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USINFO.STATE.GOV

19 March 2007

Efforts To Counter Nuclear Terrorism Grow in Size and Scope

U.S. helps train and offer alternative employment to weapons scientists

By Jacquelyn S. Porth

USINFO Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States is working with more than 70 countries to secure and dispose of dangerous nuclear and radiological materials that could be used covertly by terrorists and state sponsors of terrorism in an attack or blackmail effort.

During a recent congressional hearing, Lieutenant General Michael Maples, the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, said al-Qaeda seeks to acquire nuclear weapons capability. Analysts do not believe they have achieved that goal yet, he said.

Threat analysts have considered the possibility that terrorists might put together a dirty bomb -- one dispersing radioactive materials with conventional explosives -- or that they might be able to build an improvised nuclear device using only a few kilotons of nuclear explosives.

“Prevention plays an important role in our nonproliferation strategy,” says William Tobey, who is the second-in-command at the Energy Department’s National Nuclear Security Administration. NNSA, in concert with several U.S. government departments, has stepped up activities countering nuclear terrorism. “We have intensified our efforts to keep material and nuclear weapons out of the hands of terrorists and other networks and states that sponsor them,” says Tobey.

The strategy to detect and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons involves:

- Preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons or special related materials;
- Deterring the threat;
- Detecting, interdicting and disarming a device;
- Identifying the source that created, acquired or tried to detonate it; and
- Preparing for a catastrophic incident.

Steven Aoki, deputy under secretary of energy for counterterrorism, says that doing everything possible to keep nuclear materials from making their way to terrorists is the best means of prevention. That means eliminating vulnerable stockpiles of weapons-usable materials.

“Barriers to acquisition also provide an important element of deterrence,” according to Aoki. “If a terrorist believes that it will be extremely risky, or impossible to acquire weapons or materials, they may seek other avenues of attack.”

Eliminating the possibility of nuclear acquisition involves:

- Strengthening physical security over weapons and weapons-usable materials;
- Assisting Russia in strengthening its security, control and accounting of nuclear weapons and materials;
- Helping friends and allies secure weapons-usable nuclear material around the world and strengthen security at civil nuclear facilities; and
- Taking steps to make it easier to interdict shipments of weapons-usable nuclear materials and related technologies.

NNSA has trained 350 officials from other countries on procedures to account for and control nuclear material and has trained more than 500 more every year since 2001 on physical protection measures for critical nuclear sites.

Additionally, the United States has helped remove more than 80 kilograms of highly enriched uranium from vulnerable sites to more secure ones.

The United States and Russia have been cooperating on a variety of projects to secure nuclear materials against theft or attack by terrorists especially where nuclear warheads are located. Deputy Energy Secretary Clay Sell told the Carnegie Moscow Center on March 14, for example, that security upgrades such as barriers and sensors have been installed at 61 Russian military sites and there are plans to install two dozen more in the next two years.

By 2008, efforts to improve nuclear security through the U.S.-Russian Bratislava Initiatives will be near fruition, including safety at Russian naval and Strategic Rocket Forces sites and buildings. Additionally, hundreds of metric tons of nuclear material will be secured. (See related [fact sheet](#)).

But Sell said both countries need to proceed with an old agreement that each would dispose of 34 metric tons of excess weapons-grade plutonium. So far, none has been eliminated.

ALTERNATIVE EMPLOYMENT FOR WEAPONS SCIENTISTS OFFERED

Another important initiative is providing alternative employment for scientists with nuclear expertise. Tobey told the United States Industry Coalition recently that even if it were possible to secure every kilogram of nuclear and radiological material, “the right kind of scientific expertise can be applied to generate more.”

To prevent that, a project is under way to retrain Russian nuclear computer scientists in software applications to serve the hospitality industry and telemedicine. Another joint project has Russian scientists developing alternative epilepsy therapies.

Preventing Russian scientists from being “recruited by rogue states and terrorist organizations remains a priority,” Tobey said. And now new engagement programs are under way to offer alternative employment to Libyan and Iraqi scientists with expertise in weapons of mass destruction.

<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2007&m=March&x=20070319132147sjhtrop0.5586359>

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New York Times

March 20, 2007

Pg. 1

Russia Gives Iran Ultimatum On Enrichment

By Elaine Sciolino

PARIS, March 19 — Russia has informed Iran that it will withhold nuclear fuel for Iran's nearly completed Bushehr power plant unless Iran suspends its uranium enrichment as demanded by the United Nations Security Council, European, American and Iranian officials say.

The ultimatum was delivered in Moscow last week by Igor S. Ivanov, the secretary of the Russian National Security Council, to Ali Hosseini Tash, Iran's deputy chief nuclear negotiator, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because a confidential diplomatic exchange between two governments was involved.

For years, President Bush has been pressing President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia to cut off help to Iran on the nuclear power plant that Russia is building at Bushehr, in southern Iran. But Mr. Putin has resisted. The project is Tehran's first serious effort to produce nuclear energy and has been very profitable for Russia.

Recently, however, Moscow and Tehran have been engaged in a public argument about whether Iran has paid its bills, which may explain Russia's apparent shift. But the ultimatum may also reflect an increasing displeasure and frustration on Moscow's part with Iran over its refusal to stop enriching uranium at its vast facility at Natanz.

"We're not sure what mix of commercial and political motives are at play here," one senior Bush administration official said in Washington. "But clearly the Russians and the Iranians are getting on each other's nerves — and that's not all bad."

A senior European official said: "We consider this a very important decision by the Russians. It shows that our disagreements with the Russians about the dangers of Iran's nuclear program are tactical. Fundamentally, the Russians don't want a nuclear Iran."

At a time of growing tensions between Washington and Moscow, American officials are welcoming Russian support on the situation with Iran as a sign that there are still areas in which the two powers can cooperate.

Russia has been deeply reluctant to ratchet up sanctions against Iran in the Security Council, which is expected to vote on a new set of penalties against the country within the next week.

But American officials have been trying to create a commercial incentive for Russia to put pressure on Iran. One proposal the Bush administration has endorsed since late 2005 envisions having the Russians enrich Iran's uranium in Russia. That creates the prospect of tens or hundreds of millions of dollars in business for Russia, and a way to ensure that Iran receives only uranium enriched for use in power reactors, instead of for use in weapons.

Iran has rejected those proposals, saying it has the right to enrich uranium on its own territory.

The Russian Atomic Energy Agency, or Rosatom, is eager to become a major player in the global nuclear energy market. As Security Council action against Iran has gained momentum and Iran's isolation increases, involvement with the Bushehr project may detract from Rosatom's reputation.

In a flurry of public comments in the past month, Russian officials acknowledged that Russia was delaying the delivery of fuel to the reactor in the Iranian port city of Bushehr. It blamed the decision on the failure of Iran to pay what it owes on the project, not on concerns about nuclear proliferation.

But last month, Foreign Minister Sergey V. Lavrov informed some European officials that Russia had made a political decision not to deliver the fuel, adding that Russia would state publicly that the sole reason was financial, European officials said.

And then last week, a senior Iranian official confirmed in an interview that Mr. Ivanov had threatened Iran with an ultimatum: The fuel would be delivered only after Iran's enrichment of uranium at Natanz was frozen.

Members of the Security Council are moving toward a vote this week on a draft resolution imposing further sanctions on Iran for its defiance of demands that it suspend enrichment activities and return to negotiations over its nuclear program.

The resolution focuses on the country's arms exports, a leading Iranian bank and the elite Revolutionary Guards military force. It will reduce Iran's access to foreign currency and isolate the bank, Bank Sepah, from international financing.

The United States State Department has granted visas to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran and a retinue of 38 aides and security staff so that he can address the Security Council meeting.

Throughout the negotiations, the Russians tried to water down the resolution, a reflection of both their desire to avoid a backlash in Iran and their strong skepticism about the effectiveness of sanctions.

The pending resolution follows a similar one passed in December that required four months of negotiations, in large part because of Russia's resistance. Russia's support came only after an initial proposal, which would have imposed curbs on Bushehr, was dropped.

Russian officials have gone out of their way to not publicly link the Bushehr project and the crisis over Iran's decision to forge ahead with producing enriched uranium, which, depending on the level of enrichment, can be used to produce electricity or make weapons.

In remarks on Sunday, for example, Mr. Ivanov said there should be no linkage between discussions on Iran's nuclear program and the Bushehr plant. "It is a separate issue," he told a conference of Russia's Foreign and

Defense Policies Council. He added, "All the work being done is under strict control of the International Atomic Energy Agency," the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency based in Vienna.

He also cautioned against using possible nuclear sanctions for other purposes, saying, "We oppose attempts to use this issue as an instrument of pressure or interference in Iran's internal affairs."

But Mr. Ivanov also called on Iran to resolve outstanding questions with the agency about its nuclear program and to stop enriching uranium. The Russians have been pressing Iran to take some sort of pause in its uranium enrichment that might allow the Security Council sanction process to halt and bring Iran back to the negotiating table.

"The clock must be stopped; Iran must freeze uranium enrichment," Mr. Ivanov said. "The U.N. Security Council will then take a break, too, and the parties would gather at the negotiating table."

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, has also called for a "pause," noting that even a brief suspension of enrichment would be enough to get the United States to the negotiating table with Iran under an offer that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice made in May.

The Bushehr nuclear project has a long history. For more than a decade, Russia has been working under a \$1 billion contract to complete the plant, which began with Germany during the time of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi. After the 1979 revolution, the project was halted; then the site was bombed by Iraq during its eight-year war with Iran.

When Iran decided to complete the facility after the war ended, Germany, under pressure from the United States, refused to finish it, or even provide Moscow with the original blueprints.

The project — already eight years behind schedule — is now almost complete. Last year, Russia agreed to ship low-enriched fuel to the plant by March 2007 and start it in September, with electricity generation to start by November. But in mid-February, Russia said Iran had not made the last two \$25 million monthly payments after insisting that it be allowed to pay in euros instead of dollars. Russian officials cited a delay in the delivery of safety equipment from an unspecified third country as another reason for the decision.

Iranian officials denied that payments had been delayed. "Iran has had no delay whatsoever in making payments for the Bushehr nuclear power plant," Mohammad Saeedi, deputy head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, was quoted by Iran's state-run news agency IRNA as saying after the Russian claim.

"We would be crazy at this late date to endanger the project by not paying," the official said. "There is no financial problem. The Russians want to use this issue as a bargaining chip."

David E. Sanger and Helene Cooper contributed reporting from Washington.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/20/world/europe/20iran.html?_r=1&ref=world&oref=slogin

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Army Times

Expert: Chlorine attacks in Iraq hard to stop

By Mike Corder - The Associated Press

Posted : Monday Mar 19, 2007 16:18:32 EDT

THE HAGUE, Netherlands — A chemical warfare expert said Monday the chlorine gas-loaded weapons used in a series of attacks by Iraqi insurgents amount to "chemical dirty bombs," and will be hard to stop.

However, so far the insurgents appear only to have access to a rudimentary and inefficient method of spreading the gas — blowing it up in suicide bombings.

On Friday, three suicide bombers driving trucks rigged with tanks of toxic chlorine gas struck targets in heavily Sunni Anbar province, killing at least two people and sickening 350 Iraqi civilians and six U.S. troops, the U.S. military said.

The attacks drew a sharp condemnation Monday from Rogelio Pfitter, director general of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, a U.N. watchdog.

"Once again we have witnessed the horrors of chemicals being used to terrorize and kill innocent civilians in Iraq," he said.

Jonathan Tucker, a visiting Fulbright fellow at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, said there is little that can be done to stop the attacks because chlorine, which is used for water purification across Iraq, is so widely available.

"They can try to limit access to chlorine ... but given the black market situation that would be difficult to do," he said in a telephone interview during a visit to The Hague.

"This is obviously a very crude terrorist tactic. Terrorists tend to be very opportunistic and this is a new tactic for them that is scaring a lot of people and doing significant harm," said . "These are chemical dirty bombs."

There have been four other bombings that released chlorine gas since Jan. 28, when a suicide bomber driving a dump truck filled with explosives and a chlorine tank struck a quick-reaction force and Iraqi police in Ramadi,

killing 16 people. The U.S. military has warned that insurgents are adopting new tactics in a campaign to spread panic.

The method used by Iraqi insurgents for spreading the gas — carrying it in vehicles blown up by suicide bombers — is “an extremely crude means of delivery,” Tucker said. “A lot of the chemicals would be consumed in the explosion itself. It is just not a very efficient means of dispersal.”

Chlorine irritates the respiratory system, eyes and skin at low exposure and can cause death in heavier concentrations.

Victims in the recent chlorine blasts died from the explosions, not the effects of the gas, but scores of people have been hospitalized suffering the effects of chlorine exposure.

Friday’s attacks came on the anniversary of a 1998 mustard and nerve gas attack by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein on the northern Iraqi town of Halabja that killed an estimated 5,600 people.

Saddam ordered the attack as part of a scorched-earth campaign to crush a Kurdish rebellion in the north, seen as aiding Iran in the final months of its war with Iraq. The ousted leader was executed for other crimes against humanity before he could face trial for Halabja.

Chlorine was used by both sides in World War I, with German forces first allowing it to drift across no man’s land and into Allied trenches. Both sides later used artillery shells to deliver the gas.

Iraq’s parliament and the Western-backed government is preparing to join the Chemical Weapons Convention, which bans the development, production, stockpiling and use of such weapons and regulates the destruction of existing arsenals.

More than 180 countries around the world belong to the convention, which went into effect in April 1997, but notable absentees include North Korea, Syria and Somalia.

Pfirtner called on all countries “especially those in the Middle East,” to help eliminate chemical weapons.

“Today, with an ever greater sense of urgency, I call upon every government to help us before another, possibly more devastating, attack occurs,” he said.

http://www.armytimes.com/news/2007/03/ap_chlorinebombs_070319/

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International Herald Tribune

March 20, 2007

The Associated Press

Russians yanking key personnel from Iranian nuclear site

VIENNA: Russia is pulling out its technicians and engineers from Bushehr, U.S. and European government representatives said Tuesday, leaving Iran's first nuclear reactor just short of completion at a time of growing international pressure on Tehran to curb its atomic ambitions.

The representatives — a European diplomat and a U.S. official — said a large number of Russian technicians, engineers and other specialists were flown back to Moscow within the last week, at about the same time senior Russian and Iranian officials tried, but failed, to resolve differences over the Bushehr nuclear reactor. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

Although both sides officially say their differences are financial, the dispute has a strong political component that the West hopes could result in Moscow lining up closer behind U.S.- led efforts to impose harsher UN sanctions on Tehran for its refusal to freeze uranium enrichment.

Russian officials deny links between the dispute over Bushehr and Iran's nuclear defiance. But two senior European officials, speaking separately, said Tuesday that Moscow recently dropped all pretexts and bluntly told Iran that Russia would not make good on pledges to deliver nuclear fuel for Bushehr unless it complies with the UN demand for an enrichment freeze.

Asked about the approximately 2,000 Russian workers on site of the nearly completed reactor outside the southern city of Bushehr, the U.S. official said: "A good number of them have left recently."

The European diplomat, who is accredited to the International Atomic Energy Agency, said a large number had departed as late as last week, during abortive talks in Moscow between the Russian Security Council head, Igor Ivanov, and Ali Hosseini Tash, Iran's deputy Security Council chief.

Sergei Novikov, a spokesman for Rosatom, Russia's Federal Nuclear Power Agency, confirmed that the number of Russian workers at the Bushehr plant had recently dwindled because of what he said were Iranian payment delays. He would not say how many had left.

The Russian departures are formally linked to a financial row between Moscow and Tehran — but are also connected to international efforts to persuade Tehran to freeze activities related to uranium enrichment, which can produce both nuclear fuel and the fissile material for nuclear warheads.

The reactor is 95 percent completed, although eight years behind schedule. But Russia announced this month that further work on the project would be delayed because Iran had failed to make monthly payments since January. It said the delay could cause "irreversible" damage to the project.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/03/20/news/iran.php>

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Boston Globe
March 21, 2007

Quick OK Eyed On Iran Sanctions

By Noah Barkin, Reuters

BERLIN -- Germany and China urged rapid approval of a UN draft resolution that would impose sanctions on Iran for its nuclear program after South Africa surprised major powers by proposing a softening of the document's wording.

The proposed resolution, designed to pressure Iran to halt its uranium enrichment work, would put in place an embargo on Iranian arms exports and freeze financial assets abroad of 28 individuals, groups, and companies. It is a follow-up to a previous resolution adopted by the Security Council in December and was expected to be voted on this week after Germany and permanent council members Britain, China, France, Russia, and the United States agreed on the text.

But South Africa, the current chair of the Security Council, has called for all key sanctions proposed by major powers, including an arms embargo and financial bans on an Iranian state bank and the Revolutionary Guard, to be dropped.

Although the original draft could probably be adopted by the Security Council without South Africa's backing, the major powers had wanted it to be passed unanimously.

The German government said that Chancellor Angela Merkel had spoken with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao on Monday and that both supported quick approval of the new resolution.

Separately yesterday, Russian and Iranian officials denied a report in The New York Times that said Russia had told Tehran it would withhold fuel for its Bushehr nuclear power plant unless it suspends uranium enrichment.

The newspaper, citing European, American, and Iranian officials, had reported that Igor Ivanov, secretary of the Russian National Security Council, had delivered the ultimatum to Iranian nuclear negotiator Ali Hosseini Tash last week.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/middleeast/articles/2007/03/21/quick_ok_eyed_on_iran_sanctions/

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New York Times
March 21, 2007

Sensing Shift in Bush Policy, Another Hawk Leaves

By DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON, March 20 — Among the hawks in the Bush administration, Robert Joseph long occupied a special perch.

As the architect of much of the administration's strategy for countering nuclear proliferation, he helped engineer the decision to exit the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, worked secretly to squeeze Libya to give up its nuclear weapons program, and created a loose consortium of nations, now numbering more than 80, committed to intercepting illicit weapons at sea, in the air or on land.

But last month Mr. Joseph quietly left the State Department, where he was under secretary for arms control and international security, telling colleagues that, as a matter of principle, he simply could not abide the new agreement with North Korea that the Bush administration struck in February.

Mr. Joseph has declined to talk publicly about why he left, but he told colleagues that he thought the deal would prolong the survival of a North Korean government he has publicly called "criminal" and "morally abhorrent" while failing to require it to give up the weapons it has already produced. In an interview, Mr. Joseph made clear that he "does not support the policy" that President Bush has now embraced.

"The approach I would have endorsed was to continue to put pressure on the regime," Mr. Joseph added.

He is among the last of the hawks to turn off the lights and walk away from an administration that many conservatives say has lost its clarity of mission. He insists he is leaving without rancor and without regrets, including for his role in assessing the weapons intelligence about Iraq. "I do share the recognition that there was an

intelligence failure, but it wasn't just a failure of the Bush administration," he said. "Look, if we press too hard we are accused of politicizing the intelligence; if we don't press, then we are not doing our job."

The departure of Mr. Joseph and others has been welcomed by officials, mostly in the State Department, who believe the administration's hawks blocked opportunities for negotiated settlements. They have celebrated a distinct change in the tone and actions of the administration, now so enmeshed in Iraq that it has neither the time nor the appetite for the agenda to remake the world that dominated its first term. To the departed hawks, the administration has simply lost its moorings.

Some, like Mr. Joseph's predecessor at the State Department, John R. Bolton, the former ambassador to the United Nations, have taken to the airwaves, denouncing the North Korea accord specifically, and what they view as a general drift toward compromise, a post-Iraq overemphasis on caution.

Others, including Donald H. Rumsfeld, the former defense secretary; Paul D. Wolfowitz, Stephen A. Cambone and Douglas J. Feith, Mr. Rumsfeld's former deputies; and I. Lewis Libby Jr., Vice President Dick Cheney's former chief of staff, have remained silent. Mr. Wolfowitz has used his position as president of the World Bank to turn to other issues; others are writing books or articles defending the use of intelligence or their role in the decision to invade Iraq.

Some hawks remain. Mr. Cheney is the most prominent, of course, and by all accounts he is as unyielding as ever in the administration's internal debates. But his public statements are often more muted than before the Iraq war, when he argued that toppling Saddam Hussein would remake the Middle East.

Mr. Cheney is supported by a dwindling band of loyalists, including John Hannah, who succeeded Mr. Libby as the vice president's national security adviser but seems to wield little of his clout.

At the White House, J. D. Crouch, the deputy national security adviser, who headed the group that devised the administration's strategy to increase troops in Iraq, and Elliott Abrams, who leads global democracy strategy, are known for their relatively hawkish views. Mr. Abrams has assembled a team pressing internally to step up pressure on Iran, a strategy Mr. Bush has endorsed as a way to gain leverage over Tehran.

But that was considered a rare victory. "With the exception of a few — including the vice president — the hawks have returned to their nests," said one of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's top aides who viewed Mr. Joseph and others as seeking to block the give and take of negotiations.

Mr. Joseph, now 57 and preparing for a life as a speaker, consultant and part-time presidential envoy on proliferation issues, is careful not to criticize either Mr. Bush or Ms. Rice, both of whom he says he admires. But he declares as a fact what many still inside the administration will not: Iraq has taken the steel out of the administration's diplomacy in the second term.

"Iraq," Mr. Joseph said over lunch last week, shortly after he left his job, "inhibits taking actions that could be perceived as provocative." He and his former colleagues wonder whether many of the actions that came to define Mr. Bush's first term — when they scrapped the ABM treaty, walked away from the Kyoto Protocol on climate change and raised pre-emptive strikes to the status of a doctrine in the first National Security Strategy — would happen today.

In the first term, as he moved between his office at the National Security Council and frequent meetings with Mr. Bush and Ms. Rice, then the national security adviser, Mr. Joseph's influence was evident in a wide constellation of issues.

"The first term was a running battle between the hawks and the middle, and Bob was always there," said Michael Green, who ran Asian affairs at the National Security Council and is now at Georgetown University. Mr. Joseph turned out reams of position papers, arguing for deeper sanctions against the likes of Kim Jong-il of North Korea or the Iranian mullahs. Ms. Rice usually signed on.

When Ms. Rice declared four years ago that "we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud," she was giving rhetorical edge to positions Mr. Joseph helped sketch out. Similarly, her dismissal of a French effort to give inspectors in Iraq more time — "the worst of both worlds," she said — matched views he was expressing in interviews at the time.

In the second term, Mr. Joseph arrived at the State Department to discover a changed dynamic. Ms. Rice's first imperative was to restore relations with allies, particularly in Europe, who had parted with the administration on the war. Over the past 26 months, she appears to have steadily edged back to the realist school that she was identified with for years before signing on to Mr. Bush's presidential campaign in the late 1990s.

Some of her former colleagues argue that Ms. Rice has let the State Department change her, rather than the other way around.

Asked about that, Mr. Bolton, who moved to the American Enterprise Institute after it was clear his time as ambassador to the United Nations could not be extended, paused for a moment and said, "I think I will take a pass on that one."

But he quickly added: "I would say that the difference is that the bureaucracy is now getting what it wanted on Jan. 21, 2001."

Mr. Joseph's own trajectory in the administration seems symbolic of the changes that have taken place. He came to the administration brimming with ideas about "counterproliferation," a more muscular approach to ending trade in the world's most dangerous weapons than the Clinton administration and its predecessors had followed. One of his first tasks was to devise a strategy to get out of the ABM treaty, and answer critics who argued it would revive an arms race with Russia. Instead, the administration helped create a new treaty, signed in 2002, committing both sides to reduce the size of their arsenals, though it leaves thousands of warheads in storage. "No one even thinks about the ABM treaty anymore, which is a true measure of success," Mr. Joseph said. Inside the White House, he drafted a new policy for aggressively pursuing trade in unconventional weapons, one that goes far beyond export controls. It became the "Proliferation Security Initiative," a plan now supported by both Democrats and Republicans that creates a web of countries that use their national laws to cooperate in intercepting shipments.

When the new effort hit early pay dirt in the fall of 2003, intercepting a cargo ship bound for Libya with nuclear centrifuges built by Abdul Qadeer Khan's nuclear smuggling network, it led to Mr. Joseph's biggest success: working with American and British intelligence officials to persuade Libya to give up its nuclear program, which helped break up Mr. Khan's network.

He had a personal stake in the Libya negotiations: In 1988, Mr. Joseph had nearly taken Pan Am Flight 103, which Libyan terrorists blew up, and in his dealings with the Libyans he said he periodically saw the faces of the passengers whom he watched waiting to board that plane in London.

He said growing up in an Arab-American family in North Dakota "provided an advantage" as he sat across the table from the Libyans, telling them that they would only see better relations with the United States after they gave up their entire nuclear program. Incremental steps, he told them, would not be sufficient.

That is clearly the aggressive model Mr. Joseph would like to see used with North Korea and Iran. In his first days at the State Department in 2005, he drafted a paper entitled "Defensive Measures for North Korea," and when the United States succeeded in closing down a bank that North Korea used for a number of illicit transactions, he argued that similar techniques would bring pain to Tehran.

But he did not play a central role in devising negotiating strategies with either country. That was put into the hands of career diplomats, Christopher R. Hill in the case of North Korea, and R. Nicholas Burns in the case of Iran, while Mr. Joseph devised the administration's new "global initiative to combat nuclear terrorism."

Last fall, he argued vociferously against ending the action to seize illicit North Korean funds in order to get to a broader arms agreement. When he was overruled, he left the administration. "Pressure is essential," Mr. Joseph said, "if diplomacy is to have any chance of success."

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/21/washington/21hawks.html?_r=1&hp=&adxnml=1&adxnmlx=1174475096-bU9RsvbRNvxcpGipEDJfaQ&oref=slogin

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Los Angeles Times
March 22, 2007

Iran's Leader Vows To Retaliate Against Any New Sanctions

If the U.N. 'takes illegal actions, we will take illegal measures too,' Khamenei says.

By Ramin Mostaghim, Special to The Times

TEHRAN — Iran's supreme leader struck a defiant tone Wednesday about any possible new United Nations Security Council sanctions over his country's nuclear program, threatening to "use any means necessary" to strike back.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in a televised address marking the beginning of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, said Iran would respond in kind to punitive measures and he blamed the country's domestic divisions on foreign powers.

"If they want to threaten us and use force and violence, they should have no doubt that Iranians will use any means necessary to strike a blow against those who assault them," Khamenei, Iran's spiritual, political and military chief, said from the northeastern city of Mashhad, his hometown.

Enemies "seek to drive a wedge between the ranks of the nation, kill the unity of the Iranian people ... and make the Iranians preoccupied with internal divisions."

Audience members chanted "Death to America!" several times during the speech.

The Security Council is debating additional sanctions to pressure Tehran to halt uranium enrichment, including placing an embargo on Iran's weapons exports and freezing assets of a major bank as well as people and companies involved in the nuclear and missile programs.

The draft resolution also would ask countries to monitor the movements of certain individuals and to cut off financial assistance to Iran except for humanitarian purposes.

The Security Council's five veto-holding members have agreed on the proposed sanctions, but South Africa, Qatar and Indonesia have offered amendments that probably will delay the vote until next week. South Africa argues that the resolution should more carefully target the nuclear program, and Qatar and Indonesia want the Middle East to become a nuclear-free zone.

Khamenei said Iran was being punished even though it had broken no laws. He hinted that Iran was prepared to violate unspecified international laws if the U.N. tried to force it to halt activities aimed at enriching nuclear material. If the U.N. "takes illegal actions, we will take illegal measures too," he said.

International nonproliferation agreements allow countries to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes such as civilian energy use, which Iranian officials say is their aim. But enrichment is also a precursor to developing nuclear weapons, and U.S. and European officials suspect Iran is cloaking such an effort. Washington has demanded that Iran halt its enrichment activities as a show of good faith before negotiations, but Tehran has refused.

In his speech, Khamenei likened his country's nuclear program to its nationalization of the oil industry more than 50 years ago. That action sparked a U.S.- and British-backed coup that overthrew Iran's democratically elected government. It was followed by the return of Mohammed Reza Shah Pahlavi, whose reign ended with the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"Nuclear technology is much more important than the nationalization of the oil industry," Khamenei said.

Khamenei identified ethnic troubles and the rift between Shiite and Sunni sects of Islam as some of the most important challenges facing Iran. He declared the new year, 1386 in the Persian calendar, one of "national unity and Islamic solidarity" in the face of festering conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon and the Persian Gulf.

Khamenei blamed the West for exacerbating the religious and ethnic troubles in the region. "The enemy appears to be making an extensive and well-hidden move throughout the world of Islam aimed at driving a wedge between the nation of Iran and other Muslim nations, exaggerating religious differences and creating a Shiite-Sunni war in any part of the world where it can," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran22mar22.1.7457617.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Christian Science Monitor

March 22, 2007

War drill fails to reassure Israelis

A massive mock attack does little to deflect concern over a series of scandals that has severely weakened faith in government.

By Joshua Mitnick

Yellow smoke billowed in the schoolyard, and emergency personnel scrambled to contain the mock chemical attack. The two-day nationwide drill that began Tuesday was more than just an exercise in rescue response to possible chemical attacks or Iranian missile strikes.

Israel's largest-ever such drill was meant to signal to the public that the government and safety services had learned the lessons of this summer's war with Hizbullah in southern Lebanon.

Government services in parts of northern Israel collapsed during the monthlong war when nearly 4,000 rockets fired by Hizbullah guerrillas sent hundreds of thousands of people scurrying to bomb shelters.

Israel's performance in the war triggered harsh criticism of the leadership of Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's government, which has since been besieged by a variety of scandals that have brought confidence in public officials to an all-time low.

"We're used to attacks, but people question whether this will be the same in real time. Of course not," says Sima Abadi, who watched with her mother-in-law and two daughters in strollers. "People don't have any faith in the police or the army anymore."

Dubbed "Turning Point," the \$500,000 exercise included 5,000 policemen and was supposed to test coordination among teams of soldiers, firefighters, ambulance teams, government offices, and hospitals. But the exceptionally dark exercise, complete with sirens and actors playing screaming children and wounded with missing limbs, did little to restore the faith of a nation brooding over the seeming rot penetrating all areas of public life.

Although the mass dress rehearsal was months in the making, it comes just two weeks after the army had to petition the Supreme Court to quash publication of a state comptroller's report that is believed to be blistering in its criticism of the military's National Guard-like Homefront Command.

And as government investigators put the final touches on reports of the widespread bungling of the conflict with Hizbullah, a salvo of corruption scandals has put Israel's top politicians under fire. Since the beginning of the year, both Israel's army chief of staff and a police commissioner were forced to step down. And on Wednesday, Israel's labor foundation shut down airports, mail services, and garbage collection in a general strike to protest the failure of the government to pay the salaries of hundreds of municipal employees. The corruption scandals have tainted President Moshe Katsav, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and former Justice Minister Haim Ramon. Most recently, embezzlement charges have been brought against Finance Minister Abraham Hirschson.

Never before has the disillusionment been so comprehensive, analysts say.

Public radio newscasters quote surveys that say only 5 percent of Israelis are satisfied with the political system. Newspapers are filled with predictions of Olmert's resignation after a state inquiry is made public in another month. "Olmert-led Israel is in utter disarray. There is no policy, no responsibility, and no decision-making," wrote journalist and commentator Ari Shavit in the Israeli daily Haaretz.

"The home front is not prepared for another war. The Israel Defense Forces are not prepared for another war. No official authority has been established to deal with another war. There is no diplomatic initiative that could prevent the next war."

The gloom could prompt reservist absenteeism and even prompt young Israelis to look to immigrate, says Michael Oren, senior fellow at the Shalem Center in Jerusalem.

The cynicism has even filtered down to Israeli adolescents. As the drill wound down, and firefighters grouped together for souvenir snapshots, 14-year-old Yaron Nadin wandered amid the rescue workers and declared the fire trucks, ambulances, and actors "one big show."

While police were linking arms to hold back actors posing as hysterical parents, he slipped under the police tape.

"Do you know the word for 'shoddy' in Hebrew?"

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0322/p07s02-wome.html>

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Washington Times

March 23, 2007

Pg. 1

Chlorine Cache Found In Iraq

U.S. sees insurgents moving to chemical weapons

By Sharon Behn, Washington Times

BAGHDAD -- U.S. troops sweeping Baghdad have found containers of nitric acid and chlorine, raising concerns that insurgents are expanding their use of chemicals in the war for power in Iraq, military officials said yesterday. The containers were found as part of a larger cache of weapons discovered as U.S. and Iraqi troops cleared house after house in the Sunni-majority Ghazaliyah neighborhood in western Baghdad.

In a new twist in the Iraqi conflict, chlorine gas set off by suicide bombers in villages west of Baghdad killed at least eight and sickened hundreds last week. It was the first time the chemical was found in the capital.

Although both nitric acid and chlorine have a variety of industrial uses, finding them alongside weapons stashes in known terrorist havens signified a change of tactic for the fighters, said a U.S. military official who asked not to be named.

"We've seen them use caustic acid with improvised explosive devices to burn the skin," said the official, adding that although the acid does not increase the lethality of a bomb, it does make it "nastier."

About 1,600 Iraqi and U.S. forces have been taking part in the operations aimed at ridding Baghdad's Mansour area of both al Qaeda terrorists and illegal militias.

In one house in nearby Amariyah raided by Iraqi troops and the U.S. Army's Striker Brigade yesterday, soldiers found mortar shells stored in a bag in the front yard, along with a meat cleaver and a bomb fashioned from a propane tank.

Inside the house, clothing, photographs and children's toys were piled high in filthy corners. Black and white banners declared the rule of the Islamic Army, a Sunni extremist group.

Iraqi army soldiers spread out the munitions plus an array of license plates on the sidewalk before U.S. explosives specialists came to detonate the propane tank. The explosion shook houses in the area.

Frightened neighbors nervously acknowledged to U.S. soldiers that a group of young men had been squatting in the house during the day, but would not offer any more information, and clammed up the moment Iraqi army soldiers entered the house.

"When you leave, the Iraqi army comes in here and asks us what we told you," said the man, smoking cigarette after cigarette.

Earlier in the week, soldiers found an Iraqi policeman in uniform tied to a post, blindfolded, shot in the abdomen and left to die, a clear intimidation tactic as troops try to secure Baghdad's volatile neighborhoods.

Iraqi and U.S. forces have detained dozens of people during their raids, holding them for further questions.

In other developments yesterday, the U.S. military said it captured two brothers who were "directly connected" to the Jan. 20 sneak attack that killed five U.S. soldiers guarding the provincial headquarters in Karbala, a city 50 miles south of Baghdad, the Associated Press reported.

Qais al-Khazaali, his brother Laith al-Khazaali and several other members of their network were rounded up over the past three days.

The military also said it released an aide to Sheik Muqtada al-Sadr, Ahmed al-Shibani, at the request of Iraq's prime minister.

The U.S. military announced that three Americans died in combat Wednesday. At least 44 Iraqis were killed or found dead yesterday, including 25 bodies dumped in the capital, police said.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20070322-113046-8576r.htm>

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Washington Post

March 23, 2007

Pg. 12

Six-Party Talks Break Down As N. Korea Balks On Funds

By Maureen Fan, Washington Post Foreign Service

BEIJING, March 22 -- The six-nation talks aimed at dismantling North Korea's nuclear program broke down in Beijing on Thursday as top envoys from Russia and North Korea flew home and the Chinese hosts called a recess. Delegates from Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, had been refusing since Tuesday to take part in joint sessions until \$25 million in frozen North Korean funds was transferred. Their departure followed repeated public assurances by Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, the chief U.S. negotiator, that the funds issue would not derail the talks.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei had convened the negotiations based on U.S. assurances that the banking issue had been resolved and had argued that diplomacy, rather than sanctions, would be most effective in dealing with North Korea.

The goal of the talks is to persuade the secretive communist state to give up its nuclear program in return for aid and diplomatic recognition. The breakdown underscored a fundamental lack of trust that makes it easy for an ostensibly minor issue to suspend the difficult process of nuclear disarmament.

Although all six parties reaffirmed their commitment to agreements made so far, some officials conceded privately that the suspension of talks suggested North Korea might hold up future negotiations over other technical issues.

"The breakdown raises the question as to whether the North is really serious about denuclearization," said Peter M. Beck, a Seoul-based analyst with the International Crisis Group. "It's clearly not a question of if they're getting their money back or how much of it."

Officials said there had been no discussions about the next steps toward ending the nuclear program.

North Korean negotiator Kim Gye Gwan and Russian envoy Alexander Losyukov caught planes home Thursday at about the same time. A North Korean government source in Beijing told Reuters news agency, "Our delegation went home because there was no progress on the promised transfer of the funds."

The Pyongyang government is waiting for the return of \$25 million from dozens of accounts at Banco Delta Asia, a bank in Macau that U.S. regulators have accused of laundering money for North Korea.

Treasury Department officials last week agreed to the return of about half the money, saying that a lengthy investigation had shown that the rest was connected with illicit transactions. But they did an abrupt about-face this week, agreeing to return all the money.

The turnabout, aimed at moving the nuclear discussions forward, came without any preparations for transferring the funds. North Korea, which ended the last round of six-party talks over the frozen accounts issue, refused to take U.S. officials' word that the transfer would soon take place, demanding to see the money first.

The decision to return all the money has sparked controversy inside and outside the U.S. government. On Thursday, the North Koreans' blocking of the talks heightened the criticism.

"It is embarrassing," said David Asher, who headed a task force examining North Korean criminal activities during President Bush's first term. He likened the U.S. move to giving money back to a thief and said it would simply

encourage North Korea to test the limits. "We are trying to pay them to act good," he said. "But they think they are getting paid because they acted bad."

Michael J. Green, formerly the top Asia specialist at the White House, approves of the nuclear agreement reached in February but warned, "We have to be careful not to expend all of our chits at this stage and not let North Korea regain the initiative."

Wu said the main cause of the delay was difficulty finding a bank willing to transfer the funds.

Despite the breakdown, diplomats said they remained confident that all parties were still committed to the Feb. 13 agreement to dismantle North Korea's reactor at Yongbyon and that discussions on subsequent steps would continue later. "All six parties are now in the same boat, and the boat has already started its voyage," Wu said. "No one can get off the boat. We have to work together to make progress."

Staff writer Glenn Kessler in Washington and news researcher Jin Ling contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/03/22/AR2007032200160.html>

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