Reliable Replacement Warhead, or RRW.

Martz's aim is to help policymakers understand that, because of a more sophisticated grasp of weapons science, the United States can slowly dismantle its warheads and still protect itself. The country could also bolster its credibility as a leading voice for disarmament by ratifying the long-stalled treaty banning underground testing.

"The time is right," Martz said. "A confluence of events has now allowed the debate to progress, including the changes in Congress, the maturation of the stockpile stewardship program and the recognition by the military that RRW is feasible. A few years ago, we didn't have that."

The key to the new policy, he said, would be slowly reducing the number of warheads over a period of years, and during that time replacing older weapons with the new Reliable Replacement Warhead weapons as an interim phase. But the final goal, according to Martz, should be the elimination of the entire arsenal.

What the United States would retain in its place, he argued, would be the technology to assemble warheads from stockpiled materials if a grave threat to national security arose. The labs now have the capability to do that in a relatively short period of time, he said, without the need for testing. The U.S. nuclear deterrent would be transformed from thousands of weapons deployed on high alert to what has come to be known as the "virtual stockpile."

Martz, 41, described this view as part of the evolution in the thinking of a younger generation of weapons designers eager to rely more on science than missiles to deter foes.

"You understand what I'm offering here," he said. "I'm offering through our technological achievements the security we need to enter into a real discussion" of nuclear disarmament.

Martz believes the U.S. nuclear arsenal has been critical to the country's security and should be maintained for some years. But the nuclear policy debate, he said, has focused too much on producing new bombs and not enough on the next steps needed for broader arms control initiatives.

"I'm trying to offer solutions that say, 'How can we get the benefits of deterrence without having to put thousands of warheads on hair-trigger alert?'" he said.

Some of Martz's ideas have been discussed before, mostly among arms control experts, and there is disagreement over whether the country should deploy new generations of warheads, as Martz is proposing, even as an interim step. These experts argue that the current stockpile will be safe and reliable for decades, and that building new warheads is too provocative.

But this is the first time a senior official involved in maintaining Cold War-era warheads and designing the weapons of the future has proposed a long-term plan for eliminating them. Under current policy, officials say the world is too dangerous to consider eliminating the nuclear deterrent -- the U.S. now has more than 5,000 warheads -- which must be updated indefinitely.

Various treaties have reduced the size of the stockpile -- under the Moscow Treaty of 2002, the United States will decrease its deployed arsenal to 2,200 or fewer weapons by 2012 -- but actual disarmament has never been embraced as a concrete policy objective. In fact, even opponents of Martz's plan are pleased with his ideas, if only because it may inspire a debate on disarmament.

"We should be on a glide path to get to lower numbers of weapons," said Eugene Habiger, a retired air force general and former head of the U.S. Strategic Command, which manages the nuclear arsenal. "It's a glide path we've been on for years, but we need to think about the next step beyond the Moscow Treaty, and nobody is doing that yet."

Under the Reliable Replacement Warhead program, two design teams, one from Los Alamos and the other from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, submitted plans in April for a new generation of warheads. They are supposed to be safer and more reliable than the older weapons, but they must be built without underground testing, which has never been done before.

A high-level government body, the Nuclear Weapons Council, is expected to announce shortly which design it has chosen, or whether, as some have suggested, it will propose a hybrid, combining elements of both.

Some experts, however, have been urging a deeper shift. Two widely-read opinion pieces published in the Wall Street Journal last month argued for total disarmament.

The essays -- the first by former Secretary of State George Shultz, former Defense Secretary William Perry, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and former Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia, and the second by the former Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev -- urged aggressive steps toward this long ignored goal.

"Reassertion of the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons and practical measures toward achieving that goal would be, and would be perceived as, a bold initiative consistent with America's moral heritage," the former U.S. officials wrote in their essay.

Martz's ideas get a mixed response from experts. Supporters of the weapons program maintain that it is naive to even talk about the elimination of the weapons in a dangerous world. Others argue that manufacturing new Reliable Replacement Warhead warheads is unnecessary under any conditions.

Steve Andreasen, who was involved in nuclear weapons policy in the Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations, said he supports the concept of some kind of virtual nuclear force and elimination of the weapons, but opposes Martz's view that Reliable Replacement Warhead warheads ought to be produced and deployed as an interim step. He said it appears to be a way of maintaining the budgets at the weapons labs at a time when government officials have talked about big cuts, and that the new production could encourage more countries to consider weapons production.

"If someone at the labs is saying producing the RRW is essential for getting to our vision, I would not agree," said Andreasen.

Others say the issue is not so much numbers of weapons, but how much U.S. military policy relies on them. Robert Einhorn, a nuclear policy expert from the Clinton administration who favors arms control, said he believes the United States should boost its conventional power to make it more unlikely that it would ever need to use a nuclear bomb.

"We should be putting far more effort into developing more effective conventional weapons," he said. "It's hard to imagine a president using nuclear weapons under almost any circumstance, but no one doubts our willingness to use conventional weapons."

Martz acknowledged that he is motivated both by a desire to shape what he thinks could be a smarter policy debate and self-interest.

Los Alamos has been bitterly criticized in Washington for a series of security lapses, and some lawmakers have threatened to slash its work and budgets. The criticism has badly harmed morale at the lab, and Martz believes his

ideas would, by enhancing the importance of the science done at the lab, help maintain budgets and job security, and also bolster a view that the labs can help reduce international tensions.

But he also sees in the virtual stockpile a program that would enable a new generation of weapons scientists to solve some of the policy conundrums left from the Cold War.

"In many ways, this answers the key question many people are asking, including people at the labs -- what is the role of the labs today?" Martz said. "To me the answer is simple. We become the deterrent in the 21st century."

Livermore appears to have edge in competition to design new warheads

Because of concern over security lapses at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, it appears unlikely that the lab will be declared the winner of a competition to design a new generation of nuclear warheads, according to Joseph Martz, head of the Los Alamos design team.

When Congress voted to authorize development of the new weapon, called the Reliable Replacement Warhead, or RRW, it called for the country's two weapons labs, Los Alamos and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, to produce separate proposals.

Martz said the labs handed in their designs -- for a warhead to be fitted on submarine-based Trident missiles -- in April. He called the process revolutionary because the weapons have to be not only safer and more reliable than the current weapons in the stockpile, but the labs had to guarantee they could manufacture and deploy them without any underground testing, an unprecedented requirement.

The Livermore design essentially relied on a weapon developed but never deployed some years ago, which had been thoroughly tested, Martz said. Los Alamos took more of a chance by designing a warhead that used elements from previously tested designs, but combined them in a way that incorporated new safety features.

Those features, Martz said, were intended to prevent both accidental detonation and unauthorized use.

The Nuclear Weapons Council has been evaluating the two designs and is expected to render a decision soon.

Martz said there are rumors, which he has not confirmed, that the weapons council will order the two labs to combine the best elements of each design, but with Livermore in the lead role.

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2007/02/13/MNGI1O3N0G1.DTL&hw=Los+Alamos+Scientist+Criticizes+Federal+Approach+To+Arsenal&sn=001&sc=1000>

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Washington Post

February 15, 2007

Pg. 1

Conservatives Assail North Korea Accord

Deal Could Get Nation off Terrorism List

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

The White House yesterday found itself fending off a conservative revolt over the North Korea nuclear deal, even scrambling to mollify one of its own top officials who expressed sharp disagreement with a provision that could spring Pyongyang from the list of countries that sponsor terrorism, U.S. officials said yesterday.

Elliott Abrams, a deputy national security adviser, fired off e-mails expressing bewilderment over the agreement and demanding to know why North Korea would not have to first prove it had stopped sponsoring terrorism before being rewarded with removal from the list, according to officials who reviewed the messages.

John R. Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, called the agreement -- in which North Korea would freeze its main nuclear facility in exchange for an initial supply of fuel oil -- "a bad deal" that violated principles that were closely held in the beginning of the Bush administration.

And the National Review, a conservative bastion, yesterday slammed the agreement as essentially the same one negotiated by President Bill Clinton in 1994 -- a charge the Bush administration rejects. "When exactly did Kim Jong Il become trustworthy?" the magazine's editors asked. The Wall Street Journal editorial page, normally a Bush supporter, also condemned the accord yesterday as "faith-based nonproliferation."

Bolton's comments, the barbs from conservative publications and the Abrams e-mails reflected deep concerns among conservatives that the agreement could turn out to be an important and troubling turning point. Current and former Bush officials said they fear that after six years they are losing control of foreign policy to more pragmatic forces. The shift, they said, has become especially apparent with the departure of Donald H. Rumsfeld, who as defense secretary was often seen as a counterweight to State.

More specifically, conservatives said, they worry that the administration's willingness to bend on North Korea does not bode well for hard-line policies toward Iran, the Palestinians or other issues. Indeed, Russian Foreign Minister

Sergey Lavrov yesterday called on the United States to demonstrate "the same flexibility, a sensible flexibility" toward Iran's nuclear program.

At a news conference yesterday, Bush appeared irritated by criticism from Bolton, once a leader of the administration's conservatives. When a reporter mentioned that Bolton, whom Bush championed, had called it a bad deal, Bush smiled ruefully. "I strongly disagree, strongly disagree with his assessment," Bush said.

Abrams, a legendary bureaucratic infighter and outspoken neoconservative, is responsible for policies aimed at promoting democracy overseas. Officials who reviewed his e-mails on the nuclear deal would not quote from them but described the messages because they agreed with the concerns and wanted to make public the depth of disagreement within the administration. They said Abrams appeared frustrated because so many key decisions had been made at the highest levels without much vetting by officials scattered across the government.

Abrams, they said, was especially concerned about a section of the agreement that stated: "The U.S. will begin the process of removing the designation of the DPRK as a state-sponsor of terrorism, and advance the process of terminating the application of the Trading with the Enemy Act with respect to the DPRK." DPRK is the abbreviation of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Countries that are on the U.S. terrorism list are subject to trade and other sanctions.

In an e-mail that Abrams sent to officials involved in Asia policy and nonproliferation policy, he reminded the recipients that, in a deal with Libya on abandoning weapons of mass destruction, the United States said it would start a "delisting" process only if Libya ended its support for terrorism -- and that the terrorism track was separate from the weapons deal.

When one of the Asia experts replied that the process was young, Abrams shot back that he thought that section of the deal was bad.

Gordon Johndroe, a National Security Council spokesman, did not dispute this account but said: "Initial press reports on the six-party-talks agreement sparked a discussion among staff that were seeking clarification of some of the deal's aspects. All has been clarified, and we look forward to implementation."

The provision that irritated Abrams has also sparked concern in Japan, which fears that the United States will remove North Korea from the terrorism list before North Korea has come clean on its kidnappings of Japanese citizens decades ago. Bush tried to mollify those concerns in a phone call yesterday with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. The State Department says North Korea has not committed a terrorist act since the 1987 bombing of a Korean Air Lines flight.

Bush defended the nuclear agreement as a "unique deal," in part because of his decision to bring in other nations, such as China.

"I changed the dynamic on the North Korean issue by convincing other people to be at the table with us on the theory that the best diplomacy is diplomacy in which there is more than one voice," Bush said.

Bolton later stood by his criticism. "I'm very sad about the president's change in policy," he said in an interview.

"The policy as originally articulated and implemented in the first term was exactly right. There's no need to change it. The pressure was what brought North Korea to the table originally. Why get rid of the pressure?"

Asked if he felt disloyal to Bush, who stood by him through a long and ultimately unsuccessful Senate confirmation fight, Bolton said: "I didn't say anything for a good long time, and I wouldn't have said anything if they hadn't changed the policy. I'm loyal to the original policy."

Staff writer Peter Baker contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/14/AR2007021401695.html>

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Los Angeles Times

February 15, 2007

Iran Inspired By N. Korea Nuclear Deal?

Analysts say Tehran is in a mood to negotiate. But hard-liners sense the U.S. is weakened.

By Kim Murphy, Times Staff Writer

TEHRAN — Iran is quietly accelerating efforts to negotiate a deal on its nuclear program, using this week's agreement to freeze North Korea's program as a model.

In the North Korea pact, the Bush administration signed a deal that provides significant incentives to Pyongyang even before the country completely steps back from its nuclear weapons program. The administration's willingness to agree to that probably will harden Iran's demands that it too should get tangible benefits as part of any agreement, analysts in Iran say.

Those rewards could include guarantees for the security of Iran's government, an end to economic sanctions and the right to continue developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

At the same time, some hard-liners in Iran appear to want to use North Korea's example as an opportunity to toughen Tehran's demands in the expectation that the United States eventually will be obligated to meet them. Some U.S. conservatives have criticized the deal with North Korea, predicting it will encourage Iran and other nations considering nuclear programs. At a news conference Wednesday, President Bush dismissed such criticism by John R. Bolton, his former United Nations ambassador.

Bush said he strongly disagreed with Bolton.

"I have told the American people, like the Iranian issue, I wanted to solve the Korean issue — North Korean issue — peacefully, and that the president has an obligation to try all diplomatic means necessary to do so," Bush said.

"So the assessment made by some that this is not a good deal is just flat wrong."

But the debate in Iran now appears to focus on how hard Tehran should press for favorable terms.

"The hard-liners, perhaps impressed by North Korea's achievement, are now inclined to be more resilient and more uncompromising," said Sadeq Zibakalam, professor of politics at Tehran University. "They say if North Korea could do it, why shouldn't we? Why should we let the United States dictate to us rather than negotiate with us?"

Until this week's pact, U.S. officials had insisted that North Korea dismantle its nuclear program and disarm before a deal could be reached. In the end, North Korea agreed only to begin disabling its nuclear facilities in exchange for about \$400 million in aid and other incentives. For now, North Korea will keep its nuclear material, which U.S. officials think is enough to make eight to 10 bombs.

North Korea's situation is different from Iran's in several respects. North Korea has built and tested a nuclear bomb. Iran insists its program is for civilian power generation. U.S. and international leaders doubt Iran's claim, and most intelligence officials think Tehran is at least two years from being able to build a nuclear weapon.

A U.N. Security Council resolution passed in December, with strong support from the U.S., demands a complete halt to Iran's uranium enrichment activities.

Iran has signaled it might be willing to compromise on enrichment, either by limiting it, suspending it or operating centrifuges with an inert gas instead of uranium. Iranian negotiators say a genuine agreement can be achieved only through open negotiations without preconditions.

A subtle upping of the ante in Iran's public position was evident shortly after the North Korea agreement was announced. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mohammad Ali Hossaini, declared Tuesday that Iran would never accept suspension of uranium enrichment as a precondition for negotiation.

He had said a day earlier that many options, including suspension, were on the table.

Although hard-liners in Iran think the country can tough it out against the U.S., a broad swath of the political elite backs an effort by Ali Larijani, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, to reach a compromise.

"This scenario has been at the back of the minds of some Iranian leaders: that if we reach a stage that we would be respected as an equal partner, then we could do real negotiations and reach a deal over our nuclear program," Zibakalam said.

A source familiar with the negotiations said Iran had a four-part package that included security guarantees, continued access to nuclear technology and certain "political and economic" guarantees.

Nonproliferation experts suggested the guarantees would include a demand to drop U.N. sanctions and possibly the unilateral sanctions that the U.S. has had in place against Iran since shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

In an interview Wednesday, Mohammad Kazem Anbarlouee, head of a conservative Islamic faction in parliament and the editor of Resalat, a hard-line newspaper, said Iran must insist on the return of \$19 billion in Iranian funds intended for the purchase of U.S. weapons during the shah's regime and never returned after the revolution.

"We don't have any conditions right now, and we don't accept any preconditions," Anbarlouee said. "Because everything they asked us, we met. For example, they asked us to suspend our activities; we did that [in the past]. They asked us for U.N. supervision and visits, and we accepted this. We have nothing left. So Mr. Larijani will have some suggestions, not conditions.

"If they have some conditions, for example, about giving them some guarantees about not having nuclear weapons, they can tell us that. But if they want to ask us to suspend our nuclear activities for peaceful purposes, no, we are not ready for that."

He said Larijani was authorized to discuss establishing a consortium of nations to produce enriched fuel along with Iran, a previously floated proposal.

In Washington, Democrats intensified their calls for the administration to negotiate with Iran. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) said Bush would have to get authorization from Congress to attack Iran.

"It would be a mistake of historical proportions if the administration thought that the 2002 resolution authorizing force against Iraq was a blank check for the use of force against Iran without further congressional authorization," Clinton said.

Times staff writer Richard Simon in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-nukes15feb15,1,1361643.story>

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New York Times
February 16, 2007
Pg. 3

Rice Is Said To Have Speeded North Korea Deal

By David E. Sanger and Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 — To win approval of a deal with North Korea that has been assailed by conservatives inside and outside the administration, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice bypassed layers of government policy review that had derailed past efforts to negotiate an agreement, several senior administration officials said this week. After a meeting in Berlin in mid-January with her top negotiator on North Korea, Christopher R. Hill, who had just held lengthy sessions with his North Korean counterparts, Ms. Rice called back to Washington to describe the outlines of the deal to Stephen J. Hadley, the national security adviser, and then to President Bush.

But to some, it seemed the usual procedures were cut short — vetting the details though an interagency process that ordinarily would have brought in Vice President Dick Cheney's office, the Defense Department and aides at the White House and other agencies who had previously objected to rewarding North Korea before it gives up its weapons.

"There was no process here," said an official who has been deeply involved in the issue. "Nothing. There was no airing of whether this is the way to deal with the North Koreans."

White House and other administration officials dispute that, saying that all relevant agencies were consulted.

In lieu of the formal meetings where objections to such accords were usually voiced during the president's first term, Mr. Hadley "walked it through with concerned people," a senior administration official said. The official acknowledged that the process was much more informal, and rapid, than usual, although much of Mr. Hill's work was built upon previous negotiations at the talks that had been widely vetted across the administration.

The result has been an unusual attack on the agreement from the right, starting with John R. Bolton, the former ambassador to the United Nations who takes a tough stance on North Korea issues. He said bluntly that it was a "bad deal," and expressed the hope that it would fall apart before being carried out.

State Department officials said that Robert Joseph, the under secretary of state for arms control and disarmament, vehemently disagreed with the approach, telling associates privately what Mr. Bolton has said in public: that the new agreement was no better, and perhaps worse, than one signed by President Clinton in 1994. Mr. Joseph, who announced last month that he would resign soon, declined to comment Thursday.

Ms. Rice on Thursday sternly played down the significance of any internal dissent, making it clear that she would not entertain dissent after the president had made up his mind.

"First of all, the U.S. government is the U.S. government," she said. "And so the decision has been taken. And since people are loyal to decisions that are taken, I think that everybody expects there to be loyalty to this decision."

Mr. Bush, asked at a news conference on Wednesday about Mr. Bolton's critique, was succinct: "I strongly disagree — strongly disagree with his assessment."

But in Mr. Bush's first term, the decision-making process worked very differently.

State Department negotiators almost never dealt with the North Koreans without officials from the Defense Department and the vice president's office coming along, and reporting back. In one instance, Mr. Cheney stepped into the Oval Office to put an end to a discussion under way in Beijing, when he feared an agreement setting out steps for resolving the nuclear standoff lacked the tough language on disarmament that he believed Mr. Bush wanted. Colin L. Powell, then the secretary of state, learned of the decision after a black-tie dinner.

In this deal, North Korea has agreed in principle to disarmament, but all discussion about actually giving up weapons — and what the North might receive in return — has been deferred.

Senior administration officials said they had been concerned that this deal, unlike the 1994 accord, should not "front-load" benefits to North Korea, and they said that instead it would reward the country bit by bit, as it carried out a freeze, and the "disablement," of North Korea's nuclear facilities.

"What's different this time is that it is clear that both the president and Condi wanted a deal," said an official peripherally involved in the debate. Several officials acknowledge that as the Bush presidency enters its final years, two foreign policy goals have risen higher on the agenda: peace between the Israelis and Palestinians and disarming North Korea.

Others said that the rapidly shifting terrain beneath the negotiations allowed Ms. Rice to press her case with Mr. Hadley and directly to the president. Another senior administration official said that the North Korean response to Mr. Hill in Berlin was circulated, but on a "relatively limited" basis as it was one of the most delicate national security issues facing the Bush administration.

Immediately after Mr. Hill's meeting with his North Korean counterpart in Berlin, Mr. Hill briefed Ms. Rice as she stopped in the German capital on the way home from the Middle East. She called the president from Berlin, and also spoke with Mr. Hadley, who was reviewing a copy of the document presented to Mr. Hill by the North Koreans, a senior administration official said.

"Chris signed on to it in Berlin," said a senior administration official, although a full six-party session was required to formalize the deal because the Bush administration was insisting on a multilateral format to better enforce any agreement with the North.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/16/washington/16korea.html>

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Boston Globe
February 16, 2007

Russia May Pull Out Of Nuclear Arms Treaty

By Reuters

MOSCOW -- Russia warned the United States yesterday it might pull out of a Cold War nuclear arms reduction treaty because of plans by Washington to build a missile shield in Eastern Europe.

General Yuri Baluyevsky, head of the Russian general staff, said Russia could unilaterally withdraw from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF treaty), Russian news agencies reported.

When asked whether Russia would pull out of the agreement, Baluyevsky, said: "We will see how our American partners are going to act," Interfax news agency reported.

"What they are doing at the moment -- creating a third positioning region for anti-missile defense in Europe -- is totally inexplicable," he said.

The INF treaty was one of the key arms control pacts of the Cold War. Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan signed the treaty in December 1987.

"There is a possibility of leaving the agreement if one of the sides presents convincing evidence," Baluyevsky said.

"Many countries are developing and perfecting medium range rockets."

The United States has suggested the shield is needed to protect Europe from Iranian missiles but Russian officials have said Washington and its NATO allies are building the shield because of Russia.

"Our efforts to deploy missile defense systems around the world, and in this case we're working very closely with the Czech and the Polish governments to develop a system in Central Europe, is in no way directed at the Russian strategic forces," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said in Washington.

McCormack later said that Washington had reports that Moscow might pull out of the treaty.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/articles/2007/02/16/russia_may_pull_out_of_nuclear_arms_treaty/

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YAHOO! News

Pentagon to float balloons as part of a chem-bio defense test

Fri Feb 16, 6:25 PM ET

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The **Pentagon** plans to float balloons off its roof Saturday as part of a test of a new system to protect it against chemical or biological attack, a Pentagon spokeswoman said.

"It's an advanced chemical and biological protection system for the Pentagon and its occupants," said Major Rebecca Goodrich Hinton.

She said three balloons that are each six feet (1.8 meters) in diameter will be raised 100 feet (30 meters) over the Pentagon during the test, which is part of a series called "Pentagon Shield."

The balloons will be raised and lowered from four locations on the roof of the Pentagon, she said.

She declined to provide other details about the test, which is being conducted by the Pentagon Force Protection Agency and the Defense Department's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Directorate.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20070216/pl_afp/usmilitarytest_070216232502

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Chicago Tribune
February 15, 2007
Pg. 1

Radioactive, Unprotected: A 'Dirty Bomb' Nightmare

Soviet-era nuclear material is a target for smugglers willing to sell to anyone

By Alex Rodriguez, Tribune foreign correspondent

YEREVAN, Armenia -- Jobless for two years, Gagik Tovmasyan believed escape from poverty lay in a cardboard box on his kitchen floor.

Inside the box, a blue, lead-lined vessel held the right type and amount of radioactive cesium to make a "dirty bomb." The material was given to him by an unemployed Armenian Catholic priest who promised a cut if Tovmasyan could find a buyer.

He found one in 2004, but the man turned out to be an undercover agent. Tovmasyan spent a year behind bars on a charge of illegally storing and trying to sell 4 grams of cesium-137.

Today the chain-smoking Armenian cabdriver says his actions amounted to simple survival. "That's just the way it was back then," said Tovmasyan, 48, who insisted he had no idea of the danger the material presented. "I was selling all my belongings just to get by."

At a time when the U.S. is grappling with the specter of nuclear weapons in North Korea and Iran, security experts warn that a vast supply of radioactive materials--enough to make hundreds of so-called dirty bombs--lies virtually unprotected in former Soviet military bases and ruined factories.

Desperately poor scavengers looking for scrap metal already have raided many of those sites, fueling an ever-growing concern in the war on terrorism.

There were 662 confirmed cases of radioactive materials smuggling around the world from 1993 to 2004, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency. More than 400 involved substances that could be used to make a dirty bomb, a weapon that would spew radioactivity across a broad area. Experts say even these alarming numbers do not reflect the magnitude of the smuggling.

The risk has grown despite tens of millions of dollars spent by the United States to provide radiation detection equipment and security training in former Soviet republics. Tracking how the money is spent by opaque, often-corrupt governments has proved especially difficult.

The problem is wider in scope than often acknowledged, and the stakes are enormous: It takes only a few grams of a deadly radioactive substance such as cesium-137 or strontium-90 to make a dirty bomb.

Along Russia's barren, jagged coastline on the Barents Sea, enough strontium-90 to make hundreds of dirty bombs can be found in dozens of unguarded lighthouses and navigational beacons. In Semipalatinsk in eastern Kazakhstan, once the site of Soviet nuclear weapons testing, scavengers routinely slip through breaches in tunnels where poorly secured strontium-90, cesium-137, plutonium and uranium waste is stored alongside scrap metal, the site's director says.

In the small mountainous republic of Georgia, the director of a former Soviet laboratory in the breakaway province of Abkhazia says separatist leaders have prevented IAEA inspectors from adequately surveying the institute, where stockpiles of uranium, cesium-137, strontium-90 and other radioactive materials cannot be accounted for.

Many cases undetected

Many former Soviet republics do a poor job of maintaining reliable inventories of radioactive material, according to Lyudmila Zaitseva, a radioactive materials trafficking researcher at the University of Salzburg in Austria. Former Soviet borders are porous, and corruption is rife at border guard posts.

When it comes to protecting radioactive materials, the countries that once made up the Soviet Union are "the weakest and most dangerous link in the whole chain," said Igor Khripunov, a U.S.-based expert in nuclear and radioactive materials security at the University of Georgia.

Zaitseva and her research colleague Friedrich Steinhausler, who log radioactive materials trafficking cases into a database at the University of Salzburg, estimate that roughly 3 of every 5 cases of radioactive materials smuggling go undetected. "I am far more concerned with what we don't see than with what we see," Steinhausler said.

The U.S. government has been slow to gird its ports and border checkpoints with enough detection capability to prevent smuggled radioactive materials from entering the country. In December 2005, congressional investigators smuggled enough cesium-137 across U.S. checkpoints on the Canadian and Mexican borders to produce two dirty bombs, according to a 2006 Government Accountability Office report.

Testifying before a Senate homeland security subcommittee in March, GAO officials said they doubted that the Department of Homeland Security could hit its deadline of placing more than 3,000 radiation detectors at border crossings, seaports and mail facilities by 2009. It was likelier, said the GAO's Eugene Aloise, that the department would not finish until 2014.

"Four and a half years after Sept. 11, and less than 40 percent of our seaports have basic radiation equipment," said Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), the subcommittee chairman at the time during a congressional hearing last March.

"This is a massive blind spot."

Lure for terrorists

No one has ever detonated a dirty bomb, but terrorists have made it clear they have the means and desire to do so. In November 1995, Chechen separatists buried a canister of cesium-137 under the snow in Moscow's Izmailovo Park and told a Russian television network where to find it. Last year, a British court sentenced Dhiren Barot, a London resident linked to Al Qaeda, to 40 years in prison for planning a series of terrorist attacks in London and the U.S. that would have included a dirty bomb.

In the dense stands of birch and pine in Russia's far north, special generators used to power lighthouses represent one of the most vulnerable sources of material. Radioisotope Thermoelectric Generators create electricity through the decay of strontium-90. A single RTG can house enough strontium-90 for 40 dirty bombs.

Russia has more than 600 RTGs scattered across its 11 time zones. Lighthouses and navigational beacons equipped with them are largely unguarded, at times lacking even a chain-link fence for protection.

In the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions along the Barents coastline, scrap metal hunters have broken into six RTGs in recent years, said Vladimir Kozlovsky, a local official involved in a Russian-Norwegian project to replace the aging RTGs with safer technology.

In March, scrap metal hunters broke into a deserted military base above the Arctic Circle and ripped apart four RTGs, according to Bellona, a Norwegian environmental watchdog organization.

While there are no reports of strontium being taken from an RTG, the scavenging highlights the risks.

Radioactive materials transported in Russia by rail are also alarmingly vulnerable.

Last year Greenpeace activists staked out a train depot in a village near St. Petersburg, Russia, to monitor trainloads of uranium from Western Europe that had been stopping on their way to Siberia for disposal.

50,000 tons shipped yearly

"There were no police, no guards, no armed personnel around," said Greenpeace activist Georgy Timofeyev. "The first time we noticed this in May, we called authorities. They said, 'If there aren't any guards, then there's no danger.'

"But anyone can walk up and open them because there are no serious locks on the containers," Timofeyev said.

Greenpeace activists say Russian authorities confirmed that the shipments were being handled by Izotop, a state-owned nuclear materials transport company. The firm handles roughly 50,000 tons of nuclear material shipped through St. Petersburg each year, according to Bellona. Izotop officials declined to comment.

In Kazakhstan, once a hub for Soviet nuclear production and research because of its remoteness in the steppes of Central Asia, vast networks of tunnels and boreholes used for nuclear weapons testing pose a unique problem.

For four decades, the treeless stretches of scrub outside Semipalatinsk in eastern Kazakhstan served as the Soviet Union's ground zero. The Soviet military machine conducted 458 nuclear weapons tests at the 7,200-square mile site. Most of the blasts occurred in 181 iron-lined tunnels a half-mile below the ground, or in the site's 60 boreholes.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Kazakhstan relinquished its entire nuclear arsenal and sealed Semipalatinsk's tunnels and boreholes with concrete.

Those seals have failed to deter impoverished Kazakhs, who fashion propane tanks into makeshift bombs to blast their way into the tunnels. Their quarry is scrap metal, but local authorities worry that the vast amounts of strontium, cesium, plutonium and uranium waste still inside the tunnels could attract those intent on building a dirty bomb.

"Anyone who wants to make a dirty bomb can target by-products of the blasts," said Kayrat Kadyrzhanov, director general of the Kazakhstan National Nuclear Center, which oversees the site. "When test blasts were done, not all of the particles burned out. Even taking soil samples would be of value to a terrorist or rogue state.

"When people get into the tunnels, we assume it's for iron. But that's our assumption," Kadyrzhanov said.

Only 4 patrol teams

The U.S. government has given Kazakhstan more than \$20 million to seal up tunnel and borehole entrances, Kadyrzhanov said, "but the problem is still there." Kazakh authorities deploy only four patrol teams--made up of a local police officer, a radiation detector specialist and a driver--to cover 181 tunnels and a tract of steppe the size of New Jersey.

"The scrap hunters are well-equipped," Kadyrzhanov said. "They've got cell phones and warn each other about approaching patrols."

Radioactive flotsam left behind by the Soviets in Georgia is just as worrisome. Canisters of cesium-137 and other radioactive materials have been routinely found at abandoned military bases, research laboratories--even in farmhouses, according to nuclear safety specialists with the Georgian government.

Last summer, inspectors found cesium-137 amid a pile of nuts and bolts in a soap container at a farmer's house in the village of Likhauri.

"We came across many cases where radioactive material was found in the street, in a forest, or in fields," said Grigol Basilia, a scientist with Georgia's Nuclear Radiation Safety Service.

Georgia's biggest worry is the rebellious province of Abkhazia on the Black Sea coast, where a separatist government defies Tbilisi with the political and military backing of Russia.

Abkhazia is home to the Sukhumi Institute of Physics and Technology, or SIPT, founded in 1945 as a cog in the effort to build the Soviet Union's first atomic bomb. In 1992, civil war broke out in Abkhazia. Abkhaz separatists drove out Georgian troops in a year of fighting that claimed 17,000 lives. Georgian scientists at the institute fled, leaving the laboratory and its storehouse of uranium, plutonium and other radioactive materials in the hands of Abkhaz separatists.

No information on materials

Today, those Georgian scientists have no control over the fate of SIPT's deadly array of radioactive substances. Guram Bokuchava, the institute's director, operates out of a small office in downtown Tbilisi, not knowing how those materials are guarded or even how much are left.

In 2002, when IAEA inspectors flew to Sukhumi to check on uranium stored at the institute, Abkhaz authorities would not let them inspect the storage site, Bokuchava said.

"It's not known how much uranium is there," Bokuchava said. "And it's not known how much cesium-137 and strontium-90 is there. Of course, we're concerned about what happened to these materials ... but the Abkhaz side is not giving any information about this."

Georgia also continues to be a major transit nation for radioactive materials smugglers. In the most recent case, Oleg Khinsagov, a 50-year-old Russian trader, was caught trying to smuggle 100 grams of highly enriched uranium through Georgia last year. He was convicted of nuclear materials trafficking and sentenced to 8 1/2 years in prison. Georgian authorities believe the uranium originated in Russia.

Khinsagov fits the profile of the opportunistic radioactive materials smuggler working the Caucasus region: He was a simple trader, with no criminal background and no known connections to organized crime or terrorists.

Tovmasyan, the Armenian cabdriver, and the other men arrested with him fit the same profile.

The man who gave Tovmasyan the cesium, Asokhik Aristakesyan, was a priest and also unemployed, said Vahe Papoyan, an investigator with the Armenian National Security Service. So was another man who tried to sell the cesium, Sarkis Mikaelyan, a jobless economist. They each were convicted and also sentenced to a year in jail "Especially in countries with low standards of living," Khripunov said, "people can be very enterprising."

Big challenge: Corruption

The U.S. has aggressively tried to shore up border checkpoints in Georgia and other former Soviet republics to stem the flow of radioactive materials smuggling. From 1994 to 2005, Washington spent \$178 million to provide radiation detection equipment for border posts in 36 countries, many of them former Soviet nations.

A March 2006 GAO report acknowledged that the new equipment helps, but the bigger challenge is corruption. "Border guards often don't know what they're dealing with," Zaitseva said. "They're bribed to switch off their detection equipment. They don't know what's being smuggled, and they really don't care."

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0702150125feb15.1.6578821.story?coll=chi-news-hed>

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Miami Herald

February 18, 2007

Nuclear Accord Far From Foolproof, Experts Fear

Closing North Korea's nuclear reactors could be much easier than prying away its bombs, experts said of the deal that came from the six-party talks.

By Tim Johnson, McClatchy News Service

BEIJING - Now that North Korea has agreed to shut down and seal its nuclear facilities within 60 days, the hardest challenge ahead may be ridding the country of all of its nuclear weapons, several analysts said Wednesday.

The accord signed Tuesday in Beijing compels North Korea to list all of its nuclear facilities, weapons and atomic fuel stockpiles but doesn't require it to hand over bombs immediately. That would come in a later phase.

"I don't see how the North Koreans would be willing to give up the weapons they've already produced," said Ruediger Frank, a scholar on North Korean issues at the East Asian Institute of the University of Vienna in Austria. The problem, Frank said, is that nuclear monitors don't know precisely how many bombs Pyongyang has.

'If you read those CIA reports, they say `six to eight.' But which is it? Six, seven or eight?' Frank asked. ``You don't really know for sure."

U.S. officials say they think that North Korea has reprocessed about 110 pounds of plutonium for use as material in nuclear bombs, but they acknowledge that the estimate is based on extrapolating from the reprocessing of fuel rods at the Yongbyon nuclear reactor, which the country now has pledged to shut down and seal.

Monitors to return

Under the accord signed by North Korea, South Korea, China, Russia, Japan and the United States, North Korea will allow monitors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to return to the country and verify the shutdown of its nuclear facilities.

Still to be seen is how much access North Korea allows the monitors, and whether Pyongyang seeks to retain control of some weapons-grade nuclear material.

"There's going to be some inefficiencies in the reprocessing, so they could fudge it a little bit," said Daniel A. Pinkston, a Korea expert at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, Calif.

But proponents say that the nuclear accord, in which heavy fuel oil will be exchanged for North Korean actions on nuclear programs, could build momentum toward genuine progress.

Until last year, the Bush administration had said it would accept only a deal with North Korea that led to "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" of the country's nuclear program. That demand led to deadlock in negotiations, and the State Department later jettisoned the phrase.

Fear of copycats

The ink wasn't even dry on the accord this week, however, before critics howled that it was far from foolproof and might stir other "rogue" nations to action.

Among those to complain was John Bolton, a former Bush administration insider who left his post as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations only a few weeks ago.

"It sends exactly the wrong signal to would-be proliferators around the world, [that] if you hold out long enough and wear down the State Department negotiators, eventually you get rewarded, in this case with massive shipments of heavy fuel oil," Bolton said on CNN.

Some other North Korea-watchers agreed that the deal could encourage troublesome states to arm themselves in hopes of a big payout.

"From now on, both Pyongyang and assorted 'pariah states' will know how to treat the U.S. and by extension the world community," Andrei N. Lankov, a North Korea expert teaching at Seoul's Kookmin University, said in an e-mail interview. "They will know that: A. Blackmail pays if supported by really threatening acts; B. This payment arrives very fast."

Tehran is watching

Iran, which is in a standoff with the West over its nuclear program, appears to be watching the North Korea situation closely. Some strategists fret that small nations in Central Asia and elsewhere may be tempted to seek nuclear materials unaccounted for from the former Soviet Union and follow North Korea's lead.

"What we may well see is a number of these very small countries [acting up] that have no other power than to disturb the world order by outrageous behavior," said Allan Behm, a former intelligence official in Canberra, Australia.

Converging interests

However, several experts said the United States and North Korea had arrived at the accord for reasons of their own that coincided only recently.

"The U.S. government just really wanted to settle this one because of the mess in the Middle East and other problems," said Gavan McCormack, an expert on Northeast Asia who's retired from the Australian National University.

North Korea, facing perennial shortages of energy, viewed U.S. preoccupation with Iraq as lessening the chances of an American pre-emptive strike on its facilities.

"If you go back a couple of years, they were very concerned about whether they were on the 'hit list,'" Pinkston said. "I think it's clear in Pyongyang now that that's not the case."

China, which was angered by North Korea's Oct. 9 nuclear test, also may have leaned on Pyongyang, which gets most of its crude oil and much of its food from China.

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/16725042.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

February 20, 2007

Czechs, Poles Get Missile Warning

Russia says it could strike them if, as is likely, they allow U.S. system on their soil.

By Reuters

WARSAW — Poland and the Czech Republic said Monday that they probably would agree to having parts of a U.S. global missile defense system on their soil, and Moscow warned that the decision could make them targets of a Russian missile strike.

Poland would allow a battery of up to 10 ground-based ballistic rockets and the neighboring Czech Republic would be the site for an advanced radar system to track missiles.

Both countries are former members of the Soviet bloc that are now part of NATO.

"We have agreed that our response to the offer will most likely be positive," Czech Prime Minister Mirek Topolánek said at a joint news conference with his Polish counterpart, Jarosław Kaczyński.

The United States' multibillion-dollar defense system is designed to counter missiles that might someday be fired by what Washington calls rogue states — Iran and North Korea, for instance.

Russia has ridiculed the U.S. military logic and views the plan as a threat to its national security that would distort the post-Cold War balance of power in Europe.

In Moscow, the commander of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces reminded Poland and the Czech Republic that Russia's military had the capability to target the new U.S. bases in Eastern Europe.

James Appathurai, spokesman for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, said in a statement: "The days of talk of targeting NATO territory or vice versa are long past us. This kind of extreme language is out of date and uncalled for."

In the early 1990s, post-Soviet Russia said its missiles were no longer targeted at NATO countries. Analysts said then that the announcement, which could not be independently verified, was a purely symbolic gesture ending the Cold War hostility.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-missiles20feb20,1,4943102.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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New York Times

February 20, 2007

Pg. 8

Russia Will Slow Work On Iran's Nuclear Plant

By Andrew E. Kramer

MOSCOW, Feb. 19 — Russia said Monday that it would slow work on Iran's nearly completed Bushehr nuclear power plant.

Russia contended that Iran had not made the last two \$25 million monthly payments, in a dispute about whether it could pay in euros instead of dollars.

The move added a new twist to the deeply contentious project to build a Russian-designed light-water reactor in Iran, a decade-old deal that is a factor in the United States' concerns over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

The dispute, which became public on Monday, will delay, perhaps by a year, any delivery of nuclear fuel to Iran, Russian officials and experts said. Low-enriched uranium fuel was scheduled to be shipped next month.

"The accounts are not being paid," said Ivan A. Dybov, spokesman for Rosatom, the Russian nuclear agency. What is at issue, he said, is a request made last month by an Iranian bank to settle accounts in euros rather than dollars. The Iranian government has a stated policy of settling contracts and holding reserves in currencies other than the dollar.

As part of its effort to halt Iran's nuclear program, the United States has encouraged European banks to freeze Iranian dollar-denominated accounts.

An Iranian official denied that the country had been late in making payments. "We have made all the payments so far based on the contract and the agreed installments," said Muhammad Saeedi, the deputy director of the Atomic Energy Organization, the official IRNA news agency reported.

"We will try to come up with a solution for the financial problem of the Russian contractor, which is their problem, not the problem of the Iranian side, in the next few days," he added.

A former Iranian president, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, said, "World powers are trying to dominate international organizations and deny Iran's right, but we expect our friends to stop such moves," IRNA reported.

A United Nations ultimatum to Iran to halt uranium enrichment expires on Wednesday. But the commercial arm-twisting was also in keeping with the Kremlin's policy lately of pumping up the bottom line across a spectrum of state businesses, from oil and gas to nuclear power.

Analysts say rising prices for steel and heavy machinery have probably made the Bushehr project unprofitable.

Russia refused payment in euros without opening the contract to renegotiation, Mr. Dybov said. The Iranians settled less than 25 percent of the bill in January and missed February's payment entirely, he said. "We aren't turning down the euros" on principle, Mr. Dybov said, but he added that any change must be incorporated in a contract amendment. The payment conditions and the exact amount of the shortfall are commercial secrets, he said.

Russian officials also cited as a cause of the delay a holdup in the delivery of safety equipment for the reactor from an unspecified third country. The plant was scheduled to begin operations in September.

Now, they probably will not begin before mid-2008, said Andrei Cherkasenko, a board member of the Russian state nuclear power company Atompromresursy, the Russian press agency Interfax reported. The conflict was not the first dispute between the countries over the plant. "From time to time, the Russians get fed up with the Iranians" and work slows, Rose Gottemoeller, the director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, said in a telephone interview. "The Russians have been very canny in using the Bushehr project to back up their diplomacy" by modulating the construction schedule, she said.

Nazila Fathi contributed reporting from Tehran.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/20/world/europe/20russia.html?ref=world>

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Chemical and Biological Defense: Management Actions Are Needed to Close the Gap between Army Chemical Unit Preparedness and Stated National Priorities.

GAO-07-143, January 19.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-07-143>

Highlights - <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d07143high.pdf>

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Chemical and Biological Defense: Updated Intelligence, Clear Guidance, and Consistent Priorities Needed to Guide Investments in Collective Protection.

GAO-07-113, January 19.

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Highlights - <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d07113high.pdf>

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