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Rice Asserts U.S. Plans No Attack On North Korea

By Thom Shanker and Warren Hoge

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10 — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Tuesday that the United States did not intend to invade or attack North Korea, but she warned the North's leaders that they now risked sanctions "unlike anything that they have faced before."

Even China, North Korea's most important ally, said Tuesday that tough measures were in order, though its representatives said the punishments might not necessarily be the harsh ones that Washington was proposing. "For China, we need to have a firm, constructive, appropriate, but prudent, response," said Wang Guangya, the country's ambassador to the United Nations. "There have to be some punitive actions, but also I think these actions have to be appropriate."

The United States, Britain and France all want a resolution drafted under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which makes sanctions mandatory and poses the possibility of military enforcement.

While both China and Russia have spoken of the importance of taking serious action against North Korea's reported nuclear test, they are traditionally against invoking Chapter VII and have not indicated whether they would end their opposition.

The United States wants agreement on sanctions this week. But even as the administration sought to push tough language into a Security Council resolution, the White House expressed doubts about the capacity of North Korea's nuclear program, based on evidence that the reported test had a smaller yield than expected. [Page A8.]

Sanctions sought by the United States include international inspections of all cargo moving in and out of North Korea to detect weapons-related material. But that might prove difficult for China and Russia to accept, in part because their coastlines and borders would be affected.

The diplomatic moves came a day after administration officials responded with shock and outrage to an official announcement from North Korea that it had detonated a nuclear device.

In an interview on CNN, one of a series of television appearances, Secretary Rice stressed that "the diplomatic path is open" for the North, and that giving up its nuclear program would "lead to all kinds of benefits for North Korea." But she said the North's decision to pursue its nuclear program meant that it would face "international condemnation and international sanctions unlike anything that they have faced before."

The United States has imposed economic curbs on North Korea since the opening of the Korean War in 1950, though President Clinton lifted a few of them toward the end of his time in office, when relations seemed to be thawing.

Now, in its bid to tighten sanctions, Bush administration officials say, the United States is pursuing a two-track approach: trying at the United Nations to persuade other countries to cut off economic ties with the North, and using American banking laws to punish banks overseas that deal with North Korean companies.

At the United Nations on Tuesday, Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States, plus Japan, met twice to work out differences on the sanctions proposed Monday by the United States. John R. Bolton, the American ambassador, reported the group was making headway and would meet again Wednesday.

"I think there is convergence on many issues, more than I would have predicted perhaps a day or two ago," Mr. Bolton said. "That's not to say we're there by any stretch of the imagination, but I'm pleased by the positive nature of the discussions and look forward to more progress tomorrow."

Mr. Bolton said he had discussed the proposal for North Korean ports separately with Mr. Wang, the Chinese envoy. As for Russia, Mr. Bolton began the day complaining that Vitaly I. Churkin, the country's ambassador, had arrived at the morning session with no instructions from his government. He said it had left "a hole" in the conversations. But after the afternoon session, he said Mr. Churkin had heard from Moscow and was able to take part in the debate. "We'll have some areas to discuss there and he raised some issues we had not thought of entirely, but by and large his comments were supportive," Mr. Bolton said.

Mr. Churkin left without making any comment.

Mr. Bolton declined to discuss specifics of the talks but said one amendment suggested by Japan — a ban on travel by members of the North Korean government — had attracted particular support.

Asked if he would limit the American demands in the interests of speeding the process of drafting a resolution, he said: "We want firmness and swiftness, and I think we can have both. That's our objective."

In television interviews and briefings for reporters, Secretary Rice and other officials reiterated past assurances that the United States was not moving toward occupying North Korea or toppling its government.

She said the administration's policy was still that the diplomatic path would be multilateral, through the stalled six-party talks, and not the two-way dialogue that North Korea has sought with the United States.

But even as the administration sought to unify its international allies, there were signs of fissures among Republicans over whether Washington should negotiate directly with North Korea.

Representative Heather Wilson, a New Mexico Republican and former Air Force officer who has played a leading role on national security issues, advocated bilateral negotiations, within the context of the six-party talks. "The idea here is to open a path for this rogue regime to walk back from the edge of the ledge," she said. "I don't think there's anything wrong with straight, tough talk with countries that are not our friends."

In the administration's quest for tough sanctions, much of the effort is focused on China, Japan and especially South Korea, which supply most of North Korea's imports and investments. Indeed, South Korea has invested heavily in the Kaesong Industrial Park, an economic enclave in the North that employs thousands in factories that produce shoes, cosmetics and other export goods.

The United States has tried, without much success, to get South Korea to limit its involvement in the enclave, arguing that North Korean financial institutions that are involved in it are also involved in illicit activities. In the wake of North Korea's latest nuclear steps, persuading South Korea may be easier, American officials say.

The unilateral drive by the United States is likely to expand on existing efforts that American officials maintain have already had a damaging effect on North. Indeed, the sanctions may have propelled North Korea to walk away from negotiations on its nuclear program and test a weapon, some experts say.

Now, with the enactment of American laws and executive orders after Sept. 11, 2001, new tools have become available, and they are likely to be expanded in coming weeks.

Under the U.S.A. Patriot Act, signed into law shortly after the 2001 attacks, the United States labeled a bank in Macao, Banco Delta Asia, as a "primary money-laundering concern" and declared that any bank doing business on American soil — virtually every big bank in the world — could not do business with it.

Administration officials say the ban on Banco Delta Asia badly disrupted North Korean activities, effectively froze the personal accounts of North Korean leaders and sent a message throughout the international financial system that the United States was prepared to do more.

Backing up that threat, President Bush has accused several North Korean trading corporations of being involved in nuclear proliferation and missile activities, often in conjunction with Syria, Iran and Pakistan. American officials have also visited banks in Europe, Asia and the Middle East to tell them that dealings with those entities could jeopardize ties with American banks.

The aim, according to Stuart Levey, under secretary of the treasury for terrorism and financial intelligence, is to put the international community "on notice about a particular threat" and get them to voluntarily end their dealings with North Korean entities.

Thom Shanker reported from Washington and Warren Hoge from the United Nations. Steven R. Weisman, David E. Sanger and Sheryl Gay Stolberg contributed reporting from Washington.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/11/washington/11dipl.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Washington Post
October 11, 2006
Pg. 1

China Says It Will Back Sanctions On N. Korea

Beijing Stresses Limits on U.N. Action Against Ally

By Colum Lynch and Maureen Fan, Washington Post Staff Writers

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 10 -- China on Tuesday expressed a rare willingness to support U.N. sanctions against its ally North Korea, but it said any punitive action would have to be narrowly targeted at the country's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs.

The United States and Japan continued to press the U.N. Security Council to support far stronger economic and trade measures that would permit international inspections of all North Korean cargo to search for weapons and to strangle Pyongyang's ability to finance its nuclear program.

Varied responses to the nuclear test that North Korea apparently conducted early Monday emerged as the Bush administration sought to assuage fresh worries by its foreign counterparts that the tough strategy may cause hardship for the country's impoverished population or topple the government. France, for instance, voiced concern that a Japanese proposal to ban all North Korean exports could fuel a humanitarian crisis.

John R. Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, insisted that the U.S. sanctions plan calls for the exemption of food, medicine and other humanitarian goods for civilians. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack, meanwhile, specifically ruled out any attempt at regime change. "We have made it very clear that the United States has no intention to attack North Korea. That element of our policy still stands," he told reporters.

"What we have sought is a change in the behavior of the North Korean regime."

China's tougher stance against North Korea came as officials in Beijing faced criticism at home over their diplomatic strategy, which relies primarily on the now-stalled six-nation talks to contain North Korea's nuclear program.

The talks have been "a total failure," said Zhang Liankui, a professor at the influential Central Party School's Institute for International Strategic Studies. "North Korea's reaction is a challenge to the whole world. Every country should have a clear and definite attitude, including China.

"If peaceful means can't stop North Korea from conducting a nuclear test, then there should be other means," Zhang added. "The appeasement policy was very popular in the international community, and I think that's very dangerous. Within 10 years, people will suffer from this attitude."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao acknowledged that North Korea's action "will undoubtedly exert negative impact" on the two countries' relations. But he said the six-party talks remain "the best and practical way and effective way to resolve this issue, so I don't think it's a failure of China's diplomacy."

Still, Wang Guangya, China's U.N. ambassador, conceded that the council would have to impose "some punitive actions" on Pyongyang to persuade it to heed international demands. He added, however, that "these actions have to be appropriate" and "more specifically targeted toward the nuclear- and missile-related areas."

U.S. officials welcomed China's willingness to consider punishing a traditional ally and a neighbor that it has shielded from international pressure for decades. White House spokesman Tony Snow said China's announcement suggested that North Korea's ability to use "bluff and bravado" to obtain concessions may have ended.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told CNN that "I've never seen universal condemnation of the kind that North Korea is now facing, and condemnation, by the way, not just from the United States and Europe and Japan but from its closest supporters, those who are the ones who give them assistance."

The United States has told the North Koreans "that there is no intention to invade or attack them," Rice added. "So they have that guarantee." The president "never takes any of his options off the table," she said. "But the United States, somehow, in a provocative way, trying to invade North Korea? It's just not the case."

But other U.S. officials made it clear that they think tougher measures are required to ensure that North Korea will not ignore another unenforceable council dictate. They note that a U.N. measure that was passed in July, Resolution 1695, already bans international trade in ballistic missiles and nuclear technology with North Korea. But it lacks any enforcement provision.

The United States supports a resolution under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which can be enforced by sanctions or military action.

The U.S. draft resolution calls for imposing stringent financial penalties on North Korea and providing broad powers to foreign governments to inspect all trucks, trains, vessels and planes traveling in and out of the country. The U.S. text would also confront North Korea with a 30-day deadline to reverse course or face further penalties.

Japan has introduced a series of amendments that would ban North Korean exports and prohibit the arrival of North Korean ships or planes in foreign countries.

China opposes any deadlines or trade restrictions that would undercut North Korea's struggling economy.

It also insists that any resolution must exclude the possibility, however remote, that force could be used against North Korea. China proposed that a sanctions resolution refer simply to a provision in Chapter 7, known as Article 41, that would authorize only the imposition of sanctions.

"We have not reached agreement -- do not misunderstand me," Bolton told reporters after meetings with China and other major council powers. "I know when you're making progress and I know when you're not making progress, and I'm still pleased with the directions things are going."

Fan and researcher Jin Ling reported from Beijing; staff writer Glenn Kessler in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101000490.html>

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Los Angeles Times

DICTATOR

Kim Has Case of 'Malign Narcissism,' Expert Says

Far from being a fool, Kim Jong Il carefully plotted his country's path to nuclear power.

By Barbara Demick, Times Staff Writer

October 11, 2006

Kim Jong Il is neither insane nor stupid.

From the CIA's psychological profilers to his many biographers, experts who have studied the North Korean leader

believe that beneath the glaring eccentricities — the bouffant hairdo and the oddball Mao suits — there is a shrewd operator at work.

Despite an image as a "nut with a nuke," as some bloggers have disparaged him, the 64-year-old Kim appears to have carefully orchestrated his country's path to nuclear sovereignty.

If the announced test is confirmed, one of the world's poorest and most dysfunctional countries will have become an unlikely gate crasher in the exclusive club of nuclear powers.

That is an achievement Kim apparently believes will ensure the top item on his agenda: maintaining power.

In Kim's eyes, a nuclear weapon should prevent the United States from attempting to topple him from his post in the manner of Iraq's Saddam Hussein. And the indomitable mystique of nuclear capability could in part substitute for the charisma that Kim, unlike his late father, Kim Il Sung, is lacking.

"In the eyes of the North Korean leaders, this was very calculated and rational behavior," said Paik Hak-soon, a political scientist at South Korea's Sejong Institute. "Nobody invades a nuclear power. People respect nuclear power."

Biographers over the years have frequently made the point that Kim Jong Il did not merely inherit power, he fought for it. Short, dumpy and lacking in charm, the younger Kim had to contend with other possible successors before taking over in 1994 upon the death of his father.

Far less popular domestically than Kim Il Sung, he also has had his hands full staying in control — especially given the economic basket case that North Korea became on his watch. It is unclear as well whether he will be able to pass on power to any of his three sons.

Jerrold M. Post, founder of the CIA's Center for the Analysis of Personality and Political Behavior who now teaches at George Washington University, says Kim has had a tough act to follow because of a North Korean propaganda machine that extolled his father as a god.

"You have other world leaders whose fathers led before them — King Abdullah of Jordan, Bashar Assad of Syria — but their job pales in comparison to Kim Jong Il.... He had to be the son of God and to sustain the charismatic cult of personality," Post said.

A psychiatrist by training, Post does not believe that Kim is psychotic but that he has a dangerous personality disorder that Post diagnoses as "malign narcissism." As such, Kim has loyalty only to himself and lacks the ability to consider other people's feelings.

Kim's blatant disregard for his own people allowed him to become one of the Asia's top gourmets at a time when up to 20% of North Korea's population was dying of starvation. To indulge his private whims, he is said to have imported a sushi chef from Japan and a pizza maker from Italy, both of whom later wrote "cook-and-tell" accounts of their experiences. He dispatched couriers to Europe to pick up epicurean treats and ordered each grain of his rice inspected, according to the chefs' accounts.

North Korea's leader apparently saw no hypocrisy in exiling people to prison camps for watching foreign media, while he personally amassed a collection of 20,000 foreign film titles. From the time that President Carter visited Pyongyang in 1994 with copies of "Gone With the Wind" and "The Godfather," foreign dignitaries have been bearing such gifts. The ABC television network, granted a visa to North Korea last year, is said to have brought in, on special request, the complete "Desperate Housewives" series.

Kim is known to love cinema. He once ordered the kidnapping of a South Korean actress and her director husband to run North Korea's film studio. He wrote a book, "On the Art of Cinema," on using film to instill socialist values in the masses. His first serious job, at 30, was with the Department of Propaganda and Agitation for the ruling Workers' Party.

He oversaw a propaganda machine that maintained the elaborate mythology about the ruling family, including the claim that his own birth (like that of Christ) was heralded by the appearance of a bright star.

But Kim was not so delusional to be fooled by his own propaganda, and he knew he would need more to keep himself in power. After 1980, he turned his attention from cinema to weapons of mass destruction.

"Big toys for big boys" is how his psychological profiler, Post, puts it.

Kim steered a nuclear energy program that had been launched in the 1960s more in the direction of weapons development. According to numerous accounts by defectors, he ordered nuclear research and missile development projects moved from the purview of the military to the Workers' Party Central Committee so he could be more intimately involved.

During the famine of the mid-1990s, rank-and-file soldiers were allowed to starve to death, while the regime poured millions into the development of weapons of mass destruction. He made personal visits to the research facilities and lavished scientists with gifts.

"Kim Jong Il didn't care if he bankrupted the rest of the country. He saw the missiles and nuclear weapons as the only way to maintain power," Kim Dok-hong, former deputy director of the Juche Institute, a Pyongyang think tank devoted to North Korean ideology, said in a July interview.

Michael Breen, a Kim biographer, believes that the leader has been following a long-nurtured plan to become a nuclear power and that nothing the United States could have done, short of an invasion, would have stopped him. "From inside the Beltway, people will be talking about the failure of American policy, but I believe the North Koreans did what they always set out to do and became a nuclear state," Breen said. "They weathered the storm of international condemnation, the potential for a coup or invasion. The way the North Koreans see it, a lesser man might have caved to the pressure, but not Kim Jong Il."

Others say Kim merely wanted respect, particularly from the United States, and would have traded away his nuclear weapons in exchange for diplomatic recognition of his regime.

Post, who has also profiled Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, says it is no coincidence that both North Korea and Iran accelerated their development of nuclear weapons after President Bush lumped them in the "axis of evil" and proceeded with the invasion of Iraq. Both had reason to be fearful of a U.S. attack.

"Even if you say that Kim Jong Il is paranoid, it doesn't mean that someone was *not* out to get him," Post said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-kim11oct11.1.5937618.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Los Angeles Times

October 11, 2006

Pg. 1

U.S. Fears Export Of Technology

Preventing North Korea from selling nuclear materials would depend on China and Russia.

By Peter Spiegel and Greg Miller, Times Staff Writers

WASHINGTON — The sanctions demanded by U.S. officials in response to North Korea's announcement this week that it had tested a nuclear device would focus on closing pathways to proliferation of weapons technology.

But U.S. officials say any such effort would have to focus on the air and land routes through China and Russia that the government in Pyongyang has used in response to American monitoring on the high seas.

Since the 1990s, the Pentagon has used naval ships and aircraft to track and even intercept weapons shipments coming out of North Korea.

"Our folks pay very close attention to the vessels they are using and where they go; we stay on top of this one," Adm. William J. Fallon, the U.S. military's top officer in the Pacific, said last month. "One thing we can't do anything about is the air movement, because it goes over Chinese or Russian airspace. It's up to those countries to do things."

The new United Nations sanctions resolution proposed by the United States would direct all members "to undertake and facilitate inspection of cargo to or from" North Korea. In effect, it would require China to help close the gap in American efforts.

It's a challenge unlike any yet faced by U.S. diplomats and military officials. Until now, nations that have developed a nuclear capability have not viewed their new weapons as potential export commodities, as many believe Pyongyang does.

U.S. intelligence officials said Tuesday that they were still collecting data on Monday's declared blast, and knew little about the device involved. One military official said the Pentagon was awaiting data from its lone WC-135 "sniffer" aircraft, which was stationed at Kadena Air Base in Japan at the time of the North Korean test.

At the U.N., Chinese and Russian diplomats resisted tougher proposals by the Americans and Japanese, and U.S. Ambassador John R. Bolton dismissed a North Korean threat to launch a nuclear-tipped missile if Washington refused direct talks. Diplomats hope for a vote on a response to North Korea by Friday.

Past international efforts to block exports and enforce embargoes have had limited and short-lived success. But North Korea's use of Chinese routes for conventional weapons exports raises the concern that it may attempt to use similar means to transship nuclear technologies.

"In the early days, it is absolutely true that the North Koreans sent both missiles and missile fuel and components to the Iranians and the Syrians by sea," said David Kay, a former U.N. weapons inspector who specialized in nuclear proliferation issues. "But they now know that's not a good way to do it, so most of it goes overland via China."

Kay said that, from China, the weaponry probably is flown to places such as Iran and Syria. North Korea also has sold missile technology to Yemen and Pakistan.

The Bush administration has complained repeatedly that Beijing has not lived up to agreements to stop North Korea's shipments of weapons technologies. In testimony last month before a U.S. government commission, State Department officials said they "remain deeply concerned" over China's lack of commitment to its nonproliferation promises.

Thus far, however, U.S. proliferation concerns have centered on Pyongyang's trade in parts for long- and medium-range missiles. By some estimates, North Korea is the world's dominant exporter of ballistic missiles. An evaluation by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies estimated that missile sales had earned the North Korean government hundreds of millions of dollars, making it a significant source for hard currency.

But deliveries of missile components have begun to shrink in recent years as North Korea's traditional customers, particularly Iran, have developed their own capabilities. Experts fear that Pyongyang will view nuclear technology, and nuclear material such as plutonium, as a replacement revenue source.

"The thing that worries most people is actually the export of fissile material itself," Kay said.

"I don't think people are worried at this stage about North Korea sending weapons to Iranians or terrorists," Kay added, "although there is virtually nothing on the face of the Earth that the North Koreans have gotten their hands on that they haven't been willing to sell."

China has let North Korea ship missile parts through its territory and airspace and has exported missile systems to rogue governments itself. But U.S. officials consider Beijing less likely to tolerate North Korean nuclear shipments because such exports could undermine China's status as the only nuclear power in East Asia.

"North Korea is China's neighbor, so they, in a sense, have a more proximate cause for worry than even the United States," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

Nonetheless, enforcing any tightened counter-proliferation regime, even with Chinese cooperation, would be challenging, U.S. officials and arms experts said. The Pentagon can track ships, but it is nearly impossible to determine precise cargoes.

"The ability to recognize every single thing that's on every ship is a challenge," Adm. Fallon said.

The administration's proposed U.N. resolution would essentially establish an international agreement to allow the boarding of ships suspected of carrying prohibited items to or from North Korea.

Pentagon officials, however, said that any large-scale effort would be many times more complicated than tracking the vessels, and would require the participation of other countries. As a result, tactical planning has not begun for a U.S. blockade of North Korea, a Defense Department official said.

"The presumption is this would have to be an international effort," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue. "You can't willy-nilly stop every ship; you need to search methodically."

Similarly, China's ability to monitor North Korean deliveries across its border may be limited. Beijing polices the border, but experts say the frontier remains somewhat porous and that China may not be employing the most modern sensors and other detection equipment.

"It's like moving drugs into the United States from Mexico," Kay said. "The Chinese could do a far better technical job than they've been doing. Radiation detectors along the Yalu River" — between North Korea and China — "would be a good thing, but they can be beaten."

Times staff writers Julian E. Barnes in Washington and Maggie Farley at the United Nations contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-sanctions11oct11,1,4539579.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

October 11, 2006

Pg. 1

Experts Believe Test Was Nuclear

Small, still deadly, U.S. scientists say.

By Faye Flam, Inquirer Staff Writer

North Korea almost certainly exploded a bomb made from plutonium that it had slowly collected over years from one of its nuclear reactors, American physicists said yesterday.

The country is a serious and credible nuclear threat, the scientists said, despite the relatively weak seismic signal generated by the test.

Eight years ago, the North Koreans had already produced enough plutonium to make one or possibly two nuclear bombs, said physicist Richard Garwin, who helped design the hydrogen bomb and was part of the 1998 Rumsfeld Commission on nuclear threats.

From their stock of spent fuel, the North Koreans could have extracted more plutonium, he said. International inspectors guarded that spent fuel, which was kept in a storage pond, until 2003, when the government expelled the inspectors and announced its intention to try to develop plutonium weapons.

Since then, Garwin estimates, North Korea could have extracted enough plutonium to build six to eight bombs. Other estimates range from four to 13 bombs.

The explosion that occurred about 9:30 p.m. Eastern time Sunday, was detected as far away as Nevada, but that was more a testament to the sensitivity of seismometers than the power of the test, said Paul Richards, a seismologist at the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory at Columbia University. The test was too far away to register on equipment at Pennsylvania State University.

The seismic waves were of magnitude 4.2, which scientists estimate would require the explosive equivalent of 1 kiloton of TNT. That would make it much less powerful than underground tests by India and Pakistan or the bombs that the United States dropped on Japan in World War II.

Although the seismic waves do not prove North Korea carried out a nuclear test, they do show a characteristic pressure wave that suggests an explosion rather than an earthquake, said Jeffrey Park, a seismologist at Yale University.

The test was probably done tens or even hundreds of meters below the Earth's surface, he said. In such underground tests, the heat of the blast generally melts surrounding rock, he said, which would seal the fission products inside, but a small amount of radioactive gases is still likely to leak out.

The scientists doubt enough would leak to cause a health hazard, but even traces picked up by monitoring stations and airplanes could confirm a nuclear explosion and give more detail about the type of bomb that was used.

While some raise the possibility that the North Koreans used 1,000 tons of conventional explosives, some physicists say spy satellites would have detected the set-up for such a fake test.

They also dismissed as remote the possibility that North Korea intended the explosion to be small.

"You'd have to be a lot more advanced to get a small yield on purpose than to get a small yield by accident," said Anthony Fainberg, a physicist who has done nuclear safeguard work for Brookhaven National Laboratory. "There's no reason to believe they were that brilliant."

To get a plutonium bomb to work, at least four kilograms must be amassed and imploded in a symmetrical way within a few microseconds.

The problem, said Garwin, is that plutonium tends to emit stray neutrons. Without proper design, the initial stages of the explosion can blow much of the fissionable material apart before it has a chance to contribute to a nuclear chain reaction. This problem, called predetonation, could have caused the Korean bomb to give off a weak explosion, Garwin said.

Enriched uranium is easier to turn into a bomb. The weapon that destroyed Hiroshima used two masses of uranium fired at each other with a gun, a process the scientists say would not work with plutonium because it is not symmetrical and happens too slowly.

Iraq was trying to enrich uranium in the early 1990s, but U.N. weapons inspectors forced it to dismantle its program.

Iran has the technology to make enriched uranium, though it is unlikely to have enough to make a bomb yet, the physicists say. It is building a heavy-water reactor from which it could get plutonium, which is how India and Israel got nuclear weapons.

North Korea's plutonium comes from a reactor built in the 1980s. The reactor is relatively small but nevertheless makes about nine grams of plutonium a day, Garwin said, if the material is extracted from the spent fuel. That is enough to create one bomb every year, he said.

Physicist David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security said that while the North Korean government had a history of exaggerating its nuclear capability, it would be misleading to call the test a failure.

"Failure means they don't know what they're doing," he said. "I'd say they almost have a nuclear weapon." North Korea may have a technical problem getting the maximum explosive power, he said, "but I think they can fix it."

He said the Koreans probably conducted the test to persuade the world to take seriously their nuclear capability - thus deterring invasion. If the world deems it a failure, he said, they could test again, since they probably have enough plutonium.

Albright said he took the threat of North Korean nuclear attack very seriously and worried the situation could lead to an arms race with Japan and South Korea.

"I think a nuclear exchange could become real if this thing continues along the current path," he said.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/15727519.htm>

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Washington Post

October 11, 2006

Pg. 14

U.S. Waits For Firm Information On Nature And Success Of Device

By Dafna Linzer and Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Staff Writers

The White House yesterday played down North Korea's nuclear capability as government scientists and intelligence analysts waited for additional data to confirm whether Pyongyang had conducted a successful nuclear test.

Intelligence and administration officials said they were still working under the assumption that North Korea had managed to detonate an atomic device, but they said they needed additional environmental sampling before they could formally rule out other possibilities, such as the blast being caused solely by conventional explosives.

Intelligence officials were concerned that North Korea could conduct another test, either to improve upon the first test or to prove its capabilities.

A U.S. military RC-135, an electronic monitoring aircraft, flew around the Sea of Japan yesterday in an effort to detect nuclear radiation, two intelligence sources said. The same aircraft, based in Okinawa, Japan, was used in July after North Korea carried out a set of ballistic missile tests. The sources cautioned that it could take several days before winds push radioactive particles toward an area where they can be clearly detected.

"Over time, whenever the prevailing winds blow out over the Gulf of Japan, it will be more likely that we get some detection," one intelligence official said yesterday, requesting anonymity because the effort involves classified information.

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said officials would use a variety of means besides seismic data to try to draw a conclusion about the explosion, including some he would not discuss. "There is a possibility that particulate fallout is detectable, and then there's a variety of other intelligence means to determine the veracity of the allegation of the tests that they conducted," he said.

North Korea announced Monday that it had carried out its first nuclear test, and seismic readings suggested a blast inside a mountain in the country's north from the equivalent of 500 tons of explosives.

"We ourselves are operating under the assumption that, yes, in fact it was" a nuclear test, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said yesterday. "But I can't confirm that."

The aircraft and monitoring stations on the ground are seeking to detect particulate data that would indicate that a nuclear explosion had taken place. But those efforts will not necessarily determine the nature of the blast, a Defense Department official noted, because the explosion was relatively small and the North Korean government said it was contained.

"There are multiple ways" the U.S. government will seek to verify North Korea's claim that it detonated a nuclear device, the official said. But there is no hard information yet, the official said. Intelligence analysts are also reviewing intercepted communications and other data.

The official declined to be quoted by name, saying that the Pentagon is not playing a lead role in the U.S. response and that he wanted to defer to the White House.

White House press secretary Tony Snow said there is a "remote possibility" that U.S. intelligence will be unable to fully determine whether the test succeeded. Several nuclear tests conducted by other countries, including a number of Pakistani tests in 1998, have never been fully understood by U.S. intelligence. Many intelligence analysts believe a 1979 flash in the waters off the southern tip of Africa was caused by a nuclear test carried out by Israel, with South African help. But it has never been confirmed and remains a mystery.

Snow suggested yesterday that it is possible that the test was conducted with an older weapon from before President Bush's time in office.

"You could have something that is very old and off the shelf here, as well, in which case they've dusted off something that is old and dormant," he said.

North Korea's arsenal is estimated by U.S. intelligence to have grown substantially during Bush's presidency.

At the end of George H.W. Bush's time in office in January 1993, North Korea was presumed to have enough plutonium for one to two nuclear devices. But in 2002, Pyongyang announced that it had begun to reprocess additional plutonium for weapons. It could now have plutonium for as many as a dozen devices, depending on their size and sophistication.

Nuclear experts said there was little possibility that the explosion could have been the result of a chemical blast or a radioactive "dirty" bomb masked as a nuclear explosion.

"It would be much more difficult to mimic the radioactive isotopes you get from a nuclear blast" than to conduct an actual nuclear test, said Charles D. Ferguson, a nuclear expert at the Council on Foreign Relations. "A dirty bomb uses one type of radioactive isotope, whereas a nuclear explosion would give off dozens of different ones," he said. Ferguson agreed with government nuclear scientists that the most likely reason North Korea's blast was relatively small was that only a fraction of the plutonium detonated during the test.

Officials believe the low yield probably resulted from the poor design of the device. To create the kind of plutonium-based blast that North Korea claims, it would have needed to simultaneously set off a series of conventional explosives around a plutonium core. The force of the simultaneous blast produces a shock wave that causes the material to compress into the center and implode.

If any of those steps is imperfect and only part of the plutonium is imploded, the result is a low yield, such as the one produced by the North Korean test Monday. A low yield, deep underground, is more difficult to detect. A government scientist who was not authorized to speak publicly said that in addition to radiation in the air, ground sensors may be able to pick up seepage that emerges through the soil, sometimes months after a test.

Michael Green, who was the senior director for Asia at the National Security Council during President Bush's first term, said the North Koreans have always made good on nuclear and missile plans they announced ahead of time, leaving him confident that they had in fact conducted a nuclear test.

"They have always telegraphed what they were up to on the plutonium side," he said.

Staff researcher Julie Tate contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101001535.html>

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New York Times

October 11, 2006

Small Blast, Or 'Big Deal'? U.S. Experts Look For Clues

By David E. Sanger and William J. Broad

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10 — The White House seized on further evidence on Tuesday that North Korea's proclaimed nuclear test had resulted in a surprisingly small blast, questioning at one point whether the test was, in the end, "a big deal event."

The White House spokesman, Tony Snow, appeared to backtrack from that assessment later in the day, as he turned from mounting a defense of the administration's troubled history with North Korea to arguing that the only logical response to the test was to impose harsh sanctions.

The statements came as American intelligence analysts developed their first theories of what might have gone wrong in the barren mountains of North Korea's northeast provinces to have produced an explosion much smaller than even North Korea had apparently expected.

The officials said that their current assessment was that North Korea had in fact detonated a nuclear device, and that they were discounting some reports that North Korea had staged a hoax, trying to disguise a large conventional explosion as a nuclear blast.

"The working assumption is that this was a nuclear explosion of some kind," one intelligence official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The conventional explosion theory doesn't make a hell of a lot of sense, even for the North Koreans."

But that left the mystery of why the explosion appeared to be so small, less than a kiloton, or a fraction of the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

Theories ranged from the possibility that North Korea had used old, polluted plutonium to the possibility that it had manufactured imprecise nuclear triggers. But at this point, intelligence officials said, they were just taking educated guesses, and would need hard evidence, or the testimony of spies or defectors, to figure out exactly what happened. The officials agreed to speak about the classified intelligence assessments only on condition of anonymity.

Intelligence officials said they had yet to determine the exact size of the weapon, or whether it was a plutonium bomb, the most likely scenario, given North Korea's stockpile of spent nuclear fuel.

The Pentagon said it had dispatched planes carrying sensitive atmospheric sensors into international airspace along the North Korean coast, in hope of picking up a whiff of radiation vented from the test site. But so far, they said, none has been detected.

Mr. Snow contributed to some of the speculation at a morning meeting with reporters when he noted that North Korea began reprocessing nuclear fuel only two years ago — it was actually closer to three years, the North Koreans say — asking reporters, "Do you seriously believe that they have actually done everything within two years?" "You could have something that's very old and off the shelf here as well, in which case they've dusted off something that was old and dormant," he added. "I don't know."

Mr. Snow later said "that was just me talking." But he seemed to be suggesting that the North Koreans reached for plutonium believed to be produced in the late 1980's or early 1990's.

That first batch of North Korean plutonium is widely suspected by experts to have been contaminated with a high amount of plutonium 240, which can cause a chain reaction to start prematurely and end in a fizzle.

Thomas B. Cochran, a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, a private group that tracks nuclear arms, said the plutonium 240 contamination problem was well known, and probably understood by the North Koreans.

More likely, he said, they had difficulty getting timers, detonators and explosives to work in the perfectly choreographed manner that was needed to compress the fuel uniformly — one of the technical requirements of building a plutonium bomb.

Philip E. Coyle III, a former head of weapons testing at the Pentagon and a senior adviser to the Center for Defense Information, a private group in Washington, said other explanations might be reasonable.

“Maybe they were trying to be sophisticated, and trimmed back on the amount of fuel” in trying to perfect a small warhead for missiles, he said. “Maybe they wanted a Ferrari the first time out of the box, and got a Model T instead.”

So, was it a big deal after all? Mr. Snow, reconsidering his original question, told reporters it was a “big deal in the sense that the North Koreans have, in defiance of the international community and their neighbors, said that they were going to test, and they have claimed to have tested a nuclear weapon. That is an important deal.”

Mark Mazzetti contributed reporting.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/11/washington/11intel.html?ref=washington>

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USA Today

October 11, 2006

Pg. 1

Even A Small Nuke Poses Big Threat

By Dan Vergano, USA Today

A dud, a fake or something else? Experts are dubious about the success of North Korea's underground nuclear test Monday.

Clearly, there was an explosion, a magnitude-4.2 blast from a near-surface location 40 miles north of Kimchaek, the U.S. Geological Survey says. But an estimate of the blast's strength, equivalent to 500-2,000 tons of TNT, makes it a pipsqueak as nuclear explosions go, says physicist Terry Wallace of Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico.

Even so, the test had officials in other countries on edge. A magnitude-5.8 earthquake shook northern Japan today, and the Associated Press, quoting unnamed sources in the Japanese Foreign Ministry, reported that Japan suspected North Korea had conducted a second nuclear test. South Korean and U.S. monitors said they had detected no seismic activity in North Korea, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told the parliament he had no confirmation of a new blast.

Monday's blast had the abrupt beginning of a nuclear explosion, not the slow, rumbling start of an earthquake or the drawn-out TNT blasts seen in mine explosions, says seismologist Paul Richards of Columbia University.

International monitors are waiting for confirmation in the form of measurements of airborne radioactivity, which usually spike after a test, he says.

“Most likely they tried to get a larger yield and things went wrong,” says physicist Wolfgang Panofsky, a veteran of the Manhattan Project, which developed the first atomic bombs six decades ago.

In a plutonium atomic bomb, which North Korea is suspected of building, the radioactive material is compressed by precisely timed TNT blasts. A nuclear chain reaction produces an instantaneous explosion, Panofsky says.

Mistiming or other imperfections can cause the chain reaction to fizzle.

“It could even be a fake — conventional explosives masquerading as a nuke,” nuclear proliferation reporter Richard Stone of Science magazine, says by e-mail. Richards says, however, that timing 500 or more tons of TNT to ignite simultaneously — and getting the explosives to the test site without being detected by satellites — seems “not very credible.”

Some analysts, such as physicist David Albright of the Institute for Science and International Security, suggest that the North Koreans may have miniaturized a bomb to arm missile warheads.

Panofsky says that even the smallest possible plutonium bomb should produce an explosion the size of that at Hiroshima in Japan in World War II. That blast had an explosive force equivalent to about 15,000 tons of TNT.

“But the main thing is the cat is out of the bag,” Richards says. “Even if this is quite small by nuclear standards, something like this set off in a city would be an enormous disaster.”

Contributing: Barbara Slavin

http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20061011/1a_bottomstrip11_dom.art.htm

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Japan To Keep Prohibition On Nukes

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said yesterday that North Korea's claim it conducted a nuclear test will not affect his country's constitutional ban on developing nuclear weapons, but all of the North's neighbors face fundamental military and foreign policy questions in the wake of the test.

Mr. Abe, a hard-liner who has long pushed for a more assertive Japanese defense, told a parliamentary committee that fears in the region that Japan will seek a nuclear deterrent in response to North Korea's test are unfounded.

"We have no intention of changing our policy that possessing nuclear weapons is not our option," Mr. Abe said.

"There will be no change in our nonnuclear arms principles."

Security analysts said new pressure to rewrite Japan's post-World War II pacifist constitution is just one potential result of Pyongyang's test. A Japanese military buildup, they warn, could spur China to bolster its own arsenal, and set off a regional arms race.

"Given that some people perceive that Japan's new leadership might wish to reconsider Japan's nuclear policy, it is vitally important that the United States lead an intense and sustained effort with Japan, South Korea and China to clarify each other's intentions and policies in ways that avoid any nuclear competition," according to George Perkovich, a nuclear proliferation specialist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun has already conceded that Seoul faces a fundamental review of its decadelong "sunshine policy" of economic and political engagement with the North, in light of the purported nuclear test.

China, for its part, had found North Korea's combative regime a useful tool in tying down U.S. military assets in the region and preventing the emergence of a pro-U.S. united Korea on its border. Pyongyang's suspected nuclear test Monday, in the face of repeated warnings by China, presents Beijing with a dilemma of how hard to punish its nominal ally.

Even North Korea faces a new diplomatic headache as a result of its test.

Pyongyang's tactic of playing its neighbors off one another has been undercut as Mr. Abe, Mr. Roh and Chinese President Hu Jintao have presented a united front in meetings over the past week against Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions. The three leaders recently had been sharply at odds over such issues as Japan's World War II record and territorial claims.

Despite Mr. Abe's assurances, many in East Asia are nervously watching Japan's internal debate over defense and nuclear policy.

Former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, according to the Australian newspaper, said at a financial conference in Sydney, "My great concern is that Japan may use the [North Korean test] to move into nuclear weapons itself, eschewing the nuclear protection provided to it by the United States under its umbrella."

Taiwanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Michael Lu said Taipei "fears the nuclear test might trigger an arms race and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, thus undermining the security and welfare of people in the Northeast Asian region."

Former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who served in the mid-1980s, this past summer issued a report saying Japan should study the nuclear military option because it could not count forever on U.S. protection from its neighbors.

"There are countries with nuclear weapons in Japan's vicinity," Mr. Nakasone said at the time. "We are currently dependent on U.S. nuclear weapons as a deterrent, but it is not necessarily known whether the U.S. attitude will continue."

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061010-102846-7250r.htm>

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Iran Unfazed By Outrage Over North Korea's Test

Tehran vows to proceed with its nuclear efforts. Analysts say it may even be reassured by global uncertainty over how to punish Pyongyang.

By Alissa J. Rubin, Times Staff Writer

PARIS — Iranian officials made clear Tuesday that international outrage at North Korea's declared test of a nuclear bomb would not deter them from moving ahead with their own nuclear program.

Indeed, the North Korean test comes as a relief to Iran because it takes the focus off its program — which Tehran says is aimed only at producing electricity, not weapons — and channels American ire toward Pyongyang, analysts said. They added that the international community's uncertainty about how to punish North Korea seems to have reinforced the Iranian government's belief that it has little to fear by proceeding with its program, vindicating its decision to resist international pressure to suspend it.

Western intelligence agencies disagree about how long it would take Iran to reach the point North Korea apparently arrived at this week. The U.S. government says officially that Iran is as much as a decade away from a nuclear weapon, but Israeli intelligence analysts and evidence from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N. nuclear monitoring arm, suggest it could detonate a device much sooner.

A former American nuclear weapons expert with access to the latest intelligence said Iran was within a year or less of being able to set off a test explosion.

Iran's program is designed to produce enriched uranium, which can be used as fuel for a reactor. When enriched to a higher level, uranium can be used to make a bomb.

Tuesday, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said Iran would insist on its right under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to develop the nuclear fuel cycle for civilian purposes.

"Our policy is clear ... insisting on the nation's right without any retreat," state television quoted Khamenei as saying to a meeting of high-ranking government officials.

Two years ago, the Islamic Republic tried the path of negotiation, suspended its enrichment program and got nothing for it, Khamenei suggested. Now, he said, the program will proceed full bore.

"Two years ago [when] we started suspending uranium enrichment, if we didn't experience that path, we would have blamed ourselves for not testing that path," he said. "But today, we are going ahead with courage because no one can provide an acceptable reason why Iran's nuclear path is wrong."

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a strong supporter of his nation's nuclear program, echoed the cleric's thoughts, telling the group that Iran's most recent proposal to negotiate with European countries and the United States was as far as the country would go.

Longtime Iran watchers in the United States say the Iranian leadership has drawn lessons from watching North Korea, as well as India and Pakistan, both of which tested nuclear weapons in 1998.

Both India and Pakistan were severely censured at the time, and the United States initially imposed stiff economic penalties against both. But today, the United States considers Pakistan "a major non-NATO ally," and the Bush administration is pushing a deal to sell nuclear technology to India. Analysts say the Iranians have concluded that the consequences of obtaining the bomb appear to have been positive for both countries.

"Iran has already convinced itself that like other great civilizations, like India, they can get away with it," said Gary Samore, director of studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. If the United Nations Security Council "can actually mount an effective action against North Korea, [Iran] might be concerned," Samore added, but for now, the leadership in Tehran appears unworried.

A U.S. Defense Department analyst who closely follows Iran expressed a similar view. "I imagine the Iranians will be even more certain, more resolved that there really isn't anything that could be done to stop them if they choose to continue, so why not move ahead," the analyst said.

Western governments have cited several pieces of evidence suggesting that Iran wants more than just a civilian program: Until 2002, the country's nuclear program was clandestine for 18 years, in violation of the nonproliferation treaty, of which Iran is a signatory.

After Iran was forced to disclose its program, officials continued to refuse to answer many of the questions raised by the IAEA. U.N. inspectors were denied access to some sites for nearly two years, and one of the sites was razed during that time, virtually eliminating the chances of inspectors being able to detect whether nuclear material had ever been there.

At another military site, Parchin, U.S. intelligence agencies believed that Iran was testing explosives that could be part of a triggering system for a nuclear bomb. Although international inspectors found no trace of nuclear material at the site, they had limited access to the vast area. The IAEA has independently found documents explaining how to cast uranium into hemispheres, a step necessary only in making a bomb.

Diplomats from the United States, the European Union and other countries have been working for more than three years to persuade Iran to halt its efforts to enrich uranium.

The effort fell apart in April when Tehran announced it had successfully enriched uranium to a low level at its pilot plant at Natanz.

In the Middle East, the emphasis is on the slender hope of reversing the tide, by persuading North Korea to back down and refrain from further tests, said the Egyptian ambassador to the United Nations agencies in Vienna.

"Now that Korea has performed a nuclear test, I think what's important is that everything is reversible, the issue of denuclearization should be pushed. What happened in North Korea has implications for the whole nonproliferation regime," he said.

Special correspondent Babak Pirouz in Tehran contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran11oct11.1.7981907.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post
October 11, 2006
Pg. 19

In Search Of A North Korea Policy

By William J. Perry

North Korea's declared nuclear bomb test program will increase the incentives for other nations to go nuclear, will endanger security in the region and could ultimately result in nuclear terrorism. While this test is the culmination of North Korea's long-held aspiration to become a nuclear power, it also demonstrates the total failure of the Bush administration's policy toward that country. For almost six years this policy has been a strange combination of harsh rhetoric and inaction.

President Bush, early in his first term, dubbed North Korea a member of the "axis of evil" and made disparaging remarks about Kim Jong Il. He said he would not tolerate a North Korean nuclear weapons program, but he set no bounds on North Korean actions.

The most important such limit would have been on reprocessing spent fuel from North Korea's reactor to make plutonium. The Clinton administration declared in 1994 that if North Korea reprocessed, it would be crossing a "red line," and it threatened military action if that line was crossed. The North Koreans responded to that pressure and began negotiations that led to the Agreed Framework. The Agreed Framework did not end North Korea's aspirations for nuclear weapons, but it did result in a major delay. For more than eight years, under the Agreed Framework, the spent fuel was kept in a storage pond under international supervision.

Then in 2002, the Bush administration discovered the existence of a covert program in uranium, evidently an attempt to evade the Agreed Framework. This program, while potentially serious, would have led to a bomb at a very slow rate, compared with the more mature plutonium program. Nevertheless, the administration unwisely stopped compliance with the Agreed Framework. In response the North Koreans sent the inspectors home and announced their intention to reprocess. The administration deplored the action but set no "red line." North Korea made the plutonium.

The administration also said early this summer that a North Korean test of long-range missiles was unacceptable. North Korea conducted a multiple-launch test of missiles on July 4. Most recently, the administration said a North Korean test of a nuclear bomb would be unacceptable. A week later North Korea conducted its first test.

It appears that the administration is deeply divided on how to deal with North Korea, with some favoring negotiation and others economic and political pressure to force a regime change. As a result, while the administration was willing to send a representative to the six-party talks organized by the Chinese in 2003, it had no apparent strategy for dealing with North Korea there or for providing leadership to the other parties. In the meantime, it increased economic pressure on Pyongyang. Certainly an argument can be made for such pressure, but it would be naive to think it could succeed without the support of the Chinese and South Korean governments, neither of which backs such action. North Korea, sensing the administration's paralysis, has moved ahead with an aggressive and dangerous nuclear program.

So what can be done now that might have a constructive influence on North Korea's behavior? The attractive alternatives are behind us. There should and will be a U.N. resolution condemning the test. The United Nations may respond to calls from the United States and Japan for strong sanctions to isolate North Korea and cut off trade with it. But North Korea is already the most isolated nation in the world, and its government uses this isolation to its advantage. Stronger sanctions on materials that might be of use to the nuclear program are reasonable, but the horse is already out of the barn. Economic sanctions to squeeze North Korea would increase the suffering of its people but would have little effect on the elite. In any event, they would be effective only if China and South Korea fully participated, and they have shown no inclination to do so.

There will be calls to accelerate our national missile defense program. But the greatest danger to the United States from this program is not that North Korea would be willing to commit suicide by firing a missile at the United States, even if it did develop one of sufficient range. Rather, it is the possibility that the North Koreans will sell one of the bombs or some of their plutonium to a terrorist group. The president has warned North Korea not to transfer any materials from its nuclear program. But the warnings we have sent to North Korea these past six years have

gone unheeded and its acts unpunished. It is not clear that this latest one will have any greater effect. If a warning is to have a chance of influencing North Korea's behavior it has to be much more specific. It would have to promise retaliation against North Korea if a terrorist detonated a nuclear bomb in one of our cities. It must be backed by a meaningful forensics program that can identify the source of a nuclear bomb.

This test will certainly send an undesirable message to Iran, and that damage has already been done. But it is important to try to keep this action from precipitating a nuclear arms race in the Asia-Pacific region. Both Japan and South Korea have the capability to move quickly to full nuclear-weapon status but have not done so because they have had confidence in our nuclear umbrella. They may now reevaluate their decision. We should consult closely with Japan and South Korea to reassure them that they are still under our umbrella and that we have the will and the capability to regard an attack on them as an attack on the United States. This may be necessary to discourage them from moving forward with nuclear deterrence of their own.

Our government's inattention has allowed North Korea to establish a new and dangerous threat to the Asia-Pacific region. It is probably too late to reverse that damage, but serious attention to this problem can still limit the extent of the damage.

The writer was secretary of defense from 1994 to 1997.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101001285.html>

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Washington Post

October 11, 2006

Pg. 19

We Need A New Deterrent

By David Ignatius

"Present at the Creation" was the title Dean Acheson gave to his memoir about the founding of the post-World War II order. Now, with North Korea claiming to have tested a nuclear weapon in defiance of the international community, and Iran seemingly on the way, Harvard professor Graham Allison argues that we are present at the unraveling.

The North Korean bomb test is a seismic event for the world community. It tells us that the structure created to maintain global security is failing. The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council -- the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France -- all warned North Korea against taking this step. Yet the leaders in Pyongyang ignored these signals and in the process blew open the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The North Korean leadership, puny in everything but weapons technology, has been marching toward this moment since the 1950s. It's unrealistic to think that, having brazened their way to detonating what they say is a nuclear bomb, the North Koreans will now give it up. The proliferation machine isn't going to run in reverse. In that sense, the question is less how to repair the old architecture of nonproliferation -- practically speaking, it's a wreck -- and more how to build a new structure that can stop the worst threats.

What are the right cornerstones of this new security structure? I put that question to Allison, who is a national resource when it comes to matters of nuclear proliferation and deterrence. He wrote the definitive book, "Essence of Decision," on the Cuban missile crisis, the world's closest brush with all-out nuclear war. In recent years he has been studying the danger of nuclear terrorism, and he edited a prescient discussion of the implications of a North Korean breakout that appears in the September issue of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

Allison believes that the world must focus on what he calls "the principle of nuclear accountability." The biggest danger posed by North Korea isn't that it would launch a nuclear missile but that this desperately poor country would sell a bomb to al-Qaeda or another terrorist group. Accountability, in Allison's terms, means that if a bomb explodes in Manhattan that contains North Korean fissile material, the United States will act as if the strike came from North Korea itself -- and retaliate accordingly, with devastating force. To make this accountability principle work, the United States needs a crash program to create the "nuclear forensics" that can identify the signature of fissile material of every potential nuclear state. Arms control expert Robert Gallucci describes this approach as "expanded deterrence" in his article in the September *Annals*.

President Bush seemed to be drawing this red line of accountability when he warned Monday: "The transfer of nuclear weapons or material by North Korea to states or non-state entities would be considered a grave threat to the United States, and we would hold North Korea fully accountable for the consequences of such action."

Tough words, but are they credible? That's why the second essential pillar of a new security regime is a restoration of deterrence. The Bush administration warned North Korea over and over that it would face severe consequences if it tested a nuclear weapon. So did China and Russia, but Kim Jong Il went ahead anyway. Iranian leaders are

similarly unimpressed by Bush's saber rattling, viewing America as a weakened nation bogged down by an unwinnable war in Iraq. To restore deterrence, the West needs to stop making threats it can't carry out. And the United States must salvage its strategic position in Iraq -- either by winning or organizing the most stable plan for withdrawal.

After the Cuban missile crisis, President John F. Kennedy got serious about preventing nuclear war. He installed a "hotline" so the White House and the Kremlin could talk when crises arose; he negotiated the 1963 test ban treaty; and he began the discussions that led to the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty. That treaty worked adequately for almost four decades. Instead of the 20 nuclear states that Kennedy feared would exist by 1975, we had just eight, until last weekend. But the North Korean test threatens to begin what a 2004 U.N. commission warned would be "a cascade of proliferation" that could spread to Japan, South Korea, Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

We are present at the unraveling. We must "think about the unthinkable" with new urgency. The United States and its allies must begin constructing a system that can succeed where the Non-Proliferation Treaty has failed. A terrorist nuclear bomb in Manhattan or Washington isn't a thriller writer's fantasy; it's a probability, unless America and its allies establish new rules for nuclear accountability that are clear and credible.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/10/AR2006101001282.html>

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Washington Times

October 11, 2006

Pg. 12

Perils From Pyongyang

By James Hackett

The Bush administration is handling North Korea's nuclear brinkmanship just right. It reacts without histrionics, demands action by the world community, applies a widening circle of economic sanctions, strengthens missile defenses, and works with allies to present a united front that promises Pyongyang increasing pain.

Last year Kim Jong-il, the oddball ruler of North Korea, refused to return to the six-party disarmament talks, demanding the U.S. stop blocking his illicit financial transactions. When his demand was ignored, he launched seven missiles into the Sea of Japan. That got no results, so now he apparently has exploded a nuclear weapon. Already there are calls to meet Kim's demand for bilateral negotiations. But for years the State Department negotiated directly with North Korea and provided substantial concessions, including food, fuel and construction of nuclear reactors. All the while, the North violated the agreement by secretly developing nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

In contrast, President Bush's application of financial sanctions under the Patriot Act is getting results. Banks around the world, including in China, are restricting North Korea's questionable money transfers. And this apparently is cutting into Mr. Kim's personal slush fund.

Most important is the alliance between the U.S., Japan, South Korea, and China in confronting North Korea in what is called a "common and broad approach." After Mr. Kim ignored Beijing's advice and launched missiles, China took the unprecedented step of voting for a U.N. resolution condemning North Korea and imposing limited sanctions. In a major success for President Bush's policy of dealing with Pyongyang only through six-party talks, China finally seems to be trying to restrain Mr. Kim.

Japan is playing an important role. Its new prime minister, Shinzo Abe, is a defense hawk who made his reputation by negotiating the release of Japanese kidnapped by North Korea and then reneging on the agreement by refusing Mr. Kim's demand to return them to the North. It made Mr. Abe a hero in Japan.

As chief Cabinet secretary for Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, Mr. Abe helped shape Japan's historic actions in sending troops to Iraq, applying sanctions on North Korea, upgrading Japan's missile defenses, and strengthening ties with the United States. As prime minister, he promises more of the same, including efforts to revise Japan's pacifist constitution and create a Defense Ministry.

Japan can be expected to increase sanctions on North Korea, possibly by stopping cash remittances to the North and banning its ships from Japanese ports. Mr. Abe already has suggested Japan should be prepared to consider a pre-emptive attack on North Korea, if necessary.

While South Korea has been run in recent years by governments determined to buy off North Korea, the North's explosion of a nuclear weapon is too much even for appeasement-minded President Roh Moo-hyun, who is cooperating in the united front against the North.

The united front was in evidence at the U.N. last week when the Security Council, led by Japan, unanimously warned North Korea not to conduct a test. Even the Russian ambassador supported and praised the U.N. warning. Now the question is whether the U.N. will adopt serious sanctions.

North Korea's nuclear test following its multiple missile launch makes more urgent than ever the deployment of missile defenses and shows the folly of those who want to delay deployment of defenses while conducting interminable flight tests.

Missile defense opponents call for multiple tests against decoys before deploying any defenses. But since existing missile defenses are quite effective against the kind of decoys North Korea may have, if any, it is important to get the best defenses available into the field quickly and then improve them.

The administration should accelerate deployment of additional ground-based interceptors in Alaska and California, and PAC-3 interceptors to Japan and South Korea, and get ship-based interceptors on U.S. and Japanese Aegis destroyers in the Pacific and Sea of Japan.

The combination of a united front against Pyongyang and the strengthening of missile defenses around the Pacific can keep North Korea isolated while the united front increases sanctions to push the regime toward collapse. The U.S. approach is working. It is important to stay the course and ignore those who call for direct negotiations and other concessions.

James Hackett is a contributing writer to The Washington Times and is based in Carlsbad, Calif.

<http://www.washtimes.com/commentary/20061010-090340-8190r.htm>

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New York Times

October 11, 2006

Solving The Korean Stalemate, One Step At A Time

By Jimmy Carter

ATLANTA -- In 1994 the North Koreans expelled inspectors of the International Atomic Energy Agency and were threatening to process spent nuclear fuel into plutonium, giving them the ability to produce nuclear weapons.

With the risk of war on the Korean Peninsula, there was a consensus that the forces of South Korea and the United States could overwhelmingly defeat North Korea. But it was also known that North Korea could quickly launch more than 20,000 shells and missiles into nearby Seoul. The American commander in South Korea, Gen. Gary Luck, estimated that total casualties would far exceed those of the Korean War.

Responding to an invitation from President Kim Il-sung of North Korea, and with the approval of President Bill Clinton, I went to Pyongyang and negotiated an agreement under which North Korea would cease its nuclear program at Yongbyon and permit inspectors from the atomic agency to return to the site to assure that the spent fuel was not reprocessed. It was also agreed that direct talks would be held between the two Koreas.

The spent fuel (estimated to be adequate for a half-dozen bombs) continued to be monitored, and extensive bilateral discussions were held. The United States assured the North Koreans that there would be no military threat to them, that it would supply fuel oil to replace the lost nuclear power and that it would help build two modern atomic power plants, with their fuel rods and operation to be monitored by international inspectors. The summit talks resulted in South Korean President Kim Dae-jung earning the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize for his successful efforts to ease tensions on the peninsula.

But beginning in 2002, the United States branded North Korea as part of an axis of evil, threatened military action, ended the shipments of fuel oil and the construction of nuclear power plants and refused to consider further bilateral talks. In their discussions with me at this time, North Korean spokesmen seemed convinced that the American positions posed a serious danger to their country and to its political regime.

Responding in its ill-advised but predictable way, Pyongyang withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, expelled atomic energy agency inspectors, resumed processing fuel rods and began developing nuclear explosive devices.

Six-nation talks finally concluded in an agreement last September that called for North Korea to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs and for the United States and North Korea to respect each other's sovereignty, exist peacefully together and take steps to normalize relations. Each side subsequently claimed that the other had violated the agreement. The United States imposed severe financial sanctions and Pyongyang adopted the deeply troubling nuclear option.

The current military situation is similar but worse than it was a decade ago: we can still destroy North Korea's army, but if we do it is likely to result in many more than a million South Korean and American casualties.

If and when it is confirmed that the recent explosion in North Korea was nuclear, the international community will once again be faced with difficult choices.

One option, the most likely one, is to try to force Pyongyang's leaders to abandon their nuclear program with military threats and a further tightening of the embargoes, increasing the suffering of its already starving people.

Two important facts must be faced: Kim Jong-il and his military leaders have proven themselves almost impervious

to outside pressure, and both China and South Korea have shown that they are reluctant to destabilize the regime. This approach is also more likely to stimulate further nuclear weapons activity.

The other option is to make an effort to put into effect the September denuclearization agreement, which the North Koreans still maintain is feasible. The simple framework for a step-by-step agreement exists, with the United States giving a firm and direct statement of no hostile intent, and moving toward normal relations if North Korea forgoes any further nuclear weapons program and remains at peace with its neighbors. Each element would have to be confirmed by mutual actions combined with unimpeded international inspections.

Although a small nuclear test is a far cry from even a crude deliverable bomb, this second option has become even more difficult now, but it is unlikely that the North Koreans will back down unless the United States meets this basic demand. Washington's pledge of no direct talks could be finessed through secret discussions with a trusted emissary like former Secretary of State Jim Baker, who earlier this week said, "It's not appeasement to talk to your enemies." What must be avoided is to leave a beleaguered nuclear nation convinced that it is permanently excluded from the international community, its existence threatened, its people suffering horrible deprivation and its hard-liners in total control of military and political policy.

Jimmy Carter, the 39th president, is the founder of the Carter Center and the winner of the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/11/opinion/11carter.html>

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Washington Times

October 12, 2006

Pg. 1

Intelligence Failure Cited In Korean Crisis

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Recent U.S. intelligence analyses of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs were flawed and the lack of clarity on the issue hampered U.S. diplomatic efforts to avert the underground blast detected Sunday, according to Bush administration officials.

Some recent secret reports stated that Pyongyang did not have nuclear arms and until recently was bluffing about plans for a test, according to officials who have read the classified assessments.

The analyses in question included a National Intelligence Estimate a consensus report of all U.S. spy agencies produced several months ago and at least two other classified reports on North Korea produced by senior officials within the office of the Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte.

The officials said there were as many as 10 failures related to intelligence reporting on North Korean missile tests and the suspected nuclear test that harmed administration efforts to deal with the issue.

According to officials familiar with the reports, the failures included judgments that cast doubt about whether North Korea's nuclear program posed an immediate threat, whether North Korea could produce a militarily useful nuclear bomb, whether North Korea was capable of conducting an underground nuclear test and whether Pyongyang was bluffing by claiming it could carry one out.

The failures would be the latest in a string suffered by U.S. intelligence in recent years, as described in a series of government and nongovernment reports. Past stumbles have included missing chances to detect or stop the September 11 attacks, faulty assessments of Saddam Hussein's weapons programs, the failure to predict the 1998 round of nuclear tests by India and Pakistan, and overly optimistic predictions of the Iraqi reaction to a U.S. invasion.

Intelligence officials are hoping President Bush will make a comment supporting U.S. intelligence agencies' performance on North Korea, something he has not done to date.

Another analytical shortcoming involved the failure to predict that North Korea would fire its July 4 salvo of seven missiles. One report said North Korea would test a single long-range Taepodong-2 and also did not predict that Pyongyang would fire the missile, which failed 42 seconds into flight, toward an area of the Pacific near Hawaii, the officials said.

The analyses also predicted that China would agree to impose tough U.S. sanctions on North Korea's arms exports and imports, something that has not occurred. However, the lack of clarity about the issue was one reason both Mr. Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice did not make stronger appeals to officials in China to press North Korea not to conduct the test, the officials said.

"It was an intelligence failure," said one administration official close to the issue.

Additionally, the weak assessments undermined the recent visit to China by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who did not have good enough intelligence to persuade Mr. Hu that a test was imminent and that he should use his

government's influence on North Korea to stop it. Aides to Mr. Abe are said by U.S. officials to be upset that they could not help Mr. Abe better understand the nuclear test plans before the meetings. China in 2003 temporarily cut off oil shipments to North Korea, an action Beijing has refused to use again either to prevent the missile tests or the nuclear test.

Carl Kropf, a spokesman for Mr. Negroponte, dismissed as false claims by officials who say U.S. intelligence analysis on North Korea was flawed. "That is absolutely wrong, that we were not tracking this issue for some period of time," he said.

Rep. Peter Hoekstra, Michigan Republican and chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said he was not surprised when the nuclear test was carried out, based on his access to intelligence reports.

Mr. Hoekstra said his panel would conduct a review of intelligence analyses before North Korea's recent reported weapons test, but he noted that intelligence analysts have difficulty in making clear predications about the future, and that past failures, such as those on Iraq's weapons programs, affected current reporting.

"I think the community is a little bit gun shy," Mr. Hoekstra said. "They're being held to a strict standard and as a result are going to caveat everything in the aftermath of Iraq."

According to officials familiar with the reports, the weak analysis on North Korea is being blamed on Thomas Fingar, the most senior U.S. intelligence analyst within the office of the Director of National Intelligence.

Mr. Fingar, now deputy Director of National Intelligence for analysis, was the lone dissenter in a 2002 national intelligence assessment that stated Iraq had large stockpiles of chemical weapons and carried over the skeptical viewpoint to North Korea's arms programs.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061012-124127-8808r.htm>

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New York Times

October 12, 2006

For Bush, Many Questions On Iraq And North Korea

By Sheryl Gay Stolberg

WASHINGTON, Oct. 11 — President Bush said Wednesday that he would not use force against North Korea because "diplomacy hasn't run its course," but acknowledged that many Americans wonder why he invaded Iraq but has not taken military action to head off North Korea's race for a bomb.

"I'm asked questions around the country, 'Just go ahead and use the military,' " Mr. Bush said at a morning news conference in the Rose Garden, his first extended question-and-answer session with reporters in the days since North Korea announced it had detonated a nuclear device. "And my answer is that I believe the commander in chief must try all diplomatic measures before we commit our military."

Then, without prompting, the president asked an obvious next question.

"I'll ask myself a follow-up," Mr. Bush said. "If that's the case, why did you use military action in Iraq? And the reason why is because we tried the diplomacy."

Mr. Bush's unusual exchange with himself came during an hourlong news conference dominated by questions about North Korea and Iraq. Democrats have criticized him for rushing into a war with Iraq, which turned out not to have unconventional weapons, while not setting limits on North Korea, which declared this week that it had conducted its first nuclear test.

That the president himself raised and rejected this critique appears to reflect concern among Mr. Bush's advisers that North Korea could be a political liability for Republicans, one that the president needed to confront directly with voters.

Mr. Bush's stance was to reassert that the United States would not tolerate a nuclear-armed North Korea, but that the way to shut down its nuclear programs was through multilateral diplomacy, not one-on-one talks or military action. Intelligence officials have not yet determined the exact size of the device that North Korea tested, or explained why it appeared to have been fairly small, less than a kiloton. Democrats and Republicans have been arguing over who was responsible for the buildup in the North. Madeleine K. Albright, a secretary of state for former President Bill Clinton, issued a statement on Wednesday defending his administration and striking back at Mr. Bush.

"During the two terms of the Clinton administration, there were no nuclear weapons tests by North Korea, no new plutonium production, and no new nuclear weapons developed in Pyongyang," Ms. Albright's statement said.

"Through our policy of constructive engagement, the world was safer. President Bush chose a different path, and the results are evident for all to see."

Despite the North's test, Mr. Bush insisted Wednesday that his diplomatic approach was the best course and that he would continue to seek support for sanctions from other nations. He resisted calls for direct negotiations with North Korea of the sort the Clinton administration had engaged in, saying "the strategy did not work."

"North Korea has been trying to acquire bombs and weapons for a long period of time," Mr. Bush said, "long before I came into office."

On Iraq, Mr. Bush seemed to push back against recent remarks by James A. Baker III, the former secretary of state who is the Republican chairman of a bipartisan panel reassessing Iraq strategy. On Sunday, Mr. Baker suggested that his panel's report would depart from Mr. Bush's repeated calls to "stay the course."

But Mr. Bush signaled that he would not be pressed into a premature withdrawal.

"Stay the course means keep doing what you're doing," he said. "My attitude is, don't do what you're doing if it's not working — change. Stay the course also means, don't leave before the job is done. We're going to get the job done in Iraq."

On North Korea, Mr. Bush was asked if he regretted his decision not to take action — military or otherwise — to destroy fuel supplies in 2003, when the North threw out international weapons inspectors, withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and said it would turn its spent nuclear fuel into weapons. At that time, the fuel was all briefly in one known location.

"I used that moment to continue my desire to convince others to become equity partners in the Korean issue," Mr. Bush said, referring to the so-called six-party talks aimed at persuading the North to give up its nuclear capacity. He added, "I obviously look at all options all the time, and I felt like the best way to solve this problem would be through a diplomacy effort."

Experts believe the nuclear buildup in the North dates back to the early 1990's, when the first President Bush was in office. Under an agreement Mr. Clinton struck in 1994, North Korea agreed to freeze its production of plutonium in return for energy aid. North Korea abided by the freeze, but starting around 1997, it took steps on a second, secret nuclear program.

In 2002, after South Korean and American intelligence agencies found conclusive evidence of that program, the Bush administration confronted the North with the evidence that it had cheated while Mr. Clinton was still in office. That led to the six-nation talks, involving the United States, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China and Russia.

"The Clinton administration was prepared to accept an imperfect agreement in the interest of achieving limits," said Gary S. Samore, a North Korea expert who helped negotiate the original 1994 agreement. "The Bush administration is not prepared to accept an imperfect agreement, and the result is that we have no limits."

But Mr. Bush on Wednesday reiterated his stance that it was "unacceptable" for North Korea to have nuclear weapons. Asked if he was "ready to live with a nuclear North Korea," Mr. Bush gave a one-word answer: "No."

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/12/washington/12prexy.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Washington Post

October 12, 2006

Pg. 22

N. Korea's No. 2 Official Warns Of Further Tests

By Anthony Faiola, Washington Post Foreign Service

SEOUL, Oct. 11 -- North Korea's second most powerful political figure, Kim Yong Nam, indicated Wednesday that the communist state would carry out further nuclear tests if the United States did not change what he called its "hostile attitude."

In an interview with Japan's Kyodo news service in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, Kim also dismissed the impact that any economic sanctions imposed by the U.N. Security Council would have on his impoverished country. "Even as economic sanctions increase by day, our economy in general has entered a rising trend," he was quoted as saying.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, declaring that his country is "in gravest danger," moved Wednesday to ban imports from North Korea and stop North Korean ships and citizens from coming to Japan.

Kim's remarks were the first public comment from a high-ranking North Korean official since the secretive government announced a nuclear test on Monday. He added that North Korea would refuse to return to stalled six-party talks aimed at its nuclear disarmament unless the United States dropped sanctions imposed in September 2005 that target North Korea's alleged counterfeiting and other illegal businesses.

The Foreign Ministry, meanwhile, said North Korea would consider increased U.S. pressure "a declaration of a war."

Analysts have said the explosion detected in North Korea's barren northeast on Monday was small enough to suggest that the test partially failed or was not in fact nuclear. Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso told a parliamentary panel that Japan had unconfirmed information that another test might be coming.

"The issue of future nuclear tests is linked to U.S. policy toward our country," Kim told Kyodo on Wednesday. "If the United States continues to take a hostile attitude and apply pressure on us in various forms, we will have no choice but to take physical steps to deal with that."

As president of the presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, North Korea's one-party parliament, Kim is considered second in influence only to the country's absolute ruler, Kim Jong Il.

Across northeast Asia, the nuclear issue continued to keep people on edge, particularly after seismic activity on Wednesday was initially reported as a possible second nuclear test. It was later found to have been generated by an earthquake in northern Japan.

Japan has joined the United States in leading the call for more pressure on Pyongyang. Sanctions that were approved by Japan's national security council are on track to be formally adopted by the cabinet on Friday, and would likely precede any action by the U.N. Security Council.

In September, Japan began limiting money transfers from 16 entities suspected of having ties with North Korea's nuclear and weapons development programs. The scope of those sanctions is expected to be widened to include remittances to North Korea from Japan that analysts say total as much as \$900 million a year.

"Japan will be most affected security-wise by this North Korean issue," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki told reporters in Tokyo. "We decided on this sanction based on Japan's independent thinking and judgment, taking into consideration the significance" of the professed nuclear test.

Tokyo has taken steps in recent years to curb financial dealings with Pyongyang over various disputes. Total trade of about \$180 million in 2005 was about half the figure in 2002, according to Japan's Finance Ministry.

Japanese leaders dismissed fears that their country might now engage in a nuclear arms race. That continues to be politically untenable in Japan, given World War II memories of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. "There will be no change in our nonnuclear arms principles," Abe told reporters in Tokyo. "We want to seek a solution through peaceful and diplomatic means."

In South Korea, President Roh Moo Hyun -- long counted among the North's most staunch defenders -- continued to distance himself from the Pyongyang government. "North Korea says the reason it is pursuing nuclear [weapons] is for its security, but the security threat North Korea speaks of either does not exist in reality, or is very exaggerated," the semiofficial Yonhap news agency quoted him as saying.

The South Korean government announced late Wednesday that it would consider joining the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative, launched in 2003 and aimed at stopping ships at sea suspected of smuggling weapons of mass destruction. North Korea has been considered a main target of the initiative.

Defense Minister Yoon Kwang Ung told parliament that Seoul might enlarge its conventional arsenal if North Korea is ultimately proved to have nuclear weapons.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/11/AR2006101100346.html>

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USA Today
October 12, 2006
Pg. 10

Analysts Predict 'Beginning Of The End' In N. Korea

By Paul Wiseman and Park Juyeon, USA Today

SEOUL — North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il gambled when he announced his regime had gone nuclear this week, and he is likely to lose in the long run, say analysts who watch the Stalinist state.

"It is the beginning of the end of the North Korean political system," predicts Park Young Ho, a senior research fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification, a think tank in Seoul.

"He has shortened the life of his regime," agrees Paik Tae Woo, a former South Korean diplomat who is now a visiting professor of diplomacy at Taiwan's National Chengchi University.

Their reasoning: The United Nations will respond to reports that North Korea tested a nuclear device Monday with economic sanctions that could collapse a rickety economy and unleash widespread unrest. Sanctions already are being imposed. Japan on Tuesday banned all North Korean imports and prohibited North Korean ships from docking at its ports.

The World Food Program (WFP) warned Tuesday that it might have to suspend food aid to North Korea in January because donations have fallen short: The U.N. food relief agency has collected only 10% of the \$102 million it hoped to raise to feed 1.9 million North Koreans over the next two years, says Christiane Berthiaume, a WFP spokeswoman. And that was before the reports of a nuclear test.

"Having nuclear weapons weakens Kim Jong Il's status," says Lee Kwang Baek, a researcher with the activist group Network for North Korean Democracy and Human Rights. "They don't have enough internal capability to survive harsh sanctions and further international isolation."

Dong Yong Seung, head of North Korea research at the Samsung Economic Research Institute in Seoul, sees three long-term scenarios: North Korea descends into chaos; is forced into reunification with South Korea; or becomes a vassal state, subservient to China, with or without Kim Jong Il still in charge.

Kim Jong Il has defied the doubters before. He managed to consolidate power after the 1994 death of his father, dictator Kim Il Sung, a near-deity in North Korea. The younger Kim also maintained control after famine killed more than 2 million North Koreans in the mid-1990s, according to the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. What's more, the North Korean people have a high tolerance for economic and political deprivation, having survived food shortages, economic sanctions and brutal repression. "They are used to enduring difficulty," Paik says. "Even this time, they can endure for a certain period of time."

While Kim Jong Il probably boosted his prestige with ordinary North Koreans, and certainly with North Korea's political and military leaders, with his bid to join the world's exclusive club of nuclear powers, the euphoria won't last long — perhaps three months, predicts Cheong Seong Chang, a North Korea watcher at the Sejong Institute, a think tank outside Seoul.

"The North Koreans will be satisfied for a while even though they are hungry," Cheong says. "This winter will determine the timing. The hunger and the cold will bring out internal conflicts." The hardship will be worst in impoverished, mountainous Ham Kyeong Province, along North Korea's northern border with China, likely adding to a flood of refugees fleeing the country in search of work, he says.

During past crises, North Korea has been able to convince its people their suffering was caused by U.S. imperialism. North Koreans, however, have become better informed. Hundreds of thousands have crossed the border to work in China, where they can trade information with other refugees and get news from TV and the Internet. Others inside North Korea have gleaned outside information using computers and cellphones.

"This time, many ordinary North Koreans have been exposed to outside information," Park says.

"Ordinary people do not believe the Korean Workers' Party's propaganda," Paik says. "But they are required to shut their mouths."

North Korea is especially vulnerable because it is so dependent on the goodwill of China and South Korea: Together, they account for about 70% of North Korean trade, says Dong, of the Samsung research institute. Both have grown weary of Kim Jong Il's nuclear antics, and both issued uncharacteristically harsh denunciations of the reported North Korean nuclear test.

South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun this week warned that South Korea is rethinking its "Sunshine Policy" of no-strings-attached aid to Pyongyang. And "Kim Jong Il has turned out to be a real headache to China," says Park, of the Unification Institute. "The Chinese may start thinking of alternatives."

Contributing: Wire reports

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-10-11-nkorea-analysis_x.htm

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Washington Post

October 12, 2006

Pg. 27

The Squeeze On North Korea

By Jim Hoagland

North Korea has, in its own inimitable fashion, paid tribute to a little-noticed U.S. push to get the world's bankers to isolate regimes that promote nuclear proliferation and terrorism. Who else would claim to have conducted a nuclear weapons test and then threaten more blasts to get their way in a \$24 million banking dispute?

Don't they have any good lawyers in Pyongyang?

North Korea's efforts to blame its crossing of the nuclear-testing threshold on U.S. "economic hostility" would be laughable if the regime weren't led by world-class paranoids and fantasists capable of believing their own odious propaganda. Americans do not have to believe it, however.

Such a regime may be beyond reasoning with or, even worse, deterring in a conventional sense, as the Bush administration seems to believe.

But Pyongyang's threats -- if not its excuses -- must be taken seriously and met with new forms of containment and pressure. The same is true of Iran, the other major target of the Treasury Department's efforts "to isolate bad actors from the global financial system" by calling attention to their use of banks for rogue operations.

That description comes from Stuart Levey, Treasury undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence. I happened to call on him yesterday a few hours after Pyongyang had threatened more nuclear and verbal blasts if the United States continued its "sanctions" policy.

"If the objective was to put pressure on North Korea, well, we succeeded," said Levey, who has joined Deputy Treasury Secretary Robert Kimmitt in traveling the globe to persuade other governments to examine and, where appropriate, cut financial links to the two remaining members of President Bush's "axis of evil."

But the purpose of this effective new effort at using soft power as pressure is much broader. According to Levey, Treasury is targeting people who are eminently deterrable: "People who are in business are very concerned about their reputations and do not want to get involved in illicit activity that is under scrutiny. They will make the decisions about whether they continue doing business or not. We don't make the decision for them."

So Levey disputes North Korea's characterization of U.S. policy as being one of politically driven "sanctions." Treasury's efforts are targeted at specific illicit transactions, such as the counterfeiting of U.S. currency; the transfer of funds involved in the smuggling of drugs, arms or even nuclear-weapons components; and the financing of terrorist operations.

"The United States effectively lifted sanctions against North Korea in 2000, and the Bush administration has not reimposed them," Levey asserted. "What we are doing is calling attention to the risks involved in being involved in these transactions."

The first use of the heavy U.S. financial hammer was against the Macao-based Banco Delta Asia, which Treasury identified last year as a "primary money-laundering concern" for Pyongyang. The bank, which operates under the control of the Chinese government, froze an estimated \$24 million in North Korean assets rather than risk losing U.S. and other business. Pyongyang is still boiling over this perceived affront, as its angry statements this week indicated.

"It is important to look beyond this week's developments," Levey said, after asking rhetorically if he now needs a security detail. "Look at the receptivity of the world's finance ministers to accepting that they have a major role to play in the area of global security and intelligence. That is the future."

However much its self-imposed isolation might seem to protect it from them, North Korea clearly takes these financial pressures seriously. So must Iran. Squeezing the regime financially is probably the only hope (however forlorn it may turn out to be) of keeping Tehran from going nuclear in a few years.

Iran was forced to announce in August that its oil production will soon begin to decline because of a lack of new investment in the oil industry and the difficulty of getting new technology from abroad for its aging fields.

Access to foreign capital and advanced equipment will not have been helped by the U.S. decision last month to exclude Bank Saderat, one of Iran's largest state-owned banks, from buying or selling dollars and other financial instruments from U.S. banks. This is in response to Bank Saderat's role in transferring millions of dollars to terrorist groups.

In the early days of the Soviet Union, Lenin predicted that capitalists would eagerly sell him the rope he would use to hang them. He lost the bet when Moscow proved unable to pay for ruling an empire. Treasury's sophisticated efforts to deny gangsters in North Korea and Iran access to global capital should not be abandoned because of the nuclear bluster from Pyongyang and Tehran.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/11/AR2006101101599.html>

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New York Times
October 12, 2006

Kim Jong-Il's Suicide Watch

By B. R. Myers

Seoul, South Korea -- Hours after Monday's nuclear test, President Bush issued a stern warning to North Korea — but only against the passing of nuclear technology to other states or non-state entities. The president's declaration thus reflected a confident consensus in Washington that while Kim Jong-il may try selling his nukes, he would never dream of using them himself. Why not? The explanation was given by a former national security adviser, Donald Gregg, on Monday: "Don't panic. Kim Jong-il's objective is survival ... not suicide."

The same soothing logic could be applied to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, but of course it won't be. These long-term diagnoses of Mr. Kim's psyche are a roundabout way of saying that because he is not a fundamentalist Muslim, he is unlikely to do anything really crazy.

This sort of cultural profiling, however, can get us into real danger. Japan's emperor during World War II, Hirohito, was neither religious nor suicidal, and he led his nation into a war that no rational leader could have hoped to win.

The point is relevant, because although journalists persist in calling North Korea a Stalinist state, its worldview is far closer to that of fascist Japan.

Like the Japanese in the 1930's, the North Koreans trace the origins of their race back thousands of years to a single progenitor, and claim that this pure bloodline makes them uniquely virtuous. The country's mass games — government-choreographed spectacles with a cast of more than 100,000 — are often mistaken by foreign journalists as exercises in Stalinism. They are in fact celebrations of ethnic homogeneity. "No masses in the world," the state-run Cheollima magazine reminded readers in 2005, "are purer and more upright than our masses."

In state propaganda, Kim Jong-il is often linked, as Hirohito once was, to images of white horses, snow-capped mountain peaks and other symbols of racial purity. South Korea, on the other hand, is regarded as contaminated by too close contact with other races. At a recent meeting between generals from both Koreas, the North delegation's leader condemned the South for allowing racial intermarriage. "Not a single drop of ink," he intoned, "must be allowed to fall into the Han River."

Naturally enough, the North Koreans' race theory, like that of the Japanese fascists, actuates a blithe indifference to international law. A uniquely virtuous people has no reason to obey its moral inferiors, be they allies or enemies. China has now learned that despite decades of military and economic assistance it can draw on no residue of good will in dealing with Pyongyang.

Neither can the South Koreans, whom the North Koreans will revile for their ethnic treason no matter how much cash they pump northward. This utter imperviousness to gestures of friendship and conciliation bears obvious implications for the prospect of normal relations between North Korea and America.

The northern regime has so far restricted its racial propaganda to the home audience, because it wants the world to go on misperceiving it as a Stalinist state. This way we continue to pin our hopes on the kind of trust-building dialogue that worked so well with Communists in the 1980's — and failed so disastrously with the pure-race crowd a half-century earlier.

While the North Koreans could kill a lot of people, they do not pose as great a threat to world security as imperial Japan did. Never have they shown any interest in forging an empire. All the same, the irrationality of their worldview is such that we should, at the very least, stop assuming that they would never use their own weaponry. While Kim may not be suicidal himself, he shares Hirohito's penchant for encouraging this quality in his people: "Defense until Death" is an increasingly popular slogan. In 2003 a colorful poster was disseminated to the foreign press showing a fat missile in flight with a suicide-readiness slogan on it: "Yankee, take a good hard look." That isn't bad advice.

B. R. Myers, an associate professor of North Korean studies at Korea University, is the author of "Han Sorya and North Korean Literature."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/12/opinion/12myers.html>

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Los Angeles Times
World News

Blind Loyalty Based on Mythical Self-Reliance

North Koreans may have been trained to be tough, but the socialist nation has always depended on the aid of China and others.

By Mark Magnier, Times Staff Writer

October 12, 2006

BEIJING — Faced with a starving population, an economy that is a shambles and longtime Communist allies tripping over themselves to embrace free-market capitalism, North Korea's leadership long ago turned weakness into strength by steeling its population for permanent war.

The years of spadework have paid off, experts say. With tighter restrictions on oil, food and other goods a near-certainty after Monday's announced nuclear test, Pyongyang seems confident that its long-suffering people — battered by famine, floods and economic mismanagement — will bow their heads and continue to suffer in silence. This is an important surety in the regime's decision to detonate an apparent nuclear device, a major gamble.

Many of the intimidation tactics employed in North Korea to keep its population in line are common to totalitarian regimes elsewhere. But North Korea has taken them to the extreme, analysts say, maintaining a tighter lid on its society than East Germany did in its darkest days.

For decades, North Korea has subjected its population to a propaganda assault centered around the concept of *juche*, roughly translated as "self-reliance." In recent years, scholars say, the term has also come to connote unquestioned trust in the "living god" leadership of national founder Kim Il Sung and his son, current ruler Kim Jong Il.

This link between sacrifice, national glory and the neardivine leadership is evident in the smallest details. During a

tour of Pyongyang's Tower of the Juche Idea last year, guide Park Gyong Nam explained that the 560-foot-high monument was built in 1982, the year of the 70th birthday of Kim Il Sung, using more than 25,000 granite blocks — one for every day of Kim's life, he said.

The truth is that socialist North Korea has never been self-reliant, depending since its formation on the Soviet Union, then China and the United Nations and other international donors to feed itself. But the myth is part of the glue that binds North Koreans to the regime.

"This has a huge impact on people's ability to withstand hardship," said Cui Yingjiu, honorary director of Peking University's Institute for Korean Culture Studies. "For most of the past 100 years, North Koreans haven't had enough to eat or wear. This gives them enormous tolerance for hardship," added Cui, who attended university with Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in the early 1960s.

The idea that North Korea has joined the club of seven nations that are declared nuclear powers is also a huge source of honor and confidence for the average North Korean.

"If I were still in North Korea, like ordinary citizens, I would be proud to hear that the nation succeeded in conducting a nuclear test," said Seo Young-seok, 26, a university student living in South Korea who defected in 1999 with his mother and two older sisters. "This is by far a totally different dimension than succeeding at a missile test."

North Korea has no opinion polls, making it difficult to gauge how deeply North Koreans believe their government's propaganda. But a recent project involving North Korean refugees in China provides a clue.

Interviews with 1,300 North Korean expatriates, many of whom had been living in China for months or even years, found nearly 20% still believed North Korea was better off than South Korea, a key claim of the regime. In reality, North Korea's economy is less than one-thirtieth the size of its southern cousin's.

"This gives you some sense of the degree of the socialization in place," said Marcus Noland, a senior fellow with Washington's Institute for International Economics, who was involved in the study. "People may be angry, and there's lots of anecdotal evidence to suggest they are, but that doesn't translate into political action."

Nor would the disaffected have much internal or external support, even if they dared speak out. The state's iron grip on society means there is no domestic institution that might serve as a focal point akin to the role played by the Solidarity labor movement in Poland, the Catholic Church in the Philippines or American-supported nongovernmental assistance organizations in Ukraine, analysts say.

The North's neighbors China and South Korea hardly welcome use of their territory as a base for anti-regime activities that might ultimately give voice to the suffering of ordinary citizens. Far from working against the North, both neighbors have helped prop up the regime, fearful of the refugees and social problems that would flood their countries if Kim fell.

Both dispense unmonitored food aid they know goes mostly to the military rather than ordinary people, fearful of the cost of an implosion. China arrests and harasses North Korean refugees, sending many back. And while in theory any North Korean is entitled to South Korean citizenship, Seoul sets up huge hurdles to control the numbers and has shut down anti-North radio stations after Pyongyang complained.

Adding to North Korea's isolation are U.S. financial sanctions already in place designed to punish Pyongyang for weapons proliferation and suspected money laundering and counterfeiting. These have been surprisingly effective, analysts say, not so much because of the relatively small amount of money frozen at Macao's Banco Delta Asia, much of which is reportedly linked to the North's military, but because of the signal it has sent to banks worldwide.

"It's been a huge shot across the bow for any bank doing business with North Korea," said Stephan Haggard, director of the Korea-Pacific Program at UC San Diego. "With the sanctions already in place starting to have an effect and talk of further tightening, the North Korean economy is on an incredibly bad path."

Analysts speak of two economic classes in North Korea, the relatively well-off military and party elite and Pyongyang residents, and ordinary citizens elsewhere. Widening the wealth gap further, elites have more access to black-market luxury goods than 15 years ago now that the government's distribution system has started to break down.

The North's economy is around \$23.5 billion, or about half of Microsoft's annual sales, ranking it among the poorest nations in the world.

Feelings of international isolation tend to bolster support for a nation's leadership, say Chinese who lived through their country's self-reliance movement, known as *zili gengsheng*, after falling out with the Soviet Union in the 1960s.

Xia Liping, head of strategic research at the Shanghai Institute for International Studies, and a student and soldier in Fujian province in southern China at the time, recalls how it helped unify people in the face of hostile relations with both Moscow and Washington.

"It's the most important way to have people forget their suffering," he said.

Self-reliance is particularly attractive for a small, insecure northern-latitude country with just 22 million people and

giants Russia and China sitting to its north.

"If you listen to North Korean history, China didn't even have a role in the Korean War," said Banning Garrett, Asia programs director at the Atlantic Council in Washington. "Now of course they're making self-reliance a reality. They've made everyone angry and will be left to eat dirt all by themselves. They're in deep kimchi."

Bolstering the propaganda is the fact that the regime is not afraid to use force against the slightest sign of dissent. North Korean refugees detail the existence of detention camps with an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 inmates subject to torture, starvation, rape, killing and forced labor, according to the U.S. Committee for Human Rights in North Korea, an independent civic group. Human Rights Watch in its annual report ranks the North among the world's most repressive regimes.

Informants are numerous and every five families "share" one official responsible for ensuring adherence to ruling party ideology.

Propaganda efforts are overseen nationally by the Propaganda and Agitation Department of the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party. This department is headed by Central Committee Secretary Kim Gi Nam, who has close ties to Kim Jong Il.

Officially, everyone in the nation spends two hours a day in political classes, and all state enterprises and offices are required to devote Saturdays to political education, according to the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, Calif. There are also special courses every year for leading cadres at the Kim Il Sung Party School. Students spend two months each summer in camps devoted to military training.

Schools spend most of their time on the teachings of the two Kims, their biographies, and ruling party history. Feature movies and documentaries about the two leaders make up 20% of the broadcasting time on television and radio.

"If you inculcate *juche* and other beliefs over decades, you start to have a self-fulfilling prophecy," said Andrew O'Neil, a senior lecturer in international studies at Australia's Flinders University. "From what you hear, a lot of people really believe the U.S. is going to invade tomorrow and their best defense is nuclear weapons."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-koreans12oct12,0,854646.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

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New York Times
October 13, 2006

U.S. Softens North Korea Sanctions Proposal After Objections From China and Russia

By Warren Hoge

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 12 — The American push to win Security Council backing for tough, swift sanctions against North Korea appeared to be set back by China and Russia on Thursday, in an echo of the obstacles the United States faces in a similar push to punish Iran.

The United States circulated a softened draft resolution to the Security Council in response to North Korea's assertion that it conducted a nuclear test on Monday. The United States pressed for a vote by Friday, but China and Russia immediately signaled their opposition to critical parts of the measure and said they needed more time. On Thursday night, a new draft resolution was circulated, and Reuters quoted the Chinese and Russian ambassadors calling the revisions improvements.

China had sent an emissary to the White House, Tang Jiaxuan, who met with President Bush during the day and appeared to be walking a line between punishing North Korea and preventing the United States from taking measures that would seriously threaten the government, according to the deputy national security adviser, J. D. Crouch.

After the first new draft was circulated Thursday, a senior Bush administration official said Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was considering a trip to Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo as early as next week to negotiate punitive steps over and above those that might be acceptable to the Security Council.

That draft dropped earlier Japanese amendments prohibiting North Korean ships from entering any port and North Korean aircraft from taking off or landing in any country. Japan is imposing its own new sanctions, including a ban on North Korean ships in Japanese waters.

The draft still cited Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which makes sanctions mandatory and suggests the possibility of military enforcement. China and Russia have consistently opposed Chapter VII enforcement for North Korea in the past.

The version circulated Thursday night retains stringent economic and weapons sanctions, but makes clear that the measures do not include military force, Reuters and The Associated Press reported.

The United States was able to win a unanimous Security Council resolution condemning North Korea's missile launchings last July only by dropping the reference to Chapter VII, but John R. Bolton, the American ambassador, said he would resist that step this time.

"In light of the fact that North Korea has claimed a test of a nuclear device, we need stronger language," he said. The latest draft drops the idea of a weapons embargo and keeps a provision to allow nations to inspect cargo to and from North Korea. The provision has aroused particular objections from China, which is wary of such interdiction moves being conducted off its coasts. American officials, while acknowledging how difficult it will be to win Security Council backing for the tough sanctions they prefer, insist that even a weaker resolution would send a strong signal of international condemnation.

The draft still would require all countries to prevent the sale or transfer of arms, luxury goods and material related to North Korea's nuclear, ballistic missile and unconventional weapons programs. It also maintains a ban on travel by North Korean officials connected to those programs and a freeze on their assets.

Mention of curbs on activities benefiting North Korea like "counterfeiting, money-laundering or narcotics" was dropped, but Mr. Bolton said those activities were covered by the resolution's freeze of North Korean assets, which includes those from "illicit means."

The measure also calls on North Korea to return to the six-nation talks involving South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States that it walked out of 13 months ago.

As for the international inspections, Mr. Bolton said that the United States already had the power to inspect cargo under the American-led Proliferation Security Initiative, a group of more than 70 countries that have pledged to seize illicit weapons as they move across oceans or are transported by air. But he said the United States wanted language in the resolution that would make it binding on all 192 member states of the United Nations.

China and Russia had said they believed the steps recommended in the draft proposed by Washington earlier in the day could end up doing more harm than good. "As we know in this problem and in this part of the world," Vitaly I. Churkin, the Russian ambassador, said, "some strong statements made by others in the Security Council have hurt the entire thing and have aggravated matters, so we do not want to repeat this on the level of the Security Council." Sounding a note of exasperation, Mr. Bolton protested as "simply incorrect" the interpretation that Chapter VII sets a pretext for military force, as many countries at the United Nations believe it did in Iraq.

"It would require a separate resolution, if one were needed, to authorize force," he said.

Mr. Bolton said the United States was determined to produce a decision by the end of the week.

He began the week highlighting the unanimity of outrage over the North Korean move and expressing the conviction that in this instance the Council would act quickly and decisively.

To those who might claim that the indecision encouraged Iran to believe that it had little to fear from the Security Council in next week's scheduled debate, Mr. Bolton expressed confidence that the Council would take firm action. "I'm sure they're watching in Tehran," he said.

Mr. Churkin said he had asked Mr. Bolton on Thursday morning not to call for a vote, "but what happened, happened."

Mr. Churkin and Wang Guangya, the Chinese ambassador, said high-level negotiations over the resolution's terms were going on in major capitals over the weekend and ought not to be pre-empted by a hasty vote.

"Of course, some people are talking about a possible vote tomorrow," Mr. Wang said. "I'm not sure, but I think we have to see the final text, because there are many common grounds that members agree, but there are some disagreements."

Mr. Bolton responded, "We're certainly very much in favor of keeping all the diplomatic channels open, but we also want swift action and we shouldn't allow meetings and more meetings and more meetings and more meetings to be an excuse for inaction."

Mr. Wang said that Beijing thought the North Korean claim that it tested a nuclear device was an "irresponsible action" that had to be "firmly opposed and condemned."

But, he added, "More important, it should be helpful for leading to a solution of this issue by peaceful means."

Richard A. Grenell, Mr. Bolton's spokesman, said the Russians and Chinese were already blocking action on other issues before the Security Council regarding places like Zimbabwe, Sudan, Iran and Myanmar, formerly Burma. "It's all right to keep talking if you are really going to get action, but not if it's just delay and delay and delay," he said.

Asked if the United States would settle for a less than unanimous vote, Mr. Bolton said, "We would always like the highest number of votes in the Security Council, and we have not given up on our efforts to achieve that, but we have also said that it's important what we send a very clear signal."

He said, "We are going to continue to work on it, but we're not going to work on it at the cost of losing sending a swift and strong response."

David E. Sanger contributed reporting from Washington.

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Los Angeles Times

October 13, 2006

Pg. 1

N. Korean Threat Different For China

Beijing is concerned more with regional stability than nuclear peril from its neighbor.

By Mark Magnier, Times Staff Writer

BEIJING — China's reaction to North Korea's nuclear test announcement early this week was unusually swift and forceful. Within hours, the normally slow-to-react Chinese government characterized Pyongyang's action as *hanran*, meaning brazen, a term generally reserved for its worst enemies.

By midweek, however, China was sounding more like its old self: calling for dialogue, eschewing confrontation and warning against comprehensive economic sanctions, even as it redoubled efforts to bring its longtime ally back to the negotiating table.

As North Korea's top supplier of energy and food, Beijing is viewed as the key to a tough international response at the United Nations to North Korea's declared nuclear test Monday in defiance of Security Council warnings. And Washington argues that China must be a "responsible stakeholder" if it wants a leading role in international politics. But with its go-slow stance, Beijing has been exposed to criticism that it is squandering a golden opportunity to display global leadership.

The problem, analysts say, is that China draws much different conclusions than Washington, even in the middle of a nuclear crisis, because it has a very different idea of what's important and what it needs to prosper.

Whereas the U.S. and Europe view a nuclear North Korea as a fundamental threat to the global order, China sees it less as a problem in its own right than as a catalyst for other headaches, including the possible destabilization of the Korean peninsula and militarization of Japan.

"America wants to see North Korea go away, representing the final victory of the Cold War," said Alexandre Mansourov, a security expert with the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies in Honolulu. "China's interests, however, lie in keeping North Korea in place. China's not doing this because it loves [North Korean leader] Kim Jong Il, but because it wants the buffer to remain."

Furthermore, Beijing appears to be less worried about a nuclear-armed North Korea.

"There's a big perception gap," said Jin Linbo, Asia-Pacific director at Beijing's China Institute of International Studies. "China has a different assessment of the danger."

Beijing already lives in a tough neighborhood where nuclear neighbors are abundant. It nearly went to war with a nuclear Soviet Union in the 1960s and more recently watched Pakistan and rival India join the club. China is not all that impressed by Pyongyang's nuclear technology, analysts add, nor does it see itself as a potential target.

China's position bears similarities to that of the U.S. from the Civil War to World War I, says Jin Canrong, vice dean of foreign relations at People's University in Beijing. It is industrializing rapidly, weathering a huge population shift from rural to urban areas and is grappling with enormous social problems related to rising expectations and a widening wealth gap.

In the same way America was primarily isolationist as it focused on internal development, China seeks enough time and international stability to lift its people out of poverty, ease societal stresses and keep enough money flowing to maintain the Communist Party's monopoly.

A bigger danger than North Korean nuclear weapons from China's perspective is Washington destabilizing the region. Beijing apparently believes it needs North Korea as a buffer against the 30,000 or so U.S. troops stationed in South Korea to guard against an attack by Kim.

China, along with Russia, fears that sanctions could lead to a change of government in Pyongyang and growing U.S. influence close to home. Sanctions presaged the U.S.-led NATO removal of President Slobodan Milosevic in Yugoslavia and the 2003 invasion of Iraq that unseated President Saddam Hussein.

Moreover, if Kim fell, the risk of refugees flooding across the border into China is a frightening economic and social prospect.

Also weighing on China's mind is a fear that precipitate action could disrupt its courtship of South Korea, analysts say. If the Pyongyang government collapses in the near future in the wake of sanctions or direct military action, the United States would retain significant influence over a Seoul-dominated Korean peninsula. Keeping Kim in place, on the other hand, could eventually see both Koreas in China's camp.

"South Korea is the big prize in all of this," said Ralph Cossa, executive director of the Honolulu-based Pacific Forum, affiliated with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

Since relations between Beijing and Seoul were normalized in 1992, China has watched approvingly as anti-American sentiment has grown in South Korea, U.S. troop levels have declined, China has supplanted the United States as Seoul's largest trading partner and trendy young Koreans have dropped their English-language classes in droves to study Mandarin. A sign of China's growing confidence is its support for South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon as the next U.N. secretary-general. A decade ago, Beijing would have condemned a similar nominee as a U.S. puppet.

None of which is to say that Pyongyang doesn't infuriate Beijing. Despite receiving much of its food and an estimated 70% of its energy from China, North Korea is often ungrateful and defiant, knowing that China's interests would be hurt by its collapse. The way Pyongyang sees it, analysts say, Beijing merely writes the checks while it is doing the heavy lifting in the front-line battle against what the two governments perceive to be Western imperialists. North Korea has also timed its outbursts with seeming disregard for its giant neighbor.

Its 1998 missile launch over Japan's main island of Honshu boosted Japanese public support for a U.S. missile defense plan, hurting Beijing's interests.

Pyongyang's February 2005 announcement of reactivated nuclear activity, in the middle of Chinese New Year, infuriated Beijing officials who were forced to cut short their holiday.

And the announcement of the nuclear test Monday morning occurred during one of the most important political events on the Chinese calendar — the Communist Party's four-day Central Committee meeting.

Chinese leaders, with their love of pageantry, don't like tearing up their domestic or foreign scripts. The declared test by Beijing's mercurial neighbor not only overshadowed the meeting but discredited President Hu Jintao's main foreign policy initiative: six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear issue, involving the U.S., South Korea, Russia and Japan in addition to China and North Korea.

Beijing's biggest nightmare emerging from the crisis would be a nuclear Japan, although it remains confident that won't happen given divisions in Japanese society and Washington's fears that such a development would spur a regional arms race.

Though Beijing sees far less danger in a nuclear North Korea than does Washington, it remains under pressure to bring its stance somewhat more in line with the U.S. position. Too many other countries are angry, and Pyongyang's defiance threatens to embolden other nations aspiring to become nuclear powers, undercutting the global stability China needs to grow and prosper internally. Nor can Beijing afford to alienate the Americans, its biggest customers, by appearing too cozy with Pyongyang.

China apparently also figures it would have more influence by supporting and watering down a U.N. sanctions resolution than it would through outright opposition. Seoul and Beijing both know that North Korea can take more punishment right now: The fall harvest gives the impoverished country some breathing room.

This all leaves Beijing seeking an equilibrium closer to the U.S. position but not so close that it deals a death blow to Kim's government.

Adding to China's lumbering pace this week, analysts say, is its cumbersome decision-making system. Because policy for centuries has been made by a tiny elite behind closed doors, the system can fall short during periods of rapid change as other parts of the government await directives handed down from on high.

Beijing has certainly taken more global responsibility, as seen by its recent decision to send 1,000 peacekeeping troops to Lebanon. By and large, however, it tries to avoid getting entangled in too many overseas commitments, in keeping with its multi-decade game plan.

"China measures history in centuries, not the next quarter," said Mansourov of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies. "There's a notion that China will play out an American scenario, but they don't see it that way. They have a very different national interest."

Yin Lijin in The Times' Beijing Bureau contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china13oct13.1.6945992.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post

October 13, 2006

Pg. 24

U.N. Near Agreement On N. Korea Sanctions

Arms Embargo Among Resolution's Provisions

By Colum Lynch, Washington Post Staff Writer

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 12 -- The U.N. Security Council moved closer Thursday night to agreement on a resolution that would impose an arms embargo and broad financial sanctions on North Korea in response to its claimed nuclear test, according to senior U.S. and European diplomats.

The council's five major powers -- the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France -- and Japan hammered out a compromise text that was to be sent to capitals Thursday night for approval, diplomats said. The preliminary deal was struck after the United States, acting at the request of China, included assurances that the resolution could not be used as a pretext for future military action against North Korea.

"I don't want to say we've reached agreement, but many of the significant differences have been closed," John R. Bolton, the U.S. ambassador, said after the meeting. "But I'm very pleased with the progress we've made, and I think it's close to the point where we will have an agreement."

"It was a good meeting," added French Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sabliere. "We will now send the outcome of this meeting to our capitals. We are close to an agreement."

The diplomatic movement came hours after President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met in Washington with China's state councilor, Tang Jiaxuan.

Bush and Rice pressed Tang to support a series of tough measures designed to compel North Korea to halt its nuclear activities and resume multiparty talks aimed at eliminating Pyongyang's nuclear weapons.

A U.S.-backed draft resolution presented to the council earlier Thursday would impose an arms embargo on North Korea, ban all trade linked to its programs for ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons, and permit international inspections of North Korean cargo.

The U.S. text would also prohibit North Korean trade in luxury goods, and would ban travel and freeze assets of individuals involved in the country's prohibited weapons programs. North Korea would be given 30 days to halt its nuclear activities or face additional international penalties.

China has resisted the U.S. approach as too tough, instead favoring U.N. sanctions that would narrowly target North Korea's programs for nuclear and ballistic missiles. In an effort to address China's concern, the United States has agreed to include more restrictive language on the scope of military sanctions and inspections.

Rice told reporters that she, Bush and national security adviser Stephen J. Hadley "had excellent talks" with Tang, a senior official who outranks the foreign minister.

"I think the Chinese clearly understand the gravity of the situation," Rice said. "They clearly understand that the North Koreans in doing this have made the environment much less stable and much less secure."

China has voiced concern that international inspections of North Korean cargo would excessively intrude into the country's commercial affairs.

Beijing also expressed concern that the resolution invokes a provision of the U.N. Charter, Chapter 7, that has been used in the past to authorize military force. China insists that the text should refer to a section of Chapter 7, Article 41, that authorizes only sanctions.

Security Council diplomats said the United States and China are working on compromise language that would split the difference. It would refer to Chapter 7 but would require explicit council approval to consider any action against North Korea.

Russia's ambassador, Vitaly Churkin, meanwhile, said early Thursday that Moscow needs more time to consider the U.S. draft. He said a vote should be delayed until after Russian officials hold high-level meetings in Moscow with a senior Chinese delegation on Friday and Saturday.

But council diplomats said Russia softened its opposition after Rice agreed in a phone conversation with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to drop U.S. opposition to a Russian-backed resolution criticizing its neighbor Georgia, which recently detained seven Russian soldiers who were accused of spying.

Staff writer Glenn Kessler in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/12/AR2006101200836.html>

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New York Times

October 13, 2006

Making Good on North Korea Vow Will Take Detective Work

By Thom Shanker and David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Oct. 12 — Making good on President Bush's vow this week to hold North Korea "fully accountable" if it shares nuclear material will pose a major challenge to American intelligence and diplomacy, requiring new equipment and a high level of international cooperation, administration and military officials say.

Mr. Bush's declaration on Monday, in his first public comments after the North announced that it had detonated a nuclear device, underscored the importance of monitoring North Korea's nuclear program, tracking its exports and investing in technology for "fingerprinting" nuclear materials.

Security specialists said Mr. Bush's warning signaled a significant expansion of longstanding policies of deterrence, extending the threat of reprisals to the transfer of nuclear weapons or materials to another country or to terrorists.

That has long been a concern about the North Korean program, but the tools to prevent it are still limited.

Robert Joseph, the under secretary of state for arms control and international security, said in an interview on Thursday that “to be credible, declaratory policy must be backed up by effective capabilities.”

Mr. Joseph cited three existing programs as models for what was needed: the Proliferation Security Initiative, a loose grouping of dozens of countries that have agreed to intercept illicit arms shipments moving through their waters or airspace; Megaports, an effort to install radiation detectors at major cargo ports around the world; and Second Line of Defense, a program to place radiation detectors at major border crossings around the world.

“We are putting in place the ability to detect, disrupt and deter North Korean proliferation activities,” he said. “The announced North Korean nuclear test will provide impetus to further expand these capabilities, particularly in Asia.” The Pentagon, in carrying out one of its most sensitive missions, maintains a team of nuclear experts to analyze the fallout from any nuclear attack by terrorists, not only to identify the attackers but also to figure out where they got their bomb.

Separately, the International Atomic Energy Agency, a United Nations unit based in Vienna, compiles identifying markers drawn from the chemistry and physics of processes that produce radioactive material in nuclear programs around the world.

Using that kind of data and technology, it might be possible to figure out the likely origin of an intercepted shipment of bomb material — or of the radioactive debris of a weapon that was used. The atomic energy agency’s inspectors have significant records from their time in North Korea before they were expelled, and they could rule out many other possible sources of radioactive material by calling on records from nations that cooperate with the agency. The real question is how best to head off a nuclear transfer in the first place. Those options include stiff embargos, like those under discussion at the United Nations or even a more muscular international air and maritime inspection operation.

And then there is the threat of harsh retaliation.

Mr. Bush’s declaration on Monday was no strategic aside, a number of administration and military officials said.

Mr. Bush consciously chose language that amounts to a new “declaratory policy” of a line that must not be crossed. “The transfer of nuclear weapons or material by North Korea to states or nonstate entities would be considered a grave threat to the United States, and we would hold North Korea fully accountable of the consequences of such action,” Mr. Bush said.

When pressed for details on the implications, a range of administration and military officials declined to elaborate, saying that part of the power of deterrence was its very ambiguity. Most would speak about the topic only on condition of anonymity.

“These declarations are constructed with some elasticity, specifically to raise questions and doubts in the mind of the object,” one Bush administration official said.

Last year the White House ordered a study of whether North Korea might share some nuclear fuel with Iran, but the report was inconclusive.

Some administration officials say they doubt that the North Koreans would take the risk. Others, including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, argue that the North’s record indicates that it proliferates any weapon in its arsenal. For example, it has long supplied missiles to Iran, and there have been suspicions, but no evidence, of nuclear cooperation between the countries as well.

Mr. Bush’s statement was viewed by national security experts as a major shift in deterrence doctrine, one that acknowledges that the mission today is no longer preventing North Korea from building a nuclear weapon, but deterring its use or transfer.

“The administration will continue saying that a nuclear weapon in North Korea is unacceptable, but in fact they are beginning to accept it,” said Scott D. Sagan, director of Stanford University’s Center for International Security and Cooperation. “The administration is switching from a nonproliferation policy to a deterrence and defense policy. It is a form of containment rather than a form of nonproliferation.”

The considerations during the cold war were far more straightforward: a Soviet missile would leave an obvious return address, allowing the United States to respond with no doubt as to the source of the attack.

But getting from the presumption of North Korean proliferation to the evidence is a very difficult task, one that initially is an intelligence, not a military, effort.

The difficulties of turning Mr. Bush’s vow into real deterrence were vividly demonstrated in late 2003, the only moment when North Korea was widely suspected of being the source of nuclear material found elsewhere in the world.

The discovery was made in Libya, which decided to give up its nuclear weapons program. Along with centrifuges and other equipment purchased from the black market network created by Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani nuclear engineer, the Libyans turned over a cask of nearly two tons of uranium. It had arrived in Tripoli around 2001 in a semiprocessed form: uranium hexafluoride, the gas that is poured into centrifuges for enrichment into nuclear fuel.

Korean markings on the cask suggested that the North was the source. And chemical traces on the outside of the cask proved that the container had been at North Korea's main nuclear site, Yongbyon. But while the Bush administration at first charged that North Korea had been the source of Libya's uranium, experts spent months trying to determine whether the contents of the cask had come from there as well or whether it had been filled up elsewhere. The result: plenty of suspicions, but no hard proof. "We took months and months and months and still couldn't come to a 100 percent conclusion," one senior administration official said this year. "That happens. But it doesn't help you justify a counterstrike against someone."

The president's new warning grows from his 2002 National Security Strategy and subsequent statements on deterrence and pre-emption. But until now he never specifically said a nation transferring nuclear weapons or components would be held liable and be subject to retaliation, according to administration officials and analysts in the academic community.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/13/world/asia/13trace.html>

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Washington Times

October 13, 2006

Pg. 1

Korean Test Seen As Only Partial Blast

U.S. intelligence thinks nuclear device was dud

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Four days after North Korea tried to set off its first nuclear bomb, U.S. intelligence agencies think the blast detected by seismic sensors was a plutonium-fueled device that did not fully explode.

"The working assumption is that what happened, more likely than not, was an attempted nuclear test that fell far short of being successful," said one U.S. official familiar with the latest intelligence assessment.

There is still no confirmation that North Korea succeeded in creating a nuclear explosion, and so far no radioactive particles that would confirm a successful nuclear test have been detected. The Washington Times first reported Tuesday that U.S. officials were having doubts, based on preliminary data, about North Korea's boasts about having successfully tested its first nuclear device.

The latest intelligence estimates of Monday's test at a nuclear test site near Kilju, in northeastern North Korea, put the size of the blast at 0.2 kilotons, or the equivalent of 200 tons of TNT. A plutonium-fueled nuclear device normally creates a much larger blast, in the range of 5 kilotons to 20 kilotons. A kiloton is the equivalent of 1,000 tons of TNT.

The detected explosion likely was produced by the conventional high-explosives used to split the plutonium atoms and produce a nuclear explosion, one official said. A second official said, "There was a yield that was in the several hundred ton range, but it at least partially failed."

Complete analysis of the data could take weeks, the officials said.

Plutonium-fueled bombs use a core of plutonium that is surrounded by conventional high explosives. High-speed electronic triggers are used to set off the high explosives, which apply pressure to the plutonium and produce the nuclear blast.

According to officials, the North Koreans informed China's government that the test they planned to carry out would produce a 4-kiloton explosion. That size indicates the North Koreans were trying to test a small warhead that likely would fit on a missile. The North Koreans have several types of ballistic missiles, including a long-range Taepodong-2, medium-range Nodong and shorter-range Scuds.

Still, the top U.S. military official was noncommittal when asked yesterday by reporters whether North Korea's detected explosion was nuclear or merely conventional.

"It is not yet determined -- with any degree of assurance -- what exactly they tested," said Marine Gen. Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Other explanations for the relatively low size of the detected blast include that North Korea did create a small nuclear explosion, but that seismic waves from it -- it registered as a 4.2 on the earthquake scale -- were muffled by an underground cavern, the officials said.

A third theory that intelligence agencies are examining is that the detected explosion was only a conventional explosion that North Korea is trying to fool the world into believing was a nuclear test, the officials said.

So far, aircraft and other sensors nearby the site of the explosion have not detected any radioactive debris. But while the detection of minute amounts of such materials would confirm a successful nuclear test, the officials warned that even if no sensors detect radioactive particles, a partially successful test would remain a possibility.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061012-115954-4140r.htm>

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Philadelphia Inquirer
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North Korean Client List Is Said To Take In Iran, Syria, 16 Others

Here's what really scares the world about Pyongyang's nuclear test

By Katherine Shrader, Associated Press

WASHINGTON - North Korea's claimed test of a nuclear weapon is only the tip of what frightens the rest of the world. The country has shown itself to be a virtual bazaar for spreading missiles, conventional weapons, and nuclear technology around the globe.

Pyongyang has sold its military goods to at least 18 countries, mostly in Africa and the Middle East, according to U.S. officials and outside experts. That is a good indication, officials warn, that North Korea might sell nuclear weapons if doing so would bring hard currency into the impoverished communist state.

North Korea's catalog has included ballistic missiles and related components, conventional weapons such as mobile rocket launchers, and nuclear technology. It is also possible, the officials say, that Pyongyang has sold components that could be part of biological or chemical munitions.

The U.S. officials and others interviewed this week about North Korea's weapons trade spoke on the condition that they not be identified, given the tense situation between the two countries.

On Wednesday, the United States circulated a draft resolution at the United Nations that condemns North Korea's proclaimed nuclear test on Monday as in "flagrant disregard" of U.N. resolutions and "a clear threat to international peace and security."

The resolution calls for a ban on all North Korean arms sales and travel by people involved in North Korea's weapons program. It also would require countries to freeze all assets related to North Korea's weapons and missile programs.

In admonishing North Korea for its purported nuclear test, President Bush called Pyongyang "one of the world's leading proliferators of missile technology, including transfers to Iran and Syria."

North Korea's customer list, going back to the mid-1980s, goes beyond those two countries. U.S. officials and outside experts report sales of missiles or related components to Egypt, Pakistan, Libya, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Pyongyang is also believed to have engaged in deals for cruise missiles and other wares with most of those countries and Angola, Burma, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iraq, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Vietnam, Zaire and Zimbabwe.

North Korea is also believed to have shared its nuclear technology. Government officials have said publicly that A.Q. Khan - the Pakistani scientist who confessed in 2004 to running an illegal nuclear market - had close connections with North Korea, trading in equipment, facilitating international deals for components, and swapping nuclear know-how.

Also of concern is that North Korea sells its weaponry to unstable or undemocratic states that may not have adequate control over their arsenals. That includes Iran and Syria, said Rep. Mike Rogers (R., Mich.), chairman of the House intelligence policy subcommittee that recently issued a Republican-drafted report on the North Korean threat.

In another case, "Yemen is trying to help [the United States], and they have made some public efforts - at least in P.R. efforts - when it comes to helping us on terrorism," Rogers said. "But Yemen has a troubled history."

Rogers' report, which was reviewed by the U.S. intelligence community, says North Korean dictator Kim Jong Il has a personal fortune estimated at \$4 billion, "at least partially amassed through drug and missile sales and counterfeiting."

The United States leads the world in arms sales to developing nations. While North Korea is believed to make hundreds of millions of dollars annually from weapons sales, that may be shrinking, in part because of international pressure to avoid the unpredictable government.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/15745399.htm>

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New York Times
October 13, 2006
Pg. 12

Iran Defies Call To Drop Nuclear Plans

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Oct. 12 — The Iranian leadership is vowing to continue to defy an international demand to stop nuclear activities while refusing to condemn North Korea for its reported test of a small nuclear device.

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said in a speech on Tuesday that Iran would continue its uranium enrichment program, asserting, as other senior Iranian leaders have done, that the program was intended for peaceful civilian purposes.

He said the decision was made easier by the fact that Iran voluntarily suspended enrichment three years ago, a cooperative gesture that proved fruitless. "If we had not experienced that path, perhaps we would have criticized ourselves today," he said. "But now we will pursue with a strong heart."

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in a speech on Tuesday that Iran would "continue its path of dignity based on resistance, wisdom and without fear."

The government spokesman, Gholam Hossein Elham, while saying that "Iran opposes any use of weapons of mass destruction," nevertheless blamed the United States for the nuclear test that North Korea said it conducted Monday. "The root cause of this should be sought in the policy, behavior and method adopted by the rulers of the United States," he said Tuesday in his weekly news conference.

It appeared that Iran was emboldened by North Korea's action, and what seemed to be light penalties proposed Wednesday in the United Nations Security Council. Iran and North Korea face possible Security Council sanctions over nuclear activities.

"It looks like the message of North Korea's test for Iran was that it can also continue its program," said Saeed Leylaz, an economist and political analyst in Tehran. "They felt that if they act forcefully and confrontationally, they can also proceed with their program like North Korea."

Iran, unlike North Korea, contends that its program is for civilian purposes, and Ayatollah Khamenei has repeatedly spoken out against nuclear weapons. Although Iran's facilities are visited by inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United States contends that Tehran is using its civilian nuclear activities as a cover for a nuclear weapons program.

In an editorial on Tuesday, Kargozaran, a moderate daily newspaper, said North Korea could proceed with its program because it had China as its ally.

"The international community was less tough with North Korea, which has a nuclear bomb, than with Iran, which does not have a nuclear bomb," the newspaper said.

Iranians were mixed about whether Iran should continue with its nuclear program.

Some said they felt strongly that their country should pursue nuclear weapons, and dismissed efforts by the United States to halt proliferation. "A country that has nuclear bombs has no right to tell other countries that they should not have one," said Javad Tabatabai, a retired schoolteacher, as he browsed at a newsstand in north Tehran. "We are a superpower in the region, and no one will dare to stop our program."

Others said just as strongly that Iran should give up the quest. "People are hungry," said Armin Manouchehri, a 33-year-old mechanic. "Why do we need a nuclear program when the government is not capable of controlling the inflation?" Inflation is running in double digits in Iran, with items like bread and fuel rising even more.

Some people said they feared that the Security Council might be even tougher on Iran now. "North Korea's tests will make the West more sensitive toward Iran because Iran is in a more sensitive place in the Middle East than North Korea," said Fazlali Mahmoudi, 80, a pharmacist. "I am afraid that our leaders' policies would drag the country to the brink of war."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/13/world/middleeast/13iran.html>

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