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Washington Times

October 31, 2006

Pg. 1

China Cited As N. Korea Supplier

Report finds threat to U.S.

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

China helped North Korea develop nuclear weapons and in the past year increased its support to Pyongyang, rather than pressing the regime to halt nuclear arms and missile activities, according to a congressional report.

The final draft report of the U.S.-China Economic Security Review Commission also says that Chinese government-run companies are continuing to threaten U.S. national security by exporting arms to American enemies in Asia and the Middle East.

The report is based on public testimony and highly classified intelligence reports made available to its members and staff. It indirectly criticizes the Bush administration for failing to pressure Beijing into joining U.S.-led anti-proliferation programs and calls for Congress to take action to force the administration to do more.

"China has contributed at least indirectly to North Korea's nuclear program," the report stated, noting that China was a "primary supplier" to Pakistan's nuclear-arms program.

A copy of the commission's final draft report, due to be released formally next month, was made available to The Washington Times by congressional aides. Congress created the bipartisan commission of outside experts in 2000 to analyze the impact of U.S.-China relations on security and the economy.

North Korea was a recipient of nuclear goods supplied by the covert Pakistani nuclear supplier network headed by Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan, according to the group's fourth annual report. Several links between Pakistan and North Korea's arms programs have been identified, it stated.

The unclassified version of the report does not include details of the Chinese support but notes that China has "a history" of helping North Korea develop its weapons.

According to U.S. intelligence officials, North Korean front companies operate freely in China and have used China as a transit point for trade in missile and nuclear components.

One North Korean nuclear procurement agent was identified by U.S. officials in 2002 as Yun Ho-jin, who while working in Shenyang, China, sought to buy metal rods with nuclear applications in Germany while posing as an official of the Chinese aircraft manufacturer Shenyang Aircraft Corp.

Also, Chinese language documents on how to design a small nuclear warhead for a missile were discovered by U.S. intelligence officials in Libya after Tripoli agreed to dismantle its nuclear program.

China's government has not explained how the warhead documents reached Libya. U.S. officials think the warhead documents likely were sold by the Khan network and were also supplied to Iran and North Korea.

On China's failure to pressure North Korea, the commission report said that China has refused to exert economic pressure and "instead has actually increased its assistance and trade with North Korea."

Disclosure of the report comes as China last week refused to join the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which the Bush administration hopes to use in enforcing U.N. Security Council resolutions aimed at halting North Korean trade in illicit arms-related goods.

The Chinese turned down an appeal from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during her recent visit to Beijing to join PSI. The refusal raises questions about whether China will cooperate in a United Nations embargo against weapons and technology going in and out of North Korea.

Administration officials have praised China for supporting U.S. efforts to curb North Korea's arms programs.

However, the report makes clear that Chinese cooperation is limited.

On China's role in arms proliferation, the report stated that Chinese companies and government organizations "continue to provide weapons, weapons components and weapons technology" in violation of China's commitments to international nonproliferation agreements.

The arms transfers "harm regional security in East Asia and the Middle East," the report said.

"Given strong U.S. interests in both regions, China's proliferation threatens U.S. security and potentially could place at risk U.S. troops operating in those regions," the report said.

The report also raises questions about whether China is willing to play a responsible role in working for global peace and stability. Beijing's support for World Trade Organization commitments is "spotty and halting," it said.

"And China's apparent willingness to value its own energy needs above the needs of international security is indicative of a nation as yet unprepared or unwilling to shoulder the burdens of a stakeholder state," it said.

The report recommends that Congress take steps to pressure China into joining the PSI, and calls on Congress to press President Bush to force China to carry out both sea and land inspections of weapons related goods going in and out of North Korea under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1718.

The report recommends tightening sanctions on Chinese companies engaged in illicit arms sales, and says Congress should also require the president to provide regular reports identifying what actions China has taken to curb North Korean and Iranian nuclear activities.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061031-120304-2744r.htm>

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U.S.-Led Exercise In Persian Gulf Sets Sights On Deadliest Weapons

By Hassan M. Fattah

ABOARD THE OIL TANKER BRAMBLELEAF, in the Persian Gulf, Oct. 30 — More than two dozen countries, including three gulf states, practiced intercepting and searching vessels suspected of trafficking in unconventional weapons in major military maneuvers on Monday that emphasized their coordination and willingness to aggressively block the spread of arms.

The daylong exercise, about 20 miles outside Iranian territorial waters, seemed to signal to Iran, too, that a coalition of Western powers and neighboring states was intent on denying it access to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, even on its doorstep.

“The message is clear,” said William T. Munroe, the American ambassador to Bahrain. “Responsible countries of the world will not stand aside as proliferators circumvent their international obligations. Responsible countries will not hesitate to deny proliferators a safe haven.”

American officials insist that the training exercise, planned since January, was not related to tensions over Iran’s uranium enrichment activities. Iran said Friday that it had stepped up enrichment in defiance of a Security Council demand to suspend such work.

“This is ultimately important because of where it’s happening, when it’s happening and why it’s happening,” said a diplomat observing the exercise, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment.

“Iran and Korea are two main targets, but there are many others of interest to this effort.”

Iran warned the exercise’s participants on Monday against acts that could destabilize the region. Military officials taking part in the exercise said that Iranian patrol boats came close to coalition ships in recent days, inspecting their activities and positions.

“We do not consider this exercise appropriate,” Muhammad Ali Hussein, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, told reporters on Sunday. United States actions in the region “go in the direction of more adventurism, not of stability and security,” he said.

Instead, Iran has proposed that Persian Gulf states form a group, excluding the United States, to maintain security in the region.

The exercise on Monday was the first training maneuver in the Persian Gulf under the Proliferation Security Initiative, an American-led effort that seeks to coordinate and develop procedures for intercepting smugglers of unconventional weapons.

It was also notable for the involvement of Bahrain, and support by Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which sent observers.

The operation began last week with war games to practice intelligence cooperation, then moved to the exercise at sea, which included Australian, British, French and Italian warships and three Bahraini frigates.

Sailors from the Italian and Bahraini Navies swooped onto the British oil tanker Brambleleaf in the choppy Persian Gulf waters, their machine guns waving in a scene that was half show, half test. Each team combed the ship’s hold for almost two hours until they found a hidden simulated nuclear detonator.

Absent, however, were Saudi Arabia, a power in the Persian Gulf, and China. Officials involved in the Proliferation Security Initiative said that many states that had not signed on were largely concerned about legal aspects of the initiative.

Technically, teams conducting searches under the initiatives can board a ship only if given clearance by its owners or crew. Ships with no flag can be boarded at will. Organizers of the maneuvers said they hoped the exercise would convince those still on the fence of the legality of the initiative.

The initiative, first proposed by President Bush in May 2003, has held 24 other training exercises in Europe and Asia in the last three years.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/31/world/middleeast/31gulf.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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New York Times

October 31, 2006

Pg. 12

China May Be Using Oil To Press North Korea

By Joseph Kahn

BEIJING, Oct. 30 — China cut off oil exports to North Korea in September during heightened tension over North Korea’s nuclear and missile programs, Chinese trade statistics show.

The unusual move — the figures show China sold no crude oil at all to its neighbor in September — reduced sales for the year by about 7 percent from the similar period in 2005. China's oil exports to North Korea, though uneven, had been averaging about 12,300 barrels a day.

North Korea depends on China for up to 90 percent of its oil supplies, much of which is sold on credit or for bartered goods, according to Chinese energy experts. Any sustained reduction could cripple its isolated and struggling economy.

There is no clear indication that the September figures represent a policy shift by China on providing vital food and fuel supplies to its neighbor and ally in the Korean War. North Korea conducted a nuclear test on Oct. 9, after the period covered by the latest customs data.

But North Korea tested ballistic missiles in July, defying sharp warnings from Beijing. China supported a United Nations resolution condemning the missile tests, and urged that North Korea not take any steps that might "worsen tensions."

China did not announce a reduction in oil exports. The figures were released normally by the customs administration, and the drop in supplies was first reported by Reuters.

It remains possible the statistics are an anomaly or that supplies were cut because North Korea did not need more oil in September. Officials at the China National Petroleum Corporation, which sells oil and manages an oil pipeline to North Korea, declined to comment.

But several analysts said the reduction suggested that Beijing was using crude oil as leverage to press North Korea to resume negotiations over its nuclear program.

"It is a sharp and sudden reduction at a sensitive time, so political considerations cannot be ruled out," said He Jun, a Beijing-based energy expert and consultant. "China could be sending a clear signal."

If that analysis is correct, it suggests that Beijing may seek to punish North Korea in a variety of ways, both open and unspoken, in the aftermath of its nuclear test.

Although China has long protected North Korea against outside pressure, analysts said the nuclear test surprised and angered the Chinese leadership. Many here considered North Korea's nuclear technology primitive and argued that the country was using the threat of developing atomic bombs as an economic bargaining chip.

China took the unusual step of supporting United Nations sanctions on North Korea after the test. The sanctions restrict sales of military equipment to the North and allow inspections of North Korean cargo.

Both China and South Korea, North Korea's main trading partners, have opposed restrictions on economic ties.

They have interpreted the United Nations sanctions narrowly and declined to intercept North Korea cargo at sea, as the Bush administration suggested might be necessary to prevent exports of nuclear material.

But last spring Beijing followed Washington's lead in freezing North Korean assets that the Treasury Department identified as connected to money laundering, according to Bush administration officials. Chinese officials never announced that they had done so, suggesting that they take some tough actions quietly.

Chinese experts on North Korea who took part in discussions of the nuclear issue this month said officials had discussed reducing oil shipments if North Korea continued to defy the outside world. Beijing's response would be especially sharp if North Korea conducted more nuclear tests or declined to resume negotiations about dismantling its nuclear program, these experts said.

If Beijing was already using oil to warn North Korea in September, its response to the October test could be more severe.

"I doubt you would see them cutting down on grain shipments, because that affects directly the lives of North Korea's people," said Han Xiaoping, who follows China's energy industry for the Beijing Qunying Enterprise Company. "My own feeling is that North Korea cannot expect normal supplies of crude in this environment."

China's crude oil exports, once robust, have fallen sharply in recent years, as it uses more domestic oil to power its surging economy. Beijing has already become the world's second largest oil importer after the United States, but still exports a small part of what it produces.

North Korea has remained a consistent customer even as China has stopped selling oil to some other countries.

Volumes of oil shipped to the North varied in the past year from as low as 7,400 barrels a day to as high as 24,600.

The exception this year and last was February, when China celebrated its extended lunar New Year holiday. North Korea and other customers, including Japan, Malaysia, Thailand and Australia, got no Chinese oil supplies during that month in either year, customs figures show.

In September, China exported 125,185 tons of crude, the equivalent of 30,780 barrels a day, for a reported value of \$62 million. All of that was exported to the United States, with North Korea receiving nothing.

For the first nine months of 2006, China exported 370,000 tons of crude to North Korea, valued by customs data at \$176 million. That represented a 7 percent decline in volume but a 21 percent increase in value, according to the export prices recorded by Chinese customs.

Oil industry experts say the published price for the oil does not reflect discounts that China offers.

North Korea also buys small amounts of oil from Iran.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/31/world/asia/31korea.html>

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Washington Post
October 31, 2006
Pg. 1

Suspect And A Setback In Al-Qaeda Anthrax Case

Scientist With Ties To Group Goes Free

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

In December 2001, as the investigation into the U.S. anthrax attacks was gathering steam, coalition soldiers in Afghanistan uncovered what appeared to be an important clue: a trail of documents chronicling an attempt by al-Qaeda to create its own anthrax weapon.

The documents told of a singular mission by a scientist named Abdur Rauf, an obscure, middle-aged Pakistani with alleged al-Qaeda sympathies and an advanced degree in microbiology.

Using his membership in a prestigious scientific organization to gain access, Rauf traveled through Europe on a quest, officials say, to obtain both anthrax spores and the equipment needed to turn them into highly lethal biological weapons. He reported directly to al-Qaeda's No. 2 commander, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and in one document he appeared to signal a breakthrough.

"I successfully achieved the targets," he wrote cryptically to Zawahiri in a note in 1999.

Precisely what Rauf achieved may never be known with certainty. That's because U.S. officials remain stymied in their nearly five-year quest to bring charges against a man who they say admitted serving as a top consultant to al-Qaeda on anthrax -- a claim that makes him one of a handful of people linked publicly to the group's effort to wage biological warfare against Western targets.

Rauf, 47, has been under scrutiny in Pakistan since he was detained there for questioning in late 2001, according to U.S. and Pakistani officials who agreed to talk about the case for the first time. But officially he remains free, and Pakistan now says it has no grounds for arrest. Last year, in an acknowledgment of the impasse in its four-year joint investigation with Pakistan, the FBI officially put the case on inactive status.

"We will never close the door, but the chances of getting him into the United States are slim to none," said one U.S. intelligence official, who, like others, agreed to discuss the case on the condition that he not be identified by name. The documents that first revealed Rauf's role were part of a large stack of papers discovered in a house after coalition forces overran an al-Qaeda base in Kandahar, in southern Afghanistan. He emerges from documents and interviews as one of the most intriguing, and in some ways most troubling, figures in an international investigation into al-Qaeda's biological weapons program.

With the evidence against Rauf, some U.S. officials say they are perplexed about why Pakistani authorities have refused to further pursue him, while acknowledging that the case presents both legal and political difficulties for Pakistan.

To terrorism experts, Rauf is a symbol of a dangerous convergence: a marriage of militancy and technical expertise that could someday yield new kinds of highly lethal weapons to be used against civilians.

"He was someone who at least understood the professional procedures and methods," said Milton Leitenberg, an expert on biological weapons with the University of Maryland's Center for International and Security Studies who reviewed the seized documents. "In theory, if he went in the laboratory and tried and tried, maybe he could have gotten it right."

Exactly how far al-Qaeda progressed with Rauf's help is not publicly known. No one has turned up any links between his work and the U.S. anthrax attacks, in which spores were mailed in letters to news organizations and U.S. Senate offices. Coalition forces discovered rudimentary laboratories in Kandahar but no evidence of bioweapons production. Yet both the White House and a presidential commission have hinted at additional findings suggesting that the terrorists were much further along than was first thought.

Last year's presidential commission on intelligence failures, led by retired judge Laurence H. Silberman and former senator Charles S. Robb (D-Va.), described al-Qaeda's biological program as "extensive" and "well-organized," particularly with regard to "Agent X," a pathogen that terrorism experts say was almost certainly anthrax.

"Al-Qaeda had acquired several biological agents possibly as early as 1999, and the necessary equipment to enable limited, basic production of Agent X," the commission said.

U.S. officials are even more reticent in discussing possible links between al-Qaeda's anthrax program and the 2001 U.S. attacks, which killed five people and briefly shut down the U.S. Capitol. Privately, FBI officials doubt that such a link exists. They note that the attacks came with an explicit warning -- a letter advising the victims to take

penicillin, resulting in a far lower death toll -- but without an explicit claim of responsibility. "It doesn't fit with al-Qaeda's modus operandi," one intelligence official said.

Yet U.S. officials have been unable to rule out al-Qaeda or any other group as a suspect. Earlier this month, FBI officials acknowledged that the ultra-fine powder mailed five years ago was simply made and could have been produced by a well-trained microbiologist anywhere in the world.

Several leading bioterrorism experts still contend that the evidence points to al-Qaeda or possibly an allied group that coordinated its attack with the Sept. 11, 2001, strikes on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. These experts point to hijacker Mohamed Atta's inquiries into renting a crop-duster aircraft and to an unexplained emergency-room visit by another hijacker, Ahmed Ibrahim A. Al Haznawi, for treatment of an unusual skin lesion that resembled cutaneous anthrax.

Whether or not al-Qaeda was involved, U.S. officials and bioterrorism experts agree on this: The alliance between the terrorist group and a little-known Pakistani scientist could have yielded disastrous results in time.

The Quest for Anthrax

For all his expertise, Rauf was hardly the ideal candidate for helping al-Qaeda realize its ambition of making biological weapons.

The tall, thin and bespectacled scientist held a doctorate in microbiology but specialized in food production, according to U.S. officials familiar with the case. He had to learn about anthrax and other bioterrorism agents as he went along, slowing his progress considerably.

"He could potentially do a great deal of harm because of his knowledge and skills," said one U.S. intelligence expert connected with the case. "On the other hand, he lacked the specific knowledge and training al-Qaeda needed most." Exactly how he became acquainted with Zawahiri remains unclear. Rauf worked at the prestigious Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in his home town of Lahore, and officials speculate that he may have crossed paths professionally with Zawahiri, a physician.

In any case, captured documents suggest a close collaboration between the two men as they sought equipment for a bioweapons lab.

"I hope my letter will find you in the best of health and circumstances by the God Almighty," Rauf writes to Zawahiri in one of three intercepted notes.

The heavily redacted notes and other documents were obtained from the Defense Department through the Freedom of Information Act after they were first described in the journal *Science* in a 2003 article by three researchers at the National Defense University. Rauf's name was redacted, but U.S. and Pakistani officials confirmed his authorship in interviews with *The Washington Post*. Rauf's name was first publicly associated with the documents by Ross Getman, a New York lawyer who maintains a Web site devoted to the 2001 anthrax attacks.

Rauf was a member of the Society for Applied Microbiology, an international professional organization based in Britain, and he appears to have used his membership to make contacts and arrange visits related to his quest. One note from Rauf was handwritten on the group's stationery, apparently while he was attending a 1999 scientific conference at Porton Down, Britain's premier biodefense research center in the southern city of Wiltshire.

Rauf, who writes to Zawahiri in occasionally faltering English, admits in one note to several setbacks. For starters, he had found a supplier who could sell him *Bacillus anthracis* -- the bacterium that causes anthrax -- but it was a harmless strain incapable of killing anyone.

"Unfortunately, I did not find the required culture of *B. anthracis* -- i.e., pathogenic," he writes to Zawahiri. He then describes a new attempt to acquire a lethal strain from a different lab.

In a later note he is more upbeat, telling his patron he had "successfully achieved the targets" and had "tried to solve technical problems of our work." He ticked off a list of items he had acquired or arranged to purchase, including respirators, a fermenter used for growing bacteria and vaccines to protect lab workers against accidental exposure. Rauf also describes an unusual visit -- apparently as the guest of another scientist -- to a high-containment biological lab where dangerous pathogens such as anthrax are kept.

"I visited along with [the host] all the units . . . including the special confidential room in which thousands of cultures are placed," the note reads.

Another handwritten note includes a crude diagram of a biological lab, identifying how space should be allocated for major tasks such as animal testing and growing bacteria.

A recurring theme in the notes is money, or Rauf's apparent lack of it. He complains in one note that his salary was cut while he was on leave from his job for postdoctoral research. "This is highly objectionable, unaffordable and unpracticable with me," he writes.

Rauf's money demands may have led to a falling-out with Zawahiri, who appears to have decided to explore other options for obtaining bacteria and lab equipment, said Rohan Gunaratna, an al-Qaeda expert with the Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies in Singapore.

Gunaratna said al-Qaeda leaders also collaborated with Yazid Sufaat, a member of an allied Southeast Asian group called Jemaah Islamiyah, in purchasing equipment for the Kandahar lab. Sufaat, who once studied chemistry at California State University at Sacramento, has been in custody since late 2001.

"Rauf was financially driven, and al-Qaeda didn't entirely trust him," Gunaratna said.

Investigation Breaks Down

Rauf's detention kicked off a joint U.S.-Pakistani investigation that at first was remarkably successful.

"There was great cooperation at the start," said one U.S. intelligence official who closely followed the case.

The FBI's New York office took the lead U.S. role, and its agents worked closely with the CIA and bureau officials in Pakistan in carrying out interrogations. Though not formally charged with any crimes, Rauf consented to questioning and provided useful leads, U.S. and Pakistani officials said. But problems began when the U.S. side sought to expand the investigation with the goal of pursuing criminal charges, including possible indictment and prosecution in the United States, officials from both countries confirmed.

In earlier cases, the Pakistani government incurred the wrath of Islamic leaders when it sought to prosecute professionals for alleged ties to al-Qaeda.

In 2003, the Pakistanis shut off U.S. access to Rauf. According to Pakistani officials familiar with the case, there simply was not enough evidence showing that he succeeded in providing al-Qaeda with something useful.

Since then, Rauf has been allowed to resume his normal life. Whether he has returned to his former workplace is unclear; officials at the research council declined to respond to requests for information about the scientist. Attempts to contact Rauf in Lahore were unsuccessful.

"He was detained for questioning, and later the courts determined there was not sufficient evidence to continue detaining him," said Tariq Azim Khan, Pakistan's information minister. "If there was evidence that proved his role beyond a shadow of a doubt, we would have acted on it. But that kind of evidence was not available."

Special correspondent Kamran Khan in Karachi, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/10/30/AR2006103001250.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

October 31, 2006

U.S., 12 Others Join In Bid To Keep Nuclear Weapons From Terrorists

By John Thorne, Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco - The world's five leading nuclear powers and eight other nations launched a program yesterday aimed at keeping nuclear weapons beyond the reach of terrorists.

Amid global concerns over North Korea's test of an atomic weapon and suspicions Iran is trying to develop such arms, delegations from the United States and the other states said it was paramount for the world to guard against terrorist groups joining the hunt.

"The concern is fundamental - we must stop terrorists from acquiring" nuclear weapons, said Robert Joseph, U.S. undersecretary of state for arms control and international security.

The top five nuclear powers - the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France - form the core of the new Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

Those five plus Italy, Japan, Canada, China, Turkey, Kazakstan, Australia and Morocco signed two agreements on common principles and "terms of reference" that were not immediately made public after the start of the two-day meeting in Rabat.

The initiative aims to provide guidelines for keeping track of radioactive materials, ensuring the safety of nuclear facilities, and combating illicit trafficking that could deliver nuclear materials into the hands of terrorists.

While Russia and the United States have been at odds on how to rein in Iran's suspect nuclear program, the two countries combined to provide the impetus for this international effort to keep atomic arms from terrorist groups.

They hope the initiative will lead to better security for the world's nuclear materials and knowledge.

"It's about galvanizing the elements in the world to protect... people from one of the most dangerous threats we face," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak said.

"We do agree on some things. We have disagreements and nuances on others," he added, referring to the United States on dealing with North Korea and Iran. "I think we will work together, but we might disagree on the technique."

The United States and its allies are seeking to force the Iranians to halt uranium enrichment, which can produce material for fueling nuclear reactors but also for nuclear warheads.

Russia and China, which have economic links to Iran, have shied away from imposing punitive measures. Iran insists its nuclear effort is solely aimed at using reactors to generate electricity.

Iran: Firm Reaction if Sanctions

Iran's firebrand president warned yesterday that his country would respond with an "appropriate and firm response" to any U.N. sanctions over its nuclear program.

The comments by Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came as key Security Council members were considering a draft European resolution that would impose punishing measures on Iran over its disputed nuclear program.

"Efforts by the big powers will only incite anger and hatred," the hard-line leader told a large crowd on the outskirts of Tehran. "The Iranian nation will respond to restrictive activities with an appropriate and firm response," Ahmadinejad said.

Tehran insists its nuclear efforts are geared at peacefully producing electricity. But the United States and its allies fear Iranians want to build atomic weapons.

Russia and China, which wield veto power as permanent Security Council members, have shied away from imposing punitive measures on their trade partner Iran. The United States says the proposed sanctions are not tough enough.

Russian President Vladimir V. Putin told Ahmadinejad yesterday that Moscow strongly favored further negotiations on Tehran's nuclear program, the Kremlin said.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/15889307.htm>

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New York Times
November 1, 2006
Pg. 1

North Korea Will Resume Nuclear Talks

By Joseph Kahn and Helene Cooper

BEIJING, Oct. 31 — North Korea agreed Tuesday to resume nuclear disarmament talks, a first sign of easing tensions since the country's nuclear test this month. But the talks have dragged on inconclusively for three years, and the chances for rolling back the country's now-proven nuclear capability remained uncertain.

China announced that six-nation talks would reconvene shortly after a hiatus of more than a year, and an American envoy in Beijing said they could take place in November or December.

The agreement was a procedural victory for Beijing, which scrambled to reopen a diplomatic channel even as it joined the United States and other international powers in supporting United Nations sanctions on North Korea after the Oct. 9 test.

But Kim Jong-il, the North Korean leader, has participated in multiple rounds of talks over the past several years while he accelerated his pursuit of nuclear weapons, and some analysts suspect that he agreed to restart talks now to forestall tough enforcement of sanctions and to persuade China and South Korea to ease his government's growing economic woes.

While North Korea's decision to restart the talks is being heralded as a diplomatic breakthrough, American envoys will be returning to the negotiating table to face an adversary that now has a demonstrated nuclear capability — a fact that America will try to minimize even as North Korea tries to exploit it, Bush administration officials and analysts said.

"The dangerous possibility is that North Korea sits down at the table and says, 'We're now a nuclear state, let's deal with it,'" said Bonnie Glaser, a senior associate at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. In an interview on Tuesday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice played down suggestions that America's negotiating task would be made more difficult by the North's nuclear test. "Nobody accepts that they're a nuclear power," she said. The North Koreans, she said, "can say it all they wish."

Ms. Rice said the United States would work with the other participants of the talks to force the North to take a concrete step toward ending its nuclear program. She offered few details but acknowledged that two of the possibilities being discussed were a dismantling of one of the North's many nuclear facilities and the readmission of international inspectors.

Other officials who have discussed the administration's internal deliberations have said the dismantling should begin with a facility like North Korea's five-megawatt reactor, which is continuing to produce nuclear fuel, or its plutonium reprocessing center, where spent reactor fuel can be turned into material for weapons.

"We understand it can't go from zero to 100 in the first session," Ms. Rice said. "But the core of this is denuclearization, and we have to have concrete evidence."

Christopher R. Hill, the assistant secretary of state responsible for the talks, and Kim Kye-gwan, his North Korean counterpart, met secretly in Beijing under Chinese auspices to hash out terms of resuming negotiations, Chinese state media reported.

Mr. Hill said Tuesday that he expected “substantial progress” at the talks and that they would resume without preconditions. But he acknowledged that previous talks had been plodding and painstaking, and promised no quick breakthrough.

“We are a long way from our goal, still,” he said. “I have not broken out the cigars and Champagne quite yet.”

For the past year, North Korea had refused to resume negotiations on its nuclear program until the United States lifted financial penalties imposed on a Macao bank last year that have hobbled the country’s international financial transactions. Mr. Hill said that he agreed to discuss the matter as part of the nuclear talks — perhaps in a special working group that would convene at the same time as the main negotiations — but that he had made no promises. The Bush administration accused the Macao bank, Banco Delta Asia, of helping North Korea to launder money from drug smuggling and other illicit activities and to pass counterfeit \$100 bills manufactured by the North Korean government. In September 2005, the Treasury Department ordered United States banks to sever relations with the bank, a move that had broad ripple effects, curtailing North Korean access to the international banking system and further isolating the government in Pyongyang.

The talks, which involve Japan, South Korea and Russia as well as China, North Korea and the United States, reached a vaguely worded agreement for nuclear disarmament in September 2005, which North Korea quickly disavowed. The talks collapsed a short time later amid mutual recriminations.

Mr. Hill said Mr. Kim reiterated during their meetings in Beijing that putting the 2005 accord into effect should be the main focus of the renewed talks.

That agreement called for North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons program in exchange for a range of diplomatic, economic and energy incentives, but left most of the details to subsequent negotiations that never took place.

“We all reaffirmed, including the North Koreans, our commitment to the September statement and the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula,” Mr. Hill said.

Bush administration hard-liners, who have been chafing under Ms. Rice’s multilateral diplomatic approach to North Korea, played down the resumption of talks, saying that America is merely back where it was a year ago before the North abandoned the talks, except now Pyongyang has the added bargaining chip of having exploded a nuclear device.

“Where’s the stick?” asked one administration official. “We’re celebrating the six-party talks, but we’re back to endless chatter.”

Gary Samore, a North Korea expert who helped negotiate President Clinton’s 1994 agreement with the North, said, “I think the North Koreans gamed this all out. They calculated they could get away with a nuclear test if they allowed themselves to be cajoled back into the six-party talks.”

But North Korea’s commitment to resume talks may reduce the chances that it will soon conduct a second nuclear test, as some in the region feared it might be preparing to do.

Some Chinese experts have argued that North Korea needs to dispel doubts about its nuclear capabilities and complete its quest to become a full nuclear power before it will be willing to bargain away what it refers to as its “nuclear deterrent.”

They say that Kim Jong-il may feel he can demand a higher price for disarmament now than he could when some international experts, including some of China’s top North Korea specialists, had expressed doubts that the country could make its own nuclear bombs.

Many others disagree, including a growing contingent of Chinese officials and foreign policy specialists who take a skeptical view of the North’s intentions and favor a tougher line on China’s Korean War-era ally, according to numerous people involved in the debate.

Shi Yinhong, an international relations expert at People’s University in Beijing, said he believed that Kim Jong-il’s agreement to return to talks was motivated mainly by his desire to head off tough enforcement of international sanctions.

“His purpose has been to develop nuclear bombs and that purpose has not changed,” Mr. Shi said. “His goal now is to keep his bombs but reduce the penalty he has to pay by appearing to be negotiating in good faith.”

Some Chinese experts said Beijing had made clear that it would exercise considerable economic and financial leverage on North Korea if it continues to develop its nuclear program and refuses to return to talks.

In September, China did not sell any oil to North Korea, Chinese customs statistics show. The cutoff came before the nuclear test but after North Korea conducted a test of its ballistic missiles in July, ignoring Beijing’s pleas for restraint.

Beijing provides an estimated 90 percent of North Korea's oil by pipeline, and any sustained reduction in oil shipments could cripple the country's already weakened economy. Liu Jianchao, the foreign ministry spokesman, said Tuesday, before the resumption of talks was announced, that China had no plans to sever aid or trade with North Korea, but dodged questions about the oil cutoff. *Joseph Kahn reported from Beijing, and Helene Cooper from Washington.*
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/01/world/asia/01korea.html>

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New York Times
November 2, 2006
News Analysis

U.S. Debates Value Of North Korea Talks

By Helene Cooper

WASHINGTON, Nov. 1 — Officially, the Bush administration is “pleased” — as President Bush put it on Wednesday — that North Korea has agreed to resume talks on nuclear disarmament. But behind closed doors at the White House and the State Department, some are less happy, saying the country's nuclear test should be answered with isolation.

When it comes to North Korea, the Bush administration has always found itself pulled in two directions — confrontation versus engagement — and has generally settled on a middle course that was neither. To persuade North Korea to return to the bargaining table, President Bush agreed last week to a slight softening of his stance against direct talks with North Korea, a concession that made clear that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in charge of the policy, at least for now.

But Ms. Rice is coming under increased fire inside and outside the administration from officials and experts who are skeptical about what diplomacy can achieve in this case, and who argue that there is no chance a new round of nuclear talks with North Korea will succeed.

“What's a good description? Fantasy? Dreamworld?” said Nicholas Eberstadt, a North Korea expert with the American Enterprise Institute in Washington. “All we're doing with these hapless efforts at conference diplomacy is continuing to talk while North Korea continues to build nuclear weapons.”

A senior Bush administration official was equally pointed in criticizing the new initiative. “In the past, the one thing we could never be criticized for was whether our tough talk meant something,” said the official, who has participated in internal debates and would speak only on condition of anonymity about his dissenting views. “When we gave a stick, they knew we were serious. We've lost that credibility.”

This is not a new debate by any stretch. Within the administration, a more hawkish wing that includes Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and John R. Bolton, the ambassador to the United Nations, has chafed against talks with any American foe, be it North Korea or Iran. Meanwhile, advocates of diplomacy, including R. Nicholas Burns and Philip D. Zelikow, two of Ms. Rice's top lieutenants at the State Department, have sided with European allies in saying that the United States should engage its foes.

But the fact that the debate has resurfaced with such vigor suggests that even North Korea's decision to test a nuclear device on Oct. 9 in defiance of American warnings has not changed the old fault lines.

Ms. Rice has found herself in the middle of the tug-of-war as she seeks to mute international criticism of America's so-called cowboy diplomacy. On the two big nuclear proliferation issues, Iran and North Korea, Ms. Rice has helped to move the administration away from unilateralism, with President Bush offering in May to join European negotiations over Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Even after North Korea conducted a round of missile tests in July and three months later tested the nuclear device, the United States continued to call for it to return to six-nation disarmament talks.

“Pretty clearly, the president of the United States thinks we're doing the right thing,” the State Department spokesman, Sean McCormack, said Wednesday. “This pathway is the best opportunity we have to achieve the objective we all share: a denuclearized Korean peninsula.”

Ms. Rice argues that a new round of talks will be different and that the United States will wield more leverage because the negotiations will take place while North Korea is under United Nations sanctions for the nuclear test. But Kim Jong-il, the North Korean leader, has participated in multiple rounds of talks over the past several years while accelerating his pursuit of nuclear weapons.

North Korea boycotted the talks last year after the United States imposed financial penalties in September 2005 on Banco Delta Asia, a bank in Macao, accusing it of helping the North launder money and pass counterfeit \$100 bills manufactured by the North Korean government.

For a year, North Korea refused to return to the talks, and the United States refused to lift the sanctions. The Bush administration balked at North Korean overtures for one-on-one talks, insisting that America would talk to North Korea only as part of the six-party negotiations. But last week, Chinese officials contacted the American Embassy in Beijing and proposed a three-way meeting involving the United States, North Korea and China. That step required a shift in the American line against direct talks, but in response to a request from Ms. Rice, Mr. Bush agreed.

The chief American negotiator, Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill, worked out the deal in a seven-hour session on Tuesday with his Chinese and North Korean counterparts. As a concession to entice North Korea back to the talks, the United States agreed to discuss the financial restrictions arising from the counterfeiting issue, a gesture that has been criticized inside and outside the administration.

There is "zero chance" that the talks will persuade North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program, said John Tkacik, a senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation and a former State Department diplomat. "My Machiavellian mind tells me that the Chinese have worked out a deal with the Russians and the North Koreans that if North Korea comes back to the six-party talks, the main issue will not be denuclearization, it will be counterfeiting."

American negotiators continue to maintain the financial restrictions will remain unless North Korea stops counterfeiting United States currency. "They have to get out of the illicit-activities business and get out of the counterfeiting business," Mr. Hill said in an interview Tuesday.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/02/world/asia/02diplo.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Philadelphia Inquirer

November 2, 2006

U.N. Blocks Items From N. Korea

By Bloomberg News

UNITED NATIONS - The Security Council yesterday approved three lists containing hundreds of items North Korea is barred from acquiring, including materials that could be used to produce biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and the missiles to deliver them.

The lists will become annexes to the U.N. resolution adopted Oct. 14 that imposes sanctions on North Korea for its test of a nuclear bomb. The measure established a Security Council committee to designate people involved with North Korea's nuclear program whose assets would be frozen and travel outside the country banned.

Ambassador Peter Burian of Slovakia, chairman of that committee, said a letter would be sent to all 192 U.N. member governments telling them how to access the lists on the U.N. Web site. Member nations have until Nov. 13 to report on how they are implementing the sanctions.

The sanctions committee will turn now to designating people for the travel ban and asset freeze, and determining what luxury goods North Korea will be barred from acquiring, Burian said. No names have been submitted, and it likely will be up to each nation to define items that are to be considered luxury goods, he said.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/15906139.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

November 2, 2006

Pg. 1

Squeeze On North Korea's Money Supply Yields Results

Cash crunch seems to have helped bring nation back to talks.

By Josh Meyer, Times Staff Writer

Washington — For three years, the Bush administration has waged a campaign to choke off North Korea's access to the world's financial system, where U.S. officials say the nation launders money from criminal enterprises to fuel its trade in missile technology and its efforts to build a nuclear arsenal.

That effort has started to pay off.

U.S. pressure forced Macao this year to freeze North Korean assets in one of its banks, then foiled North Korea's panicky attempts to find friendly bankers in Vietnam, Mongolia, Singapore and Europe. And after North Korea's Oct. 9 nuclear test, China ordered some of its major banks to cease financial transactions with the country.

The cash crunch appears to have played a key role in North Korea's decision Tuesday to return to six-nation talks over its nuclear ambitions. North Korean officials said that as part of the talks, they wanted to raise the issue of lifting financial sanctions.

"They're not coming back because they want to give up nuclear weapons," said David L. Asher, the U.S. State Department's point man on North Korea until last year. "They are feeling the financial pressure and the cutoff from the international financial system, so they are trying to make nice."

But the U.S. effort still faces two enormous obstacles: Russia and China.

North Korea continues to have access to banks in both countries, according to current and former U.S. officials who say that without those nations' cooperation, the U.S. effort will be largely ineffective.

Both major powers have historically been more concerned about protecting their strategic interests than in joining U.S. efforts to sanction their neighbor.

Stuart Levey, the U.S. Treasury undersecretary in charge of investigating terrorist financial webs, has traveled to Russia and China, including a trip to Moscow last week. Levey said he had "constructive discussions" with his Russian counterparts, but declined to say whether they would act. A Russian Foreign Ministry official said they had "agreed to further cooperation."

U.S. officials believe that both countries will continue to resist American appeals for a further crackdown in part because of their "historic ties to North Korea," said a senior counter-terrorism official, who spoke about the U.S. campaign on condition of anonymity.

Evidence gathered over the decades by Washington indicates that North Korea has become what some U.S. officials call a "Soprano state." The government in Pyongyang used its embassies to coordinate illegal activities, its ships to move heroin and other contraband, and its factories to make counterfeit \$100 bills and bogus brand-name cigarettes, U.S. officials say.

Kim Jong Il, the North Korean leader, used the profits to fund his nuclear program, U.S. officials say, but also to import Mercedes-Benzes, pricey cognacs and other luxury items to buy loyalty.

Washington fears that North Korea could decide to use its well-worn trafficking networks to sell Iran or others the hardware or know-how to make weapons of mass destruction.

So administration officials decided in 2003 to attack by unconventional means. They created the Illicit Activities Initiative, a classified, multi-agency effort aimed at curbing North Korea's black-market networks.

A year ago, the United States moved on one of North Korea's bankers, officially designating the small Banco Delta Asia in Macao as a "primary money-laundering concern" under the Patriot Act.

Pyongyang, U.S. authorities found, banked much of its criminal proceeds in the former Portuguese colony, a freewheeling gambling haven, which became an autonomously governed Chinese territory in 1999.

"Banco Delta was just a thumbtack against their skin," said Asher, who headed the Illicit Activities Initiative. "We knew that behind the skin was a central artery. When we pricked it, blood was going to start coming out fast."

The Treasury action created a run on Banco Delta, which lost a third of its deposits in six days, and forced the government to seize control, sending an unmistakable message to bankers about the consequences of dealing with the North Koreans.

Assets frozen

In February, local officials froze at least \$24 million in North Korean accounts at the bank. Pyongyang officials protested and have repeatedly cited the action as justification for abandoning the nuclear bargaining table for the last year.

But Treasury officials went further. Privately, they threatened to go after much larger banks in Macao, including the Bank of China, the second-largest Chinese bank, which eventually froze some North Korean accounts.

Pyongyang then looked elsewhere for a financial safe haven.

Using spies, cooperative bankers and law enforcement agents, Washington followed the North Korean money trail. Levey and other senior Treasury officials visited Vietnam, Hong Kong, Singapore and Mongolia this year. They say they persuaded government officials and bankers to shun financial relationships with North Korea.

"Because of the way North Korea operates, it's very difficult for financial institutions to differentiate between its licit and illicit activities. And so, a lot of banks have decided that as long as North Korea is engaged in illicit activity, they don't want to take any chances of being associated with it," Levey said. "As a result, the North Koreans have had a very difficult time."

Nonetheless, Russia and China have common reasons for trading softly with North Korea on the financial front. Both fear that a financial crackdown could destabilize or even bankrupt North Korea. And both are jockeying to someday collaborate with a friendlier North Korea on economic and military issues.

"They are willing to hold their nose and live with North Korea as it is in exchange for stability on the [Korean] peninsula," said Peter Brookes, the Bush administration's former deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Asian and Pacific affairs.

Also, North Korea is able to continue to deal with Russia and China because both countries are riddled with political corruption and organized crime, and because it is willing to pay huge commissions to banks, U.S. and Asian authorities have found.

Officials in Russia and China would not talk about North Korea's use of their banks. North Korean officials also declined to comment, but have called on the U.S. to "immediately give up its anachronistic hostile policy." In recent months, intelligence has pointed to Russia as the place where North Korea has turned to stash its cash and tap into international financial markets, according to U.S. officials and money-laundering experts.

South Korea's intelligence service recently identified Sberbank, the biggest bank in Russia, as one of the institutions doing business with North Korea, according to lawmakers in Seoul who have seen the report. Russian and Japanese media have reported that at least 10 North Korean accounts have been opened in Moscow, including at state-owned Vnesheconombank, to circumvent U.S. sanctions.

Several current and former U.S. law enforcement and banking officials confirmed the broad outlines of those reports. Neither bank responded to requests for comment.

The senior U.S. counter-terrorism official said Russia was not being cooperative because Treasury officials had spent little time lobbying Moscow. "Russia, I think, is still very much up in the air. I genuinely think the jury is still out," he said.

By contrast, U.S. officials have lobbied the Chinese government for years. Levey and Daniel Glaser, a senior Treasury official who oversees anti-money-laundering efforts, have each traveled to Beijing this year to press authorities to cut off North Korea.

Within the last year, Beijing has started to respond.

But current and former U.S. officials say China's recent moves are not enough to stop the illicit money flow between the countries. "Are they doing everything that we want them to be doing on the targeted financial sanctions? No," said the U.S. counter-terrorism official.

'Window dressing'

Raphael Perl, a Congressional Research Service analyst, agreed.

"The efforts by Chinese banks in this regard are often privately referred to within [Bush] administration circles as more 'window dressing' than substantive," he said.

Some former U.S. officials also worry that completely uprooting North Korea's illicit financial network might be unwise, forcing the secretive nation to resort to tactics that could hamper U.S. efforts to spy on it.

"If you crack down in certain areas, it is like squeezing the balloon. It may pop up in an area we can't monitor," said John Cassara, a former Treasury and CIA money-laundering specialist.

The financial crackdown already appears to be forcing North Korea into closer arrangements with organized-crime syndicates with ready access to the international financial system.

That is particularly worrisome, the officials said, because these criminal outfits have a well-entrenched presence in the United States and are better at clandestinely moving money, illicit goods — and, potentially, weapons of mass destruction — than terrorists.

"That's why it's absolutely critical for us to crack down much harder on North Korea's ties to organized crime globally," Asher said. "It's going to be a much bigger challenge in my mind than even tracking terrorist finances."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor2nov02,1,552305.story>

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Korea Herald

Friday, November 03, 2006

Guest Column: Containment and deterrence?

It is difficult to be optimistic about the upcoming resumption of six-party talks with North Korea. Pyongyang's nuclear test just over three weeks ago may have attracted international attention and censure, but it does not appear to have sparked a transformation in negotiating strategy. Indeed, reaction to the test was a bit like the flawed detonation itself: an explosion of interest rapidly decaying to a fizzle.

The willingness to return to a stagnant bargaining framework stems largely from the belief that even if disarmament talks fail, a combination of containment and deterrence will succeed. The logic behind this position is two-fold: first, the United States can credibly deter North Korea from selling any weapons because the fallout from a nuclear blast even by a third party would carry the unmistakable signature of its origin and result in devastating retaliation; second, the United States can successfully contain North Korea by creating a multilateral interdiction regime capable of intercepting any weapons Pyongyang does elect to sell.

This approach is deeply suspect. To begin with, the very intensity with which the United States is pursuing containment measures - such as radiation monitors on the Chinese border - casts doubt on its faith in deterrence.

Even if we can identify the source of a nuclear attack as accurately as some suggest, there are still intermediate forms of proliferation where the red line of deterrence may be less clear. As the Cold War demonstrated repeatedly,

adversaries have a knack for finding and exploiting the ambiguities in even the most explicit terms. Indeed, the Korean War itself broke out after confusion over the precise extent of the U.S. "defensive perimeter" in East Asia. When President George Bush stated that the transfer of nuclear weapons or "material" by North Korea would be considered a grave threat to the United States, just what did he mean? Is Pyongyang free to market tools of the trade so long as it does not sell the finished product? If Kim Jong-il confronts harsh economic sanctions, he may find it worth the risk to test the boundaries of America's resolve. It would be a harrowing decision to wage war over a small shipment of plutonium, yet there do not seem to be many other escalation options left.

Nor can the United States reasonably rely on containment. It is possible to ship plutonium in containers with lead shielding to confound radiation detectors. And even a robust maritime interdiction regime is only as effective as the intelligence capabilities supporting it.

What this means is that deterrence and containment should be last resorts, not preferred strategies. Returning to the six-party talks is a partial acceptance of this conclusion, but not if there is little hope of a positive outcome. An isolated regime in the crosshairs of the world's most powerful military is likely to bear any burden to retain its ultimate deterrent. Measuring the success of foreign policy toward North Korea based on how many countries agree to slap its wrist with half-hearted sanctions, then, begins to feel like an exercise in futility.

Rather than insist on tepid multilateralism, perhaps the United States should embrace a bilateral dialogue. After all, the only previous breakthrough in negotiations came when President Carter met with Kim Il-sung face-to-face in 1994.

It may be that nothing will suffice to convince North Korea to give up the bomb. But that doesn't mean that trying to break the regime is the answer. Whether the reactors at Yongbyon will continue to churn out plutonium is an open question and a genuine danger - one that we already know will not be curtailed by threats alone. The international community should not fall prey to the siren song of deterrence and containment, but should explore novel methods of negotiation toward disarmament.

Derek D. Smith is the author of "Deterring America: Rogue States and the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction." - Ed.

http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2006/11/03/200611030032.asp

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New York Times
November 3, 2006
Pg. 1

U.S. Web Archive Is Said To Reveal A Nuclear Guide

By William J. Broad

Last March, the federal government set up a Web site to make public a vast archive of Iraqi documents captured during the war. The Bush administration did so under pressure from Congressional Republicans who had said they hoped to "leverage the Internet" to find new evidence of the prewar dangers posed by Saddam Hussein.

But in recent weeks, the site has posted some documents that weapons experts say are a danger themselves: detailed accounts of Iraq's secret nuclear research before the 1991 Persian Gulf war. The documents, the experts say, constitute a basic guide to building an atom bomb.

Last night, the government shut down the Web site after The New York Times asked about complaints from weapons experts and arms-control officials. A spokesman for the director of national intelligence said access to the site had been suspended "pending a review to ensure its content is appropriate for public viewing."

Officials of the International Atomic Energy Agency, fearing that the information could help states like Iran develop nuclear arms, had privately protested last week to the American ambassador to the agency, according to European diplomats who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the issue's sensitivity. One diplomat said the agency's technical experts "were shocked" at the public disclosures.

The documents, roughly a dozen in number, contain charts, diagrams, equations and lengthy narratives about bomb building that nuclear experts who have viewed them say go beyond what is available elsewhere on the Internet and in other public forums. For instance, the papers give detailed information on how to build nuclear firing circuits and triggering explosives, as well as the radioactive cores of atom bombs.

"For the U.S. to toss a match into this flammable area is very irresponsible," said A. Bryan Siebert, a former director of classification at the federal Department of Energy, which runs the nation's nuclear arms program. "There's a lot of things about nuclear weapons that are secret and should remain so."

The government had received earlier warnings about the contents of the Web site. Last spring, after the site began posting old Iraqi documents about chemical weapons, United Nations arms-control officials in New York won the

withdrawal of a report that gave information on how to make tabun and sarin, nerve agents that kill by causing respiratory failure.

The campaign for the online archive was mounted by conservative publications and politicians, who said that the nation's spy agencies had failed adequately to analyze the 48,000 boxes of documents seized since the March 2003 invasion. With the public increasingly skeptical about the rationale and conduct of the war, the chairmen of the House and Senate intelligence committees argued that wide analysis and translation of the documents — most of them in Arabic — would reinvigorate the search for clues that Mr. Hussein had resumed his unconventional arms programs in the years before the invasion. American search teams never found such evidence.

The director of national intelligence, John D. Negroponte, had resisted setting up the Web site, which some intelligence officials felt implicitly raised questions about the competence and judgment of government analysts. But President Bush approved the site's creation after Congressional Republicans proposed legislation to force the documents' release.

In his statement last night, Mr. Negroponte's spokesman, Chad Kolton, said, "While strict criteria had already been established to govern posted documents, the material currently on the Web site, as well as the procedures used to post new documents, will be carefully reviewed before the site becomes available again."

A spokesman for the National Security Council, Gordon D. Johndroe, said, "We're confident the D.N.I. is taking the appropriate steps to maintain the balance between public information and national security."

The Web site, "Operation Iraqi Freedom Document Portal," was a constantly expanding portrait of prewar Iraq. Its many thousands of documents included everything from a collection of religious and nationalistic poetry to instructions for the repair of parachutes to handwritten notes from Mr. Hussein's intelligence service. It became a popular quarry for a legion of bloggers, translators and amateur historians.

Among the dozens of documents in English were Iraqi reports written in the 1990s and in 2002 for United Nations inspectors in charge of making sure Iraq had abandoned its unconventional arms programs after the Persian Gulf war. Experts say that at the time, Mr. Hussein's scientists were on the verge of building an atom bomb, as little as a year away.

European diplomats said this week that some of those nuclear documents on the Web site were identical to the ones presented to the United Nations Security Council in late 2002, as America got ready to invade Iraq. But unlike those on the Web site, the papers given to the Security Council had been extensively edited, to remove sensitive information on unconventional arms.

The deletions, the diplomats said, had been done in consultation with the United States and other nuclear-weapons nations. Mohamed ElBaradei, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which ran the nuclear part of the inspections, told the Security Council in late 2002 that the deletions were "consistent with the principle that proliferation-sensitive information should not be released."

In Europe, a senior diplomat said atomic experts there had studied the nuclear documents on the Web site and judged their public release as potentially dangerous. "It's a cookbook," said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of his agency's rules. "If you had this, it would short-circuit a lot of things."

The New York Times had examined dozens of the documents and asked a half dozen nuclear experts to evaluate some of them.

Peter D. Zimmerman, a physicist and former United States government arms scientist now at the war studies department of King's College, London, called the posted material "very sensitive, much of it undoubtedly secret restricted data."

Ray E. Kidder, a senior nuclear physicist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, an arms design center, said "some things in these documents would be helpful" to nations aspiring to develop nuclear weapons and should have remained secret.

A senior American intelligence official who deals routinely with atomic issues said the documents showed "where the Iraqis failed and how to get around the failures." The documents, he added, could perhaps help Iran or other nations making a serious effort to develop nuclear arms, but probably not terrorists or poorly equipped states. The official, who requested anonymity because of his agency's rules against public comment, called the papers "a road map that helps you get from point A to point B, but only if you already have a car."

Thomas S. Blanton, director of the National Security Archive, a private group at George Washington University that tracks federal secrecy decisions, said the impetus for the Web site's creation came from an array of sources — private conservative groups, Congressional Republicans and some figures in the Bush administration — who clung to the belief that close examination of the captured documents would show that Mr. Hussein's government had clandestinely reconstituted an unconventional arms programs.

"There were hundreds of people who said, 'There's got to be gold in them thar hills,' " Mr. Blanton said.

The campaign for the Web site was led by the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Representative Peter Hoekstra of Michigan. Last November, he and his Senate counterpart, Pat Roberts of Kansas, wrote to Mr.

Negroponete, asking him to post the Iraqi material. The sheer volume of the documents, they argued, had overwhelmed the intelligence community.

Some intelligence officials feared that individual documents, translated and interpreted by amateurs, would be used out of context to second-guess the intelligence agencies' view that Mr. Hussein did not have unconventional weapons or substantive ties to Al Qaeda. Reviewing the documents for release would add an unnecessary burden on busy intelligence analysts, they argued.

On March 16, after the documents' release was approved, Mr. Negroponete's office issued a terse public announcement including a disclaimer that remained on the Web site: "The U.S. government has made no determination regarding the authenticity of the documents, validity or factual accuracy of the information contained therein, or the quality of any translations, when available."

On April 18, about a month after the first documents were made public, Mr. Hoekstra issued a news release acknowledging "minimal risks," but saying the site "will enable us to better understand information such as Saddam's links to terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and violence against the Iraqi people." He added: "It will allow us to leverage the Internet to enable a mass examination as opposed to limiting it to a few exclusive elites."

Yesterday, before the site was shut down, Jamal Ware, a spokesman for Mr. Hoekstra, said the government had "developed a sound process to review the documents to ensure sensitive or dangerous information is not posted." Later, he said the complaints about the site "didn't sound like a big deal," adding, "We were a little surprised when they pulled the plug."

The precise review process that led to the posting of the nuclear and chemical-weapons documents is unclear. But in testimony before Congress last spring, a senior official from Mr. Negroponete's office, Daniel Butler, described a "triage" system used to sort out material that should remain classified. Even so, he said, the policy was to "be biased towards release if at all possible." Government officials say all the documents in Arabic have received at least a quick review by Arabic linguists.

Some of the first posted documents dealt with Iraq's program to make germ weapons, followed by a wave of papers on chemical arms.

At the United Nations in New York, the chemical papers raised alarms at the Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, which had been in charge of searching Iraq for all unconventional arms, save the nuclear ones.

In April, diplomats said, the commission's acting chief weapons inspector, Demetrius Perricos, lodged an objection with the United States mission to the United Nations over the document that dealt with the nerve agents tabun and sarin.

Soon, the document vanished from the Web site. On June 8, diplomats said, Mr. Perricos told the Security Council of how risky arms information had shown up on a public Web site and how his agency appreciated the American cooperation in resolving the matter.

In September, the Web site began posting the nuclear documents, and some soon raised concerns. On Sept. 12, it posted a document it called "Progress of Iraqi nuclear program circa 1995." That description is potentially misleading since the research occurred years earlier.

The Iraqi document is marked "Draft FFCDD Version 3 (20.12.95)," meaning it was preparatory for the "Full, Final, Complete Disclosure" that Iraq made to United Nations inspectors in March 1996. The document carries three diagrams showing cross sections of bomb cores, and their diameters.

On Sept. 20, the site posted a much larger document, "Summary of technical achievements of Iraq's former nuclear program." It runs to 51 pages, 18 focusing on the development of Iraq's bomb design. Topics included physical theory, the atomic core and high-explosive experiments. By early October, diplomats and officials said, United Nations arms inspectors in New York and their counterparts in Vienna were alarmed and discussing what to do. Last week in Vienna, Olli J. Heinonen, head of safeguards at the international atomic agency, expressed concern about the documents to the American ambassador, Gregory L. Schulte, diplomats said.

Calls to Mr. Schulte's spokesman yesterday were not returned.

Scott Shane contributed reporting.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/03/world/middleeast/03documents.html?_r=1&ref=todayspaper&oref=slogin

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Washington Times

November 3, 2006

Pg. 1

U.S. Speeds Attack Plans For North Korea

Pushed by nuke test, Pentagon targets plant

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

The Pentagon has stepped up planning for attacks against North Korea's nuclear program and is bolstering nuclear forces in Asia, said defense officials familiar with the highly secret process.

The officials, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the accelerated military planning includes detailed programs for striking a North Korean plutonium-reprocessing facility at Yongbyon with special operations commando raids or strikes with Tomahawk cruise missiles or other precision-guided weapons.

The effort, which had been under way for several months, was given new impetus by Pyongyang's underground nuclear test Oct. 9 and growing opposition to the nuclear program of Kim Jong-il's communist regime, especially by China and South Korea.

A Pentagon official said the Department of Defense is considering "various military options" to remove the program.

"Other than nuclear strikes, which are considered excessive, there are several options now in place. Planning has been accelerated," the official said.

A second, senior defense official privy to the effort said the Bush administration recently affirmed its commitment to both South Korea and Japan that it would use U.S. nuclear weapons to deter North Korea, now considered an unofficial nuclear weapon state.

"We will resort to whatever force levels we need to have, to defend the Republic of Korea. That nuclear deterrence is in place," said the senior official, who declined to reveal what nuclear forces are deployed in Asia.

Other officials said the forces include bombs and air-launched missiles stored at Guam, a U.S. island in the western Pacific, that could be delivered by B-52 or B-2 bombers. Nine U.S. nuclear-missile submarines regularly deploy to Asian waters from Washington state.

The officials said one military option calls for teams of Navy SEALs or other special operations commandos to conduct covert raids on Yongbyon's plutonium-reprocessing facility.

The commandos would blow up the facility to prevent further reprocessing of the spent fuel rods, which provides the material for developing nuclear weapons.

A second option calls for strikes by precision-guided Tomahawk missiles on the reprocessing plant from submarines or ships. The plan calls for simultaneous strikes from various sides to minimize any radioactive particles being carried away in the air.

Planners estimate that six Tomahawks could destroy the reprocessing plant and that it would take five to 10 years to rebuild.

Asked about the strike planning, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said the U.S. government is seeking a "peaceful, diplomatic solution" to the threat posed by North Korea.

Regarding any military options, Mr. Whitman said, "The U.S. military is prepared and capable of carrying out all of its assigned missions."

The planning does not mean that the United States will attack, only that military forces are ready to do so if President Bush orders strikes. Concerned about threats from rogue states such as North Korea, Mr. Bush called for a ballistic missile defense system, parts of which are operational.

Defense officials said a key factor in the ramped-up planning effort is China's new attitude toward North Korea.

Beijing's leaders, upset that North Korea conducted the test, supported a U.S.-led United Nations' resolution.

Chinese opposition to military action had limited defense planning, the officials said. In the past, U.S. military plans required warning Beijing, a move considered likely to compromise any planned action because of the close military ties between China and North Korea.

The Bush administration regards the new level of Chinese support as a "green light" for more aggressive military planning.

U.S. officials think North Korea will conduct another underground test soon because Pyongyang is demanding to be recognized as a declared nuclear power. Both China and the U.S. gauged the test as only partially successful.

The Yongbyon plant, 32 miles from the coast and a half-mile from a river, is considered a key target because U.S. intelligence agencies suspect that it is where the plutonium fuel used in the Oct. 9 test was produced.

Defense planners also said equipment destroyed at Yongbyon would be difficult to replace once newly approved U.N. sanctions are in place.

Another set of targets could be the nuclear test site near Kilchu, in northeastern North Korea. That site includes several research and testing-control facilities in the mountains -- and possibly one more tunnel where a nuclear device could be set off, the officials said.

Recent intelligence reports also provided new information about Pyongyang's uranium-enrichment program, which remains hidden in underground facilities in northern North Korea, the officials said.

The U.S. Special Operations Command has been planning raids against North Korean nuclear facilities for some time. It has conducted training for joint operations with South Korean special forces as well as unilateral U.S. operations.

U.S. Pacific Command spokesman Capt. Jeff Alderson declined to comment on military planning but said the command is continuing to shift forces to the Pacific and has four missile-defense ships deployed in Japan.

Mr. Bush said recently that any transfer of nuclear weapons by North Korea would be a "grave threat," phrasing viewed as diplomatic code for a military response. Defense officials said the military option will be used if North Korea is caught transferring nuclear arms to other states or terrorist groups.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061103-122702-4895r.htm>

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Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)

November 3, 2006

U.S. Sending 2 Top Diplomats To Prepare For N. Korea Talks

By Wire Reports

WASHINGTON — The United States said Thursday two of its top diplomats would travel to Japan, China and South Korea next week to prepare for a new round of six-party talks on ending North Korea's nuclear ambitions. China, which is expected to host the six-party talks, said it wanted them to resume soon, and a Japanese official said Pyongyang was feeling the pinch from a year of U.S. financial sanctions as well as international punitive steps taken after its Oct. 9 nuclear test.

No date has been set for the talks among the two Koreas, China, Japan, Russia and the United States.

North Korea agreed Tuesday to resume the negotiations, which on Sept. 19, 2005, produced an agreement for Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons programs in exchange for economic, diplomatic and energy incentives from the other parties.

North Korea began to back away from that agreement soon after it was reached and refused to attend the six-party talks for nearly a year, blaming U.S. financial sanctions.

Meanwhile, a former State Department official who maintains contact with North Korea said Thursday U.S. dealings with that country have been hampered by missteps and lack of a coherent policy.

"You can't get anywhere without a clear road map, and we don't have one," said Kenneth Quinones, who served as State Department liaison with North Korea's U.N. mission between 2004 and 2006.

He said promising efforts last year to resume six-party nuclear disarmament talks fell by the wayside when President Bush referred to North Korean Chairman Kim Jong Il as a "tyrant."

Weeks later, he said, there was fresh progress toward a new round, but Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld soured the atmosphere when he announced stealth fighter planes were going to South Korea.

Talks were resumed in Beijing in September 2005, and the session ended with a breakthrough communique that included agreement on issues, including a North Korean commitment to dismantle its nuclear weapons.

But the good feelings dissipated within 48 hours, Quinones said, when a dispute erupted over whether North Korea should receive light water reactors before carrying out nuclear disarmament.

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Analysis

Optimism Turns To Anxiety On Curbing Nuclear Arms

By Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writer

In the waning days of the 20th century, nearly a dozen countries abandoned nuclear weapons programs, betting on the promised security of a post-Cold War world.

But the trend toward disarmament seems to have tapered off almost as quickly as it began.

In the first six years of the 21st century, one country -- Libya -- agreed to give up the possibility of making a weapon. But North Korea accelerated its program, and many believe Iran is doing the same. More countries are exploring uranium enrichment and nuclear power programs that could be diverted to produce weapons.

Officials and nuclear experts who felt nothing but optimism in the early 1990s now see a world on the threshold of a dangerous arms race. Some fault the Bush administration for policies that rewarded nuclear-armed friends while denouncing foes accused of building the same weapons. Others say the current situation is a natural byproduct of a fragmented world in which countries no longer have to choose between the United States and the Soviet Union, but can go separate ways and build independent alliances.

"I think we are at a dangerous tipping point," said Sam Nunn, the former Democratic senator from Georgia who has devoted years of public service to stemming nuclear proliferation and is co-chairman of the Nuclear Threat Initiative. "One of the reasons we're in this predicament is that the United States government, which had been the main proponent of nonproliferation, appears not to have the clout to build the kind of broad international coalition that dissuades countries from going nuclear."

Since President Dwight D. Eisenhower began Atoms for Peace in 1953, the United States has been at the forefront of nonproliferation strategies, talking friend and adversary alike out of weapons that bring great power but carry the risk of deep isolation. "In the last two decades, the U.S. has successfully turned around a host of states -- Argentina, Brazil, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Belarus, South Africa, Taiwan and South Korea," said Ashton B. Carter, who was assistant secretary of defense for international security policy from 1993 to 1996. "But in the last few years," Carter said, Iran and North Korea "have been allowed to lurch forward."

President Bush in 2002 named Iran, North Korea and Iraq under Saddam Hussein as members of an "axis of evil" pursuing weapons of mass destruction that could be given to terrorists. The prospect of the most dangerous weapons getting into the hands of the most dangerous people led Bush to war in Iraq against a suspected arsenal he did not find.

Meanwhile, Iran and North Korea expanded their nuclear capabilities. Last month, North Korea officially became a nuclear weapons state when it detonated a small plutonium bomb during an underground test. It is Iran, however, that the Bush administration named earlier this year as posing the greatest challenge to the United States. It is a worry shared by many policymakers and politicians outside the government, but it is not the only nuclear concern. In the 1960s, nonproliferation was one of the few areas on which there was agreement between the United States and what was then the Soviet Union. France, Britain, China and, experts believe, Israel had joined the nuclear club, and while the Cold War rivals were in the midst of their own arms race, they were also eager to prevent more states from acquiring nuclear weapons.

President John F. Kennedy worried in 1963 that if U.S. efforts were unsuccessful, there could be as many as 10 nuclear weapons states within a decade and the number could double after that. Today there are nine such states. But there would have been more had South Africa, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and Belarus not been among the countries that gave up nuclear weapons after the breakup in 1991 of the Soviet Union.

Michael Levi, a nuclear scholar at the Council on Foreign Relations, said that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a unique moment for nonproliferation, but that "the Cold War isn't going to end every 10 years."

"If you focus on nuclear testing as a benchmark, then you've got three nuclear states in the last eight years -- India, Pakistan and North Korea. But if you go by acquiring nuclear weapons, it would be one a decade," Levi said, referring to North Korea.

North Korea's test has deepened worries of an Asian arms race, with Japan and South Korea among dozens of countries with the technical ability -- known as "breakout" capacity -- to quickly divert materials from their energy programs for bomb-making. Mohamed ElBaradei, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, calls those countries "virtual" weapons states and noted during a recent talk in Washington that those with the know-how, including Japan and South Korea, could make nuclear devices "overnight" if they wanted to.

"When the Japanese, South Koreans and Taiwanese see North Korea go nuclear and nothing done, they will reconsider their decisions not to go nuclear," said Carter, now a Harvard University professor. Noting that Egypt and Saudi Arabia may change their postures too, Carter said the recent turn toward nuclear weapons presented "the biggest setback to American security in a decade. It doesn't get any bigger than this."

Jon Wolfsthal, a fellow at the International Security Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that in the 1990s, "the pessimists used to be in the minority on nuclear issues, and now theirs is the dominant view."

"The long-term pessimists will tell you the good old days were never that good," he said. "North Korea's program was up and running in the '80s, Iran's program was up and running in the '80s, India's was up in the '60s and people didn't see it because the relative dangers had diminished. We went from a Cold War world where life could end in 30 minutes to one where we had serious but isolated challenges. But now that the dangers of the Cold War really are in the history books, isolated dangers seem much more acute."

Today, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada and South Africa have begun or have expressed interest in enriching uranium to sell on the world market as nuclear power becomes more attractive to Third World countries. Iran has said repeatedly that its large-scale enrichment plans are designed solely for power generation. Uranium enriched to

low levels, as the Iranians have done so far, can be used for fueling nuclear power plants, not for weapons. But the same process, if done at higher speeds for longer periods, can produce bomb-grade uranium. Egypt, Turkey and Algeria are all exploring nuclear power capabilities.

"In a way, it's a very bad time," said David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security.

"Egypt and Turkey are already pushing for nuclear power while thinking in the back of their minds they may want the option of a nuclear capability, and all the weapons states seem to be retrenching with their nuclear weapons. But I think it can be reversed. Nuclear weapons are a deterrence but also a bargaining chip."

George Perkovich, a vice president at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, said the rise in proliferation threats can only be turned back once the United States, Russia and China figure out a power balance that makes room for each country's interests.

"The one thing we agreed on once with the Russians was that we didn't want any other countries getting nuclear weapons," Perkovich said. "But once you have a unipolar system, does Russia really have the same incentive when countries that are interested in getting nuclear weapons are also interested in limiting U.S. power? Russia and China feel wary of U.S. intentions now, in China's neighborhood and Russia's, so they aren't going to help us on nonproliferation just because it's the right thing to do."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/02/AR2006110201581.html>

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U.S. Warhead Testing Behind Schedule, IG Says

By Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writer

"Significant backlogs" in surveillance testing of several types of nuclear warheads in the aging U.S. stockpile have created gaps in information needed to ensure that the weapons remain reliable, a report released yesterday by the Energy Department's inspector general said.

Every year, a small number of missile warheads and bombs from the nine U.S. nuclear weapons systems are dismantled. Parts are subjected to laboratory and flight tests to verify they are safe, secure and reliable.

"The surveillance program's role in assessing and ensuring confidence in the reliability of the weapons stockpile is increasingly important as the nuclear weapons stockpile ages," Inspector General Gregory H. Friedman wrote to Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman.

But Friedman added: "As a result of the continuing backlog of surveillance tests, the department lacks vital information about the reliability of the stockpile . . . [and] as a result of testing delays, important operating anomalies or other defects could go undetected."

Friedman said the department is "committed" to eliminating most of the testing backlog by September 2007, in part by upgrading facilities, updating safety studies and perhaps eliminating some test requirements. In one case, surveillance activities were delayed for six to seven months in 2004 because operations were halted over the loss of a computer disk containing classified materials.

Last year, the report said, laboratory tests were behind schedule for seven of the nine weapons systems and flight tests for six. Charts contained in the report show the greatest laboratory backlog was in the oldest warhead, the W-62, which was used on the Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile and is due for retirement. Of 36 lab tests planned, 13 had been completed by Sept. 30, 2005, the report said.

Of the more modern warheads, the W-88, the newest U.S. warhead found on the Trident submarine-launched ICBM, was scheduled for 29 lab tests -- of which 23 were completed on schedule. The largest gap in flight tests was for the W-87, the warhead that is to replace the W-62 and the Minuteman III. Of eight tests planned for fiscal 2005, three had been completed.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/02/AR2006110201544.html>

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