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International Herald Tribune

June 18, 2007

The Associated Press

Nuclear powers must do more to prevent terrorists getting nukes, expert says

UNITED NATIONS: Nuclear material is not as well-guarded, easily-detected or as hard to manipulate into a weapon as many think and the world's nuclear powers must act decisively to keep it from terrorist hands, a nonproliferation expert said Monday.

Matthew Bunn, a senior researcher at Harvard University's Project on Managing the Atom, urged countries to ratify and implement the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which takes effect in July.

The convention, which has been signed by 115 countries and ratified by 22 countries, asks states to criminalize acts of nuclear terror, such as procuring nuclear material to cause harm or plotting to sabotage a nuclear power plant.

"Unfortunately, it does not take a Manhattan Project to make at least a crude nuclear bomb of the kind that terrorists might want," Bunn told representatives of member states at a conference. "Physics tells us it's not as hard as we would like it to be."

The Manhattan Project was the American effort to develop the first atomic bomb.

Bunn said there was "no convincing evidence yet" that terror groups had acquired either highly enriched uranium or plutonium, at least one of which is required to make a nuclear weapon.

He said there was evidence that groups such as al-Qaida have had "considerable difficulty" trying to find a source for these materials, but are still trying to acquire the fuel.

Security breaches at nuclear facilities are not just the stuff of science fiction movies, he said.

"Theft of the essential ingredients of a nuclear weapon is not a hypothetical worry," said Bunn, noting that over the past 15 years there have been several incidents in which nuclear material was stolen. "It is an ongoing reality."

Transporting radioactive material across a border is fairly easy, too, Bunn warned.

"These things are small. They're not as radioactive as people think they are. They're quite difficult to detect at any significant distance," Bunn said.

Though many border crossings have begun to install detectors that sniff for radiation, he said most were not powerful enough to detect shielded highly enriched uranium.

Though much of Bunn's message was grim, he emphasized that given the probability that terrorists do not yet have nuclear material, the international community still has time to prevent a disaster.

He said states should ratify and implement the nuclear terrorism convention, as well as other international treaties.

He also called on the International Atomic Energy Agency to publish more precise guidelines for safeguarding nuclear stockpiles.

States should also work to reduce the number of locations at which weapons are stored, he said.

As the holders of 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, Russia and the United States must lead this charge, Bunn said.

He commended Russia on the great strides it has made in recent years, but noted that it was still negotiating the difficulties of securing weapons in an open society, after years of relying on closed borders and secret police to safeguard its supply.

Countries such as Pakistan, which has a "proven record of selling dangerous technology" and is thought to be home to groups with links to al-Qaida, pose a particular risk, he said.

In 2004, the scientist considered to be the father of the Pakistan's nuclear weapons program, Abdul Qadeer Khan, confessed that he had leaked nuclear technology to North Korea, Iran and Libya.

Bunn said the use of a dirty bomb — a conventional bomb laced with radioactive material — is the most likely form of nuclear terrorism.

The deployment of such a weapon, while costly to clean up and psychologically terrifying, is unlikely to cause massive loss of life, Bunn said, and efforts should focus on effective response, rather than prevention.

Prevention might be impossible, he said, given that radioactive material is "everywhere," at hospitals, industrial plants and agricultural facilities.

In contrast, the detonating of a nuclear weapon in a major city would result in more than 100,000 deaths and economic devastation, he said, and the global community should do everything in its power to prevent it.

"If we shut all the doors today, we can be reasonably confident that we're greatly reducing the probability" of a terrorist nuclear attack, Bunn said.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/06/18/news/UN-GEN-UN-Nuclear-Terrorism.php>

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Financial Times

June 20, 2007

Experts Sceptical On Chances For Missile Deal

By Demetri Sevastopulo, Guy Dinmore and Neil Buckley

Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, recently surprised George W. Bush, his US counterpart, by proposing co-operation on missile defence. While Washington welcomed the move, however, experts question whether both sides can find common ground.

The US wants to place 10 missile interceptors in Poland and a powerful radar in the Czech Republic to protect the US and Europe from what it sees as future Iranian missile threats. Moscow argues that the shield appears to be aimed at Russia, since Iran is years away from developing missiles that could target the US.

At a recent summit in Germany, however, Mr Putin replaced months of cold-war style rhetoric with an offer to share data from a Russian early warning radar located in Gabala, Azerbaijan. He also suggested that the Pentagon place the interceptors in Turkey, Iraq, or on Aegis ships.

Russia is concerned about the European sites for several reasons. Politically, it is concerned about the significance of having the US military presence in Europe move into former Soviet bloc countries, a move it says would breach assurances the US provided after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

On the military side, Moscow disagrees with the Pentagon analysis that missile interceptors in Poland could not target any Russian missiles, but it is still more concerned that they could target Russian satellites. The most significant worry, however, is having an X-band radar in the Czech Republic that could monitor Russia.

Russia specialists say the Gabala radar - a Soviet-era installation developed to monitor submarine missile launches from the Indian Ocean - would provide the US with a window into Iran that would help determine whether the country was becoming a threat.

Experts say Gabala can track a wide area stretching from Turkey to Pakistan, but not Russia, which is why Mr Putin has much to gain, and little to lose, by offering its use. Some have speculated whether Mr Putin would be willing to allow the US to place an X-band radar - which is used for precision tracking to help missile interceptors hone in on their targets - at the same site.

Richard Lehner, spokesman for the US Missile Defence Agency, says the US and Russia may discuss the possibility of placing a mobile X-band radar at Gabala when their experts meet later this summer. But he cautions that it would not be a substitute for the larger, fixed X-band that the Pentagon plans on placing in the Czech Republic.

Few experts are convinced, however, that the US and Russia will be able to co-operate in a significant way. Jeffrey Lewis, a missile defence expert at the New America Foundation who writes the popular ArmsControlWonk blog, says he is pessimistic because both sides have missed opportunities to co-operate in the past, including over the joint use of radars.

Dmitri Trenin, a Russia expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, agrees that opportunities for missile defence co-operation are limited. The Gabala offer was conditional on the US halting its plans for Poland and the Czech Republic, he says. Since that offer, Mr Bush and Robert Gates, his defence secretary, have made clear that the US does not see the Russian proposal as halting their plans.

One of the reasons the US welcomed the Gabala offer is its perception that Russia has recognised the potential threat from Iran. Russian officials dispute this, saying their offer was partly intended to prove that Iran currently poses no risk, by using the radar to open a window into Iran. But Mr Trenin says the offer still represents a shift in Russian attitude to Tehran.

“This is a subtle change because this essentially invites the Americans to sit in front of that window. The Americans and the Russians will be sitting and watching and you cannot say after that that Russia is on the side of Iran. If I were a Persian, I wouldn’t be very happy about this proposal of Mr Putin’s.”

One senior US official says the Pentagon hopes that US and Russian experts can talk before Mr Bush and Mr Putin meet in Maine in early July to get a “complete understanding” of the proposal from Moscow.

“Until then we probably won’t understand the full parameters of what might or might not be possible,” the official said. “But I still don’t rule out that we will find a way to co-operate on this issue with Russia. There are lots of reasons for them and for us to do so.”

The US has been less receptive to the idea of placing missile interceptors in Turkey, Iraq, or on Aegis ships, as Mr Putin suggested. The Missile Defence Agency says Turkey and Iraq are too close to Iran for interceptors to be able to catch an incoming missile from Iran.

But the idea of using Aegis ships has seen more debate. Duncan Hunter, the top Republican on the House armed services committee, recently said Mr Putin’s proposal about sea-based missile defences was “promising”, although only as an additional capability to ground-based missile interceptors in Poland.

“The Navy’s Aegis ship-based defensive systems could be based in existing Black Sea ports, either in Ukraine, Russia or Turkey,” said Mr Hunter.

General Trey Obering, MDA director, has argued that the Aegis ships are currently configured to intercept short- and medium-range threats, and could not counter against long-range intercontinental ballistic missiles that could target the US without costly modifications, which would take a considerable amount of time. His critics say the Iranian threat is far enough in the future to provide the US time.

Gen Obering also argues that the US would need to deploy tens of ships for the system to be feasible. But several people familiar with a study prepared by Raytheon, which is manufacturing missile interceptors for the Aegis ships, said it concluded that as few as five ships could provide a defence against an Iranian threat. Raytheon declined to comment.

While the Bush administration faces opposition from Russia, it has also encountered some hurdles on Capitol Hill. The House has passed legislation that would prevent the Pentagon from spending money on the Polish site, unless

they reach agreement with Poland and get consent from Nato, and the Senate is likely to follow suit. The House has also called for an independent study of the European-based missile defence system.

Ellen Tauscher, the Democratic chairwoman of the House strategic forces subcommittee who pushed to block the funding, says the Pentagon should be negotiating with Nato, and not two Nato member countries on a bilateral basis. She also takes issue with the argument that the missile defence sites in Poland and the Czech Republic are aimed at protecting Europe.

“The Polish site is really to protect the US,” she said last week.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, says a major reason for the Russian unease with missile defence is related to problems negotiating a nuclear arms agreement to succeed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which expires in 2009.

With the combination of the US developing missile defence capabilities and the reduced capability to verify each other’s missiles if Start is not replaced, Mr Kimball says Moscow is concerned that the US could deliver a “devastating first strike”.

“This is one of the reasons why the Russians are increasingly concerned about the viability of their own strategic offensive deterrent,” adds Mr Kimball.

A second senior US official says Russia and the US are currently examining whether they can negotiate a follow-on agreement to Start. While Russia wants a legally binding agreement, the Bush administration is resisting. The two sides are still hoping, however, to have some kind of joint declaration on non-proliferation when Mr Putin and Mr Bush meet at Kennebunkport next month.

The White House has also run into criticism from Capitol Hill. Richard Lugar, the top Republican on the Senate foreign relations committee, recently wrote a letter to Condoleezza Rice, secretary of state, questioning the administration’s reluctance to prepare a strong replacement agreement for Start.

The US intelligence community has also raised concerns that it will have less ability to monitor Russian missiles if Start is allowed to expire with no replacement.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/ca7c048e-1f6a-11dc-ac86-000b5df10621.html>

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New York Times

June 21, 2007

Pg. 8

U.S. To Hold Direct Talks In North Korea On Arms

By David E. Sanger and Norimitsu Onishi

WASHINGTON, June 20 — In a sharp reversal of strategy, the Bush administration on Wednesday secretly dispatched its top North Korea negotiator to the country’s capital, Pyongyang, for one-on-one talks about the North Koreans giving up their nuclear arsenal.

The visit is the first in five years by a senior American official. The State Department confirmed Wednesday night that the negotiator, Christopher R. Hill, was en route to Pyongyang from Tokyo, just hours after the United States found a way to return to the North roughly \$25 million in funds that were frozen for several years. The United States had frozen the money, saying it came from counterfeiting and trade in missiles and nuclear equipment.

It took months for Washington to clear obstacles preventing the money’s return, a move that hawks in the administration had argued was deeply mistaken. Now Mr. Hill can pursue the next items on his agenda: Persuading North Korea to fulfill a commitment it made in February to slow down its main nuclear reactor, whose spent fuel has enabled the country to manufacture plutonium and gain the fuel for eight or more nuclear weapons, according to public American intelligence estimates.

In the next step, the North is supposed to provide the United States and the other participants in the six-party negotiations on the issue — Japan, South Korea, Russia and China — with a detailed list of all of its nuclear programs and facilities.

The Bush administration is also considering authorizing Mr. Hill to offer to buy from the North Koreans nuclear equipment that they are believed to have purchased several years ago from Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani nuclear engineer. That equipment could conceivably give the North a second path to building a bomb, by enriching uranium.

But American officials do not know whether the North ever learned the secrets of enrichment, or where enrichment facilities might be. So far, the North has denied that it possesses the equipment.

“This is critical to the administration’s plan,” one senior official involved in the North Korea strategy said, “because unless they get their hands on this stuff, there is no way we can argue that we’ve stopped the North from making more nukes.”

But it was unclear whether Mr. Hill was prepared to make the offer to the North now, or what form it would take. While Washington or its allies could offer cash for the equipment, they might also promise future deliveries of nuclear fuel to power the civilian nuclear reactors the North insists it needs.

Mr. Hill's trip was organized in such secrecy that he apparently did not convey his plans to top Japanese officials, whom he visited Wednesday in Tokyo. Japan has refused to join the disarmament deal that North Korea signed in February. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has said Japan will only consider joining the deal after resolution of the cases of about a dozen Japanese said to have been abducted by North Korea.

In confirming reports of Mr. Hill's trip on Wednesday night — after sidestepping questions during the day to give Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice time to alert the Japanese and other American allies — the State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack, cast the trip as “part of the consultations” with all of the countries in the North Korea talks, trying to make it sound routine.

But for years the administration has refused to engage one on one with the North Koreans. Ms. Rice had to maneuver around Vice President Dick Cheney, officials said in February, to reach the deal that gives the North hundreds of thousands of tons of fuel oil in return for step-by-step disablement of its facilities. It was exactly the kind of grand bargain the administration had avoided for years, as Mr. Cheney and others argued that the United States should not prolong the life of the North Korean government of Kim Jong-il, but rather seek ways to speed its demise.

“Condi knows she needs a big win here,” said a senior administration official who has dealt with her often on North Korea. “They know they are getting nowhere on Iraq, and they probably won't get far on Iran. She needs to show that she can reduce at least one big threat.”

Late last week North Korea invited the return of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, presumably to witness the shutdown of its main nuclear reactor at Yongbyon. Those inspectors were thrown out of the country in late 2002, after American officials confronted the North with evidence that it had sought to cheat on a previous nuclear accord by purchasing from Dr. Khan the centrifuges to enrich uranium. Under the first phase of the accord reached in February, North Korea agreed to shut down the reactor after its frozen funds were returned. In addition, South Korea will deliver 50,000 tons of fuel oil to the energy-starved North after the shutdown is confirmed. Mr. Hill said in Tokyo that the next round of talks should focus on how to carry out the February agreement's second phase: declaring where the North has hidden decades of secret work, on the way to dismantling it. That is expected to prove even more difficult; several American officials say they did not believe the North would ever give up all of its nuclear program.

The last time an American delegation traveled to Pyongyang to negotiate, it ended badly. Mr. Hill's predecessor, James Kelly, went to Pyongyang in 2002 and opened the talks by telling the North Koreans that the United States had evidence they had purchased centrifuges and other equipment, and were breaking a 1994 accord. The Americans said the North first confirmed it had obtained the equipment, then later denied it.

That started a confrontation that resulted in a cutoff of American fuel oil supplies to the North. In retaliation, the North ejected the international inspectors and moved its nuclear fuel for what it said was conversion into plutonium. That began a downward spiral of events, culminating in North Korea's test of a nuclear device last October. Now, some Korea experts say the confrontation was avoidable. But President Bush was focused on Iraq, and his former aides say he was convinced that once Saddam Hussein fell, the North would be intimidated into giving up its weapons.

David E. Sanger reported from Washington, and Norimitsu Onishi from Tokyo.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/21/world/asia/21korea.html?ref=washington>

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Miami Herald

June 22, 2007

Bush Urged Not To Replace Nuclear Arms Inspections

Senators urged the Bush administration to retain its treaty-based arms inspections with Russia.

By Renee Schoof

WASHINGTON--Sen. Richard Lugar, co-creator of the program that's helped Russia dismantle and secure large portions of its Soviet-era nuclear forces, urged the Bush administration Thursday to reconsider plans to end treaty-based intrusive inspections of each other's arsenals.

"I'm concerned that transparency and verification will suffer if legally binding regimes are permitted to dissolve," the Indiana Republican told Daniel Fried, the assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs. "The predictability and confidence provided by treaty verification reduces the chances of misinterpretation, miscalculation and error."

He said Russian-American relations were "complicated enough without introducing more elements of uncertainty into the nuclear relationship."

Democrat Joseph Biden, D-Del., the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, also sounded the alarm. "I think it would be the single greatest negative legacy this administration could leave if it leaves us in a situation where there is no future architecture to follow on to START," he said, referring to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Bush administration officials want to replace the complex verification system of the START treaty, which expires in 2009, with a more informal system. McClatchy reported in an exclusive story earlier this week that talks between Moscow and Washington on a replacement accord have been delayed for three months by a dispute between Bush administration policymakers and U.S. intelligence officials.

The intelligence agencies want to retain the verification system because it gives them a window on Russia's weapons. Administration officials want the binding verification measures lifted so the United States can replace nuclear warheads with conventional warheads on intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Weapons of mass destruction are the No. 1 national security threat to both countries, and "success in this area would enhance national security and improve the prospects of U.S.-Russian cooperation in other policy areas," Lugar said. He spoke during a Senate hearing on U.S.-Russia relations before talks between President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Kennebunkport, Maine, on July 1 and 2.

Fried said the administration wanted to maintain transparency and predictability. "There are discussions going on with the Russians now about how to do that," he said. "There are a range of options, some more formal and elaborate than others, but we certainly do want to have a predictable and confidence-building post-START regime."

Lugar said the United States and Russia must extend START's verification and transparency elements and should work to add verification measures to a 2002 treaty mandating further cuts in deployed nuclear warheads. He cited the McClatchy story in his comments to Fried.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/578/story/147586.html>

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Washington Post

June 22, 2007

Pg. 1

U.S. Official Wraps Up Sudden Visit To N. Korea

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill launched a surprise two-day trip to Pyongyang yesterday, becoming the highest-ranking U.S. official to travel there since the crisis over North Korea's nuclear ambitions began nearly five years ago.

Hill visited the North Korean capital at the sudden request of the country's government, and -- in a shift in policy -- the United States did not demand any concessions as a condition for the trip. Hill had long lobbied to travel to Pyongyang, but Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other top officials had insisted that North Korea had to earn such a high-profile gesture by first shutting down its nuclear reactor.

But the aging reactor at Yongbyon is still operational, and this week the United States also arranged for North Korea to receive millions of dollars that the U.S. Treasury Department had previously deemed the fruits of illicit activities. The Bush administration -- which once all but barred bilateral contacts between North Korean and U.S. diplomats -- has sought to portray such shifts in policy as part of a natural evolution. But former administration officials who had once fought internal battles over North Korea policy said yesterday that the administration appears to be weakening its negotiating position by making so many concessions so quickly.

"Meeting and engaging with North Korea bilaterally is appropriate," said Michael J. Green, who was the top Asia specialist at the White House in 2005 and is now at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "But the administration has to be careful about shifting goal posts. North Korea has not shut down their reactor, and they have extracted all of their demands -- demands they had been told they would not get unless the reactor was shut down."

Many of President Bush's core conservative supporters also expressed distress over the administration's move. "This is another mistake that will convince the North Koreans that they have the whip hand and the State Department is desperate for a deal," said John R. Bolton, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack rejected notions that the administration has changed direction.

"There are always accusations of 'Well, you know, the administration has come unmoored from its principles and its policies, and it's shifting policies,'" he told reporters. "I would submit to you that this is not a change in policy."

State Department officials said that Hill's trip came about unexpectedly this week while the U.S. negotiator was traveling in Asia, consulting with the Japanese, the South Koreans and the Chinese about restarting the six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear programs. North Korea sent a message noting that it -- along with Russia -- was also part of the six-party talks and, thus, should be included in Hill's consultations. Rice discussed the proposal with Bush before approving the trip, with Vice President Cheney not raising any objection. The visit came about so quickly that Hill was accompanied by only a small group of State Department colleagues, rather than the standard delegation that would have included representatives from the White House and the Pentagon.

Hill has long believed that he could make more progress if he met with a wider range of North Korean officials than just the nuclear negotiators. He was scheduled to meet with the North Korean foreign minister, but it was unclear whether he would be granted a meeting with Kang Suk Ju, the first vice foreign minister and right-hand man of North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. Kang has directed North Korea's nuclear diplomacy since the early 1990s.

"Kang is the buffer," said Charles L. "Jack" Pritchard, president of the Korean Economic Institute.

Footage from Associated Press Television showed Hill arriving at Pyongyang's airport in a small jet amid a steady downpour. His five-member delegation was met by Li Gun, Pyongyang's deputy nuclear negotiator.

"We want to get the six-party process moving," Hill, standing under an umbrella, said in the footage. "We hope that we can make up for some of the time that we lost this spring, and so I'm looking forward to good discussions about that."

Hill and Li were shown walking together having an animated conversation. "We're all waiting for you," Li said. In response, Hill said he "got the message on Monday, and we had to work fast to find an airplane."

North Korea had pledged in February to disable its Yongbyon reactor, but it missed an April deadline because of a dispute over \$25 million in North Korean-linked funds that had been frozen because of a Treasury Department investigation. North Korea demanded a wire transfer, but for months no bank would agree to accept the money because about half of it appeared linked to North Korean money-laundering and other illicit activities.

That dispute was apparently resolved this week, after the Federal Reserve Bank of New York wired about \$23 million to the Russian central bank last week. (About \$2 million could not be transferred because North Korean officials could not obtain the appropriate release from account holders, U.S. officials said.) Russian officials announced yesterday that the funds were to be transferred to a Russian bank in which North Korea has an account, finally giving Pyongyang access to the money.

North Korea has said that once it receives the money, it would invite International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to begin discussions on the closure of the facility, which produces weapons-grade plutonium.

Since the reactor was restarted in 2002, North Korea has obtained enough plutonium to make as many as a dozen weapons.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/21/AR2007062100454.html>

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Boston Globe
June 22, 2007

Images Show New Reactor In Pakistan, Group Says

Warns effort could intensify arms race

By Stephen Graham, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Satellite images show that Pakistan is building a nuclear reactor that can produce weapons-grade plutonium, an American watchdog group said yesterday, warning that it could contribute to an atomic arms race with archrival India.

A picture taken June 3 shows work progressing rapidly on the reactor at the Khushab nuclear site, 100 miles southwest of Islamabad, the Institute of Science for International Security said.

The development of the reactor and other nuclear-related activities imply that Pakistan has decided to "increase significantly its production of plutonium for nuclear weapons," the Washington-based institute said in a report analyzing the images.

A senior official at the Pakistan Atomic Energy Authority said the country was expanding its infrastructure for its national interests, but declined to address the details of the report.

"We are a declared nuclear state and we are pursuing our nuclear program for peaceful purposes," said the official, who asked that he not be named because of the sensitivity of the subject.

Pakistan has stated repeatedly that it will develop its secretive nuclear program and maintain an atomic arsenal to deter India, its more powerful neighbor, despite past leaks of sensitive technology to countries, including Iran.

The report, co authored by former UN inspector David Albright, said Pakistan may have decided to produce more plutonium for lighter warheads for cruise missiles, or to upgrade weapons aimed at Indian cities.

Most Pakistani nuclear weapons use highly enriched uranium, the report noted.

Albright said the work on the reactor shows that the country is trying to improve its nuclear capabilities. Plutonium-based weapons pack more explosive power into smaller, lighter packages than those made with uranium, which Pakistan has been using for years, according to Albright.

"The work on these reactors reflects a Pakistani decision to create a new generation of nuclear weapons. . . . We have to interpret that as an attempt to make smaller, more powerful weapons that are going to be more destructive in India," Albright said in a telephone interview.

With India also trying to expand its ability to enrich uranium, Pakistan's activities "should be viewed as a sign of an accelerated nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan," according to the report.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2007/06/22/images_show_new_reactor_in_pakistan_group_says/

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Washington Times

June 22, 2007

Pg. 6

Report Faults U.S. Nuclear Arms Policy

By Elizabeth Miller, The Washington Times

The only deterrent for some countries from being next on "Washington's hit list" is to have nuclear weapons themselves, a new policy report concludes.

The report, released this week by the Independent Institute, a California free-market think tank, said U.S. behavior may have inadvertently created an incentive for some countries to acquire nuclear weapons, and that the United States should change its policies concerning relations with countries with nuclear weapons.

In "Nuclear Nonproliferation in the Post-9/11 World," defense analyst Charles Pena says that current U.S. nonproliferation policies, which attempt to prevent countries from acquiring weapons of mass destruction, should be changed from preventing them from gaining this material to figuring out what to do about it once they have acquired such weapons.

Speaking at a policy forum yesterday, Mr. Pena said because of past U.S. military intervention to cause regime change in countries such as Panama, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iraq that did not have nuclear capabilities, countries such as North Korea and Iran may be enticed into having nuclear programs to prevent U.S. military intervention in their countries because of the fear of U.S. nuclear retaliation.

"None of us are arguing proliferation is a good thing," Mr. Pena said. "If we're going to have alternatives we have to be able to talk and debate them."

Doug Bandow, vice president of policy for Citizen Outreach, said "for most of President Bush's administration, government officials refused to talk to North Korea."

North Korea, a communist country run by dictator Kim Jong-Il, began its nuclear weapons development program in late 2002.

Coincidentally, Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Christopher Hill traveled to North Korea yesterday in an attempt to encourage the government to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Iran's nuclear program — which Tehran says is a peaceful energy program — is of concern because of the country's ties to terrorist groups, the Independent Institute report said.

"It seems from the presentations that the biggest threat isn't that they'll launch an attack on the U.S. but it seems the biggest threat is that they'll sell these weapons to terrorist groups," said Ivan Eland, director of the institute's Center on Peace and Liberty.

But Mr. Pena said while many Americans fear terrorists will attack a major U.S. city with nuclear weapons, many dictators and leaders are hesitant to give terrorist groups these weapons.

While former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein supported terrorist groups, he never gave them nuclear weapons and actually kept them on a "tight leash because he viewed these groups as a threat to his power," Mr. Pena said.

"There's an irony here, if one of the reasons they acquire nuclear weapons is to prevent regime change, why would they give them away to a group that may take control away from them?" he said.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070622/NATION/106220061/1002>

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Washington Times

June 23, 2007

Pg. 1

IAEA Team Returning To North Korea

By Andrew Salmon, The Washington Times

SEOUL — U.N. nuclear inspectors will travel to North Korea on Tuesday to discuss the modalities of a promised shutdown of Pyongyang's nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, the International Atomic Energy Agency announced yesterday.

The facility is at the center of the North's nuclear weapons program.

The announcement came a day after North Korea said the IAEA delegation's visit was on hold because it had not received the \$25 million in frozen funds whose release was a condition for fulfilling a Feb. 13 nuclear disarmament deal.

The impasse ended yesterday when a Russian government official was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying the money would be transferred into a North Korean account on Russian soil by Monday.

"I am pleased to inform you that our team will be leaving on Sunday and arrive in Pyongyang on Tuesday," Mohamed ElBaradei told reporters in Vienna, Austria, adding that his No. 2 man, Olli Heinonen, would head the U.N. delegation.

"We should be able to start a long and complex process for working out with the DPRK the modalities of shutting down the installation at Yongbyon," he said, using the abbreviation for North Korea's official name — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"I believe the process goes in the right direction," he said.

The visit, at Pyongyang's invitation, will be the first to North Korea by IAEA inspectors since they were ousted by the communist country's leader Kim Jong-Il in late 2002.

Meanwhile in Seoul, after returning from a surprise overnight visit to North Korea, Undersecretary of State Christopher Hill, the chief U.S. envoy on the North Korean denuclearization process, said yesterday that he was pleased with the results of his trip to the reclusive communist state.

His comments also indicated that Pyongyang could become a stop on his travels around the region, raising hopes of a growing trust between him and his North Korean counterpart.

Mr. Hill also said yesterday he expects Pyongyang to shut down its nuclear reactor in about three weeks.

"Predictions are hard in this business, but I think what will happen is next week the international inspectors will come in," Mr. Hill told CNN in an interview yesterday from Seoul, during a regional tour. "Then I think within the week after that, or within two weeks of that, I think we can expect a shutdown of this facility," the chief negotiator said. "When it does, it will be a good day.

"The DPRK indicated that they are prepared to promptly shut down the Yongbyon facility, as called for in the February agreement," Mr. Hill said.

Calling talks "detailed and substantive," he said he and Northern officials discussed the "various elements we expect to sequence" in the denuclearization process. He also said he had discussed the issue of Japanese abductees.

Mr. Hill said he was "buoyed by a sense of achievement" but "burdened by the realization ... that it will take a great deal of work" to achieve North Korean denuclearization.

Most analysts expect the first phase — the shutdown of the North's Yongbyon reactor — to be much easier than the second phase, in which the North is obliged to disclose all its nuclear programs. The disclosure presumably would clear up doubts over whether North Korea, in addition to the plutonium-based program at Yongbyon, is also secretly enriching uranium.

The implementation of the Feb. 13 multilateral denuclearization agreement has been held up by a failure to resolve a dispute over North Korean funds held in a Macau Bank.

Mr. Hill's visit was praised by South Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Chun Yung-woo, who said it would "add momentum." Mr. Chun expected six-party nuclear talks to reconvene in early July, followed by a meeting of six-party foreign ministers "at an appropriate time."

The trip by the U.S. negotiator to meet his North Korean counterpart in Pyongyang, outside the six-party talks venue, may indicate an increasing rapport between the two key men in a process in which a lack of bilateral trust has been cited as a major obstacle.

"My purpose in going was to respond to my six-party talks colleague Kim Kye-gwan's request that I come for discussions," Mr. Hill said.

Mr. Hill makes regular tours of the region to discuss progress — or lack thereof — in the six-party nuclear talks in affected capitals, but this was his first trip to Pyongyang. The U.S. side turned down a similar invitation from Pyongyang last year.

The last Pyongyang visit by a senior U.S. official was by Mr. Hill's predecessor, James Kelly, in 2002. Then, Mr. Kelly's team accused the North of a secret uranium-based nuclear program, triggering a crisis that culminated in Pyongyang's detonation of a nuclear device last October.

In a reversal of an earlier American position not to negotiate with North Korea outside multilateral formats, Mr. Hill met Mr. Kim in Berlin in January. Pundits ascribe the breakthrough six-party Feb. 13 agreement to the bilateral, closed-door Berlin meeting.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20070623/FOREIGN/106230052/1003/foreign>

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Washington Times

June 23, 2007

Pg. 5

Nuke Deal Linked To U.N. Retreat

By George Jahn, Associated Press

VIENNA, Austria — Iran is ready to provide answers on past suspicious nuclear activities to the International Atomic Energy Agency within the next few months, the agency's head said yesterday after meeting with the country's top nuclear negotiator.

But the Iranian official suggested the offer was conditional to an end of U.N. Security Council involvement in Iran's nuclear program. The council has already imposed two sets of sanctions on the Islamic Republic over the past six months for its refusal to freeze uranium enrichment and is poised to impose new penalties.

Such terms would likely be unacceptable to the five permanent council members plus Germany — the six powers that have spearheaded the effort to pressure Iran to give up its enrichment ambitions.

The Security Council has demanded that Iran provide answers to the IAEA, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, on activities that could be linked to a weapons program. But it has also called on Iran to freeze enrichment and stop building a heavy water reactor that will produce plutonium — like enriched uranium a material that could provide the fissile core of nuclear warheads.

With the main emphasis on blunting the possible nuclear threat from Iran by depriving it of technologies that could be used for such weapons, any concession that falls short of suspending both enrichment and construction of the reactor was unlikely to be far-reaching enough.

Still, the timing of the offer by Ali Larijani, Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, appeared to be designed to exploit possible cracks among the six world powers. Russia and China are opposed to quick council moves to new sanctions, while diplomats say Germany in the past has appeared ready to accept a compromise that falls short of a full enrichment freeze.

The Iranian proposal, to IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei, came on the eve of a new round of talks between Mr. Larijani and Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief and built on a recent offer by Mr. Larijani to provide answers to questions sought by the IAEA in its four-year Iran probe.

"I hope that in the next few weeks we should be able to start planning a plan of action, which I hope that we should be able to conclude within two months," Mr. ElBaradei told reporters at his Vienna headquarters. "This would be key to our ability to provide assurances about ... [the nature of] Iran's nuclear program."

But Mr. Larijani suggested the offer was conditional on reaching a "political understanding with Mr. Solana" — apparent shorthand for a deal in which the Security Council drops or at least suspends its involvement in Iran's nuclear program.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20070623/FOREIGN/106230035/1003/foreign>

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New York Times

June 23, 2007

Pg. 5

U.S. Group Says Pakistan Is Building New Reactor

By Jane Perlez

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan, June 22 — Pakistan is building a third plutonium production reactor at a major nuclear weapons center, a sign of plans to increase the nation's nuclear arsenal significantly, a Washington group specializing in nuclear issues said Friday.

Based on satellite imagery of a reactor under construction at Khushab, about 100 miles south of the capital, Islamabad, it appeared that Pakistan would be able to build a new generation of lighter, more powerful weapons that could be more easily launched on missiles, said David Albright, the president of the Institute for Science and International Security.

The new reactor, which had not been publicly known about, is a replica of a second heavy water reactor at Khushab, Mr. Albright said in a telephone interview.

"The other two reactors at Khushab are there for weapons, and this is a duplicate of the second," Mr. Albright said. He said he was convinced that the new reactor was intended for plutonium to be used in nuclear weapons and not for a civilian energy program.

He added that it was possible that Pakistan was pushing forward with the new reactor because the military was not satisfied that the current nuclear warheads were of sufficient power.

The more powerful weapons, which use plutonium instead of highly enriched uranium — currently Pakistan's principal nuclear explosive material — would do greater damage to the large cities of its rival, India, which also possesses nuclear arms, Mr. Albright said.

"The trouble with the third reactor is that it seems almost provocative, especially when Pakistan doesn't say anything, and remains ambiguous," Mr. Albright said.

Pakistan also recently tested a cruise missile on which it could put a smaller, more lethal nuclear warhead, Mr. Albright said.

A State Department deputy spokesman, Thomas H. Casey, said, "I am not in a position to speculate on the veracity of the information in this report or the intentions of the Pakistani government." Washington continued to discourage expansion or modernization of such weapons programs in Pakistan, he said.

A spokeswoman for Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, Tasnim Aslam, did not confirm or deny that a new reactor was under construction.

"Pakistan has a nuclear weapons program, and we have nuclear facilities in Khushab," she said. The site was "well known," and "coordinates" were exchanged with India, she said.

"Regarding details of development of nuclear weapons facilities, we don't comment on that," Ms. Aslam said.

John D. Negroponte, the deputy secretary of state, met with the Pakistani president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, here last weekend during a visit that reaffirmed Washington's backing of the military leader, who is now under increasing popular pressure to return Pakistan to civilian rule.

It was not clear whether Mr. Negroponte raised the issue of the construction of the new reactor with General Musharraf.

Critics of the Bush administration's support of General Musharraf, who is viewed by the White House as a vital partner in the fight against terrorism, assert that Pakistan has been given too easy a ride on its nuclear weapons program.

"The expansion of the Pakistani nuclear program demonstrates that the Bush policy of giving Musharraf a pass on nonproliferation is accelerating the nuclear arms race in South Asia," said Bruce Riedel, who directed Pakistan policy at the National Security Council under President Clinton and is now at the Saban Center at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Pakistan's facilities at Khushab are not subject to safeguard inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency because the nation has not signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The first reactor at the Khushab site came on line in 1998.

Maria Sultan, a Pakistan nuclear expert at the South Asian Strategic Stability Institute in Britain, said that Pakistan had embarked on an ambitious program for civilian nuclear power that involved building new reactors by 2030. The new reactor could be for either military needs or civilian power requirements, she said.

Pakistan and India, which has also not signed the nonproliferation treaty, each have enough fissile material for more than 50 nuclear weapons, and possibly 100, Mr. Albright said.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/23/world/asia/23pakistan.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Honolulu Advertiser

June 23, 2007

Navy Scores Hit On Kauai Test Missile 100 Miles Up

By Jan TenBruggencate, Advertiser Kaua'i Bureau

LIHU'E, Kaua'i — The Missile Defense Agency and the Navy yesterday successfully launched an interceptor missile that collided with a separating target missile, in the ninth successful intercept in 11 tests of the Aegis Missile Defense System, said Lt. Gen. Henry "Trey" Obering, Missile Defense Agency director.

"It was a no-notice launch in an operationally realistic environment," said Rear Adm. Brad Hicks, Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense program director. "We've got some happy people out here today."

In this test, a target missile was launched from the Pacific Missile Range Facility at Barking Sands, Kaua'i, at 4:40 p.m. yesterday. It was a separating target, meaning the warhead separated from the booster rocket in flight. The Navy destroyer USS Decatur, which is equipped with the Aegis Missile Defense System, tracked the target, worked out a solution for intercepting it, and launched a Standard Missile-3 that slammed into the target midway through its flight — 100 miles high outside the earth's atmosphere and several hundred miles from Kaua'i. The impact occurred four minutes into the target's flight.

The Aegis system is the maritime part of the nation's missile defense initiative. It is built to intercept short- to medium-range ballistic missiles in flight. Previous tests have involved Aegis-equipped Navy cruisers. This was the first to test the system on a Navy destroyer.

In a simultaneous exercise, the Missile Defense Agency conducted a virtual anti-ballistic missile launch from another Navy ship, which was linked electronically with an Army missile defense system, THAAD, for Terminal High Altitude Area Defense.

"The THAAD ground-based radar at Barking Sands successfully tracked the launch and cued the USS Port Royal," an Aegis-equipped cruiser that then conducted a simulated launch against the same target. It was not the first time that THAAD and Aegis systems have been tested together, but it was another opportunity to test and improve on their interoperability, which will be of value to U.S. military units in the field, Hicks said.

The Port Royal also used the target launch to collect data on capabilities of the new Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense SPY-1B radar system, which is anticipated to be deployed in the field in 2010, Hicks said.

A key goal of this effort was to test the ability of a range of systems at different locations to track the missiles, and to communicate what they were tracking with each other. Besides the Decatur, the Port Royal and a Spanish Navy frigate, the Aegis-equipped Mendez Nunez participated. The Spanish ship, which conducted long-range surveillance and tracking of the test, was the third foreign vessel to participate in this series of Aegis tests. Previously, Japanese and Dutch navy vessels have been involved.

In the last Aegis test on April 26, the Aegis cruiser USS Lake Erie engaged two targets at once, firing a missile to defend itself from a rocket fired at the ship from an aircraft, while at the same time shooting down a short-range ballistic missile that had been fired from the ground at the Pacific Missile Range Facility.

The Lake Erie was able to track both targets, launch interceptors and successfully stopped them. In that case, the ship used a Standard Missile-2 to attack the aircraft-launched drone, and a Standard Missile-3 to collide with the non-separating target ballistic missile.

The Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense program is run by the Missile Defense Agency and the Navy. Lockheed Martin Maritime Services is the main contractor for the Aegis gear, and Raytheon Missile Systems the prime contractor for the Standard Missile program.

<http://www.honoluluadvertiser.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=2007706230344>

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New York Times

June 25, 2007

Pg. 1

Hussein's Cousin Sentenced To Die For Kurd Attacks

By John F. Burns

BAGHDAD, June 24 — As the judge pronounced five death sentences — on the man Iraqis know as Chemical Ali, the defendant seemed on Sunday to be a shadow of the merciless enforcer who oversaw poison gas attacks that killed thousands of Kurdish villagers in Iraq's northern uplands nearly 20 years ago.

At the age of 61, severely weakened by diabetes, the defendant, Ali Hassan al-Majid, leaned heavily on a walking stick for the 18 minutes it took the judge to read guilty verdicts on counts of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Unlike his cousin Saddam Hussein, whose shouted defiance nearly drowned out the judge who sent him to the gallows last year, Mr. Majid offered no protest until the judge ordered bailiffs to lead him from the iron-ribbed cage that serves as a dock.

"Thanks be to God, now I'm leaving," he said gruffly, as he turned to limp from the courtroom in the old Baath Party headquarters, a place where his reputation as a man who relished handing out summary sentences to Kurds, Shiites and other supposed enemies of the old government — and overseeing the executions himself, with a ghoulish pleasure evident in official videos — made him almost as feared as Mr. Hussein.

If the pattern set in Mr. Hussein's case is a guide, Mr. Majid's automatic appeal could be completed in little more than a month, with his hanging soon after. Including two other high-ranking officials who were sentenced Sunday,

seven top officials have now received death sentences for crimes committed during Mr. Hussein's 24 years in power.

Four have been executed, including Mr. Hussein in December and his half-brother, Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, who went to the gallows at the turn of the year.

The two other men condemned to death on Sunday were former high-ranking army officers. Sultan Hashem Ahmed, the general who commanded the First Army Corps during the attacks on the Kurds in 1988 and served as defense minister during the American-led invasion of 2003, received three death sentences on the same counts as Mr. Majid. Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, a deputy chief of staff, also received three death sentences.

Although Iraqi military officers have traditionally claimed the right to face a firing squad when sentenced to death, the court ordered both to be hanged.

The end of the Anfal trial — the word was chosen by Mr. Hussein for his campaigns against the Kurds, and means “spoils of war” in Arabic — came at a time when Iraqi public interest in the trials has flagged. Only a handful of Iraqi reporters attended the session on Sunday, and none from the country's Kurdish newspapers. There was only a handful of Western reporters, too.

The court's glass-fronted V.I.P. gallery was packed with Kurdish politicians, but even they reacted impassively, according to one of those seated with them. Their quiet exchanges after the verdicts may have spoken for the pain the Anfal campaign still arouses among Kurds, who say that as many as 180,000 of their people were killed when Iraqi forces bombed and razed hundreds of villages, rounding up survivors and subjecting them to torture, starvation and, in many cases, to executions at mass graves dug by bulldozers. Mr. Hussein led other defendants at the Anfal trial in contending that Kurds provoked the attacks by fighting on Iran's side during the Iran-Iraq war that ended in 1988.

Still, the Kurds' phlegmatic reaction at the verdicts contrasted starkly with the jubilant hugging in the gallery with which prominent figures from the new Iraqi ruling class — mostly Shiites and Kurds, who bore the brunt of Mr. Hussein's repression — greeted the former ruler's death sentence in November.

One difference is that Mr. Hussein himself, removed as a defendant in the Anfal trial after his hanging, is gone. But another is the exhaustion with the war here, and the growing inclination of Iraqis — even Iraqis whose families suffered grievously under Mr. Hussein — to say that life was never as miserable as it has become under the daily cycle of suicide bombings and death-squad killings, and the deprivation of basic public services like electricity, hospitals and schooling. The desire for revenge, or retribution, has been muted.

The slow grinding of the legal process has played its part, too. The first major trial was the Dujail case, involving the killing of 148 Shiite men and boys after an abortive assassination attempt against Mr. Hussein in 1982, which ended with the verdict that sent Mr. Hussein to the gallows.

It lasted a year. The trial for the Kurdish attacks that began as the Dujail trial concluded after 10 months on Sunday. The single courtroom built for the trials has security precautions so stringent that American officials have said that getting into the White House is less fraught.

Plainclothes American guards with automatic rifles patrol marbled corridors inside the building, and American troops stand sentry in sandbagged watchtowers outside. High above, unmanned aerial drones keep watch. With American Justice Department lawyers providing much of the expertise that sustains the court, the arrangements have cost American taxpayers at least \$150 million, and Iraqi court officials say they have been told that future financing is likely to be sharply cut.

Still, Iraqi court officials said after the verdicts that the trials would continue, starting in July. The next case will be the so-called Intifada trial, involving the suppression of a Shiite uprising across southern Iraq in 1991 that followed the Persian Gulf war, in which, Shiite officials say, at least 150,000 people were killed. Defendants will include two men considered to have been among Mr. Hussein's most ruthless aides: his secretary and chief bodyguard, Abid Hamid Mahmud al-Tikriti, and his half-brother, Sabawi Ibrahim Hassan al-Tikriti, a former director of two of Mr. Hussein's feared security agencies, the Mukhabarat and the General Security Directorate.

At least 10 other trials are being prepared, Iraqi officials say. One will focus on the poison gas attacks in March 1988 that devastated the town of Halabja in Iraqi Kurdistan, where as many as 5,000 people are said to have been killed. That attack, more than anything else, drew international attention to the plight of the Kurds under Mr. Hussein. It was separated from the Anfal trial because of its notoriety, and its deep resonance among the Kurds. Other trials will center on the killing of prominent religious and political figures under Mr. Hussein; the killing of hundreds of members of a prominent Kurdish political family, the Barzanis, in the 1980s; the persecution of the Shiite marsh dwellers of southern Iraq; and an incident in 1993, when another half-brother of Mr. Hussein's, Watban Ibrahim al-Hassan al-Tikriti, arrested dozens of Baghdad market-sellers for alleged profiteering in foodstuffs, then had them hanged from lampposts after trials that lasted less than a day.

For the Kurds, the Anfal verdict's significance was heightened by the fact that five of the six defendants were found guilty of genocide. While Western legal-monitoring groups have expressed doubts whether the Anfal campaign met

the international legal definition of genocide, in the sense of a systematic attempt to wipe out an entire ethnic or religious group, Kurdish officials in Iraq had said that guilty findings on the genocide charges would add momentum to the claim by Iraqi Kurds that their survival can be assured only by an entrenched autonomy within Iraq.

The main surprise in the verdicts was that two defendants, both high-ranking officials of Mr. Hussein's military intelligence directorate, were given life imprisonment instead of death. They were Sabir Abdul-Aziz al-Douri and Farhan Motlak al-Jabouri. Both were found guilty of close involvement in the Anfal attacks.

A sixth defendant, Tahir Tawfiq al-Ani, who was an aide to Mr. Majid as secretary of the Baath Party's northern bureau, was found not guilty by the judges and ordered released, in accordance with the urging of prosecutors who told the court that there was no evidence to convict him. He left the court hastily, without a smile. Mr. Ahmed and Mr. Rashid, the generals, spoke out as they were sentenced, but were quickly ordered removed from the court by the chief judge, Mohammed Ureibi al-Khalifa.

Mr. Ahmed first entered American public consciousness in March 1991, when he led the Iraqi military delegation that met American generals on Iraq's border with Kuwait to sign agreements ending the Persian Gulf war. The heavyset former defense minister pleaded unsuccessfully for permission to address the judges after his death sentences were read. "I won't say anything; I will just leave you to the mercy of God," he said, as bailiffs took him from the dock.

Mr. Rashid was more vociferous. "Thanks be to God, we are being executed because we defended our country against thieves and criminals," he shouted. "We defended Iraq."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/25/world/middleeast/25verdict.html>

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Washington Post

June 25, 2007

Pg. 14

'Chemical Ali' Sentenced To Hang For Genocide Of Kurds

By John Ward Anderson, Washington Post Foreign Service

BAGHDAD, June 24 -- Three senior aides to Saddam Hussein were found guilty on Sunday of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity by the Iraqi High Tribunal and sentenced to death by hanging for their roles in the slaughter of as many as 180,000 Kurds in northern Iraq in the late 1980s.

The most notorious of the defendants, Ali Hassan al-Majeed -- a former general known as "Chemical Ali" -- received five death sentences for ordering the use of deadly mustard gas and nerve agents against the Kurds during the so-called Anfal campaign. Majeed and Hussein were cousins.

Hussein had been a defendant in the case but was executed last year for ordering the killings of 148 men and boys from the town of Dujail, 35 miles north of Baghdad, after a failed assassination attempt against him there in 1982. Some Kurds said after Sunday's hearing, which was nationally televised, that they felt deprived of justice because of the rush to execute Hussein. The government had hoped his quick death would allow Iraqis to put the past behind them and focus on transforming the country into a functioning democracy.

"I wished they had kept Saddam alive and had not executed him until they finish all the trials, so all Iraqis, including Kurds, could feel that they had been repaid for the injustices of his regime," said Saman Mahmood Aziz, 55, a teacher whose wife and five children died during the Anfal campaign. But he added, "We feel so happy after seeing the verdict today against Chemical Ali."

But Sukaina Taqi Khurshid al-Hamawandi, 69, who lost 19 family members, including five sons, in the campaign, said: "I do not feel happy today for the verdict against my sons' murderers. This will not bring my family back."

Majeed, army commander of northern Iraq during the Anfal campaign, once was one of the most powerful and feared men in the country. In asking for the death penalty for him in April, prosecutor Munqith al-Faroun said Majeed was "the ultimate master of the genocide operations against the Kurds," while the other accused bore responsibility for a "plan that was implemented in stages to eliminate the Kurdish race from the north of Iraq."

Also sentenced to hang were Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, 66, former armed forces deputy chief of operations, and Sultan Hashim al-Tai, 67, a former defense minister.

All three men were found guilty of genocide, which is defined as the systematic elimination of a group of people because of their religion, race, ethnicity or nationality. Each was also sentenced to death on separate charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

As his sentence was read, Tikriti, wearing a traditional red-checkered Arabic headdress, repeatedly interrupted Chief Judge Mohammed al-Uraibiy, saying at one point: "Thank God! We defended Iraq. We are not agents."

When Uraibiy finished listing Tikriti's three death sentences and announced a seven-year sentence for attacking religious buildings, Tikriti laughed.

"Thank God we did not become traitors, cowards, agents nor thieves," he said. "Long live the glorious Iraqi army!" When his first death sentence was read, Majeed smiled and mumbled, "Thank God."

All of the defendants had asserted their innocence during trial, often saying they were simply following the orders of superiors and that military action against Kurdish rebels was justified because they were backing Iran in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war.

"I was a soldier, and I took the oath of my country and defended my country as best I could," Tikriti said during the trial.

The sentences will be sent to Iraq's Appeals Court, Uraibiy said in announcing the verdicts. The appeals process can be swift: Hussein was convicted of war crimes on Nov. 5, lost his appeal on Dec. 26 and was hanged four days later. The Anfal trial, held in a courtroom in Baghdad's Green Zone, opened Aug. 21. Numerous witnesses testified about the horrors of the Iraqi military's scorched-earth campaign against the Kurds, military planes dropping poisonous chemicals that blinded and burned them, men being tortured and executed in concentration camps, women being raped and thousands of towns being leveled. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced.

Early in the trial, Ali Mostafa Hama, a goat farmer, described an April 16, 1987, attack on his isolated village of Baselan in which bombs were dropped on the area, followed by a smell "like rotting apples, or garlic."

"Minutes later, a lot of people, their eyes became sore and they started crying," and people ran to nearby mountains and caves, he testified. "Our bodies were burning us, and we lost the ability to see. The echo of our screams was coming from wherever we were, and we had nothing other than God."

A woman nearby gave birth during the flight, and the child died with its first breaths, Hama said. The woman named her son Kimyawi, or Chemical, he testified.

In a statement released Friday, Richard Dicker, director of the international justice program for Human Rights Watch, said the Anfal trial "was marred by procedural flaws," including the removal of the first presiding judge by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and his cabinet for making statements perceived as favorable to the defense. Dicker also criticized the trial's "vague charges" and what he said was the defendants' inability to call witnesses because of concern for their security.

Two of the defendants in the Anfal case received multiple life sentences: Farhan al-Juburi, a former military intelligence commander in northern Iraq, and Sabir al-Duri, former director of military intelligence. In reading the verdict, Uraibiy said the court took into consideration Duri's expressions of regret.

Taher al-Ani, 70, the former governor of the northern city of Mosul, was acquitted because of a lack of evidence. Prosecutors had recommended that Ani be freed when the evidentiary phase ended May 10.

Uraibiy announced that the Anfal case will continue with investigations of 423 other officials, including Wafiq Ageel al-Samarai, former head of military intelligence under Hussein and currently a top security adviser to President Jalal Talabani.

Justice officials are considering trials in other high-profile cases, including the killings of thousands of Shiites in southern Iraq after they rebelled against Hussein's rule following the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Elsewhere Sunday in Iraq, Brig. Gen. Mick Bednarek, commander of a U.S. offensive north of Baghdad against the Sunni insurgent group al-Qaeda in Iraq, said U.S. troops had cleared insurgents out of at least 60 percent of western Baqubah, the focus of the operation, but that Iraqi troops were not yet ready to hold the territory.

"One of our biggest challenges is how are we holding and retaining the terrain that we clear," Bednarek said in an interview, adding that Iraqi security forces are "not quite up to the job yet" of holding the territory themselves.

A key problem for Iraqi troops is a lack of proper equipment, he said. "It runs the gamut from uniforms, weapons, helmets, body armor, boots, ammunition, trucks, radios."

Bednarek said it could take several weeks to clear insurgents from Baqubah, capital of Diyala province, and that it would probably be several more months before Iraqi forces in Diyala can stand on their own.

He said some senior leaders of al-Qaeda in Iraq had fled the town, about 25 miles northeast of Baghdad, and that U.S. and Iraqi forces are trying to "tighten the noose" around three western Baqubah neighborhoods where 50 to 100 insurgents are still hiding.

A U.S. military spokesman, Maj. Robbie Parke, said that 49 al-Qaeda in Iraq fighters have been killed in the offensive and 50 detained. One U.S. soldier has been killed and about 14 injured, Bednarek said.

Also on Sunday, the Associated Press reported that a 35-year-old Iraqi journalist was shot to death on her way home from work in Mosul, the second female journalist to be killed in the northern city this month, officials said.

The attack on Zeena Shakir Mahmoud occurred even as Maliki, the prime minister, marked Iraqi Journalists' Day by acknowledging the high numbers of media workers killed in the country, saying their "blood was mixed with the blood of Iraqi people who die every day for the sake of defending Iraq."

Correspondent Joshua Partlow in Baqubah and other Washington Post staff in Iraq contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/06/24/AR2007062400269.html>

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