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Los Angeles Times
October 19, 2006

U.S. Is Japan's Nuclear Shield, Rice Says

By Bruce Wallace, Times Staff Writer

TOKYO — Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on Wednesday reaffirmed Washington's commitment to use all available force to protect Japan in case of attack, a declaration aimed at halting any rush by East Asian countries to acquire nuclear weapons.

North Korea's Oct. 9 underground test has spawned fears of an arms race in which Japan, South Korea and possibly even Taiwan might seek a nuclear deterrent.

Senior Japanese lawmakers and advisors to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe have called for a discussion of whether a nuclear option should be an element of Japan's security. None have actually called for the building of an atomic bomb.

Speaking in Tokyo on the first leg of a diplomatic swing through Asia, Rice said Washington's nuclear umbrella provides sufficient security to countries that could be targets of a North Korean attack.

"I reaffirmed the president's statement of Oct. 9 that the United States has the will and the capability to meet the full range, and I underscore full range, of its deterrent and security commitments to Japan," she said.

Abe also tried to squelch any further talk of a Japanese bomb before it becomes a major distraction to his push for a more assertive international role for Japan. "The debate is finished," the prime minister said.

Rice's tour took her to Seoul today. On Friday, the secretary goes to Beijing, where she will attempt to bolster enforcement of the United Nations Security Council resolution that imposes limited sanctions on North Korea.

The talks in Japan were expected to be the smoothest given the consensus between Washington and Tokyo on the need for a tough response to North Korea.

Rice said U.S. and Japanese officials were still working out details of how to carry out inspections of North Korean cargo. The secretary said inspections probably would be intelligence-driven and target specific ships.

"This is not an embargo," she said. "This is not a blockade or quarantine."

Abe's government is eager to participate in at-sea inspections, but Japan has a tangle of constitutional provisions and other laws that prevent its Maritime Self-Defense Forces from firing at other vessels unless Japanese ships are under direct threat.

A Japanese coast guard vessel sank what Japan said was a North Korean spy ship in its waters in 2001. But the Abe government has declared that even warning shots would constitute a threat of force that is banned under the postwar constitution.

Many here expect the Abe government to use the tension over North Korea's nuclear program to end some of the restrictions on the armed forces.

Japan's fear of North Korea, notwithstanding the reclusive country's erratic missile program and inability to feed its own people or light its cities, offers Abe the right political conditions to unravel many of the legal restrictions on the military.

Abe has already signaled his intention to amend laws that prevent Japanese forces from participating in collective defense.

The Bush administration welcomes Japan's military modernization. In recent years, Washington and Tokyo have taken steps to integrate their military commands in Asia. As recently as 2004, officials including Howard Baker, the then-U.S. ambassador to Japan, said they were sanguine about the prospect of Japan someday acquiring nuclear weapons.

But the administration has shown more alarm about that prospect in recent days, as the musings of Japanese officials about the need to discuss a nuclear option threatened to focus global attention on a potential Japanese bomb rather than on North Korea's nuclear program.

Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso raised eyebrows across the region Wednesday when he told a parliamentary committee that it was important for Japan to discuss the need for a nuclear capability.

"The reality is that it is only Japan that has not discussed possessing nuclear weapons, and all other countries have been discussing it," he said.

But hours later, standing beside Rice at a Tokyo news conference, Aso reiterated Japan's commitment to not build nuclear weapons.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor19oct19,1,2843654.story>

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Washington Times

October 19, 2006

Pg. 13

U.S. Seeks Help For Shipment Searches

By Nicholas Kravev, The Washington Times

TOKYO -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday sought Japan's help in an expanded plan to stop and search ships to and from North Korea suspected of carrying nuclear- and missile-related cargo.

"We want very much this to be done in a way that is steady, effective and brings close scrutiny to North Korean transfers," Miss Rice said during the first stop on a tour that also will take her to Seoul, Beijing and Moscow. Miss Rice also pledged the "full range" of U.S. military power to protect Japan from an attack from North Korea. "The United States has the will and the capability to meet the full range, and I underscore the full range, of its deterrence and security commitment to Japan," she told reporters.

Miss Rice met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe during the visit.

In Washington yesterday, President Bush warned North Korea of "grave" consequences if it sells nuclear arms, and top U.S. nuclear negotiator Christopher R. Hill acknowledged signs of North Korea preparing to conduct a second, though not imminent, nuclear test.

"If we get intelligence they're about to transfer a nuclear weapon, we would stop the transfer," Mr. Bush told ABC News, vowing to deal with ships and airplanes and take all measures against North Korea selling nuclear arms to other countries and non-state entities such as terrorists.

Miss Rice's trip follows a unanimous decision by the U.N. Security Council Saturday to impose sanctions on North Korea for its test of a nuclear weapon last week.

CNN and Fox News reported yesterday that U.S. spy satellites have detected possible preparations for more tests, and CNN said North Korea had told China that it plans to conduct "as many as three additional tests."

One of the main questions concerning the implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718 is how to conduct interdictions of ships that would stop illicit materials from getting to the North, but would not be hostile acts.

The resolution explicitly rejects military force as a response, and Miss Rice emphasized yesterday that the United States was not imposing a blockade or an embargo against North Korea.

According to diplomats and local news reports, Japan would use patrol and surveillance aircraft to detect suspicious vessels in Japanese waters and surrounding areas. The country's navy would then dispatch destroyers to pursue the vessel and ask it to stop for an inspection.

If it complies, Japanese and U.S. forces stationed in Japan would board and inspect the cargo.

If it refuses, Japan would negotiate with other involved countries, such as those whose flags the ships fly or where they are registered, to inspect the shipments "by other means."

Those "means" are one of the sticking points in the negotiations between the United States and Japan, on one side, and China and South Korea, which share land borders with North Korea, on the other.

Neither South Korea nor China participate in Washington's Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), a multinational program designed in 2003 to interdict shipments of weapons-related material to keep it from terrorists.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061019-120318-2393r.htm>

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Newport News Daily Press

October 18, 2006

Pg. 1

Law Takes Aim At Army For Dumping

Congress to military: Inspect, test and clean up the chemical weapons dumped into the sea.

By John M.R. Bull

The military must inspect the chemical weapons it dumped into the ocean decades ago to determine the danger they now pose to people or marine life, under a bill signed into law on Tuesday.

Then the Army will have to figure out how to clean up or contain -- if possible -- the mess it secretly made in more than two dozen offshore locations.

"We're elated," said Dave Helfert, a spokesman for U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii, who pushed for the new law. "This is the first concrete step that addresses a serious threat to the public. It's very important."

A Daily Press investigation last October revealed that the Army dumped at least 64 million pounds of deadly mustard and nerve gas -- included in artillery shells, bombs and rockets -- off the U.S. coastline, kept it secret and stopped checking 30 years ago to see whether the weapons were leaking.

Some evidence suggests the munitions may now be leaking and pose a danger to marine life and people who eat some types of seafood.

The weapons are off the coast of at least 11 states, including Virginia, New Jersey, North Carolina, Hawaii, Alaska and Florida. But more dumpsites may exist because the Army's records are sketchy and were destroyed long ago.

If not cleaned up, the weapons likely pose a threat for generations to come. Metal deteriorates at different rates in the ocean, depending on the depth, temperature and prevailing currents. This causes the weapons to potentially leak at different times and at different rates.

The Daily Press investigation prompted the Army to conduct an extensive search of all surviving ocean-dumping records. A report on that research is finished but has sat unreleased in the hands of top Pentagon officials for more than a month.

After reading the newspaper's findings, several lawmakers demanded the military do more than just check records for unrevealed dumpsites.

A provision in the defense authorization act -- signed into law Tuesday by President Bush -- requires that the military inspect its known chemical weapons dumps and record the locations on nautical charts so mariners know the potential dangers.

The inspections must include water and seabed environmental testing to see whether the weapons are leaking, or have leaked, and determine the current and potential future threat to sea life. The military also must assess the risks to humans.

Mustard gas survives in seawater in a concentrated gel that can last for years, pushed around by ocean currents.

Other chemicals can accumulate in seafood and be passed up the food chain to humans.

"This requirement is absolutely necessary to protect the public health of everyone who lives, works or visits the oceans near these munitions dumps as well as the condition of the oceans and marine life," said U.S. Rep. Rob Andrews, D-New Jersey, one of the first lawmakers to raise a fuss.

The bill requires the military to monitor each site -- most, but not all, are located in deep water -- and determine how to clean them up if that is possible.

The weapons are likely to be unstable and extremely hazardous to disturb after decades in the ocean. They were dumped between 1940 and 1972.

The bill went a step further than experts expected because it applies to all ocean-dumped munitions, not just chemical weapons. "That really is quite amazing," said Craig Williams, director of the Kentucky-based Chemical Weapons Working Group, a citizen advocacy operation that monitors the Army's disposal of land-based chemical weapons. "I'll be in the ground 100 years before they get around to all of that. This isn't going to be cheap."

The Army and Navy extensively dumped surplus conventional weapons off the side of ships for decades and in the late 1960s and early 1970s loaded old ships with old weapons and blew them up, scattering unexploded ordnance in all directions.

The military will abide by the new law "in an effort to ensure the continued protection of the environment and safety of the American public," said Pentagon spokeswoman Cheryl Irwin.

There is no estimate on what the new law's requirements will cost, and this year's defense-funding bill doesn't include any money for the military to begin complying with the new law's provisions. Congress makes such appropriations annually.

The law does not apply to U.S.-created chemical weapon dumpsites off the coasts of at least 11 other countries. At the end of World War II, the Army dumped its overseas chemical weapon stockpiles where they were located, killing or injuring hundreds in the ensuing decades.

<http://www.dailypress.com/news/local/dp-55593sy0oct18,0,4130877.story?track=rss>

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Washington Post

October 19, 2006

Pg. 24

Japan, Acting To Calm U.S. Worries, Rules Out Building Nuclear Arms

Rice Affirms American Protection in Wake of N. Korean Test

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

TOKYO, Oct. 18 -- Japan "is absolutely not considering" building a nuclear arsenal in response to the North Korean nuclear test, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso said Wednesday, moments after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reiterated that Japan was protected by the American nuclear umbrella.

Rice arrived here Wednesday on the first stop of a tour through northeast Asia and Russia. Her trip is aimed at allaying concerns and coordinating strategy against the Pyongyang government in the wake of the test.

The question of whether Japan would go nuclear has stoked worries within the U.S. government and increased tensions in the region. Earlier in the day, Aso told a parliamentary committee that while Japan's nonnuclear principles remain unchanged, "it's important to have discussions on the matter."

The ruling party's policy director on Sunday also urged a debate on whether Japan should consider developing its own nuclear deterrent. Japan is the world's only victim of a nuclear attack, and it has consistently refused to allow the United States to store nuclear weapons on its territory. But experts say Japan has a large supply of plutonium from its civilian nuclear power program, giving it access to the material necessary to quickly make the switch to a strategic nuclear program.

In response to a question at a news conference with Rice, Aso said: "There is no need to arm ourselves with nuclear weapons. For Japan's own defense . . . we have the commitment, and that commitment has been reconfirmed by Secretary Rice."

"Japan has answered this question," Rice said. "The role of the United States is to make sure that everybody, including the North Koreans, know very well that the United States will fully recognize and act upon its obligations under the mutual defense treaty" with Japan.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is to meet with Rice on Thursday, also reiterated Wednesday that his government would not discuss building a nuclear bomb. "That debate is finished," Abe testily told reporters.

Speaking to reporters as she flew to Asia, Rice acknowledged that a nuclear arms race was a concern, which is one reason she planned to use the trip to assure Japan and South Korea that they remain under U.S. protection. "I think through doing that we can mitigate some of the potential for a truly destabilizing set of events to take place in the region in response to the North Korean test," she said.

During a speech in Shanghai in 2004, Vice President Cheney warned that, if faced with a reality that North Korea has a stockpile of nuclear weapons, other nations in the region "may conclude their only option is to develop their own capabilities, and then we have a nuclear arms race unleashed in Asia."

South Korea and Taiwan are also considered potential candidates to begin nuclear weapons development.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/18/AR2006101800268.html>

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New York Times
October 19, 2006

Iran Seems Unmoved By Specter Of Sanctions Against North Korea

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Oct. 18 — For the most part, Iran's leaders have offered silence on what lessons they draw from the sanctions that the United Nations Security Council adopted last weekend to punish North Korea for its nuclear test — other than to say, as they have in the past, that they intend to continue what they call a peaceful nuclear program. On Monday, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said the sanctions on North Korea would not deter Iran. And on Tuesday, he said efforts aimed at preventing Iran from having nuclear technology were doomed to fail, the state-controlled IRNA news agency reported.

At the United Nations, Britain, France, Germany and the United States are working on a Security Council resolution calling for sanctions against Iran for defying the organization's call to stop enriching uranium. The resolution, which they hope to introduce early next week, may include a ban on nuclear or missile cooperation with Iran. On Tuesday, the 25 European Union foreign ministers met in Luxembourg and agreed to call for limited sanctions on Iran.

After four months of talks with Javier Solana, the director of foreign policy for the European Union, Iran defied a Security Council resolution and refused to suspend its uranium enrichment program in August.

"Some Western countries have turned the U.N. Security Council into a weapon to impose their hegemony and issue resolutions against countries that oppose them," Mr. Ahmadinejad said Monday, as quoted by state-run television. Iran "won't be intimidated," he added.

On Tuesday, he weighed in again. "Some oppressive countries intend to create discord in order to dissuade the Iranian nation from reaching the summits of dignity and glory, including using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes," Mr. Ahmadinejad said, according to IRNA. "But with God's kindness, they will be defeated."

Hard-line newspapers close to Iran's supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and to Mr. Ahmadinejad warned this week that Iran would respond to any sanctions.

The daily Jomhuri Islami wrote in an editorial on Monday that Iran could take steps that would jeopardize economic and political interests of European countries. The editorial did not offer details, but Iran could restrict sales of oil, or switch to currencies other than the dollar for its large oil trades.

In much harsher language, the daily Kayhan warned Tuesday that if Europeans favored sanctions on Iran, then Iran would act.

“Europe could have learned a lesson from what happened in Afghanistan, Iraq and during the 33-day war in Lebanon, and not underestimate the capability of the Islamic Republic of Iran for taking revenge on its enemies,” it said.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/19/world/middleeast/19iran.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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New York Times

October 20, 2006

Pg. 1

China May Press North Koreans

By Joseph Kahn

BEIJING, Oct. 19 — China is prepared to step up pressure on North Korea in coming weeks by reducing oil shipments, among other measures, if the country refuses to return to negotiations or conducts more nuclear tests, Chinese government advisers and scholars who have discussed the matter with the leadership say.

If Beijing does take a tougher line on its neighbor and longtime ally, the action is likely to bolster its relationship with the United States. Washington has urged Chinese leaders to use all the tools at their disposal to put additional pressure on Kim Jong-il, the North Korean leader.

Among the most potent of those tools is oil. China provides an estimated 80 to 90 percent of North Korea's oil imports, shipped by pipeline at undisclosed prices that Chinese officials say represent a steep discount from the world market price. Any reduction in that aid could severely hamper North Korea's already faltering economy. Several leading Chinese experts said senior officials had indicated in the past week that they planned to slap new penalties on North Korea going beyond the ban on sales of military equipment imposed by the United Nations. But they would be likely to hold off if Mr. Kim agreed to return soon to multilateral talks North Korea has boycotted since September 2005. Years of talks have produced meager results.

Discussions about how to respond to the nuclear test, which was described by one expert as a “political earthquake” for Chinese leaders, come amid a flurry of diplomacy aimed at ironing out enforcement of United Nations sanctions and luring Mr. Kim back to negotiations.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is to arrive here Friday to meet with Chinese officials. On Thursday in Pyongyang, Mr. Kim met a delegation sent by President Hu Jintao of China, the first diplomatic contact with the North Korean leader since the nuclear test on Oct. 9.

There was no immediate word on what Mr. Kim told the Chinese, but Beijing experts said he would most likely have declined to meet with the delegation, headed by a cabinet-level official, State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, unless he hoped to head off additional penalties by promising to resume negotiations.

“China is going to have to make some crucial choices in the coming days,” said one senior international relations specialist who has participated in top-level discussions of the matter but asked to remain anonymous. “I think Chinese leaders are prepared to take a hard line, but Kim may be smart enough to try to divide China and the U.S.” China and the United States already have some differences over how to enforce the United Nations sanctions that they and the rest of the Security Council voted for last Saturday. Beijing says it will not interdict North Korean cargo ships at sea, as the United States and Japan have recommended, and has warned against seeking to use the sanctions to provoke a confrontation.

“All sides need to consider how to implement Resolution 1718 in a balanced way and not devise ways to willfully expand the sanctions,” Liu Jianchao, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said Thursday, referring to the Security Council resolution banning the sale or transfer of missile- or nuclear-weapons-related goods to North Korea.

“Sanctions are the signal, not the goal.”

But Chinese experts who have taken part in discussions about how to manage the situation said that after North Korea's missile tests in July, Chinese leaders concluded that Mr. Kim might not negotiate a way out of the impasse unless he had no other choice. Officials felt badly stung by the nuclear test and have dug in their heels on ending the nuclear program there, the experts said.

China has opposed military action or an embargo to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to its Korean War ally and has subsidized Mr. Kim's government despite gross human rights violations. But it is also wary that Mr. Kim may set off an arms race in Northeast Asia and prompt Japan and South Korea, and even Taiwan, to seek nuclear weapons.

Beijing's relations with North Korea have been strained for many years, and some Chinese officials argue that Mr. Kim wants a nuclear trump card to intimidate China as much as the United States.

In the wake of the test, President Hu renewed his government's commitment to “a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula,” and ruled out recognizing North Korea, as a fellow nuclear power, they said.

"I believe that Chinese leaders are firmly resolved to roll back the nuclear program and not accept it as an accomplished fact," said Zhang Liangui, a Korea expert at the Communist Party's Central Party School in Beijing who has favored taking a tougher line.

"I do not think that the resolve of the Chinese leadership is going to be less than the resolve of the American leadership," he said.

Others agreed, arguing that as long as the Bush administration kept its focus on a diplomatic solution, China would work to maintain solidarity with the United States.

"The only issue that they do not agree on is interdiction at sea," said Xu Guangyu, a retired general who is now a member of the Chinese Arms Control and Disarmament Association, a government-sponsored institute. "For the most part the United States has responded to this with the right tone, so I don't see a major obstacle to cooperation." Mr. Xu said the question now was not whether China and the United States could maintain common ground, but rather how Mr. Kim would respond to the universal condemnation of his test. "The matter is in his hands," Mr. Xu said. "If he returns to negotiating, the pressure will ease. If he conducts another test, that would be very reckless." Chinese officials have already begun carrying out measures intended to increase the pressure.

Customs officers have begun inspecting cargo passing through Dandong, a major trading post with North Korea. China Southern Airlines, the only Chinese carrier that flies to Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, announced that it had suspended service to the city.

Chinese banks, fearing possible freezes on assets, have restricted some forms of transactions involving North Korean interests while expanding a crackdown on suspected laundering of drug money and counterfeiting by individuals and front companies associated with North Korea, according to Chinese officials and local news reports. More important, Chinese officials have discussed staged reductions in oil shipments if North Korea ignores international pressure, scholars who have been told about the leadership's planning said.

Beijing is also North Korea's leading provider of grain, but is not likely to suspend food shipments. North Korea suffers severe food shortages, with about a third of the population depending on imported grain.

China has not threatened publicly to cut off oil supplies, and it has resisted imposing economic sanctions. Instead, it has emphasized reviving the six-nation nuclear talks that collapsed a year ago. At least superficially, that puts China on the same page as the United States, which has called for a diplomatic solution to the crisis.

China has put much more emphasis on the process of negotiating than has the United States, which has expressed interest only in the results. Beijing argues that resuming talks would de-escalate the crisis, giving Mr. Kim an incentive to freeze his nuclear activities and making it possible to find a peaceful way out.

Some Chinese experts speculate that Mr. Kim, having proved that he has mastered at least the basics of manufacturing atomic bombs, may now be willing to return to the table, feeling he can demand a higher price for agreeing to discontinue the program.

"Kim has done nothing but anger China for the last few months," said Shi Yinong, a foreign policy expert at People's University in Beijing. "But he could be smart enough to make a concession now, just before Rice visits, to create some trouble for the United States."

After Mr. Kim twice ignored China's stern warnings — first when he tested ballistic missiles in July, and then when he exploded a nuclear device close to the Chinese border — many officials here felt chagrined about having sheltered him, people who discussed the situation with the leadership said.

"The people who were the most critical of Kim in the past were a minority," said one scholar. "But they have a bigger voice now. The people who had the most favorable interpretations of Kim's actions are for now keeping quiet."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/20/world/asia/20china.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer
October 20, 2006

Another Hurdle For VX Disposal

A N.J.-inspired law calls for review of Army plans for the nerve agent.

By Jacqueline L. Urgo, Inquirer Staff Writer

Army plans to dispose of caustic waste from the lethal VX nerve agent into the Delaware River have been halted - at least temporarily - by a new federal law.

An amendment to a defense spending bill signed this week by President Bush, and written by U.S. Reps. Robert E. Andrews (D., N.J.), James Saxton (R., N.J.), and Frank A. LoBiondo (R., N.J.), calls for a detailed review of the Army plan by the Government Accountability Office.

The bipartisan group of New Jersey lawmakers said the measure could cripple the Army's plan to dump a treated, watered-down form of the VX nerve agent called hydrolysate into the river at Deepwater, N.J. Gov. Corzine also praised the measure, saying it sends the Army a message: "New Jersey is no dumping ground. The Delaware River should be treasured and protected, not harmed and mistreated."

The Government Accountability Office will determine whether treating the chemical at a weapons stockpile in Newport, Ind., where it is currently being stored, is significantly more expensive - as the Army has claimed - than risking its transport by truck or rail through four heavily populated states.

The lawmakers said they would ask the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control to again investigate the Army's plan to transport as much as four million gallons of neutralized VX hydrolysate to the DuPont Chambers Works in Deepwater, near the Delaware Memorial Bridge. The lawmakers said they believed the agencies would reject the plan under the new law's standards, even though they have approved the plan in the past. The new law calls for a review of the "adequacy of rationale" in the Army's dismissal of other technologies to dispose of its VX stockpile, including the Army's refusal to build a wastewater disposal system at the chemical depot in Indiana.

If the Army's plan to dump the VX hydrolysate passes the new regulatory hurdles, the material could be transported to New Jersey by early next year. Meanwhile, Corzine and the legislators said they will continue to work on permanently killing the Army's plan.

Scientists call VX a weapon of mass destruction.

The military counts the nerve agent among its deadliest weapons. A drop of VX in its raw form can kill a human on contact.

It appears the Army never used VX on the battlefield because of the danger that the wind could blow the odorless vapor back in the direction of the troops, according to scientists at Oxford University, in England, where VX was developed in the 1950s.

The Army says its plan to dispose of the treated VX wastewater in the Delaware River is safe and would save taxpayers as much as \$347 million.

Citing contract sensitivity, the Army wouldn't say how much the entire project could cost, nor when it would likely be completed, said Jeffrey Lindblad, spokesman for the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency.

Critics say the VX disposal plan puts at risk millions of residents of Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, as well as the environment in general.

"We have by no means exhausted our alternatives to ending this plan," LoBiondo said. "The only gambling that should be done in New Jersey is in Atlantic City, not with the lives of our residents."

Tracy C. Carluccio, deputy director of the nonprofit Delaware Riverkeeper Network, called the VX disposal "ill conceived and reckless" and vowed to stand with New Jersey lawmakers in fighting the Army.

"We will remain vigilant along with them until this project is dead," Carluccio said.

Lindblad, the Army's spokesman, said military officials believe they will eventually prevail.

"We're confident in our process and that this can be done safely with no harm to humans or the environment," Lindblad said yesterday.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/living/health/15803962.htm>

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Washington Post

October 20, 2006

Pg. 15

Rice Presses S. Korea To Pursue Full Sanctions

Seoul Reluctant to Interrupt Two Major Projects in North

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

SEOUL, Oct. 19 -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice pressed the South Korean government on Thursday to fully implement U.N.-authorized sanctions against North Korea for its nuclear test, but she encountered reluctance among officials in Seoul, who fear that tough action could lead to increased tensions and even war.

South Korean officials said they had deferred decisions on whether to suspend two cross-border business projects with North Korea -- the Mount Kumgang tourist resort and the Kaesong Industrial Park.

Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon said the government would evaluate its participation in light of the new U.N.

Security Council resolution that punishes North Korea by halting trade in weapons, luxury goods and other items.

He noted that the Kumgang resort, which provides about \$13 million a year in hard currency for North Korea, is a "very symbolic project" for the two countries, separated since World War II.

Before Rice landed in Seoul, one of the government's top officials was quoted in local newspapers as saying South Korea could not be left at the whims of the United States, given that the United States "has fought more wars than any other nation." Song Min Soon, chief presidential secretary for security, later softened his remarks in a telephone interview, explaining that while the "United States has global interests," it was also important for the U.S. government "to accept our interests" and "harmonize our needs in the U.S. global policy." He said the U.N. resolution would be implemented through "our view and our interpretation."

Rice arrived here as the Chinese government announced that State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan had led a high-level delegation to Pyongyang and met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. A Chinese government spokesman said it was a "very significant" meeting but declined to provide details.

A senior State Department official traveling with Rice said China has taken a "rather dramatic shift" in its policy toward North Korea since the Stalinist country announced it had conducted a nuclear test on Oct. 9.

[At least four Chinese banks in recent days have halted transactions with North Korea, cutting off a major conduit for the isolated country to move its money to and from the outside world, the Wall Street Journal reported in Friday's editions.]

"I'm pretty convinced that the Chinese will have a very strong message about future tests," the official said, referring to intelligence reports that suggest preparation for a second test is underway. He spoke to reporters on Rice's plane under condition of anonymity, citing rules set by the State Department.

Tang, who as state councilor outranks the foreign minister in the Chinese system, visited Washington last week and then flew to Moscow before arriving in Pyongyang. He is scheduled to meet with Rice when she visits Beijing on Friday, but the official cautioned against any breakthrough. "Our understanding is that the North Koreans have not been in the mood to return" to negotiations, the U.S. official said. "If anything, they are looking to escalate the crisis further."

Throughout her tour of Asia, Rice has battled the perception that the United States is eager for an escalation. News media reports here have suggested that the United States wants to use the U.N. resolution to spur a dramatic confrontation with North Korea, such as a blockage or quarantine.

Asian officials have repeatedly cautioned against relying only on sanctions. Ban said that "sanctions are not made for the sake of sanctions," but as a way to draw North Korea back to negotiations. In Beijing, Rice's next stop, a Chinese government spokesman told reporters that "sanctions are a signal, not the goal."

At the news conference with Ban, Rice emphasized: "We want to leave open the path of negotiation. We don't want the crisis to escalate."

She added: "I did not come to South Korea, nor will I go anyplace else, to try and dictate to governments what they ought to do." But she urged other nations to "take stock of the leverage we have to get North Korea to return to the six-party talks" involving Russia and Japan in addition to the United States, China and the two Koreas.

Rice held lengthy talks with Ban, who was recently selected as the next U.N. secretary general, and South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun. She then held a dinner with Ban and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso, which was intended to show trilateral solidarity after several years of bickering between South Korea and Japan -- and a worsening U.S.-South Korean relationship.

U.S. officials want South Korea to join the administration's Proliferation Security Initiative, a maritime exercise designed to thwart trade in weapons of mass destruction. South Korea was deliberately not invited when the program was started during President Bush's first term. The official traveling with Rice acknowledged that South Korea previously felt that joining it would be seen as a "provocative act" that would undermine its ability to influence North Korea.

Rice said that "there is a lot of misunderstanding" about the initiative, stressing that it is based on current legal authority and relies on intelligence, not "constant random inspection of ships." Rice said that while the United States wants to pay close attention to North Korean cargo, "there are many different ways in which this can be achieved," such as "container security initiatives" to detect potentially radioactive materials.

The senior U.S. official suggested there is concern about the stability of North Korea, a tightly controlled dictatorship. "A lot of us are wondering what is going on," the official said, adding it did not make sense for North Korea to test a weapon in defiance of China, its main benefactor.

"There should never be a second nuclear test, as it would further aggravate the current situation," Ban said. The United States and South Korea "shared an understanding that if it happened, there would be more grave consequences."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/19/AR2006101900203.html>

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North Korean Ploy Masks Ships Under Other Flags

By Keith Bradsher

HONG KONG, Oct. 19 — When helicopter-borne Australian commandos stormed a freighter three years ago after it was spotted unloading 110 pounds of high-grade heroin, the ship proved to be registered in Tuvalu, a tiny island nation in the South Pacific.

When a Spanish warship stopped a freighter carrying cement to Yemen four years ago, the cargo vessel turned out to be carrying 15 Scud missiles as well and was registered in Cambodia.

The two freighters had something in common: although registered elsewhere, both were owned by North Korea.

The incidents illustrated North Korea's adroit use of so-called flags of convenience to camouflage the movement of its cargo vessels as they engage in tasks that sometimes violate international laws.

The North Korean ploy could both simplify and complicate the efforts to carry out the United Nations Security Council's resolution authorizing countries to inspect cargo entering or leaving North Korea to see if it includes illicit weapons, say shipping executives, lawyers and security experts.

The use of flags of convenience could also weaken moves like Australia's on Monday to ban North Korean-flagged vessels from its ports to protest the nuclear test.

But if Western nations suspect that a North Korean-owned vessel flying another country's flag is carrying illicit weapons, boarding the vessel could be simpler than if it carried North Korea's flag, said Jonathan D. Pollack, professor of Asian and Pacific studies at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I.

A Western nation could ask the country that registered the vessel for permission to board it even if the vessel was not entering or leaving North Korean waters. Practically any country would be more cooperative about giving permission for a search than North Korea, Mr. Pollack noted.

A North Korean crew might still resist boarding, however. The crew of the Tuvalu-registered freighter, the Pong Su, did so when chased by Australian forces for four days in 2003 before it was finally boarded and captured by the commandos.

But Mr. Pollack and other experts said that flags of convenience could still prove useful to North Korea in maintaining its arms trade despite the Security Council resolution.

One possibility would be for North Korea to try to smuggle out weapons or weapons components across its land borders with China or Russia, and then to a Chinese or Russian port. The weapons could then be loaded on a vessel secretly owned by North Korea but flying another country's flag — and perhaps not be closely watched by Western intelligence services as a result.

Or weapons could be loaded on a North Korean ship flying its own flag, and the registration of the ship could be altered after it left port. "In the middle of the night, they could change the name and change the flag," said Gary Wolfe, a maritime lawyer at Seward & Kissel, a New York law firm.

Still another possibility, shipping and security experts said, would be for a North Korean-flagged ship to transfer cargo to a North Korean ship carrying another flag, either in port or in midocean if it were a calm day and the cargo small enough.

Changing the registration of a ship — and therefore its flag — is fairly simple. A ship owner simply sends the necessary paperwork to a country's ship registry, along with a fee of as little as \$1,000. The vessel is not required to visit the country where it is registered, or even go to port.

Ship registries do require basic information about a vessel's length and tonnage. So if a ship of a certain size and displacement disappears from one ship's registry and a vessel of equal size and displacement pops up with a different name on another registry at the same time, they may be the same ship and could be identified with careful sleuthing, Mr. Wolfe said.

The Pong Su sailed from North Korea to Singapore in 2003 under a North Korean flag. The vessel then switched its registration to Tuvalu and sailed on to Australia, where witnesses saw a dinghy coming ashore with what proved to be the shipment of heroin.

The freighter was seized and later used as a bombing target by the Australian armed forces as a warning to drug traffickers. The North Korean government denied that it had been involved.

Without specifically mentioning flags of convenience, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld warned on Wednesday of the difficulty of monitoring North Korea's trade. "There's so much moving around the world by land, sea and air that it is practically impossible — not impossible, but certainly it would take a lot of countries cooperating with a high degree of cohesion," and cohesion has been lacking, he said during a question-and-answer period at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base in Alabama.

Until 2002, North Korea tended to register its ships as Cambodian, using a registration office that the Cambodian government had authorized in Singapore. Marcus Hand, the Asia editor for Lloyd's List, a shipping industry newspaper, said dozens of North Korean ships used to carry the Cambodian flag.

He cautioned, however, that it is often difficult to know with certainty who owns a ship, since ships are often held through various companies registered all over the world. No one outside North Korea really knows for sure how many cargo vessels the country has registered under other flags.

Cambodia canceled the right of its Singapore agents to register ships in 2002 after finding that Cambodian-registered ships were in such poor condition that ports were reluctant to let them berth, and after France accused a Cambodian-registered ship and its crew of transporting cocaine. The government of Cambodia ended up authorizing representatives in Pusan, South Korea, to manage the country's ship registry.

Charlie Bach, the managing director of the overhauled International Ship Registry of Cambodia, said in an e-mail message that there were no longer any North Korean ships carrying the Cambodian flag.

The mystery lies in where North Korea's ships are registered instead.

According to reports in the shipping press in 2003, some of the shipping agents in Singapore who represented Cambodia switched to representing Tuvalu and landlocked Mongolia instead, and encouraged their clients to change their ships' registration to those countries.

Several shipping executives said they believed that North Korean ships were sailing under Mongolian and Tuvaluan flags now.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/20/world/asia/20shipping.html>

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Washington Post

October 20, 2006

Pg. 11

U.S. Plan For New Nuclear Weapons Advances

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States took another step yesterday toward building a new stockpile of up to 2,200 deployed nuclear weapons that would last well into the 21st century, announcing the start of a multiyear process to repair and replace facilities where they would be developed and assembled and where older warheads could be more rapidly dismantled.

Thomas P. D'Agostino, head of defense programs for the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), told reporters that the "Complex 2030" program would repair or replace "inefficient, old and expensive [to maintain]" facilities at eight sites, including some buildings going back to the 1940s Manhattan Project that built the first atomic bombs. He said the sites -- primarily in California, New Mexico, Texas and Tennessee -- "are not sustainable for the long term."

Yesterday's announcement comes as the Bush administration is pressing its allies to take harsh steps to halt nuclear weapons programs in both North Korea and Iran that it says are violations of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. That same treaty calls for the United States and other members of the nuclear club to eliminate their own stockpiles, but it gives no deadline by which that should take place.

The Bush administration plan would replace the aging Cold War stockpile of about 6,000 warheads with a smaller, more reliable arsenal that would last for decades. It would also consolidate the handling of plutonium, the most dangerous of the nuclear materials, in one center that would be built at a site that already houses similar special materials. Another part of the plan would be to remove all highly enriched uranium from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, D'Agostino said.

Key to the Bush plan is an expected decision in December by the NNSA on a design for the new "Reliable Replacement Warhead" (RRW). The nation's two nuclear weapons laboratories, Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore, are competing for the new warhead design. Before going ahead with any new warhead, however, the NNSA would have to get Congress's approval to move into actual engineering development.

A requirement of the new design is that it must be based on nuclear packages tested in the past so that it will not require the United States to break the moratorium on underground tests to make certain the RRW will work.

The process initiated yesterday will provide the public the first chance to give its views on the Bush nuclear program. To carry out the rebuilding of the complex, the agency must prepare updated environmental-impact statements for the eight sites, including public comments, and hold hearings at each location.

Although the administration has decided to go ahead with the Complex 2030 plan and sees the RRW as a way to have a more reliable weapon, the public will also get a chance to comment on two alternative plans for handling the nuclear stockpile -- plans that the administration has rejected.

The Bush option, titled "Transform to a More Modern, Cost-Effective Nuclear Weapons Complex (Complex 2030)," would call for stepped-up dismantling of older warheads, a process that has been slowed by the aging of some facilities and by efforts to refurbish other deployed warheads.

The second option to be placed before the public is called the "No Action Alternative," which is described as "the status quo as it exists today and is presently planned," according to yesterday's notice in the Federal Register about the upcoming environmental-impact hearings. That approach would keep the current programs going and defer decisions on the future of the nuclear stockpile.

The third option, titled "Reduced Operations and Capability-Based Complex Alternative," could draw support from arms control and anti-nuclear activists.

Under this approach, the NNSA would keep its current technologies for manufacturing weapons and its production facilities would not be upgraded. The production of plutonium triggers for current weapons, called pits, would remain limited at about 50 per year. Under the Bush plan, the new plutonium center could produce 125 pits a year, a number D'Agostino said would satisfy current planning for the 2,200 RRW stockpile of the future.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/19/AR2006101901863.html>

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Washington Times

U.N. reports on genetic concentration camps

By Damien McElroy

LONDON DAILY TELEGRAPH

Published October 21, 2006

North Korea operates a rigorous system of eugenics that locks up those deemed subnormal, ranging from the disabled to dwarfs, according to a U.N. report released yesterday.

A system of gulags is designed to ensure that those who do not conform to the state's designation of normal do not pass on their genes by having children.

"Those with disabilities are sent away from the capital city and particularly those with mental disability are detained in areas or camps known as 'Ward 49' with harsh and subhuman conditions," wrote Vitit Muntarbhorn, a Thai lawyer who is special rapporteur for human rights in North Korea.

Evidence was gathered from defectors to South Korea.

The report said dwarfs are not allowed to reproduce and they are rounded up and relocated. Marriages at the camps are permitted but having children is not.

Shut away for life, the afflicted are subjected to harsh and subhuman conditions. Food is scarce and of poor quality and beatings are commonplace, according to the report.

There are extensive descriptions of other forms of torture, including chemical weapons tests and germ agent experiments. Those not used as laboratory guinea pigs are ordered to carry out back-breaking work.

North Korea is not the only totalitarian state to retain a fascination with the goal of breeding a better population by eliminating those with "weak" genes. But since the fall of the Soviet bloc, it apparently is one of the last states to implement the practice.

Pyongyang is also dedicated to the principle of racial purity. Women who have sexual relations with the small Chinese community in North Korea are often purged.

"If they carry a child of non-Korean ethnicity, they may be subjected to discrimination and/or violence, with a dire impact on the babies," the report stated.

The report was delivered to the U.N. General Assembly, which has been asked to censure the Stalinist dictatorship.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061020-114426-2999r.htm>

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Washington Times

October 21, 2006

Pg. 2

S. Korea Presses U.S. Over 'Umbrella'

By Associated Press

U.S. and South Korean defense chiefs disagreed yesterday over how explicitly the United States should say that South Korea is under the protective "umbrella" of America's nuclear arsenal.

The North's recent underground nuclear test has heightened the South Koreans' concerns about the future of their defense relationship with the United States -- a relationship that is undergoing major change as the U.S. reduces the number of its ground troops in South Korea and pulls troops farther from the North Korean border area.

A South Korean delegation led by Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung tried to persuade Pentagon officials yesterday to issue a public statement that if the North attacked the South with nuclear weapons, the United States would retaliate as if U.S. territory itself had been attacked by nuclear weapons.

U.S. officials resisted, saying that would go beyond what the U.S. normally says publicly about how it would respond with regard to nuclear weapons. For decades, U.S. policy has been deliberately designed to include some ambiguity about the circumstances under which it would use nuclear arms.

Japan is covered by a similar U.S. "umbrella" promise. U.S. officials have restated this commitment to both countries in the days following the North Korean nuclear test, in part to tamp down any enthusiasm in Seoul or Tokyo for reconsidering their commitment not to build a Japanese or South Korean nuclear bomb.

At a news conference with Mr. Yoon yesterday, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld noted that a public statement is issued each year following U.S.-South Korean defense talks and that it always reaffirms the provision of a nuclear umbrella for South Korea, consistent with the 1954 U.S.-South Korean defense treaty.

Mr. Rumsfeld said he was unaware of any proposal to change the language, "nor can I imagine how it could be improved upon."

Mr. Yoon responded by saying the matter had been discussed extensively in a series of meetings this week and that he hoped the language on U.S. nuclear protection for South Korea would be different than in years past.

"Oh, do you?" Mr. Rumsfeld said.

Mr. Yoon said in his meetings with Mr. Rumsfeld that the statement should be more explicit about U.S. nuclear assurances, according to two American officials who participated in the talks and who would discuss the matter only on the condition of anonymity.

At the time of the Rumsfeld-Yoon news conference, the statement had not been completed or made public, but the U.S. officials said the language on U.S. nuclear assurances had been settled. The officials said the language would not include the provisions sought by the South Koreans.

The officials said the statement would say, in this regard, that Mr. Rumsfeld "offered assurances of firm U.S. commitment and immediate support to the Republic of Korea, including continuation of the extended deterrence offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella, consistent with the mutual defense treaty."

That is roughly the same as the statement issued after last year's meeting, which said, "Rumsfeld reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to the security of the Republic of Korea and to the continued provision of a nuclear umbrella for the Republic of Korea, consistent with the mutual defense treaty."

The United States intervened on the South's behalf when the North invaded in June 1950. The two sides fought to a standstill and the conflict ended with the signing of an armistice in July 1953. U.S. forces have remained in the South ever since.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061020-105403-2536r.htm>

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Washington Post

October 21, 2006

Pg. 11

China Gave 'Strong Message' To North Koreans, Rice Says

Beijing Is Called Ready to Apply U.N. Sanctions

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

BEIJING, Oct. 20 -- China and the United States on Friday appeared to close ranks on North Korea, as Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice emerged from a day-long series of meetings here to say that a high-level Chinese government delegation had given North Korea "a strong message" about its nuclear test. China urged North Korea, its longtime beneficiary, to return to six-nation negotiations and appeared ready to implement key measures of the U.N. Security Council resolution punishing the Pyongyang government, Rice said.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and other Chinese officials did not provide details of the meeting on Thursday between a Chinese envoy and North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. But Li pointedly told reporters after meeting with Rice that China will "continue to implement our relevant international obligations and exert our due role in this process."

Rice, briefing reporters traveling with her, said China is considering a range of responses, but said she did not press the government to take any particular steps to force North Korea back to the bargaining table to discuss its nuclear

program. "Let's just watch and see what China will do," Rice said, adding that "nobody wants to be on the wrong side of this resolution, in other words, something slipping through."

The U.N. resolution bars trade with North Korea in major weapons, materials that could be used in a nuclear program and luxury goods. China has an 880-mile land border with North Korea, and Rice said the border would be closely monitored.

China has been North Korea's largest trading partner, and has frequently criticized the Bush administration for its refusal to hold bilateral negotiations with North Korea. But officials here were shocked by Pyongyang's refusal to heed its warnings not to conduct a test.

Rice arrived in China after stops in Japan and South Korea to coordinate strategy on implementing the resolution and to reassure Asians that the United States does not want to escalate the conflict. Among the leaders she met with were Chinese President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao.

Rice said it was clear that early reports on U.S. intentions have "conjured up in people's minds the Cuban missile crisis," in which the United States imposed a quarantine on Cuba, and she wanted to allay those fears.

She also emphasized that she had not come to Asia "with my own list of what every country in the world should do." But she predicted that the sanctions may remain in place for some time. "I do believe that you're getting a firm response," she said. "If there isn't some movement, you may get a firmer response as time goes on, but I think this is going to evolve."

On Thursday, China announced that State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan had met with Kim in Pyongyang. When Rice and Tang posed for photographs before their meeting Friday, Tang was overheard telling Rice, "Fortunately, my visit this time has not been in vain." Reporters were then ushered from the room.

The Tang-Kim meeting spurred a rash of news reports in South Korea that Kim had expressed regret for the Oct. 9 test, that North Korea would return to the talks and even that North Korea had declared it would not conduct a second test. Like the Chinese officials, Rice did not disclose details of the meeting, except to say she did not get any indication that Kim expressed regret for testing the weapon.

"There wasn't anything particularly surprising" about Kim's message, Rice said, suggesting the reports that Kim promised a halt in testing were also inaccurate.

Rice aides declined to elaborate on her remarks. In Washington, White House spokesman Tony Snow said that "the North Koreans have not made proffers to return to the six-party talks" and instead said they would return only if the United States ended a crackdown on North Korean money-laundering operations.

The talks have been suspended for nearly a year. North Korea has blamed a U.S. Treasury Department action against a bank in Macau called Banco Delta Asia, which the department had identified as the main conduit for bringing North Korean-made counterfeit U.S. bills into the international system. The Treasury Department had determined that senior officials at the Macau bank accepted large deposits of cash and agreed to place the bogus money into circulation. The bank is also reputed to hold the private accounts of Kim and his family.

In September 2005, four days before North Korea reached an agreement with the United States, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea on a "statement of principles" to guide nuclear negotiations, the Treasury Department formally designated the bank as a "primary money-laundering concern." Banco Delta Asia quickly teetered on the edge of collapse, and banks around the world began to curtail their dealings with North Korea for fear of being similarly tainted. After the impact of the Treasury action became apparent, North Korea refused to return to the six-party talks.

Rice said a recent decision by at least four Chinese banks to stop dealing with North Korea was related to the investigation of Banco Delta Asia. "I will tell you that the reaction to Banco Delta Asia has been quite extraordinary, and it must mean that it's having an effect," she said.

In Washington, meanwhile, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and South Korean Defense Minister Yoon Kwang Ung met Friday and approved a joint communique emphasizing the "continuation of the extended deterrence offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella" for South Korea. The 2005 communique had spoken only of "continued provision of a nuclear umbrella."

South Korean officials had urged their U.S. counterparts to expand on the "nuclear umbrella" assurance, although the Pentagon resisted the change, U.S. defense officials said. "They wanted to define it further" said a Pentagon spokesman, Maj. David Smith, such as "if the North does this, we'll do that." But he said U.S. policy is not to provide such details, either publicly or privately.

At a Pentagon news conference, Rumsfeld repeatedly said that this year's joint communique would be virtually the same as last year's, until Yoon contradicted him. "I hope that when the joint statement comes out eventually, it'll have different language from years past," Yoon said.

Staff writer Ann Scott Tyson in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/20/AR2006102000117.html>

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New York Times
October 21, 2006
Pg. 8

U.S. And China Call For North Korea To Rejoin Talks

By Thom Shanker and Joseph Kahn

BEIJING, Oct. 20 — The United States and China spoke in a unified voice on Friday to call for the resumption of six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program, but they did not announce concrete steps to increase pressure on the North Korean government.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said she had been told by the Chinese government that a special envoy sent by Beijing to North Korea had delivered "a strong message." And the Chinese foreign minister, standing beside Ms. Rice, pledged his nation's commitment to breaking the stalemate over the North's nuclear weapons program. The meetings in Beijing took place after China's special envoy, State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, returned from Pyongyang, where he had met with Kim Jong-il, the North Korean leader. Chinese officials described the meeting as "positive" and "greatly significant," but declined to provide details of what Mr. Kim had said.

Two South Korean news organizations quoted diplomatic sources as saying Mr. Kim had offered to resume nuclear talks under certain conditions, and said he gave assurances that he had no plans to conduct a second nuclear test, as many in the region had feared.

Those accounts were not confirmed by either Chinese or American officials, and North Korea held a huge political rally in downtown Pyongyang to "hail the success" of its nuclear test.

Li Zhaoxing, China's foreign minister, said, "We are ready to maintain and continue to strengthen our consultation and cooperation with all the other parties to strive to break the stalemate as soon as possible and reconvene the six-party talks."

Ms. Rice stressed that North Korea should return to those talks "without condition," and that the financial restrictions the United States has imposed to crack down on North Korean counterfeiting would not be lifted just to entice the North back to the negotiations.

In comments later Friday, Ms. Rice expressed confidence that China was committed to enforcing new United Nations military sanctions on North Korea, and that a number of economic and trade measures were under review. Asked specifically whether the Chinese were considering halting their oil supplies to North Korea, Ms. Rice said the Chinese government had told her it would "consider a whole host of measures."

Ms. Rice also said the Beijing leadership pledged to be "scrupulous" about ensuring that North Korea does not ship prohibited materials across its lengthy border with China.

As she neared the end of a fast-paced swing through Japan, South Korea and China, with a final stop in Moscow planned for the weekend, Ms. Rice said that halting North Korea's trade in nuclear bomb-making materials and missiles would take time; she emphasized that "this is an early trip."

The six-nation talks over North Korea's nuclear program stalled after multiple rounds in 2004 and 2005. Mr. Kim ignored Chinese pressure to return to the bargaining table before conducting a missile test in July and the nuclear test on Oct. 9.

Some Chinese experts say they hope Mr. Kim, emboldened by becoming the world's latest nuclear power, is eager to resume negotiations and see the price he can extract in exchange for slowing or scrapping his nuclear program. But others here doubt he has any intention of rolling back the nuclear program, the realization of an enormously expensive effort begun by Mr. Kim's father, Kim Il-sung, after the Korean War.

There were mixed signs on Friday about the potential for resuming talks. Mr. Kim's meeting on Thursday with Mr. Tang was treated as a sign of progress here, if only because Mr. Kim appeared eager to repair relations with his leading benefactor.

A South Korean newspaper, Chosun Ilbo, citing diplomatic sources in China, said Mr. Kim had "expressed regret" for the nuclear test. Ms. Rice, however, said that her Chinese hosts had made no mention of any expression of regret by Mr. Kim. She said that there was nothing surprising in the Chinese summary of the visit by their envoy to North Korea.

Later in the day, though, the Yonhap News Agency of South Korea quoted diplomatic sources as saying that Mr. Kim had promised not to conduct another nuclear test, an event that China and the United States have said would quickly lead to a much harsher set of sanctions on his already isolated country.

That account also could not be confirmed.

It is unclear whether a new offer from North Korea to return to talks, provided certain conditions are met, will persuade China to reduce pressure on Pyongyang.

The risk for the United States is that China may soften its stance if it perceives that the Bush administration, rather than Mr. Kim, is throwing up obstacles to resuming talks.

Mr. Kim has pushed to hold one-on-one negotiations with the United States, but the Bush administration has refused to negotiate with North Korea outside the six-party talks. China has urged President Bush to authorize bilateral talks, but he has declined.

Even so, Chinese scholars who have held discussions with Chinese leaders say that North Korea's missile and nuclear tests, which were conducted despite stern warnings from China, had pushed Beijing toward a less accommodating approach toward its neighbor and onetime ally.

China twice backed United Nations sanctions against North Korea, and has since then indicated internally that it may be prepared to impose a range of bilateral sanctions if Mr. Kim continues to develop his nuclear program.

The Chinese leadership, the experts said, is prepared to reduce inexpensive oil supplies to North Korea if it conducts more nuclear tests or refuses to return to talks.

China has also imposed limited restrictions on banking transactions with North Korea, especially in the trading post of Dandong, on the Chinese side of the North Korean border, bankers there say.

Chinese analysts said they were not surprised that Mr. Kim would seek to blunt international solidarity against him. But they said they doubted he would be prepared to bargain in earnest about dismantling his nuclear program.

"I am pessimistic about the prospects for a diplomatic breakthrough," said Zhu Feng, a senior international affairs scholar and arms control expert at Beijing University. "The talks have to be given a chance, but I see no signs that Kim has undergone a sudden change of heart."

Mr. Zhu said he also doubted that China had much patience for inconclusive negotiations or North Korean "tricks" to buy time.

"I don't think our leaders are prepared to tolerate him much longer," Mr. Zhu said. "My feeling is that they are prepared to implement harsher penalties and will have to proceed with them before long."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/21/world/asia/21rice.html>

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Los Angeles Times

October 21, 2006

N. Korea Threat Lies In Nuclear Sales

U.S. intelligence officials and weapons experts say the possible export of atomic material and know-how is a greater concern than an attack.

By Greg Miller, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. intelligence officials and weapons proliferation experts say they are concerned that North Korea could add plutonium to the extensive inventory of arms components and technologies it already has sold to such nations as Syria, Pakistan and Libya.

Because of North Korea's track record as an eager exporter of weaponry, some experts are more worried about the government in Pyongyang spreading nuclear technology to other "rogue" nations than about the possibility of it launching a nuclear attack.

"Iran having nuclear weapons is a threat," said David Albright, a former weapons inspector and current president of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington.

"It's hard to articulate that North Korea having nuclear weapons is a threat to anybody, except by selling it."

That concern prompted a warning from President Bush on Wednesday that Pyongyang would face a "grave consequence" if caught trying to sell plutonium or nuclear weapons to "rogue" nations or terrorist groups.

Albright and other experts, as well as American intelligence officials, said they had not seen evidence that North Korea was attempting to sell the nuclear technology it demonstrated in an underground explosion Oct. 9. Doing so, they said, would be an extreme and dangerous step even for one of the world's most defiant regimes.

But the combination of North Korea's newly demonstrated capability and its long history of selling arms has refocused international attention on the nuclear proliferation threat.

"I don't think you'll find guys saying they've got devices ready to sell off the shelf," said a U.S. intelligence official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the classified nature of the subject. "I think the concern would be about components and raw material."

Tracking North Korea's weapons programs and shipments has been a major priority for U.S. intelligence agencies. Last year, American intelligence analysts concluded that samples of processed uranium surrendered by Libya probably had come from North Korea. Libya turned over the materials when it agreed in 2003 to abandon its illegal weapons programs.

Pyongyang has a more extensive and established record as an exporter of conventional missile components.

A study by the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies says North Korea had sold "several hundred" mid-range ballistic missiles "as well as materials, equipment, components and production technology" to countries that include Egypt, Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Syria and Yemen. Most of the exported missiles have been variants of the Scud design the Soviets first sold to North Korea in the late 1960s, the study says.

Over a two-decade period, sales of missiles and components have brought in revenue of several hundred million dollars, "a significant portion of North Korea's hard currency earnings," the study says.

North Korea is an impoverished country that relies on China for much of its food, and it depends on the sale of weapons and contraband, allegedly including counterfeit U.S. currency, for much of its revenue.

North Korea is believed to have engaged in barter arrangements by which it has provided missiles to Iran in exchange for oil. Of greater concern has been an apparent deal with Pakistan begun in 1997 by which North Korea provided missile components and technology in return for expertise on developing a uranium enrichment program — a means of producing weapons-grade nuclear material that is more difficult to detect than the reprocessing of plutonium.

Numerous North Korean weapons shipments have been intercepted. In 1996, Swiss authorities stopped a consignment of Scud missile components headed to Egypt, prompting Cairo to promise to curtail its purchases from North Korea.

Given North Korea's record, its nuclear test has triggered fears that it may next seek to export such weapons technology as well.

As recently as several years ago, American intelligence agencies concluded that North Korea probably had enough plutonium for two or three bombs. But in December 2002, North Korea expelled international inspectors, soon thereafter withdrew from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and subsequently declared that it was resuming the reprocessing of more than 8,000 spent fuel rods.

"They have certainly produced enough plutonium since that time to make a number of more weapons," said a U.S. defense official familiar with the intelligence on North Korea.

It is unclear whether Pyongyang plans further nuclear tests. American spy satellites and other surveillance have detected suspicious activity at other underground facilities, possibly indicating preparations for another test, U.S. intelligence officials said. However, South Korean and Japanese media reported Friday that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il had told a Chinese envoy that Pyongyang would not conduct another test.

Experts said that further tests would suggest that North Korea has an ample supply of plutonium, enough to make additional bombs and raise concerns about proliferation.

Recent sanctions imposed by the United Nations bar North Korea from spreading nuclear material or technology. And most experts said the country would probably refrain from doing so. "It's still a low-probability worry," said Michael Levi, a nuclear weapons expert at the Council on Foreign Relations, "but it's the high consequences that make people concerned."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-nukes21oct21.1.6080254.story>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

October 21, 2006

Ahmadinejad: Israeli Leaders Are 'Terrorists'

Iran's chief also branded as 'illegitimate' the U.N. Security Council in the fight over nuclear plans.

By Ali Akbar Dareini, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran - President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad branded Israeli leaders "a group of terrorists" yesterday after Israel's prime minister warned that Tehran would have "a price to pay" if it did not roll back its nuclear program. The exchange was among the harshest from either leader, and reflected tension ahead of the planned circulation next week of a draft United Nations resolution on Iran's nuclear program.

Ahmadinejad called the U.N. Security Council and its decisions "illegitimate" and said the world body was being used as a tool of Iran's enemies - the United States and Britain.

Across Iran, millions took to the streets on Al-Quds Day, a holiday established by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to assert Muslim claims on Jerusalem, which is known as al-Quds in Arabic. Rallies took place in Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad, and elsewhere across the Islamic world.

Ahmadinejad, speaking to a crowd of hundreds of thousands in Tehran, threatened any country that supports Israel, and said the United States and its allies had "imposed a group of terrorists" on the region by their support of the Jewish state.

"It is in your own interest to distance yourself from these criminals... . This is an ultimatum. Don't complain tomorrow," he cautioned. "Nations will take revenge."

His comments came a day after Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert warned that Iran would have "a price to pay" if it did not give up its nuclear ambitions, and hinted Israel might take action.

He did not threaten to cripple Iran's nuclear program with a military strike, as Israel did 25 years ago in Iraq, when it sent planes to destroy an unfinished nuclear reactor. But Olmert, on his way home from a three-day trip to Moscow, said Thursday the Iranians should "be afraid" of the consequences of their defiance.

"They have to understand that if they object to every compromise, there will be a price to pay," he said.

Yesterday, Israel's army chief, Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz, said Israel could not ignore the threat of a nuclear Iran. "This combination of nuclear weapons and an extreme regime which has the clear goal of destroying Israel is a combination to which we cannot remain indifferent," Halutz said.

Diplomats have said they would seek limited sanctions against Tehran for its refusal to suspend uranium enrichment - a key process that can produce either fuel for a nuclear reactor or material for a warhead.

Iran claims enrichment as a national right, and says its program aims only to generate electricity. The United States and some in Europe accuse Tehran of seeking to develop nuclear weapons.

"What sort of Security Council is this? The whole world knows that the U.S. and Britain are enemies of the Iranian nation," Ahmadinejad said yesterday.

The United States and Britain - along with France, Russia and China - have the power to veto any Security Council measures.

"The time is over for such logic. Under such circumstances, the Security Council is illegitimate and its decisions are illegitimate," Ahmadinejad said, drawing chants of "Death to America" from the crowd.

A spokesman for British Prime Minister Tony Blair said Ahmadinejad's comments came as no surprise.

"They're consistent with what Mr. Ahmadinejad has said for some time," the spokesman said, on condition of anonymity in keeping with government policy. "It's why we take the issue of Iran in general so seriously and the possibility of it acquiring nuclear weaponry so seriously."

Israel: Iran Blocked Release of Prisoner

Israel accused the Iranian government of paying \$50 million to block a deal that would have freed an Israeli soldier captured by Hamas-linked gunmen who crossed from Gaza into Israel on June 25. Hamas and Iran dismissed the accusation as untrue.

Israel's U.N. ambassador, Dan Gillerman, told the Security Council on Thursday that "we heard news" earlier in the day that Tehran bribed Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal "to sabotage the negotiations on the release of Cpl. Gilad Shalit and prevent his release."

Iranian diplomat Mansour Sadeghi told the council his government "categorically rejected" all allegations against his country made by Israel, dismissing Gillerman's allegations as "baseless and absurd."

According to a report Thursday in the Israeli daily Yedioth Ahronoth, which cited anonymous sources from a Western country, the deal was foiled when an Iranian delegation met Mashaal in Damascus and offered him \$50 million to block it.

Mashaal, who lives in exile in Damascus, accepted the money and ratcheted up his demands for Shalit's release, the report said.

Osama Hamdan, Hamas' representative in Lebanon, said in an interview yesterday that the report "is an obvious Israeli lie."

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/15812290.htm>

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Miami Herald

October 22, 2006

Sanctions against Iran losing support

Support for sanctions against Iran has shown signs of ebbing recently, with Russia not supporting punitive measures.

By Ali Akbar Dareini, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran - Iran offered Saturday to talk with the West about its disputed nuclear program days before the U.S. and its partners are expected to circulate a draft resolution providing for limited sanctions against Tehran.

But prospects for any U.N. action dimmed as Russia declared it will not support measures to punish Iran or "promote ideas of regime change there."

"Any measures of influence should encourage creating conditions for talks," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview with Kuwait's news agency.

A draft resolution on Iran is expected to be introduced in the U.N. Security Council within days, and diplomats have said they would seek limited sanctions against Tehran for refusing to suspend uranium enrichment.

"We won't be able to support and will oppose any attempts to use the Security Council to punish Iran or use Iran's program in order to promote the ideas of regime change there," Lavrov said in the interview, which was posted Saturday on the Russian Foreign Ministry's website.

Russia -- along with the U.S., France, China and Britain -- has veto power on the 15-nation Security Council and could block sanctions.

French Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie also indicated that support for sanctions was showing signs of ebbing, saying that pressure could be lifted if Iran takes steps toward resolving questions over its nuclear program.

Lavrov's Iranian counterpart, Manouchehr Mottaki, offered to hold discussions with the West during which his government would explain its nuclear ambitions.

"Dialogue is the best way to reach an understanding," Mottaki said. "We are ready to hold talks about the reason for enrichment."

Uranium enrichment is a key process that can produce either fuel for a nuclear reactor or the material for a warhead. Tehran says its uranium-enrichment program aims only to generate electricity, while the United States and others suspect it's a cover for building atomic weapons.

Mottaki did not suggest a time or venue for the discussions, and Western capitals issued no response.

Still, Mottaki's invitation gave the Security Council -- already saddled with the issue of North Korea's more advanced nuclear program -- a possible out.

North Korea joined the elite club of nuclear-armed nations on Oct. 9, with its nuclear test. The Security Council imposed sanctions on Pyongyang days later.

That rebuke followed only a few days of debate. The council has been considering Iran's case since February.

Lavrov said international efforts should focus on forcing Tehran to cooperate more closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"There is no proof that Iran is pursuing a military nuclear program. There are suspicions and questions that have not yet been answered," Lavrov said.

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/15819910.htm>

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Washington Post

October 22, 2006

Pg. 21

Analysis

Rice Sees Bright Spot In China's New Role Since N. Korean Test

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

MOSCOW, Oct. 21 -- President Bush came into office six years ago deeply skeptical of Chinese intentions, casting doubt on the idea advanced by the Clinton administration that there could be a "strategic partnership" between China and the United States.

Now, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other U.S. officials have begun to depict China's increasingly central role in the administration's myriad foreign policy problems as a significant achievement.

Rice, who arrived here Saturday on the last leg of her mission to galvanize action against North Korea, said she saw "some data points" that suggest China is becoming more of a partner on issues of importance to the United States, though the shift will not "happen in one fell swoop."

There is some evidence of China's shift, but the argument also has the virtue of finding a silver lining in the dark strategic cloud posed by North Korea's test of a nuclear weapon.

Many experts regard North Korea's test as a failure of Bush's nonproliferation policy. Critics have charged that Bush, distracted by Iraq, allowed North Korea to bolt from a Clinton-era agreement on freezing its nuclear programs, build a stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium and finally test a weapon. Bush, unlike President Bill Clinton in an earlier crisis, refused to conduct sustained bilateral negotiations with North Korea and instead set up a somewhat cumbersome six-party negotiating framework hosted by China.

At many points, the United States found itself at odds with other partners in the six-party process, such as China and South Korea, which repeatedly urged the Bush administration to show more flexibility in its tactics. Meanwhile, administration officials were often divided on North Korea policy, with some wanting to engage the country and others wanting to isolate it.

Before North Korea announced it had detonated a nuclear device, some senior officials even said they were quietly rooting for a test, believing that would finally clarify the debate within the administration.

On her trip to Asia this week, Rice has come close to saying the test was a net plus for the United States. She has tried to deflect criticism by saying the test was an affirmation, rather than a failure, of the Bush administration's policy of trying to draw China deeper into negotiations on North Korea.

Noting that North Korea has spent three decades developing a nuclear weapon, Rice said it was "very unusual and quite significant" that China, which has traditionally considered sanctions to be a violation of national sovereignty, supported a tough U.N. Security Council resolution punishing North Korea. The resolution is under Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter, which calls for mandatory sanctions for issues affecting international security.

"I don't care how many times you visited Pyongyang," Rice said, referring to a trip made by then-Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright to the North Korean capital in 2000. "China had to be part of this regime to deal with the North Korea nuclear problem, and you're seeing it. Thirty years ago, you wouldn't have been able to get a Security Council resolution on North Korea, and when you get one it's Chapter 7, it's 15-0 and China's at the center of it. Not bad for a couple years' work."

Rice acknowledged that it was still unclear how hard the Chinese government would push North Korea, although she said China's views on the issue were "evolving." She said China had concerns about North Korea's stability and the prospect of a mass influx of refugees if the government collapses. And though China has always valued the status quo, Rice said: "I don't think that they are making a lot of assumptions about the status quo."

China is very concerned, for example, that Japan might decide to build a nuclear arsenal in response to North Korea's test. The Japanese government has ruled that out for now. But when Rice visited Tokyo on her first stop, officials there wanted to focus almost exclusively on receiving firm assurances that Japan is still protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. The test "had set off a lot of questions that the Japanese were asking about their own security posture," Rice said.

In addition to the North Korea discussions, China is an important participant in the drive to roll back Iran's nuclear program. China also has extensive oil investments in Sudan, which has adamantly rebuffed a U.S.-led push to bring U.N. peacekeepers to Sudan's troubled Darfur region.

In 2005, when China abstained from a U.N. resolution launching a war crimes investigation into atrocities in Darfur, U.S. officials reported that China's state-owned petroleum company immediately erected billboards in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, attesting to China's friendship with Sudan. But in Rice's talks with Chinese officials Friday, she said she was able to have "more concrete discussions" about how to deal with Sudan, including strategizing on an upcoming meeting of African leaders in Beijing.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/21/AR2006102100296.html>

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New York Times
October 22, 2006

Tension, Desperation: The China-North Korean Border

By Norimitsu Onishi

NORTH KOREA'S porous 880-mile border with China is its lifeline to the outside world. About 39 percent of its trade last year was with China, which, critically, supplies it with 80 to 90 percent of its oil. Trafficking in money transfers and human beings also flourishes.

By contrast, North Korea's border with Russia is 11 miles and heavily guarded; the 150-mile-long demilitarized zone with South Korea has hundreds of thousands of soldiers on each side. Until now, the North's ships have regularly visited Japan, from which relatives sent cash and goods, but North Korea's nuclear test is expected to end that trade.

For China, the bottom line is to erect the right number of fences, as it did along the border city of Dandong recently. Build too few and you invite instability in China. Build too many and North Korea collapses.

A collapse is clearly something Beijing doesn't want, and why it is lukewarm toward harsh sanctions. A collapse might send more North Koreans into China than the 100,000 to 300,000 estimated to have flooded the border during the North's great famine in the mid- to late-1990's. (Paradoxically, the famine also opened trade links when local North Korean groups formed to barter raw materials for Chinese grain.)

The end of the North Korean state could also bring reunification of the Korean Peninsula under America's ally South Korea, another development Beijing does not want. Also, the border itself could be put into question. South Korea has, in recent years, challenged China over the legacy of Koguryo, an ancient Korean kingdom whose rule extended into present-day China. The region is home to hundreds of thousands of ethnic Korean-Chinese, who face discrimination in China and might be sympathetic toward a reunified Korea making territorial claims.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/22/weekinreview/22marsh.html>

USA Today
October 23, 2006
Pg. 11

N. Korean Economy Not Easily Gauged

Clues suggest some ability to bear sanctions

By Barbara Slavin, USA Today

SEOUL — At a kindergarten in Hyangsan, a small city near North Korea's capital, dozens of colorfully dressed children put on a calisthenics display this month for visitors from the U.N. World Food Program.

The children, full of corn porridge and high-protein biscuits provided daily by the aid agency, jumped, stretched briskly and looked healthy, said Jean-Pierre DeMargerie, the top program official in North Korea. Kids in the front rows looked especially good, he said. "Those 20-30 yards back were not as well groomed or dressed."

"It's always difficult to get a clear picture," DeMargerie said. "The North Koreans don't like to expose those that might be sick or weak. You build your assumptions on a relatively small sample."

North Korea, one of the world's most isolated nations, is a hard society to fathom even for the few foreigners who visit regularly. Whether it is on the verge of economic collapse or resilient in the face of decades of adversity and deprivation remains a matter of conjecture.

The shroud that keeps North Korea hidden makes it virtually impossible to judge whether the limited sanctions the United Nations imposed after North Korea claimed to have conducted a nuclear weapons test Oct. 9 will have any effect on the regime of Kim Jong Il.

The Bush administration hopes the sanctions and international rebuke, particularly from China, North Korea's main source of trade and investment, will prompt Kim to halt his nuclear program and resume negotiations on a diplomatic solution. "I think (the North Koreans) were surprised by a 15-0" vote on sanctions by the U.N. Security Council, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Saturday. "We'll see whether or not they are prepared."

DeMargerie and a half-dozen others who visited North Korea recently say it is better off than a few years ago and may be able to withstand sanctions.

The sanctions could reduce the amount of hard currency North Korea receives, but market reforms in place since 2002 and stockpiling of excess cash, food aid and fuel may give Kim a cushion to defy the U.N.

In 2005, North Korea "received a surplus of a half-million to 600,000 tons of grain" from China and South Korea, said Kenneth Quinones, a former U.S. intelligence expert on North Korea who teaches at Akita International University in Japan. "It looks like most of that went into storage." North Korea also had a decent harvest this year after two consecutive bumper crops, he said.

Marcus Noland, a Korea specialist at the Institute for International Economics in Washington, said millions of dollars in Chinese investment went into North Korea during the first half of 2006, more than the country could absorb.

Signs of progress are evident to Steve Linton, 56, who has made more than 50 trips to North Korea in the last 15 years. The son and grandson of Christian missionaries, Linton heads the Eugene Bell Foundation, which has delivered medical equipment to about 70 hospitals throughout the country.

"It used to be that people were visibly thinner in the spring," when food from the previous year's harvest had run out and new crops were about to be planted, said Linton, who last visited North Korea in May. Now, he said, "that distinction has pretty much disappeared."

Linton has noticed that North Koreans are better dressed and that there are more bicycles in a country where a decade ago, nearly everyone traveled on foot. "It's not lightning speed, but it's gradual change," he said.

Pyongyang, a gloomy capital of bland concrete high-rises and little commerce a decade ago, has a few dozen shops and many sidewalk stalls selling ice cream, cookies, flowers, even videocassettes, said Simon Cockerell, manager for Beijing-based Koryo Tours, which organizes trips to North Korea.

Cockerell said there are four or five billboards for cars, the first commercial advertising in the country. Electricity blackouts, once common, are rare in the capital, he said.

Other indicators of an economic cushion include:

- A resumption of a state-run rationing system that hands out about half a pound of grain daily to city residents, who make up 70% of North Korea's 22 million people. DeMargerie said North Korean officials told his organization that rationing, which collapsed during a famine in the 1990s, resumed last year. It provides corn or rice to make porridge, a mainstay of the North Korean diet.

- Diversification of oil suppliers. China provides about 80% of North Korean fuel, and Iran and Indonesia supply most of the rest, Quinones said. That gives supply alternatives should China carry out threats to restrict deliveries. Noland said North Korea also may have stockpiled diesel fuel that South Korea provided in 2004.

Noland, who spent several weeks in China last summer along the 880-mile border with North Korea, said economic progress is notable for one group of new entrepreneurs: managers of shuttered state-owned factories who are trading coke, coal and iron ore for cheap Chinese consumer goods and food, which they then sell to fellow North Koreans. “A lot of small-scale activity in North Korea is done by state-owned enterprises,” Noland said. “They have transformed themselves into retailers. I call it the ‘Wal-Martization’ of the North Korean economy.”

On the negative side, trade with China, which totaled more than \$1.5 billion last year, is down about 30% this year because of the difficulty of transferring funds to North Korean bank accounts, said Nam Sung Wook, head of North Korean Studies at Korea University in Seoul. The problem stems from U.S. action last year to freeze North Korean accounts in a bank in the Chinese enclave of Macau linked to counterfeiting and money laundering.

“There is some confusion among traders in Dandong,” a Chinese city across the Yalu River from North Korea that has become a center of cross-border commerce, Nam said. He forecasts negative growth for the North Korean economy this year after 2.2% growth last year. Even so, new sanctions “will not collapse the North Korean economy,” he said.

Those likely to suffer most are salaried urban professionals, said Nam, who visited Pyongyang in July. He said he heard grumbling from technocrats and professors, whose average monthly pay comes out to about \$33 at the official exchange rate but only \$5 on the black market.

North Korea also has massive infrastructure needs that make it difficult to sustain economic gains. DeMargerie said only 20%-25% of households have access to clean running water, and the sanitation system is becoming a serious health hazard.

Still, Noland predicted, “They can make it through the winter. They are hunkering down and believe they can survive until the world accepts them as a nuclear power.”

Rice conceded that sanctions are no certain solution. “I think we’ll be at this for a while,” she said. “I can’t tell you how long.”

http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20061023/a_korea23.art.htm

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New York Times

October 23, 2006

Pg. 7

News Analysis

A Different Tactic For Rice: Speaking Softly Without The Stick

By Thom Shanker

SHANNON, Ireland, Oct. 22 — With North Korea’s nuclear test presenting one of her greatest diplomatic challenges, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has taken an approach that allies say they have seen not often enough from the Bush administration: an effort to persuade and to build consensus, rather than to dictate terms or press for immediate agreement.

On Sunday the secretary concluded her around-the-world mission to urge American negotiating partners, some with complex relationships to North Korea or to the United States, to start strict enforcement of United Nations military sanctions on North Korea.

There had been widespread indications that some of the major players were unwilling to take the steps necessary to enforce the sanctions. But as she flew back to Washington, Ms. Rice tried to convey a sense that she had done what was necessary to preserve the required, if nominal, unity among Japan, South Korea, China, Russia and the United States, members of stalled six-party talks with North Korea over its nuclear program.

Ms. Rice and her foreign counterparts announced no concrete steps to fire up a new embargo machine that could press North Korea, although commitments to a set of initial goals emerged. Thus she was able to contend that important progress had been made toward a new “nonproliferation regime,” whose core would be a vastly enhanced regional system of monitoring and inspecting cargo to and from North Korea.

“We could be — probably will be — in this regime for a long time,” Ms. Rice said. While “it’s quite important what happens on Day 1,” she said, her public diplomacy tried to manage expectations about what was and was not possible from her first foreign lobbying campaign for the sanctions.

This was not a trip planned to culminate with agreements signed or even boxes checked off, she said. “An effective way to monitor and scrutinize and deal with North Korean transfers” of weapons material, nuclear bombs and missiles will “have to evolve over a period of time,” she said.

Her call for patience and perspective in carrying out sanctions to press North Korea to give up its weapons program and return to six-party talks — each is anything but inevitable — echoed a folk maxim about patience and

perspective, and also about inevitability, that could be heard on Moscow streets as she met with Kremlin leaders on Saturday and Sunday.

Ms. Rice, a student of Russian language, history and politics, is familiar with the old saying Russians quote as the skies turn to slate and chilled rain hits a frosty earth: "Winter doesn't begin until the third snow."

As Ms. Rice enters the autumn months of the Bush administration's tenure in office, she dropped early administration mantras — like other nations are "either with us or against us" — on this trip, and instead repeated at each whistle-stop, "I did not come here, nor will I go anyplace else, to try and dictate to governments what they ought to do in response to Resolution 1718," the United Nations Security Council resolution on North Korea.

The Bush administration's struggle to rethink a faltering Iraq strategy hung over her entire trip like a shadow. Given that the Bush administration has been more reticent all along to take strong action toward North Korea, her more collegial approach was not entirely unexpected. And her approach may have been more necessity than virtue.

The administration may simply be in no position to press its partners in a tougher way over North Korea. To paraphrase a comment — not entirely well received — by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, Ms. Rice's cabinet colleague at the Pentagon, a nation goes off to diplomatic negotiations with the bargaining chips it has, not the ones it might like to have or will be able to have at a later date.

But Ms. Rice's tempered message played well across Asia, and extremely well in Japan, whose policies were already mostly in line with those of Washington.

Unexpectedly, the Chinese responded warmly, too, prompting fresh assessments from senior State Department officials that the North Korea crisis may, in the end, bring the United States and China into closer partnership on other issues.

In the three-dimensional chess of diplomacy, deterrence and sanctions, China's broad endorsement of the American position — at least as put in resolution form by the Security Council — was in no small measure encouraged by a clear statement from Ms. Rice reaffirming the United States' military commitment to the defense of Japan. That statement helped preclude, at least for now, any serious move by Japan to start its own nuclear weapons program, which China knows would jumble its security calculus in the region.

The United States and China are now on the same page on this issue in ways they have not been before, and any solution to the North Korea crisis leads through Beijing. But the United States and China still have stark differences over whether the ultimate goal is to peacefully manage a status quo relationship with a denuclearized North Korea, as China prefers, or whether to add pressure to the point where a change in its leadership may occur.

China fears that if North Korea came unglued, millions of refugees would flood across its border.

South Korea, not China, was the odd man out. America's military ally on the lower half of the tense Korean Peninsula was reluctant in its public endorsement of the positions urged by Washington. South Korea feels most threatened by North Korea's nuclear program, but also the most exposed politically, and a number of South Korean opinion leaders are doing all they can to rescue their policy of engaging, not isolating, North Korea.

Ms. Rice acknowledged during her journey that Iran, with its own nuclear ambitions, was watching her efforts. She left one senior adviser in Asia to continue discussions of sanctions, while another spent time at the working-group level to devise specific goals and rules for monitoring and inspecting North Korean cargo.

Administration officials say those initial steps forward may already be influencing North Korean decisions about whether to hold off on a second test, even as they acknowledge the absolute unpredictability of the leadership. Over time, they hope, a strict sanctions architecture can be erected to contain its nuclear ambitions and prevent the transfer of weapons to another state or to terrorists.

All that may be true, but only if winter does not begin until the third snow.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/23/world/asia/23rice.html>

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World fails to ratify WMD sea law a year on-IMO

19 Oct 2006 18:01:00 GMT

Source: Reuters

By Stefano Ambrogi

LONDON, Oct 19 (Reuters) - A United Nations treaty designed to stop the carriage of weapons of mass destruction by sea has not been ratified by a single country, including the United States, despite its being formally agreed a year ago.

The shortcoming emerged as world powers this week grappled with enforcing U.N. sanctions on North Korea that include the inspection of seaborne cargo and possible ship searches in international waters.

Countries party to U.N. International Maritime Organisation (IMO) laws agreed to the new convention in London last October.

The Suppression of Unlawful Acts (SUA) at sea convention makes it illegal for merchant ships to carry WMD and engage in acts of terrorism on the high seas.

It also sets out procedures for the world's navies to stop and inspect ships flying the flag of another country. The world's oceans have been likened by many security experts to the Wild West amid scores of examples of smuggling of arms, drugs and people.

At the time, Secretary-General Efthimios Mitropoulos urged countries to ratify quickly so that the global shipping industry was fully armed to counteract "the gravest menace it had ever faced".

But the IMO said on Thursday that not a single country had ratified the law yet, not even the United States which had pushed so hard for the treaty in the first place.

"It is a source of tremendous frustration for the organisation," an IMO spokesman said.

When asked why ratification was taking so long, the spokesman said the convention was at the mercy of the legislative process in respective countries, which could be notoriously slow.

So far only seven countries: Australia, Austria, France, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the United States had signalled their intention to ratify, but none had done so.

The treaty agreed to by 126 countries, representing 82 percent of the world's 50,000-strong fleet, requires twelve nations to ratify before it becomes law and then only for those who are party to it.

Experts say the measure could have helped clamp down on the smuggling of nuclear arms components to countries like North Korea by writing into international law procedures to interdict on the high seas.

They say the law could also stop other proliferators from transferring weapons technology to countries such as Iran or extremist groups such as al Qaeda.

"It would add another string to the bow in terms of interdiction," said Chris Trelawny of IMO's security section.

Far out to sea, ships are sovereign entities and any interdiction without the relevant protocols in place could spark a major diplomatic incident.

"The Security Council resolution is different but it would have helped the Americans if they had ratified SUA and everyone else for that matter who had ratified," said Frank F. Wall, formerly chair of the IMO security arm and now a consultant.

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice flew to South Korea on Thursday and travels on to China on Friday to urge countries in the region to implement U.N. sanctions, particularly the inspection of cargo to intercept weapons parts.

China, North Korea's biggest trading partner, has backed the Security Council resolution and has said it will carry out cargo inspections, but has ruled out searches at sea.

<http://www.alertnet.org/thenews/newsdesk/L19251286.htm>

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Chicago Tribune
October 22, 2006

A Nuclear Fuel Bank Advocated

By Richard Lugar and Evan Bayh

While the full ramifications of North Korea's nuclear tests remain unclear, one thing is certain: The international community has failed to prevent countries from developing nuclear weapons, and we must act now to prevent a world of multiplying nuclear-armed countries and terrorists.

For too long, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has been exploited. States are allowed to walk up to the threshold of a nuclear bomb legally and openly. If a state agrees to forswear nuclear weapons, the treaty has been wrongly interpreted to say it may acquire nuclear technology and fuel, including enrichment facilities.

From there, all it takes is a country's decision to leave the treaty and, with minimal knowhow, become a nuclear weapons state complete with a steady supply of bomb-grade uranium and plutonium. This is how North Korea got the bomb, and it's how Iran is seeking to do so as well.

We need a new international non-proliferation standard that prevents countries from using the guise of nuclear energy to develop nuclear weapons.

The dangers are so great that the world community must declare that there is no right under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to enrich uranium or separate plutonium from spent nuclear fuel. No new country should be able to pursue uranium enrichment or plutonium separation, even if claiming to do so for civil nuclear energy purposes. Unfortunately, this change appears to be too late to prevent a nuclear North Korea. But the opportunity remains to stop countries such as Iran that may take a similar tack.

Unless the international community, led by the U.S., takes this important step, the coming surge in demand for nuclear power will lead more and more nations to seek their own enrichment facilities. Making the case for this change will be difficult, but it is necessary given the continued failures of the current approach.

Some countries will complain that in opposing new enrichment and reprocessing facilities, the U.S. is breaking the basic bargain of the treaty, which offers assistance on peaceful nuclear programs to countries that agree not to build nuclear bombs. Instead, for countries that renounce their own enrichment and reprocessing capabilities, we would offer guaranteed access to nuclear reactor fuel at reasonable prices, consistent with the treaty's true intent.

To assure steady nuclear reactor fuel supplies and services, we propose the establishment of an International Nuclear Fuel Bank, controlled by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Countries would be able to draw fuel for their power plants, provided they agree to strict verification and inspections, and then return the spent fuel for safe oversight by the agency. This proposal will ensure access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and prevent weapons proliferation, consistent with the treaty's true intent.

Equally important, the creation of the fuel bank cuts short the debate over nuclear technology rights. It will draw a clear line in the sand: Countries that refuse fuel bank services will come under immediate suspicion about their weapons intentions.

Think tanks and private groups, including the Nuclear Threat Initiative, have supported this idea. In fact, President Bush announced a similar initiative two years ago, but the issue has been given little attention. The challenges to achieving this goal are daunting, but so are the dangers if we fail to do so. It is time to try a new approach to stop the spread of nuclear weapons, before the North Korean test is echoed by Iran.

Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and Sen. Evan Bayh (D-Ind.) is a member of the Select Committee on Intelligence.

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