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Los Angeles Times
July 3, 2007

Bush Backs Wider Missile Shield Talks

The president accepts Putin's idea to involve more nations, but the two leaders fail to resolve a central dispute.

By Maura Reynolds, Times Staff Writer

KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE — President Bush accepted a proposal from Russian President Vladimir V. Putin on Monday to involve more European nations in negotiations over missile defense and to consider basing a controversial antimissile radar system in southern Russia.

However, two days of informal talks between the two presidents at the Bush family's seaside compound did not resolve their central disagreement over U.S. plans to install missile defense facilities in Eastern Europe, systems Russia considers a potential threat on its borders.

Putin's proposals, representing a marked expansion over suggestions he offered last month, also would include joint early warning centers in Moscow and Brussels. Putin said his proposal would make the systems the United States plans to build in the Czech Republic and Poland superfluous.

"There would be no need to place any more facilities in Europe," Putin said, standing next to Bush above the rocky Maine shoreline. "Such cooperation I believe would result in raising to an entirely new level the quality of

cooperation between Russia and the United States. And for all practical purposes, this would lead to a gradual development of strategic partnership in the area of security." Bush disagreed.

"He just laid out a vision. I think it's very sincere. I think it's innovative. I think it's strategic," Bush said. "But as I told Vladimir, I think that the Czech Republic and Poland need to be an integral part of the system."

Both sides described Putin's two-day visit to Walker's Point, the Bush family's stately resort, as friendly and productive, helping the two leaders move beyond the tensions that have hobbled relations in recent months.

The two presidents also discussed their disagreements over Iran, which the United States believes is trying to acquire nuclear weapons under the guise of a uranium enrichment program.

"I have been counting on the Russians' support to send a clear message to the Iranians," Bush said. "We discussed a variety of ways to continue sending a joint message."

On other issues, the leaders discussed North Korea's nuclear weapons program and Kosovo's bid for independence, but reported no progress on either issue. Aides said other agreements could be announced in coming days.

Missile defense has become a significant source of tension between the two governments. Russia has grown increasingly agitated over U.S. plans to build a radar system in the Czech Republic and place interceptors in Poland, both former Soviet bloc countries that Russia considers within its sphere of influence. Opposition also is growing within Poland and the Czech Republic, and U.S. lawmakers have begun to question the system.

Kremlin officials have said they cannot approve of the U.S. installing missiles, even those designed to intercept missiles coming from other countries, so close to its borders. The Bush administration has argued that the system is designed to counter a potential threat from Iran, not from Russia.

At a meeting in Germany last month, Putin took Bush by surprise in proposing that the U.S. use a Russian radar site in Azerbaijan in lieu of the system proposed for the Czech Republic. Since then, the two countries have been discussing the possibility of cooperative steps.

Putin said that if the radar in Gabala, Azerbaijan, turned out to be unsuitable for use in a missile defense system, he would be willing to let the U.S. build a better facility in southern Russia.

U.S. officials, including the president, have said they see any other facilities as supplementing, not replacing, the systems planned for Eastern Europe.

However, national security advisor Stephen J. Hadley said the Russian proposals helped dispel doubts over Putin's interest in discussing missile defense with the United States.

"I think he answered that question very strongly in the affirmative today," Hadley said.

Talks suggested by Putin would involve North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries, a move that Hadley said would be welcomed by U.S. officials.

The disagreements did not detract from the friendly atmosphere of the meeting, which both sides took pains to describe as an informal gathering focused as much on recreation as business.

Putin took two rides on the family speedboat, Fidelity III, including a fishing trip early Monday morning during which Putin was the only one to catch a fish. The boat was piloted by Bush's father, former President George H.W. Bush, who described the catch as a 31-inch striped bass.

The president congratulated Putin, saying, "Fine catch." Putin diplomatically described the catch as a "team effort." And, perhaps in an effort to avoid allegations of inappropriate incarceration, Putin made a point of letting the fish go. "We've let it free," he said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/washingtondc/la-fg-bushputin3jul03,1.7892386.story>

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Washington Post

July 3, 2007

Pg. 8

Putin Proposes Broader Cooperation On Missile Defense

He Offers Broader Cooperation, but Key Concerns Remain Unresolved

By Peter Baker, Washington Post Staff Writer

KENNEBUNKPORT, Maine, July 2 -- Russian President Vladimir Putin offered an expanded counterproposal to U.S. missile defense plans on Monday, challenging President Bush to build a regional European missile shield that could include a sophisticated new radar facility on Russian soil.

Putin's proposal went far beyond the cooperation he first suggested in Germany last month and surprised Bush as the two leaders wrapped up two days of informal meetings at the president's family compound in this oceanfront resort town. Bush welcomed the plan, and his advisers said Putin's suggestions convinced them that he is serious about working together, not just posturing, as they initially suspected.

But the two sides remained at odds over the core issue -- whether Bush would deploy anti-missile facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic over the objections of Putin, who sees them as a threat to Russian security. And for all the optimism voiced by senior U.S. officials about the prospects of finding agreement, past attempts by Washington and Moscow to work together to guard against accidental or rogue missile launches have gone nowhere.

"The deck has been dealt, and we are here to play," Putin said as he stood at Bush's side overlooking the rocky coast at the Walker's Point compound. "And I would very much hope that we are playing one and the same game."

The discussion of missile defense dominated a visit intended to repair the deepening fractures in the U.S.-Russian relationship. Putin in recent months has denounced U.S. anti-missile plans as the start of a new arms race, threatened to withdraw from a conventional-forces treaty and implicitly compared Bush's international policies to those of the Third Reich.

Bush hoped to use the relaxed atmosphere here to reestablish a bond frayed since he first met Putin in 2001. Fresh from a speedboat outing with Bush's father, in which Putin caught the only fish, the two presidents emerged from the estate to address reporters and reaffirm their friendship. Playing to wounded Russian pride, Bush hailed the "amazing transformation" in Russia since Putin took office 7 1/2 years ago.

"Is it perfect from the eyes of Americans? Not necessarily," Bush said. "Is the change real? Absolutely. And it's in our interests, in the U.S. interests, to have good, solid relations with Russia."

Bush reiterated that he considers Putin a friend. "Do I trust him? Yes, I trust him," he said. "Do I like everything he says? No. And I suspect he doesn't like everything I say. But we're able to say it in a way that shows mutual respect."

The two presidents avoided the announcements and signings that typify a formal summit, but U.S. officials later said that on Tuesday in Washington, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will sign a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement negotiated over the past year as well as a declaration on fighting nuclear proliferation. They will also release a joint statement on the future of nuclear arms after the expiration of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I) regime in 2009.

Putin's missile defense proposal caught Bush and his advisers off guard. Last month Putin suggested using a Soviet-era radar facility in Azerbaijan as an alternative to building a new U.S. radar in the Czech Republic. U.S. officials indicated that the Russian-run installation is too antiquated to target incoming missiles.

Putin addressed that concern during the two-day meeting, saying that if the radar in Azerbaijan is not adequate, Russia will modernize it. And if that is not feasible, he said, Russia will build a modern radar facility in southern Russia. He also proposed putting the system under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council to make it a European anti-missile shield and advocated setting up joint early-warning centers in Moscow and Brussels.

"There would be no need to place any more facilities in Europe," Putin said. If Bush accepts, Putin added, it would transform U.S.-Russian ties. "The relations between our two countries would be raised to an entirely new level. Gradually, our relations would become those of a strategic partnership nature."

Bush called Putin's proposal "very constructive and bold" and said he is "in strong agreement" with it in principle. But he was not willing to give up plans to install systems in Poland and the Czech Republic. "I think it's very sincere, I think it's innovative, I think it's strategic," Bush said of Putin's proposal. "But as I told Vladimir, I think that the Czech Republic and Poland need to be an integral part of the system."

National security adviser Stephen J. Hadley later called Putin's proposal a "very interesting shift, and some real progress on this issue." But the two nations have tried and failed to coordinate missile defense efforts for years. In 1998, Presidents Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin announced an agreement to build a joint early-warning center in Moscow like the one Putin mentioned Monday. Under the plan, Americans and Russians would share satellite data to avoid false alarms over missile launches. The idea was reaffirmed by Bush and Putin. Nearly a decade later, the center has not been established, a victim of squabbles over politics and legal liability.

Bush and Putin also discussed other issues that have challenged the relationship, including how to pressure Iran to give up its nuclear program and whether the Serbian province of Kosovo should be granted independence. Aides said they also talked about the presidential elections in both countries next year, but they declined to elaborate.

Over their two days here together, the presidents sometimes had meetings joined by top advisers, but they also had a lot of time one-on-one. George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush hosted a lobster and swordfish dinner Sunday night that included first lady Laura Bush as well as Rice, Hadley and their Russian counterparts. And the elder Bush took the two presidents fishing Monday, racing along as fast as 64 mph in his speedboat off the rocky coast.

"It was a very human visit," the former president said on his lawn as reporters awaited his son and the Russian leader. "He had his Labrador with him and threw a stick into the sea. . . . We wanted to make him feel at home here."

Putin reciprocated, saying he appreciated the "warm, homey atmosphere." As a gift, Bush gave Putin a Segway transporter, and he reportedly gave it a try. The former president and first lady own three Segways and regularly zip

around their sprawling property on them. A sign at the entrance to Walker's Point reads: "Caution. President on Segway. Slow Down."

The Bushes also gave Putin the chance to catch his first fish off the Maine coast, a 30-inch striped bass. In keeping with Bush custom, Putin threw it back. Bush praised his counterpart for his angling skills when they met reporters, and Putin tried to share credit.

"We caught one fish," Putin said, "but that was a team effort."

Bush laughed. "Very thoughtful of you," he said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/02/AR2007070200131.html>

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Los Angeles Times

July 3, 2007

Official Quits Over A-Bomb Remarks

By Times Wire Reports

Japanese Defense Minister Fumio Kyuma will step down over remarks that appeared to accept the 1945 U.S. atomic bombings of two Japanese cities, Japanese media said.

Kyuma had come under intense criticism from A-bomb survivors after the comments over the weekend. He had apologized.

The resignation was another blow to the ruling party of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe ahead of parliamentary elections July 29. Abe's support rates have already been slashed by outrage over government mishandling of pension records.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-briefs3.4jul03,1,3726603.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post

July 5, 2007

Pg. 3

Senate Panel Faults Missile Defense Plan

Location in Eastern Europe Is Criticized

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

Democrats in Congress are building a legislative roadblock to the Bush administration's plan to place elements of a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic.

The Senate is expected to join the House next week in reducing funds in the fiscal 2008 Defense Authorization Bill for construction of 10 interceptor missile sites in Poland and for deployment of an X-band radar in the Czech Republic. The House, in passing its version of the legislation last month, cut \$40 million from the bill, which would have funded preparation of the Polish sites next year. The move prevents the White House from proceeding unless President Bush vetoes the measure.

The Senate Armed Services Committee, justifying its decision to delay funding for the European antimissile sites, emphasized not only foreign policy concerns but also technical issues surrounding the interceptor missiles.

As illustrated by Russian President Vladimir Putin's statements last weekend during his visit with Bush in Maine, Russia remains opposed to the U.S. deployment plans. In its report on the authorization bill, the Senate committee cited Moscow's opposition and said any funding should await completion of talks between the two governments.

The panel also noted that moving ahead without NATO participation in a system that is in part intended to protect Europe from Iranian missiles would cost the United States an estimated \$4 billion through fiscal 2013. "NATO, which has not yet decided to pursue missile defense of its territory, has not endorsed or rejected the proposed deployment," the panel's report added.

Although preliminary talks have begun with Polish and Czech leaders, the committee said that "these negotiations may not be concluded before the end of this year, and then would have to be ratified by the parliaments in each nation." At the same time, residents of the areas where U.S. facilities would be located have voiced overwhelming objections in local referendums.

Tomas Klvana, the Czech special envoy for missile defense, recently told reporters in Washington that some of the opposition has been generated by anti-Americanism and by concerns about foreign soldiers in the country. "We have some catching up to do," Klvana said to the group, brought together by the German Marshall Fund. "We have given a free ride to the people opposed."

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency has told the Senate panel that construction and deployment could not begin until the two countries ratify agreements with the United States, estimating that such actions "would not take place before 2009," according to the report. Polish officials, hearing Russian objections to the U.S. system so near their border, have also raised questions about the additional U.S. military support that would come with placement of the interceptors on their soil.

The Senate panel also noted that the interceptor to be placed in Poland "has not yet been developed or tested, and is not currently planned to be flight-tested until 2010." Therefore, the committee concluded, "it could be several years before it is known if the interceptor will work in an operationally effective manner."

The committee also raised in its report the timing of a potential Iranian threat.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry A. Obering III, director of the Missile Defense Agency, recently testified before the panel that U.S. intelligence misjudged North Korea's ability to launch a long-range missile in 1998. "Right now, the experts are saying that Iran will not have an ICBM until the 2010-2015 time frame," Obering said. "But it's going to take us at least that long, until 2011 or 2012, to get a first capability in the ground."

Pushing to move ahead rapidly with a missile defense system, he added: "What we're trying to do is stay ahead of what we believe to be an emerging threat, because we can't wait until they actually demonstrate it and then say, 'Now let's go find a way to counter it.'"

The Senate committee, according to its report, apparently did not embrace that argument. "There is uncertainty about whether Iran will have such long-range missiles, or nuclear warheads that could work on such missiles, by 2015," it said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/04/AR2007070401490.html>

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Washington Post

July 4, 2007

Pg. 12

U.S. And Russia Vow Further Cuts In Nuclear Arms

They Also Agree To Aid Nations In Power Projects

By Peter Baker and Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writers

The United States and Russia vowed yesterday to keep reducing nuclear warhead stockpiles to "the lowest possible level" even after a key treaty expires in 2009, and they agreed to work together to help other countries develop civilian nuclear power without spreading weapons.

Coming the day after President Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in Kennebunkport, Maine, the announcements were intended to show that the two countries continue to collaborate, despite strained relations. But critics said the statements raised as many questions as they answered and underlined disagreements over the future of arms control.

The statement issued by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, pledged the two nations to cutting their nuclear arsenals "to the lowest possible level consistent with their national security requirements and alliance commitments," once the first Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or START, expires in 2009. The two sides will embark on talks designed to ensure "continuity and predictability."

The commitment, though, glossed over the heart of their dispute over what to do when START ends. Russia wants a new, legally binding treaty; the Bush administration does not. Without such a treaty obligation, the inspection process created by the 1991 pact would cease, a prospect that alarms arms-control advocates in both countries. It would also remove most limits on the two nuclear arsenals.

Joseph Cirincione, a nuclear nonproliferation specialist at the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank, said the Bush administration "does not want foreign nationals having any inspection rights over our nuclear forces. Arms-control advocates and many in Congress are appalled at the administration's position, because it's in the U.S. interest to verify the massive Russian nuclear arsenal. It doesn't make any sense to let tried and tested measures expire."

Both countries have met the START goal of trimming their arsenals to 6,000 warheads. The 2002 Moscow Treaty commits each to further slashing its stockpile to 1,700 to 2,200 by 2012, but the pact includes no inspection process beyond START.

Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, called yesterday's statement "extremely disappointing." Bush's plans to station missile defense facilities in Eastern Europe, combined with the administration's resistance to extending START, have fueled Russian anxiety, he said. "The Cold War ideological rivalry may be over, but the two countries have failed to eliminate the weapons left over from that conflict. And the weapons continue to create a certain amount of anxiety and mistrust," he said.

U.S. and Russian officials also agreed yesterday to jointly aid nations seeking nuclear energy by providing safe reactors and infrastructure, financial support and management of spent fuel, while safeguarding such efforts against the risk of developing nuclear weapons. "It's about providing an alternative path to energy development that becomes a win for energy security, a win for environment security and a win for nonproliferation," said Robert G. Joseph, U.S. special envoy for nuclear nonproliferation.

But the two sides did not sign a new agreement for civilian nuclear cooperation between themselves. The agreement, negotiated over the past year, was initialed on Friday in Moscow, but a U.S. official said it could take months for review before it is signed. Such an agreement could prove controversial in Congress, which has the power to block it.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/03/AR2007070302122.html>

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Washington Times

July 7, 2007

Pg. 6

Early Reactor Shutdown Tied To Energy Aid Receipt

By Jae-Soon Chang, Associated Press

SEOUL — North Korea said yesterday it is willing to shut down its main nuclear reactor as soon as it receives an initial shipment of energy aid promised as a reward for closing the facility.

It is the first time that the communist nation has indicated a specific timeline for when it would close its Yongbyon facility in exchange for economic aid and political concessions, including 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil, as called for by a February international deal.

The North's Foreign Ministry said the country "is now earnestly examining even the issue of suspending the operation of its nuclear facilities earlier than expected, that is from the moment the first shipment of heavy oil equivalent to one-tenth of the total quantity is made," according to the country's official Korean Central News Agency.

South Korea said earlier yesterday that a first shipment of the energy aid, totaling 6,200 metric tons, would depart for North Korea on July 12. That is more than one-tenth of the 50,000 tons.

South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported yesterday that the shipment is expected to arrive in North Korea on July 14. That means the shutdown could theoretically begin next week.

The February agreement, which involves China, Japan, the two Koreas, Russia and the United States, calls for the communist North to ultimately get additional aid equivalent to 950,000 tons when it irreversibly disables its reactor and declares all its nuclear programs.

South Korean chief nuclear negotiator, Chun Yung-woo, said he expects the six-party talks on the nuclear issue to resume later this month after North Korea closes Yongbyon.

"A meeting among the head delegates of the six-party talks will be held this month," Mr. Chun told reporters in Beijing following discussions with his Chinese counterpart, Wu Dawei.

Efforts to implement the February agreement that committed the North to shutting down its main reactor in exchange for economic aid and political concessions had been held up by a financial dispute between North Korea and the United States. The issue was resolved last week.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20070707/FOREIGN/107070031/1003/foreign>

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YaHoo! News

Singapore

N.Korean Leader's Health Draws Attention

By JAESOOON CHANG, Associated Press Writer

AP - Friday, July 6

SEOUL, South Korea - Talk of reclusive North Korean leader Kim Jong Il's health emerged again this week when he made a rare public appearance looking a bit thinner and sporting less hair.

It was the first public view of the secretive Kim since late April, when he reviewed a military parade from a balcony over Pyongyang's main plaza, clapping and waving to his soldiers as they hysterically shouted cheers, appearing deeply moved by the rare glimpse of Kim.

This week, Chinese television broadcast video of Kim meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in Pyongyang on Tuesday.

The 65-year-old leader _ revered as a near-demigod in his totalitarian nation _ brandished a big smile and looked generally well. But he also appeared to have lost some weight and hair, and South Korean news media revived speculation that he might be in poor health.

Kim's condition is of international interest because he tightly rules isolated, nuclear-armed North Korea, which is participating in a six-nation forum shepherding Pyongyang toward giving up its atomic weapons.

The new view of the leader came after unconfirmed news reports that Kim underwent some kind of medical procedure involving his heart in May, performed by doctors flown in from Germany. He was said to be so weak he could not walk more than 30 yards without resting.

In response to questions last month, the German Heart Institute Berlin said it had sent a team of doctors to North Korea to perform operations there _ but not on Kim Jong Il.

Still, one of South Korea's three largest newspapers, Dong-a Ilbo, speculated this week after the video of Kim that the reported medical procedure might have made Kim "markedly leaner" and caused him to lose hair, saying such symptoms are common after heart surgery.

Kim Won-jang, a cardiologist at Seoul's Asan Medical Center, said some patients can lose appetite and thus weight after a heart operation, but not all do.

Nobody but North Korea can give a definite answer about Kim's health conditions. But the regime, which is one of the world's most closed and tolerates no independent press, has never commented on Kim's health _ an absolute taboo in the communist country.

South Korea's main spy agency, the National Intelligence Service, said last month that Kim has long had heart disease and diabetes, but added that there was no sign the chronic ailments had progressed enough to affect his public activity.

"Our assessment of his health remains unchanged," an agency official said Friday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity as required by his office, also said the agency did not believe the report that Kim underwent a heart procedure. He declined to elaborate.

Some independent analysts also do not think Kim has any serious health problem.

"We can't assess his health conditions just by pictures, but even by the pictures, he didn't look that different from before," said Koh Yu-hwan, a respected North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University.

"I think there is no possibility of a (health) mishap, at least in the next one year or two," he added.

Paik Hak-soon, a top North Korea expert at Sejong Institute outside Seoul, agreed Kim looked a bit thinner and had less hair, but said he believes Kim's health conditions are not serious enough to affect his ability to rule. "Anybody of that age has some adult diseases," he said.

Kim has ruled North Korea with an iron fist since succeeding his late father, Kim Il Sung, the founder of the nation who built a personality cult that has survived his death.

The younger Kim, said to have a fondness for fine food, expensive alcoholic drinks like cognac and a passion for Western movies, has three known sons, but has not yet publicly designated any as his successor.

His health is of particular concern as international efforts led by the United States, China, Japan, Russia and South Korea are gaining momentum in persuading North Korea to dismantle its nuclear arsenal.

After alarming the world by conducting its first atomic test explosion in October, North Korea pledged in February to shut down its plutonium-producing nuclear reactor in exchange for economic and political concessions.

After months of delay, caused in part by snarls in resolving a financial dispute with the U.S., the regime appears to be moving to fulfill its pledge. It reached an agreement last week with the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency on how to verify and monitor the planned shutdown.

<http://sg.news.yahoo.com/ap/20070706/twl-nkorea-leader-s-health-1be00ca.html>

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Houston Chronicle

July 7, 2007

Canadian Agency Lost Track Of 'Dirty Bomb' Ingredients

It offered four answers recently on just how many devices are missing

By Rob Gillies, Associated Press

TORONTO — The Canadian government agency tracking radioactive devices that could be used by terrorists gave four different answers in the past two weeks when asked how many are missing until finally settling Friday on 32.

The confusion has raised questions about how closely the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission is keeping tabs on items that experts say could be used to make a so-called "dirty" bomb.

The commission initially said it knew of just one wayward device in the last few years, but after being challenged, the number climbed days later to 27 since 2002.

The commission said this week that 40 gauges, medical tools and other radioactive devices lost in the last five years are still missing, but it revised the figure Friday to 32.

Commission spokesman Max London says the number has fluctuated because officials followed up with the companies that reported losing them and found some have been retrieved.

"I received a revised report of what's confirmed is still missing and my count is 32. They've been taking a real hard look at the list," said London, who added that most of the devices were stolen from a vehicle or stolen along with the car, truck or trailer. "We see no pattern that thefts are targeting the gauges."

Some 3,200 Canadian license holders, from engineering companies to blood banks, use tens of thousands of sealed radioactive devices in their work.

Of the 32 devices they say are still missing, the commission classified 10 as posing a medium safety risk at the time they were lost. The others were considered low risk.

The Canadian Press news agency challenged the commission's initial responses after compiling its own database of more than six dozen items — from measuring gauges to electron-capture detectors — that were lost or stolen, according to the commission's incident reports, obtained under Canada's Access to Information Act.

The varying figures emerged as anti-terrorism experts and emergency responders warned that even low-level nuclear materials found in gauges, dials and other equipment could be turned into a crude radiological device or dirty bomb.

Rami Jammal, head of nuclear substance regulation for the safety commission, acknowledged it has been a challenge to keep tabs on the gauges, irradiators and other equipment containing potentially harmful materials.

"Unfortunately, the world has changed," he said. "You are as strong as your weakest link."

Wesley Wark, a University of Toronto security expert, said the panel's inability to track its inventory is alarming and unprofessional.

"The fact that these devices are going missing in these quantities just underscores what I think people in the business know: We haven't yet arrived at a way to fully lock down this material," Wark said.

The commission offered to recalculate when it was pointed out that Inspec-Sol, a Montreal engineering firm, confirmed it lost six gauges to thieves between 2004 and 2006.

The company was penalized with more visits from inspectors and an increase in the fee for renewing its nuclear permit.

Four of the five thefts involved employee vehicles stolen with gauges locked in trunks, Cote said.

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/headline/world/4949325.html>

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Washington Times

July 8, 2007

Pg. B3

Iffy Cool-Down

By Richard Halloran

Hearts are fluttering once again among the disarmament folks over renewed hopes North Korea will finally take the first step toward giving up the nuclear ambitions of its leader, Kim Jong-il.

International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors have visited Yongbyon, site of North Korea's primary nuclear facility. The U.S. negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, has been received in Pyongyang. China's Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi urged Kim Jong-il last week to move things along. The Six-Party Talks central to this process are to resume this month or next.

Skeptics, however, have cautioned that not everything will go well. The North Korean regime has a long history of renegeing on promises to other nations while keeping promises to the North Korean people, foremost of which is Mr. Kim's pledge to retain nuclear arms to deter what he sees as a U.S. threat.

Graham Allison, who specialized in arms control as a Clinton administration assistant defense secretary and is now at Harvard, wrote recently that even if the Yongbyon plant is disabled, much remains to execute an accord reached in February by the Six Parties — North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia, and the United States. It calls for North Korea to shut down all its nuclear sites.

Mr. Allison warned: "Expect lengthy slogging through incomplete records, all in Korean script, missed deadlines, disputes about who can visit where, and all the other antics" that have frustrated those who have dealt with North Korea.

Confronted with this likelihood, the United States appears to have evolved a new strategy, which is to play for time by adopting the North Korean tactic of talk, talk, and more talk until Mr. Kim either gives up his nuclear weapons or

his regime collapses. Whiffs of dissent have recently been wafting from Pyongyang, making regime change a possibility.

Said an American insider: "The U.S. will take note of North Korea's nuclear weapons but we will never accept North Korea as a nuclear nation. We will never tolerate a North Korea armed with nuclear weapons."

The game afoot has ruled out military action to destroy North Korea's nuclear sites. Bombs and cruise missiles could do enormous damage but would most likely trigger a North Korean attack on South Korea. Tens of thousands of South Koreans would die in artillery barrages before South Korean and U.S. forces could overrun North Korean positions.

Instead, in this developing strategy, American negotiators will continue talking while carrying out what might be called the five "Nots." The U.S. will not:

- *Extend diplomatic recognition to North Korea, thus depriving it of a status that Kim Jong-il is said to be eager to attain.

- *Sign a treaty replacing the truce that ended the Korean War of 1950-53 because North Korea will not give assurances it will reduce its forces along the demilitarized zone separating the two Koreas.

- *Remove the threat of U.S. nuclear weapons that could strike North Korea from submarines in the Pacific or with ballistic missiles or bombers based in the United States.

- *Offer substantial economic aid to a North Korea that has been stricken with famine, limping industrial output and financial disruption for a decade.

- *Open trade and investment relations with a nation that, like China, could benefit from access to American markets, technology, and capital.

The Bush administration has already drawn fire about this strategy and can expect more, especially from China.

John Bolton, President George Bush's former ambassador to the United Nations, reflected the so-called neo-conservatives in an article last week, asserting: "The Bush administration has effectively ended where North Korea policy is concerned, replaced for the next 18 months by a caretaker government of bureaucrats, technocrats and academics."

Chinese leaders have long said they will keep North Korea afloat. David Frum, of the American Enterprise Institute, wrote in June that Beijing dreads a North Korean breakup. "Chinese leaders know that such a collapse," he said, "would unify the peninsula under a democratic government based in Seoul and aligned with the U.S. and Japan — for them, a terrifying outcome."

Nor will North Korea roll over easily. Rodong Shinmun, an official newspaper in Pyongyang, said last week that North Korea's "mighty war deterrent for self-defense has become an invincible shield for curbing reckless war provocations of the bellicose forces at home and abroad."

That doesn't sound much like a nation ready for nuclear disarmament.

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<http://www.washingtontimes.com/article/20070708/COMMENTARY/107080020/1012/commentary>

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Christian Science Monitor

July 9, 2007

Obstacles Ahead For Missile Defense

A US missile-defense system in Eastern Europe remains a distant prospect despite its high profile in US-Russia talks.

By Peter Grier, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON--You'd think deployment of US missile defenses in Europe was imminent, given the way Presidents George Bush and Vladimir Putin sparred over the subject at last week's "Lobster Summit" in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Despite the goodwill generated by speedboat rides and swordfish dinners, Mr. Putin vehemently objected during the two-day meeting to US plans to push forward with antimissile sites in the Czech Republic and Poland.

In fact, US missile defense faces a long and winding European road – and Russian opposition is far from its only hurdle. The US still must strike basing deals with the Czech and Polish governments. And in Washington the Democratic-controlled Congress appears reluctant to fund the move, scrambling its near-term prospects.

"I can see money trickling to the system to keep it on life support," says Wade Boese, director of research at the Arms Control Association. "I don't think you're going to see something that is full-bore ahead."

At issue are a radar facility in the Czech Republic and a battery of 10 interceptor missiles in Poland that the Bush administration says are needed to guard against a developing missile threat from Iran.

Russian officials have long complained about these plans, saying the system as designed seemed aimed against them. According to US experts, the Russian government appears to be motivated both by a genuine worry about the eventual effect of missile defense on its hard-won nuclear deterrent and by irritation that the US may be expanding its influence in Eastern Europe, once the Soviet backyard.

"The Russians appear to regard almost ... any Western engagement with that former Soviet space as somehow inimical to Russian interests," said Steven Pfeiffer, former US ambassador to Ukraine, at a recent Center for Strategic and International Studies briefing on US-Russian relations.

In Maine, Putin among other things proposed to link the missile-defense system with Russian sites and to regionalize its control via joint missile launch early-warning centers.

But since then, Russian officials have continued to threaten consequences if US plans for defense sites in Poland and the Czech Republic move forward. Sergei Ivanov, former Russian defense minister and current first deputy prime minister, on July 4 said the Kremlin might even deploy new missiles in Kaliningrad, Russia's westernmost region, to counter US defenses at Eastern European bases. US officials don't dismiss these threats. But they do downplay them. "While we have not bridged what are obvious differences on missile defense, I think there's a very constructive conversation going on now," said State Department spokesman Sean McCormack on July 5.

Of course, Russia is not the only nation with which the US is having such discussion. Talks with Polish and Czech officials are continuing, too.

But negotiations with Poland and the Czech Republic may not wrap up until the end of the year – and after that, any government-to-government agreement will still have to be approved by the legislatures of those nations.

The US Missile Defense Agency has estimated that such ratification won't take place until 2009, notes the Senate Armed Services Committee in its report on this year's defense authorization bill. Construction and deployment could not begin before then.

And Congress may not be eager to allocate funds for the program before its geopolitical future is more assured. Generally speaking, the attitude of Democratic legislative leaders is "until they're ready, why should we be spending money on this project?" says Mr. Boese.

The House version of the fiscal 2008 defense bill, approved by the chamber last month, cuts out about half of the \$310 million requested by the Bush administration for preparation of European missile-defense sites. The Senate version – which faces a full chamber vote this week – would reduce funding by some \$85 million.

"The committee believes that construction and deployment activities are premature," says the Senate Armed Services report on its '08 legislation.

The two-stage interceptor that the US has proposed for European deployment has not yet been developed, and under current plans will not be flight-tested until 2010, according to the report.

Nor would the deployment of 10 interceptors protect all NATO European territory, says the report. And it's uncertain whether Iran will develop missiles capable of striking most of Europe, or nuclear warheads small enough to top them prior to 2015.

Pentagon officials say that they are trying to stay ahead of a developing threat – and that the West has misjudged its adversaries before.

The administration is trying to field a relatively rudimentary system, and then follow up with incremental improvements, say missile defense proponents. This "spiral development" process is essential to missile defense because it is a complicated system that must be built before it can be tested, they say.

"The Senate Armed Services Committee, however, has chosen to ignore this reality" by placing restrictions on the program, writes Baker Spring, a Heritage Foundation defense expert, in a recent analysis of the program.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0709/p02s01-usfp.html>

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Washington Post

July 9, 2007

Pg. 1

Tunneling Near Iranian Nuclear Site Stirs Worry

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

The sudden flurry of digging seen in recent satellite photos of a mountainside in central Iran might have passed for ordinary road tunneling. But the site is the back yard of Iran's most ambitious and controversial nuclear facility, leading U.S. officials and independent experts to reach another conclusion: It appears to be the start of a major tunnel complex inside the mountain.

The question is, why? Worries have been stoked by the presence nearby of fortified buildings where uranium is being processed. Those structures in turn are now being connected by roads to Iran's nuclear site at Natanz, where the country recently started production of enriched uranium in defiance of international protests.

As a result, photos of the site are being studied by governments, intelligence agencies and nuclear experts, all asking the same question: Is Iran attempting to thwart future military strikes against its nuclear facility by placing key parts of it in underground bunkers?

The construction has raised concerns at the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Vienna-based U.N. watchdog that monitors Iran's nuclear program. On Friday, an IAEA spokeswoman confirmed that the agency has broached the subject with Iranian officials. "We have been in contact with the Iranian authorities about this, and we have received clarifications," said Melissa Fleming, the spokeswoman. She declined to elaborate.

Calls to Iran's U.N. mission in Vienna were not returned. IAEA officials plan to press the issue further in a previously scheduled visit to Tehran later this week, according to informed sources.

"The tunnel complex certainly appears to be related to Natanz," said David Albright, a former U.N. weapons inspector and president of the Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington-based nonprofit group that provided copies of the photos to The Washington Post. "We think it is probably for storage of nuclear items."

U.S. officials at several military and intelligence-gathering agencies said they are aware of the construction and are watching it closely, though none would comment publicly or speculate on the purpose of the tunnels.

A tunnel complex would reduce options for a preemptive military strike to knock out Iran's nuclear program, according to U.S. officials who closely follow Iran's nuclear activities. It also could further heighten tensions between the Bush administration and the government of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has said he is committed to pursuing a peaceful use of nuclear power.

In response to suggestions by Vice President Cheney and others that the United States might consider using force to halt Iran's nuclear ambitions, Ahmadinejad has shrouded the program in additional secrecy and threatened to suspend cooperation with international nuclear inspectors.

Iran has been enriching uranium at Natanz on a small scale for more than four years, creating a less-enriched product that can be used for generating electricity. With further enrichment, the uranium could be used in making weapons.

The commercial satellite photos, taken on June 11 by the firm DigitalGlobe, show two new roads leading to a construction site on the side of a mountain closest to the nuclear site's southern boundary. Although tunnel entrances are not directly visible, the photos show rocks and debris in large piles near the dig sites. There are no signs of construction in similar photos taken of the area six months ago.

In a report analyzing the photos, officials of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) compared the new Natanz construction with a tunnel built by Iran inside a mountain near another key nuclear site. That site, located about 80 miles to the south and known as Esfahan, is home to a major nuclear research center and a factory that converts uranium to a form that can be enriched at Natanz.

Iran began the work at Esfahan quietly in 2004, digging a large, two-entrance mountain tunnel that it later acknowledged was meant for nuclear storage. Iran eventually allowed IAEA inspectors to visit the then-empty tunnel. Having separate underground bunkers near both sites would allow Iranian officials to rapidly evacuate sensitive materials to safe storage if an attack were believed to be imminent, Albright, the ISIS president, said.

The intended use of the Natanz tunnel cannot be ascertained from the photos. But "such a tunnel inside a mountain would offer excellent protection from an aerial attack," said the report by ISIS, which produces technical assessments of nuclear programs. "This new facility would be ideal for safely storing" natural and enriched uranium and the specialized equipment needed to make it, ISIS said.

A less likely possibility, according to the ISIS report, is that Iran might seek to use the tunnels to house centrifuges used in uranium enrichment. Iran's existing centrifuges at Natanz are in heavily fortified buildings built partly underground. Iran has acknowledged plans to expand its uranium enrichment, requiring tens of thousands of fast-spinning centrifuges.

In April, Iran unilaterally withdrew from an international treaty that would have required it to publicly disclose design plans for any new nuclear-related construction. The ISIS report said that Iran nonetheless "should disclose to the [IAEA] any activity in this area related to its efforts at the nearby Natanz site or another nuclear purpose."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/08/AR2007070801307.html>

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Slowdown Seen In Iran's Nuclear Program

By Robin Wright, Washington Post Staff Writer

After boasting of rapid progress for months, Iran has slowed expansion of a controversial uranium enrichment program that can be used both for peaceful nuclear energy and to develop weapons, according to the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency.

Mohamed ElBaradei, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said yesterday that U.N. inspectors detected the change during a visit to Iran's underground enrichment facility at Natanz last week. "Without going into detail, you could say that there is a fairly marked slowdown. It is not a full-size freeze, but it is a marked slowdown" in launching new centrifuges that spin at high speeds to refine uranium into fuel, ElBaradei told reporters in Vienna. Explanations for the shift vary widely.

ElBaradei has been pushing Iran to consider a "timeout" in which it would stop adding more centrifuges in exchange for a suspension of movement toward a third punitive U.N. resolution against Tehran, which has repeatedly not complied with a Security Council mandate to stop developing nuclear fuel. Tehran initially balked at the proposal. U.S. and European officials who are engaged in carrot-and-stick diplomacy with Tehran said yesterday that they do not believe that Iran is showing good-faith interest in resolving the tense standoff.

"As Iran still appears to be working to master centrifuge technology, it is not the numbers of centrifuges that matter. What matters is that all centrifuge activity be suspended immediately, as the U.N. Security Council has required," said Jim Kelman, spokesman for the State Department's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation. A senior European official said Iran's slowdown is most likely due to technical problems. "They've committed down a road to expand as quickly as possible. But Iran won't be the first to discover that it does happen to be rocket science, and development has its peaks and troughs," said the envoy, who tracks Iran's activities.

Iran had predicted that it would have 3,000 centrifuges running by the end of July. Most estimates by nuclear experts say Iran had to work hard just to get to its current level -- between 1,600 and 2,000 centrifuges -- which have still produced low enrichment levels. "Iran may be trying to learn how to operate centrifuges better, so they produce more enriched uranium instead of trying to add more centrifuges," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security.

Others suggest, however, that Tehran may be responding to mounting international pressure.

"We've been getting a lot of signals from Iran that they want to talk," said Joseph Cirincione, a weapons proliferation expert at the Center for American Progress. "Pay less attention to the rantings of [President Mahmoud] Ahmadinejad and pay more attention to the comments of [national security adviser Ali] Larijani. All of Larijani's body language and statements indicate that they want to make a deal. There have been more signals over the past couple of months than in the past year. They also want to talk to us about Iraq."

Ahmadinejad said yesterday that Iran is ready for a second round of talks with the United States on Iraq, following similar statements by other Iranian officials over the past week. The first talks took place in May.

Iran has not lived up to other nuclear claims. Tehran said on July 3 that its first Russian-built nuclear power plant, at Bushehr, would be completed in two months, a statement immediately refuted by Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak as "too ambitious."

"It's not doable physically because the state of development requires . . . a number of additional months to complete it and certainly to sort out all these technical and economic questions that need to be resolved," Kislyak told reporters in Washington last week.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/07/09/AR2007070901779.html>

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New York Times

July 11, 2007

Pg. 19

A Ring Around Iran

By Theodore Postol

President Vladimir Putin of Russia has made an offer that President Bush cannot refuse — not if Mr. Bush truly wants substantive international cooperation on missile defense. Last month, Mr. Putin offered to give America access to data from a Russian early-warning radar unit in Azerbaijan that can observe the launching and flight of any long-range ballistic missiles from Iran. The offer was part of Mr. Putin's effort to keep the United States from setting up its own missile-defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic.

The Azerbaijan proposal makes sense in two ways: it could end the diplomatic tussle over the Eastern Europe plan, and it could also be a more effective check on Iran. This is because the technical features of the Russian radar

complement those of American missile-defense radar systems, like the one now being set up in Alaska. (Let's leave aside, for the moment, the question of whether missile defense will ever be very effective, something I'm quite skeptical about.)

If we are going to pursue missile defense, we should not only accept the data-sharing offer but also place American defense radars and other technology in Azerbaijan, or possibly in nearby Turkey: working together could substantially increase the chances of making a missile defense against Iran more effective.

Here's the technical explanation. The Russian radar uses low-frequency radio signals to search for distant ballistic missile warheads. The wavelengths of these radio signals are close to the dimensions of the warheads, so you get very strong oscillations of the electromagnetic field and a huge reflection of the signal back to the radar where it can be detected.

By contrast, the favored American missile-defense radar operates at frequencies 70 times higher. The advantage of this is that you get 70 times better radar resolution, and thus a far clearer picture of the object. Clarity is important when it comes to figuring out exactly what sort of a missile you are dealing with and distinguishing an actual warhead from debris. However, at such high frequencies the amount of radio energy that is reflected back to the radar is very small, typically one one-hundredth or less of that received when using the lower frequencies of the Russian radar.

What all this means is that the Russian radar can quickly and effectively search the sky for missiles, but has little ability to determine exactly what it has found. The American radar may take longer to find the object, but can carefully observe its structural details. It should be obvious that when you use two systems with such different strengths and weaknesses in tandem, you will have a much easier time spotting and tracking missiles.

Working together at Azerbaijan, which borders northwestern Iran, has another advantage. At such short range, the curvature of the Earth has only a small effect on the radar's line of sight, so we'd get a clearer view and much earlier warning. American radar there could observe the launching of a missile out of Iran and headed toward Washington at least three to four minutes earlier than could the proposed Eastern Europe system. During these precious extra minutes, tracking data can be accumulated, intercept points calculated, and interceptor missiles launched.

There can be few, if any, technical objections to such cooperation. Politics, however, is another story. Those who do not believe that the cold war is over will complain that we cannot trust the Russians to work with us even when it is in our common interests. Another objection — that President Putin's government is hardly a paragon of democracy and human rights — ignores the fact that technical cooperation between the countries is a good way to encourage Russia to be closer with the West.

President Bush told Mr. Putin last month that "the cold war is over." Cooperating with Russia on missile defense is the perfect way to put those words into action.

Theodore Postol is a professor of science, technology and national security policy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/11/opinion/11postol.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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New York Times

July 12, 2007

Pg. 1

A Nuclear Ruse Uncovers Holes In U.S. Security

By Eric Lipton

WASHINGTON, July 11 — Undercover Congressional investigators set up a bogus company and obtained a license from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in March that would have allowed them to buy the radioactive materials needed for a so-called dirty bomb.

The investigators, from the Government Accountability Office, demonstrated once again that the security measures put in place since the 2001 terrorist attacks to prevent radioactive materials from getting into the wrong hands are insufficient, according to a G.A.O. report, which is scheduled to be released at a Senate hearing Thursday.

"Given that terrorists have expressed an interest in obtaining nuclear material, the Congress and the American people expect licensing programs for these materials to be secure," said Gregory D. Kutz, an investigator at the accountability office, in testimony prepared for the hearing.

The bomb the investigators could have built would not have caused widespread damage or even high-level contamination. But it still could have had serious consequences, particularly economic ones, in any city where it was set off.

The undercover operation involved an application from a fake construction company, supposedly based in West Virginia, that the investigators had incorporated even though it had no offices, Internet site or employees. Its only asset was a postal box.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission officials did not visit the company or try to interview its executives in person. Instead, within 28 days, they mailed the license to the West Virginia postal box, the report says.

That license, on a standard-size piece of paper, also had so few security measures incorporated into it that the investigators, using commercially available equipment, were able to modify it easily, removing a limit on the amount of radioactive material they could buy, the report says.

With that forged document, the auditors approached two industrial equipment companies to arrange to buy dozens of portable moisture density gauges, which cost about \$5,000 each and are used to read the density of soil and pavement when building highways. The machines include americium-241 and cesium-137, radioactive substances commonly used in industrial equipment. Auditors, convinced they had enough evidence to prove their point, called off the ruse before the devices were delivered.

But if they had gone ahead with the plot — which would have required extracting the radioactive materials from the machines and combining them, a job that could harm anyone in close contact — they could have built a bomb that would have contaminated an area about the length of a city block, according to the regulatory commission.

As with any dirty bomb, the resulting low-level contamination would not have presented an immediate health hazard. Still, the area would have to have been evacuated and decontaminated.

Edward McGaffigan Jr., a member of the regulatory commission's governing board, said the agency had taken steps to improve safeguards immediately after learning about the security lapses from auditors. The commission now requires members of its staff to visit any company it is not familiar with before approving a license application. It is also looking for ways to change the license to make it harder to modify or counterfeit, Mr. McGaffigan said.

But he said the danger associated with the amount of radioactive material the auditors were trying to buy should not be overstated. And the operation would have been much more expensive and complicated than pulling off a more conventional attack involving a truck bomb or a chemical tanker truck.

“Why would I not blow up a chemical tanker on a train with chlorine in it or other toxic materials, at a tiny fraction of the cost before doing this very elaborate exercise?” Mr. McGaffigan said.

A nuclear commission spokesman, David McIntyre, said the agency had not inspected the offices of the bogus company before issuing a license because the portable devices the Congressional auditors were trying to buy are considered a lower-level threat than that posed by more dangerous radioactive materials, which it regulates more strictly.

But Senator Norm Coleman, Republican of Minnesota, who has pushed Congressional auditors to investigate nuclear threats since 2003, said the commission was guilty of playing down the threat.

“The economic and psychological effects of a dirty bomb detonating on American soil would be devastating,” Mr. Coleman said in a statement Wednesday. “The N.R.C. has a pre 9-11 mindset in a post 9-11 world focusing just on preventing another Chernobyl.”

The findings by the Congressional auditors are the latest in a series of reports about management and procedural weaknesses at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that investigators have argued make the nation more vulnerable to a dirty bomb attack. In 2003, auditors first recommended that licenses for radioactive materials not be granted without inspections or other means of verifying that the applicant was legitimate.

In 2006, it recommended that the agency take steps to make sure its documents cannot be forged.

The use of undercover tactics is not a new one for the auditors. They used a similar approach last year when trying to smuggle radioactive materials across the border and investigating how effective the government's protections were against fraudulent efforts to get cash assistance after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The most recent investigation did turn up some reassuring news: a second ploy by the auditors to acquire radioactive material was thwarted.

In 34 states, local regulatory authorities handle license applications. In Maryland, the Congressional investigators sent a similar application for a license to buy construction equipment that relied on a radioactive source. But Maryland officials said they wanted to inspect the bogus company's offices and storage yard, so the auditors withdrew their application.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/12/us/12nuke.html?_r=1&ref=washington&oref=slogin

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