



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL

Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 536, 26 October 2006

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Influenza Pandemic: DOD Has Taken Important Actions to Prepare, but Accountability, Funding, and Communications Need to be Clearer and Focused Departmentwide.

GAO-06-1042, September 21.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-1042>

Highlights - <http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d061042high.pdf>

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Washington Post
October 24, 2006
Pg. 4

IAEA Head: Iran Close To Enriching Uranium

By Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writer

Iran has taken another step in its ability to enrich uranium, the head of the U.N. atomic energy agency confirmed yesterday, as the Bush administration and European allies failed to reach agreement on sanctions against Tehran's expanding nuclear program.

Mohamed ElBaradei, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said that Iranian technicians had pieced together a second line, or cascade, of 164 centrifuges and are days away from using the cascade to enrich uranium.

"It's in place and ready to go," ElBaradei said in a brief interview yesterday.

European officials suggested that the new cascade is a political move by Iranian officials who are hoping to send a defiant message to the U.N. Security Council as it weighs possible sanctions.

It would take many years for the Iranians to produce bomb-grade uranium using the other 164-centrifuge cascade it is currently operating, and U.S. intelligence officials think that Tehran is at least four years away from gaining the technical capability to produce enough nuclear material for a single weapon. Since February, Iran has produced minuscule amounts of low-enriched uranium suitable for the energy program that the government says it wants, and not for bombs. The same cascades, if run longer and more efficiently, can produce bomb-grade uranium.

The Bush administration has dismissed the energy claims and thinks Iran intends to use the program to secretly build nuclear weapons. ElBaradei's inspectors, on their fourth year investigating in Iran, reported earlier this year that they were unable to determine whether the Iranian program is peaceful.

The United States backed a package of European incentives designed to coax Iran into negotiations if it suspended the nuclear program during talks. When Tehran did not respond to the offer, the Security Council stepped in and passed a resolution in August obligating Iran to halt the program and negotiate. The council threatened to impose sanctions if Iran balked.

Iran has since said it wants talks with China, Europe, Russia and the United States but will not suspend its nuclear work in advance, arguing instead that it is exercising its right to peaceful nuclear technology. Iran signed on to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in the 1960s, forswearing nuclear weapons for sensitive technology that could be used for an energy program.

Yesterday, U.S. diplomats met with British and French negotiators to try to complete a draft resolution on sanctions that the rest of the council members, including China and Russia, would approve. The Bush administration had hoped to reach an agreement last Friday, but European officials said they were not comfortable with some of the tougher measures that the United States sought to impose.

State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said there was "widespread agreement, although not total agreement," among Britain, France and the United States on sanctions. European officials said privately that the resolution is likely to be limited to a ban on any nuclear or missile trade with Iran, while carving out an exception for a preexisting Iranian-Russian nuclear deal.

Some U.S. officials have been pushing for broader action, including travel bans and financial restrictions on people connected to the nuclear program.

Iran began its program in secret in 1987, with equipment and know-how from Pakistan's top nuclear scientist. The existence of the program, which includes a large facility in the town of Natanz built to house thousands of centrifuges, was made public in 2002 by Iranian exiles who hope to overthrow the country's clerical regime. The Pakistani scientist, Abdul Qadeer Khan, remains under house arrest in Pakistan, but the Pakistani government has refused to let U.S. officials directly question him about Iran's program or other programs he supplied in North Korea and Libya.

A senior Pakistani military official said yesterday that Khan responds to written U.S. requests for information as best he can. The Pakistani official, in Washington to lobby against a U.S. nuclear deal with rival India, said his country had put Khan and his black market network in the past and suggested it is time for the United States to also move beyond the episode.

Staff writer Colum Lynch at the United Nations contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/23/AR2006102301054.html>

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Washington Times

October 24, 2006

Pg. 11

Nuclear Program Oversight Increased

India-U.S. pact called '1-sided'

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times

Pakistan has adopted a vast system of checks and balances in its military nuclear program to prevent nonproliferation abuses such as the nuclear black market run by top scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan, a senior Pakistani military official said yesterday.

The official, in an unusually detailed background briefing for reporters at the Pakistani Embassy, also warned that the proposed U.S.-India nuclear-cooperation pact was a "one-sided deal" that could prove "counterproductive for U.S. strategic objectives" in South Asia if Islamabad was not offered a similar deal.

The Pakistani military official, who has extensive familiarity with the country's nuclear bureaucracy, could not be quoted by name under the ground rules of the briefing.

But the session reflected Pakistani concerns that its nuclear-proliferation failings were in the spotlight again after this month's nuclear test by North Korea.

The network run by Mr. Khan, still a revered figure in Pakistan for his role in developing the country's nuclear arsenal, "cast a long shadow over Pakistan's image," the official said. "We have years of baggage to shed."

Mr. Khan, who is under house arrest, traveled to Pyongyang often before his nuclear-smuggling ring was exposed in 2003. His network is thought to have provided North Korea with designs, parts, and working models of centrifuges needed to manufacture nuclear fuel. The Pakistani researcher also provided centrifuges for Iran's clandestine nuclear programs.

Many nonproliferation specialists fear that Pakistan is the world's greatest cause for worry, with the government of President Pervez Musharraf facing challenges from within and without.

But the Pakistani military official said that nearly a decade ago, the country began a thorough revamping of its nuclear bureaucracy, increasing the levels of oversight, implementing new controls on the production and transfer of nuclear materials and establishing "reliability tests" for Pakistani nuclear researchers.

He confirmed that U.S. nuclear specialists had been providing technical advice and some "off-the-shelf" basic equipment to aid Pakistan's nonproliferation efforts, but stressed that Pakistan had total say over what help it accepts.

"We have a good system now down to the grass roots," he insisted.

Islamabad still prevents investigators from the U.S. and the United Nations from directly interviewing Mr. Khan about his nuclear dealings, and the official said Mr. Khan remains "a hero" to Pakistanis.

The official said he saw little hope of derailing the U.S. nuclear deal with rival India.

The accord, strongly backed by the Bush administration and being considered by Congress, would open up major cooperation and trade between the United States and India on civilian nuclear projects, while allowing India to keep its nuclear military programs free from international monitoring. Pakistan and many U.S. critics fear the deal could allow India to bulk up its own nuclear arsenal and overwhelm Pakistan's smaller deterrent.

The official said the United States should make it clear that Pakistan would be eligible for a similar nuclear-cooperation deal in the future.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061023-101949-6791r.htm>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

October 24, 2006

N. Korea Reportedly Offers Route To Talks

The U.S. would have to try to resolve a dispute over counterfeiting allegations, a South Korean said.

By Jae-Soon Chang, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea - North Korea is amenable to returning to international nuclear talks if the United States shows a willingness to resolve a dispute over the North's alleged counterfeiting and money-laundering, a South Korean lawmaker said yesterday.

Rep. Choi Sung of South Korea's ruling Uri Party said he met with a "key North Korean official" in Beijing for four hours Sunday night. He said the official was well-versed in China-North Korea relations and inter-Korean ties, but declined to identify him further.

After the meeting, Choi suggested the United States present the communist state with evidence of its alleged illicit financial activities so the North could punish those responsible.

He said the North Korean official said his country could then return to the talks "even if the issue is not completely resolved."

The United States has sought to cut off the North's access to international banking as punishment for alleged counterfeiting of U.S. dollars and other illicit activity. Pyongyang has denied the allegations and boycotted six-nation talks on its nuclear program until the U.S. crackdown ends.

A Japanese legislator, meanwhile, said a top Chinese official who recently visited Pyongyang indicated China was not optimistic that North Korea would end its nuclear program or reenter disarmament talks soon.

Japanese lawmaker Ichiro Aisawa, who visited Beijing yesterday to discuss the nuclear test with Chinese leaders, said he was told by Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei that Beijing had asked both Pyongyang and Washington for flexibility in restarting talks.

However, he said Wu told him: "China is not optimistic about the resumption of the six-party talks or that North Korea will abandon its nuclear program," according to Kyodo news agency and the public broadcaster NHK.

South Korean media reported late last week that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il expressed regret for carrying out the country's underground nuclear test Oct. 9 and told a Chinese envoy that he did not plan to carry out further tests. Kim also raised the possibility the country would return to arms talks, according to the reports, which cited unnamed diplomatic sources in China.

But Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice cast doubt on the reports, saying Chinese officials had told her no such thing.

IAEA Chief: Talk, Not Sanctions

The only realoption for trying to curb North Korea's nuclear weapons program is to talk to the insular government, the head of the U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency said yesterday.

"I don't think sanctions work as a penalty," Mohamed ElBaradei said after a meeting with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in Washington. "They feel they are isolated; they feel they are not getting the security they need." The Security Council, largely at the urging of the United States, has imposed controls on trade in dangerous goods with North Korea.

The controls "are not sufficient" to turn North Korea away from building nuclear weapons, ElBaradei said.

"Penalizing them is not the solution."

ElBaradei said it did not matter whether the United States talked to North Korea in a six-nation negotiations format that has failed to deter a nuclear test, or one-on-one.

"At the end of the day," he said, "we have to bite the bullet and talk to North Korea and Iran."

The administration counters that it is willing to talk to North Korea in the six-nation framework, saying having other nations - China, Japan, South Korea and Russia - in the negotiations reinforces the antinuclear message.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/15832611.htm>

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USA Today

October 25, 2006

Pg. 7

N. Korea Doesn't Plan Second Nuclear Test, Chinese Official Says

Reports of Kim Jong Il apologizing 'not accurate'

By Alexa Olesen, Associated Press

BEIJING — China gave its first full public account Tuesday of its recent diplomatic mission to North Korea. An official said leader Kim Jong Il did not apologize for the atomic explosion, but he did say there were no plans for a second nuclear test.

North Korea's reclusive leader expressed willingness to return to six-nation talks over his government's nuclear program if financial restrictions levied by the United States are first resolved, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said.

Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan met with Kim last week during a trip to Pyongyang with China's top nuclear envoy and vice foreign minister.

Tang was told during meetings with Kim and other officials that North Korea has no plans to carry out a second nuclear test, Liu said. "But if it faces pressure, North Korea reserves the right to take further actions," he added, citing Tang.

Liu said Kim did not apologize for his regime's nuclear test Oct. 9, as some South Korean media had reported.

"These reports are certainly not accurate," he said.

North Korean officials told the Chinese envoy Pyongyang was willing to return to international negotiations on its nuclear program but wants "certain questions, including the matter of U.S. financial sanctions against it, resolved first," Liu said.

The United States has sought to cut off the North's access to international banking for alleged counterfeiting of U.S. dollars and other illicit activity. North Korea has denied the charges and boycotted six-nation talks on its nuclear program until the United States relents. "All countries involved in the six-party talks believe the talks should be resumed, but of course, the parties do not all agree on how," Liu said.

The parties are China, the Koreans, the United States, Russia and Japan.

The North Koreans also said countries should not "willfully interpret or expand the sanctions" imposed by the United Nations because of the test, according to Liu.

The United States and Japan are among countries that have imposed additional sanctions on the North.

Ban Ki Moon, the next U.N. secretary-general and South Korea's foreign minister, was scheduled to arrive Friday in Beijing to discuss the standoff with Chinese leaders.

http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20061025/a_korea25.art.htm

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Washington Times

October 25, 2006

Pg. 11

Iran, Syria Rebuild Hezbollah

Official calls for global pressure against Tehran nukes

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times

Iran and Syria are rapidly rearming Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon as an international peacekeeping force has failed to carry out a U.N. mandate to disarm the Shi'ite militia group, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz said yesterday.

Mr. Mofaz, a former defense minister and chief of general staff in the Israeli Defense Force, also warned that time was growing short for the international community to implement effective sanctions to halt Iran's drive for nuclear weapons.

"We know the policy of the Iranian regime is to buy time by talking" while it pursues a nuclear bomb, Mr. Mofaz said in an interview in his suite at the Renaissance Mayflower Hotel in Washington. "So far they have been very successful."

The hawkish Mr. Mofaz is the transportation minister under the unity government headed by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, but he remains a major voice on defense and security issues in Israel.

He met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Director of National Intelligence John D. Negroponte, among others, on a visit to Washington this week in advance of U.S.-Israel security talks set for December.

Mr. Mofaz said Israel's 34-day war with Hezbollah fighters this summer had dealt the Shi'ite militia a major setback in its southern Lebanese base. But he expressed frustration that the Lebanese army and an enhanced U.N. peacekeeping force had not disarmed Hezbollah or sealed the border to prevent Syria and Iran from rearming their "proxy."

"Arms smuggling across the border from Syria has continued after the war," he said. "We know of the activity but we don't know what types of weapons are involved."

He acknowledged that Israel's armed forces "did not achieve all our goals" in the Lebanon campaign, failing to crush Hezbollah as a fighting force and to win the release of Israeli soldiers held by the Shi'ite group.

But he said the "main issue of discussion" with U.S. officials was Iran.

"Iran poses the biggest threat not only to the state of Israel but to the countries of the West as well," he said. "Under the umbrella provided by a nuclear capability, Iran might be more involved in harboring, supporting and financing terror."

Mr. Olmert told reporters last week that Iran would have a "price to pay" if it rejected international offers to stop its suspect nuclear programs. But Mr. Mofaz yesterday put greater stress on multilateral efforts to pressure Iran, calling for strong sanctions against Tehran if it refuses to cooperate.

"The time has come for effective sanctions after three years of dialogue without any achievements," he said.

The North Korea nuclear test earlier this month has heightened the need for a tough stand against Iran, Mr. Mofaz said. North Korea has sold Iran missiles that can deliver nuclear warheads, and Mr. Mofaz said Pyongyang's test of a nuclear device means it could now transfer "nuclear assets" to Iran as well.

On Syria, Mr. Mofaz dismissed as a "ploy" recent offers by President Bashar Assad for direct peace talks with Israel, saying Damascus continues to support Hezbollah and militant Palestinian groups battling Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

"We believe it is not [Syria's] intention to have a real negotiation," he said. "When we see real intentions for peace in Syria, then we can have a different approach."

Mr. Olmert is expected to travel to Washington next month for talks, and the Bush administration is pressing for new movement on peace talks with the Palestinians.

But Mr. Mofaz said the bloody internal standoff in the Palestinian territories between the Hamas government, which refuses to recognize Israel, and the Fatah party of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas leaves Israel with no effective negotiating partner.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061024-102251-6587r.htm>

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Washington Post

October 26, 2006

Pg. 20

U.S., European Allies At Odds On Terms Of Iran Resolution

By Colum Lynch and Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writers

UNITED NATIONS, Oct. 25 -- The United States and its European allies split Wednesday over the terms of a U.N. resolution calling for a ban on Iranian trade in ballistic missiles and nuclear materials, according to Security Council diplomats.

The Bush administration supports the Europeans' broad aims of sanctioning Tehran for refusing to halt nuclear activities. But the White House declined to endorse a European-backed draft resolution, fearing it would be too weak to constrain Iran from developing nuclear weapons, U.S. and European diplomats said.

On Wednesday, France, Britain and Germany presented Russia and China with the text of a resolution that requires states to "prevent the supply, sale or transfer" of Iran's nuclear and ballistic programs and would halt Tehran's ability to secure financing and technical assistance for them. The resolution would also ban travel and freeze the assets of individuals associated with the weapons programs, said a council diplomat who has seen the draft.

But it exempts Russia from the trade embargo, allowing it to continue a previously approved nuclear energy agreement to support the construction of Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant.

The Europeans rejected a series of U.S. amendments that would have imposed greater restrictions on Russia's nuclear trade with Iran and that characterized Iran's nuclear activities as a threat to international peace and security. They said the U.S. proposals may have provoked a Russian veto. The Europeans also have far stronger trade relations with Iran than does the United States and have been reluctant to approve tougher sanctions.

European negotiators, however, did agree to include a proposal by U.S. Ambassador John R. Bolton to invoke a provision known as Article 41, which obliges states to enforce U.N. sanctions. They have given China and Russia two days to respond to the resolution before presenting it to all 15 members of the Security Council.

"We're going to be meeting with the Russians and the Chinese tomorrow to get their reaction," Bolton said. "The Europeans gave them two days in both Moscow and Beijing, which we hope will be sufficient time so that we can make progress rapidly."

European negotiators thought they had secured U.S. backing for the proposal to exempt Russia from the trade ban at a meeting of political directors in late September.

But the deal failed to secure the full backing of the Bush administration because of concerns that Iran could use the Bushehr exemption as a cover for importing other prohibited goods.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice this week backed a proposal by Bolton to present the Europeans with tougher language. When the Europeans refused, Bolton said the United States would not co-sponsor their resolution.

Iran says its nuclear energy program is designed to meet the country's growing energy needs, not to produce nuclear weapons. The United States alleges the effort is a front for a weapons program.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog, the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, maintains that it has not found proof that Iran is developing nuclear weapons. But it charges that Iran's efforts to develop its nuclear program in secrecy over the past 18 years have helped fueled international suspicions.

The United Nations and key European governments have been pressing Tehran, without success, for about three years to provide the world with verifiable assurances that its program is peaceful.

In August, the Security Council threatened to consider sanctions against Iran if it did not suspend its enrichment of uranium and consider a package of U.S.-backed European incentives.

Iran maintains that it prepared to hold talks with the council's five major powers -- the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain -- as well as Germany over the fate of its nuclear program. But it has refused to first halt its nuclear activities, insisting that it has the authority, under the 1970 Non-Proliferation Treaty, to develop nuclear energy.

Earlier this week, the head of the U.N. atomic energy agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, told The Washington Post that Iran continues to advance its nuclear enrichment activities, and that Iranian technicians are on the verge of using a new cascade of 164 centrifuges to enrich uranium.

Kessler reported from Washington.

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Philadelphia Inquirer
October 26, 2006

Iran Confirms New Enrichment

As a U.N. resolution was being prepared, Tehran admitted proceeding with expanded uranium work.

By Nasser Karimi, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran - Iran confirmed yesterday that it had expanded its uranium-enrichment program, a semiofficial news agency reported, even as the United States and its partners prepared a U.N. resolution to impose limited sanctions.

Tehran's plan to inject gas into a second cascade of centrifuges - a process that yields either nuclear fuel or material for a warhead - was a tiny step unlikely to bring Iran within grasp of a weapon.

But its timing, while Western powers prepared recommendations for possible sanctions, was a further sign of defiance.

The move also violates a resolution of the International Atomic Energy Agency, a U.N. watchdog, that requires Iran to cease enrichment-related activity.

The confirmation came on the semiofficial Iranian Students News Agency. Iran's government sometimes uses the agency to leak information deemed too sensitive for official channels.

Politicians were on holiday for the Islamic feast of Eid al-Fitr, and the report could not be immediately corroborated. Iran started a second cascade of centrifuges two weeks ago, and "gas will be injected into the cascade during the current week," the agency reported. That step produces enriched uranium, which Tehran intends to use, the agency added.

Tehran says its uranium-enrichment program aims only to generate electricity. The United States and others suspect it is a cover for building atomic weapons.

A draft U.N. resolution floated by Germany, France and Britain would ban the sale of missile and atomic technology to Iran, and end most U.N. help for its nuclear programs, diplomats said on condition of anonymity because the draft was not yet public.

The United States indicated yesterday that it saw the European proposal as too weak.

"We look forward to a full meeting of the five permanent members where we will obviously have American changes to the proposed European text," said Richard Grenell, spokesman for the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. He refused to comment on any U.S. proposals.

The United States, France, Britain, Russia and China have veto power on the 15-nation Security Council and could block any measure. All five were expected to meet in the next day or two to discuss the European draft.

One diplomat said it contained moderate language aimed at winning support from Russia and China - both of whom agreed in principle to imposing sanctions after Tehran rebuffed an Aug. 31 deadline to cease all experiments linked to uranium enrichment.

Moscow and Beijing also have major commercial ties with Iran, and they continue to publicly push for dialogue instead of U.N. punishment.

In Washington, President Bush ruled out more talks until Iran agreed to suspend uranium enrichment. "If they would verifiably stop their enrichment, the United States would be at the table with them," he said.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/15849336.htm>

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Washington Post
October 26, 2006
Pg. 12

Los Alamos Disks May Hold U.S. Secrets

By Dan Eggen, Washington Post Staff Writer

The contract employee at the center of a possible security breach at Los Alamos National Laboratory had a high-level clearance that may have given her special access to intelligence intercepts and other closely held national secrets, sources familiar with the case said yesterday.

The FBI is examining at least three computer disks that police in Los Alamos, N.M., discovered last week during a search of a suspected drug dealer's trailer home, according to the FBI and other agencies. A woman who was living at the home and worked for a Los Alamos subcontractor has been linked to the disks by investigators, officials said. Authorities said the disks appear to contain classified material. An FBI search warrant filed in connection with the case has been sealed.

The investigation -- which was revealed publicly on Tuesday -- is the latest potential embarrassment for the Los Alamos lab, which is under new management and undergoing changes designed to improve security. The lab is one of the nation's three nuclear-weapons-research facilities.

Los Alamos Director Michael Anastasio confirmed the potential breach of security in a statement yesterday. He said that the lab is cooperating with the FBI and is implementing extra security measures.

"This is a serious matter, and we are taking immediate steps to address it," Anastasio said, adding that "we intend to do everything possible to guard against any criminal activity, particularly where a breach of security may be involved."

The National Nuclear Security Administration, which oversees Los Alamos, said it has begun its own investigation and has sent a "cyber security team" to New Mexico to review procedures.

The case began after the Los Alamos Police Department responded to an Oct. 17 domestic dispute complaint at the home. Officers found drug paraphernalia and other evidence of methamphetamine trafficking, officials said. A search through records in the home revealed the computer disks, and the FBI was notified.

FBI spokesman Bill Elwell in Albuquerque said no charges have been filed.

"We are at the stage of going through the evidence and assessing its importance," he said.

Staff writer Walter Pincus contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/25/AR2006102501639.html>

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