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Articles & Other Documents:

[Bid To Buy Chemical Weapons Is Alleged](#)

[Panelists: Pentagon could take lead role in some disasters](#)

[Iran's Leader Cites Nuclear Progress](#)

[Nuclear Deal With India Wins Senate Backing](#)

[U.S. Seeks Korea Nuclear Step](#)

[Mustard Agent Vial Breaks In APG Lab](#)

[Pakistan Tests New Missile In Wake Of Talks](#)

[U.S. Signals New Incentives For North Korea](#)

[Envisioning U.S. Talks With Iran And Syria](#)

[Pacific Rim Statement On N. Korea Falls Short Of What Bush Sought](#)

[As Iran Seeks Aid, Atom Agency Faces Quandary](#)

[China and India on verge of nuclear deal](#)

[Annan tells countries to address biological weapons threats](#)

[South Korea Won't Intercept Cargo Ships From The North](#)

[Lawmakers Concerned About U.S.-India Nuclear Trade Deal](#)

[Rice Says Nuclear Talks Will Take Time](#)

[Pakistan-India Deal Targets Terror, Nukes](#)

[Seoul Refuses To Press North](#)

[U.S. Senate Vote On Nuclear Deal Draws Guarded Praise By India](#)

[Bush Asks Conferees To Help Bring N. Korea Back To Talks](#)

[World Leaders Denounce North Korean Nuke Program](#)

[Bombs That Won't Go Off](#)

[India, Too, Tests A Medium-Range Missile](#)

[Extremist Vying To Become Top Ayatollah](#)

[Iran probably has germ weapons, possibly N.Korea-US](#)

Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

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Boston Globe
November 14, 2006

Bid To Buy Chemical Weapons Is Alleged

Terror cells cited by British official

By David Stringer, Associated Press

LONDON -- Islamic extremists, including members of Al Qaeda, have tried to acquire chemical or radiological weapons to use in attacks against Britain and other Western targets, a senior British diplomat said yesterday.

The warning followed an acknowledgment last week by Britain's domestic spy chief, Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, that officials are tracking almost 30 terror plots involving 1,600 people.

Britain's Foreign Office has evidence of efforts by the terror groups to purchase chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials for use in attacks, the diplomat said on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of his work.

Dhiren Barot, a British Muslim convert who was sentenced to life in prison last week for plotting to attack US financial landmarks and London hotels, had plans to build and detonate a so-called dirty bomb, which combines radioactive materials with conventional explosives, prosecutors said.

"We know the aspiration is there, we know the efforts to get the materials are there, we know the efforts to get the technology are there," the senior diplomat said.

The diplomat acknowledged that an attack with chemical or radiological weapons would most likely be mounted with crude technology and cause mass panic rather than mass casualties.

Britain's Foreign Office is concerned over the potential access terrorists could have to substances with legitimate uses that could also be used to create weapons and biological agents like smallpox or anthrax, the official said.

Manningham-Buller, head of the British domestic spy agency MI5, said last week that her agency is monitoring 200 cells actively engaged in plotting or aiding attacks in Britain and abroad.

She said agents had foiled five major plots since the July 2005 transit bomb attacks in London.

The Foreign Office official said hundreds of British Muslims were making terrorism-related trips between Britain and Pakistan each year.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2006/11/14/bid_to_buy_chemical_weapons_is_alleged/

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

November 14, 2006

South Korea Won't Intercept Cargo Ships From The North

By Norimitsu Onishi

SEOUL, South Korea, Nov. 13 — South Korea said Monday that it would not join a United States-led effort to intercept North Korean ships suspected of carrying unconventional weapons or related cargo, raising fresh doubts about Washington's drive to punish the North for its nuclear test last month.

The South Korean government of President Roh Moo-hyun has come under increasing pressure from the political opposition and its American ally to join the campaign since the test.

The effort to punish North Korea has become a part of the Proliferation Security Initiative, a three-year-old, American-led program to coordinate and develop procedures for intercepting smugglers of unconventional weapons around the world.

But even as Washington sought to build unity ahead of a meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit meeting in Hanoi this week, and the possible resumption of six-nation talks over the North's nuclear program early next month, Seoul made it clear that it was hewing to its policy of avoiding confrontation with the North.

South Korea has supported, but not joined, the security program, fearing that inspecting North Korean ships by force could lead to a military confrontation.

"The government has declared that it has a special status of officially supporting the goals and principles of the Proliferation Security Initiative, while not formally joining it in consideration of special circumstances on the Korean Peninsula," Park In-kook, the deputy foreign minister, said at a news conference.

A loose coalition of countries that have joined, including Australia and Japan, have carried out naval exercises to practice for interdictions, and a few countries have already boarded ships to and from North Korea in ports throughout Asia.

But the legality of intercepting ships in international waters remains unclear, even under a United Nations Security Council resolution passed after the North's test. The resolution calls on countries, though it does not require them, to inspect cargo in and out of North Korea.

On Monday, South Korean officials did not announce any new measures to comply with the resolution, repeating modest steps they had already announced in recent weeks. They said South Korea would ban the visit of any North

Korean official related to the development of unconventional weapons, and would suspend subsidies for some South Koreans to visit the Mount Kumgang resort in the North.

The South announced soon after the nuclear test that it would not suspend its two major economic projects with the North, the resort and an industrial park in Kaesong. American officials have also pressed Seoul to suspend those projects.

Except for North Korea, the nations participating in the six-nation talks — South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia — are expected to meet in Hanoi, Vietnam, this week to plan for the resumption of talks next month.

North Korea withdrew from the talks a year ago after the United States imposed a crackdown on banks dealing with the North and on North Korean businesses, but agreed last month to return to the talks after American officials indicated that they would discuss the restrictions.

In Tokyo, the Russian ambassador to Japan, Aleksandr P. Losyukov, said Monday at a news conference that the talks would probably take place in early December. But Mr. Losyukov, who had been Russia's lead negotiator in the earlier talks, played down expectations.

"Even if the talks are held," he said, "I don't think there will be a complete solution to the problem."

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/14/world/asia/14korea.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

GOVEXEC.com
DAILY BRIEFING
November 13, 2006

Panelists: Pentagon could take lead role in some disasters

By Jonathan Marino
jmarino@govexec.com

The Defense Department may be called upon to lead some responses to disaster, relegating the Homeland Security Department to a support role, defense experts said Monday.

The Pentagon's authority trumps that of DHS in the event of an attack, said David McIntyre, director of the Integrative Center for Homeland Security at Texas A&M University. McIntyre, a 30-year Army veteran, said the Pentagon's role in a disaster leans heavily toward response and recovery, while DHS' is more focused on prevention and mitigation.

This could even make the Defense Department suited to lead responses for some incidents that do not involve an attack, such as a pandemic flu outbreak or massive earthquake, McIntyre said. He spoke on a panel at The George Washington University's Eisenhower Series on national security.

The Defense Department "is inevitably going to be called on to take the lead" from DHS after an attack, though it might not want to, said Paul Stockton, former director of the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security.

Col. Richard Chavez, director of civil support in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, said local and state agencies must be allowed to contribute significantly and argued that instead of a Defense-led response, multi-departmental collaboration is needed.

The Pentagon must be careful to avoid over-committing to any region, in case it has to later deploy forces to meet separate needs, Chavez said.

Stockton said governors and local leaders must be incorporated into disaster response plans, and must keep their immediate region well-informed. The government should avoid the "slippery slope toward federalizing [the] emergency response system," he said. He noted that the Pentagon also gets involved when public order collapses.

In discussing the magnitude of the disaster response challenge, McIntyre said the average scope of a weapon of mass destruction detonation on a U.S. city could result in 60,000 deaths and projected that as many as four weapons could be detonated at once, as the typical terrorist tactic has been to use multiple simultaneous attacks. "The enemy doesn't do onesies," he said.

Experts called for improvements in the U.S. health care system's ability to respond to another attack on American soil. Stockton said more "surge capacity" in health care is needed, and McIntyre projected that a detonation that resulted in "150,000 casualties [would] fill every burn ward in the United States."

Along with increased hospital surge capacity, experts cautioned that DHS may need a large cadre of educated surge employees. McIntyre called for the creation of a DHS reserve system similar to the one employed by the military, by which enlisted students would pledge to assist in response efforts in exchange for college financing.

http://govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=35478&dcn=todaysnews

Washington Post
November 15, 2006
Pg. 14

Lawmakers Concerned About U.S.-India Nuclear Trade Deal

White House Hasn't Provided Long-Awaited Intelligence Assessment and Other Key Information

By Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writer

Congressional leaders requested a secret intelligence assessment of India's nuclear program and its government's ties to Iran in January amid concerns about a White House effort to provide nuclear technology to New Delhi. Ten months later, as the Senate prepares to vote on nuclear trade with India, the intelligence assessment has yet to be seen on Capitol Hill, congressional and intelligence sources say.

The pending nuclear deal with India would reverse years of U.S. policies aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. U.S. law forbids selling civilian nuclear technology to countries such as India that have refused to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Arms-control experts, concerned that the deal would have major ramifications for U.S. efforts to stop nuclear programs in Iran and North Korea, said yesterday that the White House plan would allow India to rapidly increase its nuclear arsenal.

For the Bush administration, the deal is part of a strategy to accelerate India's rise as a regional counterweight to China. Further, officials have argued that a nuclear arsenal in the hands of democratic India, which conducted its first nuclear test in 1974, would not be a threat to the United States.

The White House wants legislation for the deal approved by the lame-duck Congress and is hoping the Senate will vote on it by Friday. The bill would carve out an India-specific exception to long-standing laws that forbid nuclear trade with countries that have not signed the NPT. Sen. Harry M. Reid (Nev.), who will become majority leader when Democrats take control of the Senate in January, has said that he wants the India bill to come up before the current Congress ends in December.

In July, the House voted in favor of a similar bill. Lawmakers did not know at the time that the Bush administration was planning to sanction two Indian firms for selling missile parts to Iran -- a fact that seemed to undercut administration assurances that India's nonproliferation record is excellent.

Democrats later accused the administration of deception, and Senate and House staff members said yesterday that they are concerned that the White House is still pushing for congressional approval without providing needed information, such as the intelligence report.

In a Jan. 23 letter to John D. Negroponte, director of national intelligence, the ranking chairmen of the House and Senate foreign relations panels asked for "an interagency assessment" of India's nuclear program, its record of proliferation and its ties to Iran. The letter was signed by Reps. Henry J. Hyde (R-Ill.) and Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and Sens. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.) and Richard G. Lugar (R-Ind.) -- all of whom have been generally supportive of the India deal but have raised concerns about the proliferation implications and about India's relations with Iran. The four asked Negroponte to assess how India is implementing its nonproliferation commitments, the adequacy of its export controls and the movement into and out of India of materials to make weapons of mass destruction.

Much of the deal rests on assurances that India will separate its nuclear and civilian facilities so that the United States can be certain that the nuclear technology it provides will go only to the civilian energy side. With a population of 1 billion, India has vast energy needs and civilian technology would help it to modernize. But the arrangement would also free up India's nuclear infrastructure so that it could be devoted solely to weapons.

The letter asked the intelligence community to gauge the extent to which the deal "may enhance India's ability to produce fissile material for weapons." The senators also asked for a full assessment of India's positions on Iran.

In a Feb. 9 response to the letter, Negroponte wrote: "We look forward to providing the necessary information in the near future." Copies of both letters were read to The Washington Post. Negroponte's office said yesterday that it could not comment on the letters or the status of the assessment.

Several congressional sources said that the National Intelligence Council provided two oral briefings, in March and April, that focused on the history of U.S.-India relations as well as the beginnings of India's nuclear program, but that the briefings did not address the specific information requested in the letter. "We expect a written intelligence product," one Republican said. Four other staff members -- two Democrats and two Republicans -- also said that they expected a complete intelligence assessment that responds point by point to the issues raised in the letter. All spoke on the condition of anonymity, fearing that public comment would put their congressional jobs at risk.

The terms of a U.S.-India accord, worked out in secret in 2005, took Congress by surprise. Congress must approve any final deal before it can be implemented. While both parties support a strategic alliance with India, some have voiced concerns about its strong ties to Iran.

Tehran and New Delhi signed an extensive agreement in 2003 and their military, scientific, political and economic ties are growing.

A report issued yesterday by the Congressional Research Service, which does in-depth analysis for Congress, said that "India's long relationship with Iran" made it unlikely that India would take a hard line on Tehran. India does not support nuclear weapons for Iran, but "its views of the Iranian threat and appropriate responses differ significantly from U.S. views."

The report also found that entities in India and Iran "appear to have engaged in very limited nuclear, chemical and missile related transfers over the years."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/14/AR2006111401208.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 15, 2006

Iran's Leader Cites Nuclear Progress

By William J. Broad and Nazila Fathi

Iran's president declared yesterday that his country's nuclear program was nearing an important milestone, even as international atomic inspectors reported that they had found unexplained traces of plutonium and that Tehran continued to be so uncooperative in answering questions that they had been unable to confirm earlier claims of progress.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's statement that Iran hoped soon to master the nuclear fuel cycle came as world powers, suspicious that Iran is seeking the means to make atom bombs, are trying to agree on a regimen of sanctions. Iran says it wants only to fuel reactors and generate electricity.

"I hope we can have our celebration of Iran's full nuclearization this year," Mr. Ahmadinejad said during a news conference in Tehran, apparently referring to a program that could do everything from extracting uranium ore from the ground to enriching it into reactor fuel. Iran's calendar ends in March.

In its latest report on the Iranian nuclear program, the International Atomic Energy Agency, based in Vienna, said Tehran was moving ahead with its efforts to purify uranium while refusing to answer basic questions about its atomic program.

For instance, the report said Iran had failed to provide full access to records needed to confirm its claims in June of having enriched uranium to a level of 5 percent, which is suitable for reactors.

The report also said inspectors had made no progress in resolving the origin of previously discovered traces of highly enriched uranium, which can fuel atomic bombs. In September, the agency disclosed the discovery of the particles on a container from a waste storage site at Karaj, not far from Tehran, but withheld judgment about where the material came from and whether it could be linked to a secret nuclear weapons program.

Finally, the report said inspectors had recently found traces of yet another unexplained particle — plutonium — on samples from containers at Karaj and was assessing a response from Tehran about its origin. Plutonium, like uranium, can fuel atom bombs. "Unless Iran addresses the long outstanding verification issues," the report concluded, the atomic agency "will remain unable to make further progress in its efforts to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities."

The report was sent to the 35 countries on the atomic agency's decision-making board before its regularly scheduled quarterly session in Vienna on Thursday and Friday of next week. It was distributed on a confidential basis yesterday but was quickly made available to reporters.

In Tehran, Mr. Ahmadinejad once again defied international demands to suspend uranium enrichment and reiterated Iran's ultimate enrichment goal — to expand its program to an industrial level with 60,000 centrifuges.

In a news conference with Iranian journalists, he also brushed off suggestions by other senior authorities that Iran might suspend the reactor-fuel program, saying there was no way Iran would turn back.

Mr. Ahmadinejad said Iran had prepared itself to confront possible sanctions. "Nothing has been passed against Iran yet, but we are ready for any condition," he said. "They will do their best, and so will we. In the end, the winner is whoever stands more firmly."

He said Iran was willing to hold talks with the United States if it changed its attitude. "We want to have good relations with all countries, but they have a certain attitude and think they own the world," he said. "Our people cannot tolerate that." He said he would soon send a message to the American people that would explain the viewpoint of Iranians.

So far, Iran has built two cascades of 164 centrifuges for uranium enrichment — the process of purification used to make nuclear reactor fuel and, at great purity, the core of an atom bomb. It has announced that it wants to have 3,000 centrifuges operating by March 2007.

Nuclear experts have estimated that it could take a plant of 3,000 centrifuges as little as nine months to make 55 pounds of highly enriched uranium — enough for anywhere from one to five small nuclear weapons, depending on the skill of the bomb makers.

Intelligence analysts say Iran could be anywhere from three to nine years away from having the ability to build an atom bomb.

William J. Broad reported from New York, and Nazila Fathi from Tehran.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/15/world/middleeast/15iran.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times

November 16, 2006

Pg. 13

Rice Says Nuclear Talks Will Take Time

Groundwork tied to success

By Anne Gearan, Associated Press

HANOI -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is suggesting that new talks intended to shutter North Korea's nuclear program may not come quickly.

The six-nation talks have been mothballed for a year, during which North Korea test-fired a long-range missile and conducted an underground nuclear explosion that unnerved Asia and the West.

"We need to take our time this time and make sure when we go to the table at the six-party talks there is a reasonable chance of a successful outcome," Miss Rice told reporters en route to a Pacific Rim economic meeting in Vietnam.

The United States, South Korea, China, Japan and Russia have offered impoverished North Korea a package of economic, political and energy incentives if it gives up its nuclear weapons. The North agreed to the deal in September 2005, but then backed away.

The North also agreed in principle to return to arms control negotiations after its nuclear test last month, and host China had hoped to schedule the session before the end of the year.

Legwork is under way to ensure the new talks are tightly structured and produce a result, Miss Rice said. Two top State Department officials recently returned from planning meetings in Asia, and Miss Rice predicted more such visits. Miss Rice also will meet separately with the foreign ministers of China and South Korea during her stay in the Vietnamese capital.

"I'm a veteran of arms control negotiations," said Miss Rice, a specialist on the former Soviet Union. "It's not at all unusual that you have a lot of preparatory work in advance of any round of getting the actual negotiators together."

The North Korean nuclear test will be a focus of diplomatic meetings during this week's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Hanoi. Miss Rice and President Bush will attend.

A draft statement by the 21-member forum shows apparent differences among members on the appropriate way to deal with the threat of weapons of mass destruction. Two sentences about the issue are enclosed in brackets, meaning some members wanted that material deleted.

The draft does not mention North Korea, although the issue was high on the summit agenda. Envoys from South Korea, Japan and the United States were to meet yesterday in Hanoi to hammer out a common strategy ahead of the six-way nuclear talks, which include North Korea.

Christopher R. Hill, the top U.S. nuclear envoy, said talks with North Korea won't succeed unless the communist regime lives up to commitments to abandon nuclear weapons in exchange for aid and security guarantees.

"I think we've all made very clear that we don't accept North Korea as a nuclear state," he said.

South Korean nuclear envoy Chun Yung-woo earlier called for real progress in the talks.

"If we do not make substantial progress, the future for the six-party talks will be very unclear," he said late Tuesday after arriving in Hanoi from Seoul. "There should not be talks for the sake of talks."

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061115-095749-5007r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

November 17, 2006

Pg. 10

Nuclear Deal With India Wins Senate Backing

By Thom Shanker

WASHINGTON, Nov. 16 — The Senate gave overwhelming approval late Thursday to President Bush's deal for nuclear cooperation with India, a vote expressing that a goal of nurturing India as an ally outweighed concerns over the risks of spreading nuclear skills and bomb-making materials.

By a vote of 85 to 12, senators agreed to a program that would allow the United States to send nuclear fuel and technology to India, which has refused to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

The agreement, negotiated by President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India in March, calls for the United States to end a long moratorium on sales of nuclear fuel and reactor components. For its part, India would divide its reactor facilities into civilian and military nuclear programs, with civilian facilities open to international inspections.

Critics have been unwavering in arguing that the pact would rally nations like North Korea and Iran to press ahead with nuclear weapons programs despite international complaints and threats. Opponents of the measure also warned that the deal would allow India to build more bombs with its limited stockpile of radioactive material, and could spur a regional nuclear arms race with Pakistan and China.

Senator Richard G. Lugar, the Indiana Republican who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, hailed the measure's passage as "one more important step toward a vibrant and exciting relationship between our two great democracies."

His endorsement was significant, coming from a senator respected for efforts in nonproliferation and whose name is part of a sweeping program to secure nuclear bomb-making materials in the former Soviet Union. He also expressed "thanks for a truly bipartisan effort" to Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr., the Delaware Democrat set to become Foreign Relations chairman in the new Congress.

While advocates of the measure said it would be an incentive for India to refrain from nuclear tests, denunciations came quickly from a minority of senators who opposed it, as well as from critics in the House.

"It is a sad day for U.S. national security when the Senate passes a sweeping exemption to our nonproliferation laws that will allow India to increase its annual bomb-production capacity from 7 to over 40 bombs a year," said Representative Edward J. Markey, co-chairman of the House Bipartisan Taskforce on Nonproliferation. He said the measure "sends the wrong signal at a time when the world is trying to prevent Iran from getting the bomb."

After the vote, the White House issued a statement from President Bush praising passage of the bill.

"The United States and India enjoy a strategic partnership based upon common values," the statement said. "The U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation agreement will bring India into the international nuclear nonproliferation mainstream and will increase the transparency of India's entire civilian nuclear program."

The Senate rejected several amendments that sponsors said would clarify or narrow the deal, including one that would have required India to halt all military relations with Iran. The legislation, as passed, does contain a new provision that requires the president to declare that India has joined multinational efforts to contain Iran's nuclear program before the United States-India nuclear deal moves forward.

The Senate legislation now must be matched to the House version, which passed in July by a vote of 359 to 68; both chambers then must approve the final language. Even with Senate approval, the package will not move forward until both houses agree to specifics of a nuclear-cooperation accord with India. A complementary deal between India and the International Atomic Energy Agency also must be reached.

When the plan was announced, India pledged to classify 14 of its 22 nuclear reactors as civilian facilities. That would put those reactors under international inspections for the first time. But other reactors would remain under Indian military jurisdiction, and not open to inspectors.

After India and Pakistan conducted surprise nuclear tests about eight years ago, the Clinton administration imposed economic sanctions on both countries. But the Bush administration's effort to enlist allies for its global antiterrorism campaign brought an end to those sanctions.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/17/washington/17nuke.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Chicago Tribune
November 16, 2006

Pakistan-India Deal Targets Terror, Nukes

By Muneeza Naqvi, Associated Press

NEW DELHI -- India and Pakistan agreed on measures to combat terrorism and prevent an accidental nuclear conflict in South Asia at the first peace talks since a terrorist attack on Mumbai's train network in July, Pakistan's foreign secretary said Wednesday.

Blaming the attack, which killed more than 200 people, on militants based in Pakistan, and on Islamabad's intelligence service, India put the talks on hold. The key to resumption was a deal to create an "anti-terrorism mechanism" that could help the historic rivals work together to halt attacks like those in Mumbai.

Pakistani Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammed Khan told reporters that, as talks began Tuesday, he and Indian Foreign Secretary Shiv Shanker Menon had agreed to set up a three-member commission to exchange information on terror threats. A Foreign Ministry official from each side is to work with the group, he said.

Khan also said the two sides had prepared a deal intended to curb the risk of an inadvertent nuclear conflict. The nuclear safety deal would be signed at a later date, he said, without providing details of the agreement.

The nuclear-armed neighbors have fought three wars since the bloody partition of the subcontinent after independence from Britain in 1947.

They began the peace process in 2004 and have since taken several steps to improve relations, but the process broke down after the Mumbai bombings.

Khan said that during two days of talks, Indian officials had given him no evidence of Pakistani links to the Mumbai bombings, but "there is something about other blasts." He did not elaborate.

Other deadly recent attacks that India blamed on militants based in Pakistan include October 2005 bombings in New Delhi, which killed 62 people, and bombings in March in the Hindu holy city of Varanasi that killed 20.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0611160153nov16.1.212667.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 17, 2006
Pg. 12

U.S. Seeks Korea Nuclear Step

HANOI, Nov. 16 — The United States is working with China and other Asian nations to pressure North Korea to take a visible step toward dismantling its nuclear program before starting a new round of nuclear disarmament talks, American officials said Thursday.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, here for a meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, said that while she was hopeful the talks — begun in 2003 — would resume in December, it was pointless to return to the bargaining table without a show of good faith from both sides.

She refused to expand on what those steps would be. But American officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity said an acceptable move might be for North Korea to dismantle one of its nuclear facilities and to readmit inspectors.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/17/world/17prexy.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times
November 18, 2006
Pg. 1

Seoul Refuses To Press North

By Joseph Curl, The Washington Times

HANOI -- President Bush failed to win South Korea's support today for an inspection plan aimed at intercepting ships suspected of carrying supplies for North Korea's nuclear weapons program.

During talks before the opening of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, Mr. Bush tried to persuade South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun to fully implement sanctions imposed on North Korea after it tested a nuclear device on Oct. 9.

Mr. Roh said that his country "is not taking part in the full scope" of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which calls for the stopping of suspect ships headed for North Korea. However, he said South Korea supports the "principles and goals of the PSI," and will cooperate in preventing the transfer of material for weapons of mass destruction.

South Korea has only been an observer to the program, fearing its direct participation could lead to armed clashes with its neighbor.

Mr. Bush downplayed the disagreement, saying he appreciates South Korea's help in solving the nuclear standoff with North Korea.

"I appreciate the cooperation we're receiving from South Korea for the Proliferation Security Initiative," he said. "Our desire is to solve the North Korean issue peacefully."

White House press secretary Tony Snow acknowledged that Mr. Roh faced political pressure not to anger North Korea.

Mr. Bush "understands political constraints," Mr. Snow said.

Yesterday, after arriving in Hanoi, the president urged patience regarding the war in Iraq, saying the Vietnam War taught the United States inspecting there will be no "instant success."

"We tend to want there to be instant success in the world, and the task in Iraq is going to take a while," Mr. Bush said after meeting with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia, an ally in the Iraq war.

Rep. John P. Murtha, the Pennsylvania Democrat who has called for U.S. troops to be withdrawn from Iraq, was quick to jump on Mr. Bush's "instant success" remark.

"The president seems to be suggesting that the American people don't have patience and that they're looking for 'instant success' in Iraq," Mr. Murtha said. "We're going into our fourth year of a failed strategy. That doesn't fit anyone's definition of 'instant.' "

After suffering a blow last week when Republicans lost control of the House and Senate, the president urged critics to hold fast to the job at hand, expressing confidence in Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

"We'll succeed unless we quit. The Maliki government is going to make it unless the coalition leaves before they have a chance to make it. And that's why I assured the prime minister we'll get the job done," he said.

But Sen. Richard J. Durbin, Illinois Democrat who was elected this week as majority whip for the next Congress, dismissed Mr. Bush's calls for patience.

"America has been patient. Our troops have been heroic," Mr. Durbin said. "I think we ought to show a little impatience when it comes to the Iraqis and their unwillingness to respond to the need to change."

In meetings with top Vietnamese officials, including President Nguyen Minh Triet, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and the country's most powerful leader, Communist Party chief Nong Duc Manh, Mr. Bush said the United States has moved past its grievances with Vietnam.

"For decades, we have been torn apart by war. And today, the Vietnamese people are at peace and seeing the benefits of reform," the president said in a dinner toast to his hosts.

"We are indeed very happy to see the expansion of relations between our two countries," Mr. Triet said at a state dinner for Mr. Bush.

Vietnam, one of Asia's fastest-growing economies, is preparing to join the World Trade Organization, a big move for the communist nation. But an effort by House Republicans to grant permanent normal trade status to Vietnam failed on Monday. Mr. Bush, however, expressed optimism that a bill granting the status will pass soon. "I believe it's going to happen," he told Vietnamese leaders.

The president spent yesterday meeting with Vietnamese officials, discussing HIV/AIDS, avian flu, trade and cooperation on information about more than 1,300 U.S. military personnel still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War. Today, he will visit the U.S. military's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command before the APEC meetings get under way.

Mr. Bush was greeted warmly in Vietnam, and thousands lined the streets on his motorcade route from the airport to Hanoi. He was welcomed at the presidential palace by soldiers standing at attention and bands playing the U.S. and Vietnamese national anthems.

But reminders of the Vietnam War were everywhere: Mr. Bush told reporters he found it poignant driving by the Hanoi lake into which former POW and Arizona Republican Sen. John McCain, a potential presidential candidate in 2008, parachuted when his fighter jet was shot down during the war.

"He suffered a lot as a result of his imprisonment, and yet we passed the place where he was literally saved, in one way, by the people pulling him out," Mr. Bush said.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061117-115924-5108r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Baltimore Sun

November 18, 2006

Mustard Agent Vial Breaks In APG Lab

Three workers taken for observation; no release of chemical

By Justin Fenton, Sun reporter

Three workers at Aberdeen Proving Ground were taken for medical observation yesterday after a laboratory vial containing dilute mustard agent broke, officials said.

The Harford County military base's emergency personnel responded to an accident in a laboratory at the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center at 11:30 a.m. after a worker handling a small quantity of the blister agent was exposed, said George Mercer, a spokesman for APG.

The worker was decontaminated and sent to an on-post medical clinic for observation, Mercer said. Two other workers, who were not believed to be exposed to the agent, also were sent there for observation as a precaution and released.

While the gate to the facility was closed for 20 minutes, no chemical agent was released to the environment, Mercer said.

The Edgewood Chemical Biological Center is a 1.5 million-square-foot research and engineering facility within APG for chemical and biological defense.

Earlier this year, APG became the first continental U.S. military site to eliminate its stockpile of chemical weapons, clearing out 600 tons of mustard agent. A building that held containers that once held the agent was demolished this fall.

But work involving small amounts of mustard agent continues, typically in small quantities.

"The Army is tasked with researching chemical defense, and we are constantly looking for appropriate ways to protect our soldiers and civilian population in case of a chemical attack," Mercer said.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/harford/bal-md.ha.apg18nov18.0.4034706.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 18, 2006
Pg. 6

U.S. Senate Vote On Nuclear Deal Draws Guarded Praise By India

By Amelia Gentleman

NEW DELHI, Nov. 17 — India expressed both optimism and concern on Friday over the United States Senate's approval of nuclear cooperation between the countries, noting that major sticking points remained, including a stipulation by the Senate requiring India to help contain Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Friday that there was "still a long way to go before nuclear cooperation between India and the U.S. becomes a living reality." He stressed that the final version of the deal should be in line with "mutual commitments" made last year — a comment intended to ease concerns that the government had made too many concessions to the United States during negotiations since the proposal was announced in July 2005.

The House approved its version of the legislation in July, and the final language will have to be reconciled by the two chambers in Congress.

The Senate passed its bill 85 to 12 late on Thursday, in a deal that would allow the United States to ship nuclear fuel and technology to India despite India's refusal to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. "This undoubtedly reflects the very broad bipartisan support which this initiative enjoys," India's foreign minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said in a statement. "We must await the final version before drawing any conclusions on the legislation."

Sonia Gandhi, the leader of the governing Congress Party, also stressed that she would welcome the final agreement only if it mirrored the original plan. "Nothing will be accepted which is outside the July 18 agreement between the two countries," she said.

The legislation, as passed in the Senate, contains a new provision that requires the American president to declare that India has joined multinational efforts to contain Iran's nuclear program before the United States-India nuclear deal moves forward. Iran is among India's most vital energy partners, and India's large Shiite Muslim population makes relations with Tehran particularly delicate.

"It makes it appear as though we are being required to gang up with the United States against Iran," warned Lalit Mansingh, a former Indian ambassador to the United States. "It will be politically difficult for the government to accept."

A complementary deal between India and the International Atomic Energy Agency must be reached and an exception for India made by the Nuclear Suppliers Group, countries that export nuclear material.

The United States assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asian affairs, Richard A. Boucher, called the agreement "a unique opportunity based on India's unique circumstances." He was referring to Pakistan's position that it should also be accorded civilian nuclear cooperation from the United States.

Reuters reported this week that Pakistan was poised to receive nuclear technology from China. On Friday, the Pakistani Foreign Office spokeswoman, Tasnim Aslam, said that "cooperation with China in the field of nuclear technology is longstanding."

Mr. Boucher, on a visit here on Friday, said in an interview that the Bush administration was working on expanding Pakistan's access to other nonnuclear sources of energy.

Somini Sengupta contributed reporting from New Delhi and Salman Masood from Islamabad, Pakistan.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/18/world/asia/18india.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Chicago Tribune
November 17, 2006

Pakistan Tests New Missile In Wake Of Talks

By Associated Press

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pakistan said it successfully test-fired a new version of its nuclear-capable medium-range missile Thursday, a show of power a day after peace talks with India that were criticized by domestic hard-liners. The North Korean-designed Ghauri missile, also known as the Hatf-5, was launched to mark the end of military exercises at an undisclosed location, an army statement said. The missile, with a range of 800 miles, could easily strike deep into neighboring India, Pakistan's nuclear-armed foe.

The missile is based on the Soviet Scud and has been in service since 1998.

On Wednesday, longtime nuclear rivals Pakistan and India concluded a crucial round of peace talks in New Delhi aimed at resolving their differences, including the thorny issue of their territorial dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir.

India did not comment on the test.

Hamid Gul, a former head of Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence spy agency, said President Pervez Musharraf's government was incapable of solving the Kashmir issue through talks with India, and that Pakistan must continue missile tests to safeguard its defense.

"So far, Musharraf has got nothing in return for giving concessions to India," Gul said.

He said that this week's Pakistan-India talks were an "exercise in futility" and that India was not interested in resolving the key issue of Kashmir.

In Islamabad, analyst Khaled Mahmood said the test was probably meant as a message to domestic hard-liners.

Mahmood said Pakistan was sending a signal to India that it would "not compromise on its defense."

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0611170230nov17.1.7360690.story>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times
November 19, 2006

Pg. 1

Bush Asks Conferees To Help Bring N. Korea Back To Talks

By Joseph Curl, The Washington Times

HANOI -- President Bush yesterday sought leverage among Asia-Pacific leaders today to pressure North Korea into resuming six-nation talks on its nuclear-weapons program.

"China is a very important nation, and the United States believes strongly that, by working together, we can help solve problems, such as North Korea and Iran," Mr. Bush said as he sat down with Chinese President Hu Jintao today on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit.

The full 21-nation APEC was expected to issue a statement urging North Korea to return to nuclear negotiations, which it has boycotted for the past year.

Earlier, Mr. Bush met with South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, separately and then together, with North Korea also at the top of the agenda.

He was to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin later in the day.

Mr. Bush and the Japanese prime minister, in their first face-to-face talks since Mr. Abe replaced Junichiro Koizumi, agreed that world leaders should work together to pressure North Korea into abandoning its nuclear ambitions.

"We agreed that we would take a coordinated approach to reach a final resolution of the issue and also to achieve some concrete results at an early stage," Mr. Abe said.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Roh stopped short of complete support for the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which is aimed at intercepting North Korean ships. Seoul prefers a less confrontational approach as it tries to pressure its northern neighbor to re-enter six-party talks with the United States, Russia, South Korea, Japan and China.

But Mr. Roh vowed to implement "in a faithful manner" enforcement of a U.N. Security Council resolution that bans trade of goods and transfer of funds to the North, which could be used to expand its nuclear programs. National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley said the United States is pleased with the consensus on North Korea. The statement will reiterate concern about North Korea's July 4 missile launches and its Oct. 9 nuclear test, the White House said. The statement also will urge North Korea to comply with a Security Council resolution imposing sanctions after the nuclear test, the White House said, and it will urge North Korea to return to the long-stalled six-party talks.

North Korea has said it will return, but no date has been set.

Mr. Hadley said the president, Mr. Roh and Mr. Abe discussed the need to use both pressure and incentives to try to get North Korea to give up nuclear weapons.

"I think there is a sense that, while there is patience required, there was also a shared view that we must not let North Korea use the six-party talks as an instrument for delay," he said.

On another front, Mr. Bush and Mr. Abe agreed to work together on developing a missile-defense shield, which could prevent North Korea from striking Japan or the United States.

"One of the most interesting issues we discussed was our common desire to continue to cooperate on ballistic-missile defense," Mr. Bush said.

The president spent the day meeting with APEC leaders to discuss free trade and world issues such as HIV/AIDS and avian flu. But before the forum meetings, the president visited the U.S. military's Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, which recovers and identifies the remains of Americans killed in action in Vietnam but never repatriated.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20061119-120627-9466r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

November 19, 2006

Pg. 8

U.S. Signals New Incentives For North Korea

By Helene Cooper and David E. Sanger

HANOI, Vietnam, Sunday, Nov. 19 — In a series of closed-door meetings on the edges of the economic summit meeting of Asian nations here, President Bush and his aides have signaled that they will dangle a new set of incentives for North Korea to give up nuclear weapons and technology, American officials said. But the offers would hinge on the North's coming to talks next month agreeing to begin immediately dismantling some of the equipment it is using to build an arsenal.

The stepped up diplomatic effort was made as Mr. Bush met leaders of the four countries that surround North Korea for the first time since the North conducted a nuclear test on Oct. 9. The meetings included a warm session with Japan's new prime minister, Shinzo Abe, and a frosty one with the South Korean president, Roh Moo-hyun. At the end of the meeting with Mr. Roh, who has been fundamentally at odds with Mr. Bush on North Korea strategy, the South Korean president repeated his insistence that while his country accepted the "principles and goals" of an America-led initiative to intercept shipments in and out of the North, it would not participate in parts of the effort, American and Korean officials said. That left murky the critical question of whether Mr. Roh would permit a North Korean ship traveling in the South's waters to be stopped and searched.

American officials at the meeting would not publicly discuss their discussions with Japan, China, South Korea and Russia over what steps they were demanding that North Korea take before resuming negotiations. Even in discussing broader points, most would speak only on condition of anonymity. But Stephen J. Hadley, Mr. Bush's national security adviser, said the North needed to take "concrete steps."

He declined to confirm three steps that American and Asian officials said were now being debated: an immediate shutdown of North Korea's 5 megawatt reactor, whose spent fuel can be turned into weapons; the closing of the reprocessing facility that manufactures plutonium fuel; and immediate inspections led by the International Atomic Energy Commission. The agency's inspectors were thrown out of the country in 2003.

"Generically, those are the kinds of things one might think about," Mr. Hadley said when asked about them.

The combination of incentives and demands on North Korea were expected to be the focal point when President Bush met President Hu Jintao of China. But in their statements to reporters as they sat down in a South Korean-owned hotel here on Sunday, Mr. Hu never mentioned North Korea, instead citing new trade statistics showing a 25 percent jump in American exports to China and noting renewed joint maneuvers between the Chinese and American Navies for search and rescue operations. Mr. Bush mention the North only in passing in the public comments.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also dangled a new incentive: the prospect of North Korea one day being allowed to join this Asia-Pacific economic forum. During a speech to business leaders, she said North Korea could

follow the example of Vietnam and overcome its adversarial relationship with the United States. “I can assure you we would welcome them, too, to a future of hope and prosperity,” she said. “We could then all realize the promise of a true community in the Asia-Pacific region.”

North Korea is one of the very few Pacific nations not part of APEC, the group of 21 Asian and Pacific countries holding its annual summit meeting here in Hanoi.

But for all the talk of regional economic cooperation and trade expansion that peppered the official agenda, the focal point of the behind-the-scenes huddles here was the package the United States was trying to put together to make sure that coming six-nation talks aimed at reining in North Korea’s nuclear ambitions would not fail.

Wary that the off-again-on-again talks risk irrelevancy — they began in 2003 and have yet to produce anything — American officials said they did not want to sit down for another round until they had prepared a successful outcome. A senior Bush administration official said the United States was close to agreement with Russia, China, South Korea and Japan on what steps to ask North Korea to take.

Part of the debate has centered on what the five countries, but especially the United States, would give North Korea in return. In the past, American officials have talked about signing a peace treaty that would officially end the Korean War. Now they are hinting at the prospect of a ceremony to commemorate the event, hoping to capitalize on the desire of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-il, for American recognition.

But few diplomats say the promise of a peace ceremony one day and eventual membership to a trade organization will be enough to get Mr. Kim to start dismantling the nuclear program that his country has spent the last 50 years building. A senior Bush administration official said the five countries were also working on “more immediate elements” of an incentives package.

One big thing that North Korea has signaled it wants is for the United States to lift the financial restrictions it placed on a Macao bank, Banco Delta Asia, last year, that was a main hub of the North’s international financial transactions. Last year, the Bush administration accused 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’s government.

Officially, American diplomats say they will lift the restrictions when North Korea stops counterfeiting American currency. But privately, they acknowledge that they hope to find ways to work on the problem with their North Korean counterparts. The American hope is to use the prospect of a resolution of the counterfeiting issue to get at an overall nuclear agreement.

The United States endorsed a statement from the Asia-Pacific group that strongly criticizes North Korea’s October nuclear test and its July missile launchings. Mr. Bush spent Saturday afternoon at the brand new convention center that Vietnam built for the forum, and Saturday night at a gala dinner and cultural performance.

This is his first trip abroad since the midterm elections, and administration officials were dogged by questions about the Iraq war. After her speech to business leaders, Ms. Rice was challenged by an American questioner who drew a parallel between “our recent misadventures in Iraq and the tragedy of the Vietnam War some 30 years ago.”

“How can we resolve this quagmire?”

Ms. Rice, who had been giving fairly bland answers to questions, became animated, embarking on a lengthy discourse that touched on the history books she read last summer (biographies of America’s founding fathers), an exploration of the Iraqi psyche, the 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia that “ended the last free society in Eastern Europe,” and reflections on her own life growing up in the segregated South.

“Think about Japan, prostrate at the end of World War II, now the vibrant second-most important economy in the world,” she said. “Think, too, about Korea, South Korea: after years of military dictatorship, finally a vibrant democracy.

“And think also about where we’re standing. Thirty years ago, what American would have thought that you would be standing in Vietnam at a conference of the Asia-Pacific Economic Council talking about free markets and open trade and the need to better integrate our economies? Who would have thought it?”

She concluded that if the Iraqis work at it, with America’s help, one day an American secretary of state would stand on a podium somewhere and say: “How could it ever have been thought that the Iraqi people weren’t capable of democracy? How could anyone have ever questioned that freedom and liberty would reign in the Middle East?”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/19/world/asia/19prexy.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Miami Herald
November 19, 2006

World Leaders Denounce North Korean Nuke Program

By Ron Hutcheson, McClatchy News Service

HANOI - More than 20 nations from both sides of the Pacific Ocean agreed Saturday to denounce North Korea's nuclear weapons program, but the show of solidarity masked differences over how to shut it down.

President Bush and 20 other world leaders planned to wrap up their three-day summit today in Vietnam's capital with a joint statement condemning North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Regional concerns about North Korea's intentions increased last month when the reclusive regime tested a nuclear device.

But Bush's attempt to rally other countries behind his get-tough approach suffered a setback Saturday when South Korea declined to fully participate in an international effort to intercept North Korean ships suspected of transporting nuclear materials.

South Korea has balked at the idea of attempting to board North Korean vessels, although it will not object if other countries do so.

Leaders from both countries downplayed the split over tactics.

"We are allies in peace," Bush said after meeting with South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun on the sidelines of the annual Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Hanoi.

U.S. officials reiterated their willingness to improve relations with North Korea if it abandons its nuclear weapons program. The conditional U.S. overture includes an offer to formally declare an end to the Korean War, a conflict that technically remains unresolved since the war began in 1950.

Concerns about North Korea have dominated discussions at the Hanoi summit, but Bush and the other leaders have also pledged cooperation on free trade, anti-terrorism tactics and efforts to deal with AIDS and avian flu.

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/16049810.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 19, 2006
Pg. WK1

Envisioning U.S. Talks With Iran And Syria

By Michael Slackman

CAIRO--IN Washington these days, an idea the White House once treated as anathema is suddenly gaining currency: to sit down and talk directly to Iran and Syria.

Tony Blair is recommending it. The Iraq Study Group headed by James Baker and Lee Hamilton may do so, too. With Iran intent on pursuing its nuclear program and with Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia unable to stabilize the region, there may be no other choice.

But if the White House chose to talk directly to Iran and Syria, what would those two want, and what possible areas of agreement could there be?

At the core of any negotiation would be a basic demand: Iran and Syria want some assurance that their regimes are going to survive. This may seem surprising, since both have been emboldened by American troubles in Iraq and by their ally Hezbollah's success against Israel in Lebanon. And both have seemed to do everything they can to provoke the United States. But political analysts and diplomats say Iran's and Syria's leaders still share a paramount fear that their regimes are vulnerable to the unequalled economic and military might of the United States, strained as it is.

The fears have a basis in history. Iran could not defeat Saddam Hussein's army in eight years of war, then watched twice as American tanks rolled up Iraq's forces in short campaigns. The post-conquest American difficulties there may have emboldened Iran's leaders, but the two invasions remain a lesson. Now Iran fears the prospect of painful economic sanctions, at American urging, because it will not halt its nuclear program.

Syria's leaders are said to worry that an international investigation of the assassination of a top Lebanese politician will reach high into the Syrian government and shake the regime.

"The main concern for Iran is that it does not want to change the current power structure in the country," said Ahmad Zeidabadi, a political analyst in Tehran. "It will resist any change."

So far, the Bush administration has said that it wants to solve the Iranian nuclear confrontation "diplomatically" and that Syria chose the wrong protector when it threw itself in with Iran's mullahs. But it has never offered up the security assurances it has periodically, if half-heartedly, given North Korea. And Iran and Syria have noticed. Nevertheless, even if no grand bargain on Iran's nuclear ambitions and role throughout the Middle East is in the making, could there be a moment when both Iran and Syria might talk seriously with the United States about a smaller range of issues?

While Iran's leaders have shown no sign of dropping their antagonism toward the United States and Israel, they have hinted at willingness to help stabilize Iraq, and perhaps Afghanistan. After all, preventing a complete disintegration of Iraq would allay Iranian concern that anarchy could one day cross the border and, perhaps, incite Iran's own

ethnic minorities (Kurds, for example). Similarly, holding back Afghanistan's Taliban would block the re-emergence of an old Sunni enemy that considers Shiites apostates.

In exchange for cooperation in Afghanistan, of course, the Iranians might expect the United States to abandon what they see as efforts to interfere in their domestic affairs. Those include American projects that aim to promote Iranian democracy (but that Iranian officials say foster instability), as well as the prospect of sanctions as punishment for Iran's nuclear program.

Syria feels more vulnerable than Iran now, due to both domestic and international politics and the reality that its slim reserves of oil will soon run dry. President Bashar al-Assad has drawn closer to Iran since being isolated by Washington and its Arab allies. But Syria does not want its confrontation with the West to bring it more isolation and humiliation, or a loss of legitimacy at home.

This could happen as a result of a continuing investigation into the murder nearly two years ago of the former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri. A United Nations investigation has implicated Syrian officials, and the Security Council has moved to form a tribunal. That scares the Syrians, and they are eager to block its inception. "Syrians think that the U.S. can just call up the U.N. and stop it," said Andrew Tabler, a consulting editor for Syria Today magazine in Damascus. "That's not going to happen. However, where some room to maneuver does exist is over how high up the food chain the investigation will go. This is what worries Syria because this is the primary place it is vulnerable."

Recently, political analysts say, Syria has shown a degree of willingness to help stabilize the conflict in Gaza — something the United States wants — and its officials have repeatedly said the government is willing to hold peace talks with Israel.

"Syria is quite realistic, if proud and stubborn," said Joshua Landis, an assistant professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Oklahoma. "It will accept serious American offers and insist that the problems be dealt with comprehensively."

Focusing on Iraq, Afghanistan and the Israel-Palestinian conflict might be a realistic way for the United States to navigate with Iran and Syria. That is true partly because the Iranians and Syrians both understand, no matter how reluctant they are to express it publicly, that the United States can help them stabilize their regimes and help settle regional problems. "You can't have a deal in the Middle East without the Americans, regardless of the judgment we carry," said an Arab diplomat who spoke on the condition his name and nationality not be identified because of the sensitive nature of the topic.

But bolstering those regimes is a lot to ask of the United States.

Why, in fact, do anything to boost the prestige of the Iranian mullahs or the Assad regime, when that would also risk colliding with the aims of America's Mideast allies? When Americans agreed to hold talks with Iran about Iraq — talks that never went forward — officials in Egypt were furious because it confirmed their own fears that Iraq was now in Iran's orbit, and not their own.

The administration's stated position has been that it will join negotiations with Iran if Iran first suspends the enrichment of uranium. But the Iranians have rejected any conditions on the talks. There are also few contacts with the Syrians, with whom the United States still has diplomatic relations.

The president's national security adviser, Stephen J. Hadley, says that talking alone "is not a strategy," and that when it comes to talking about stabilizing Iraq, the administration must be sure the Iranians and Syrians really feel it is necessary to do so. But that may not happen soon: As long as the violence stays inside Iraq, it mainly keeps the Americans pinned down and off balance.

In any event, Mr. Hadley said last week, America would never trade away its determination to stop Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon in return for help in Iraq.

Nevertheless, diplomatic analysts in Lebanon suggest that this is a good time to recognize that differences between Iran's and Syria's positions that could, perhaps, be played off against each other.

Take the case of Hezbollah.

While Iran feels that the perceived victory of Hezbollah over Israel in the summer war boosted its own prestige, it does not want Hezbollah's rise to plunge Lebanon into chaos; instead, it wants Hezbollah to consolidate power and help spread Shiite influence and Iranian ideology. Syria, on the other hand, appears to want chaos in Lebanon, an environment that could stymie the Hariri murder investigation.

In the end, though, such differences could count for little in the face of the far larger antagonisms that have so far kept any talks, even over small issues, from starting.

One factor is Iran's reluctance to compromise on ideological issues. Its leaders define Iran's revolutionary character largely as anti-American and anti-Israeli, while the United States is seeking to slow the spread of revolutionary Islam.

“The U.S. and Iran are pursuing different policies in the region,” Mr. Zeidabadi said. “They might have some common interests. But what is obvious is that Iran considers its survival in spreading a kind of radical ideological Islam in the region which the U.S. says is its enemy.”

And whatever their differences with each other, both Syria and Iran distrust the United States far more.

“A lot has to happen first before we see a grand bargain,” Mr. Tabler said.

David E. Sanger contributed reporting for this article from Hanoi, Vietnam, where he is traveling with President Bush.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/19/weekinreview/19slackman.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post

November 19, 2006

Pg. B7

Bombs That Won't Go Off

By Anthony Wier and Matthew Bunn

With North Korea testing a nuclear bomb and Iran suspected of heading in that direction, one might be forgiven for thinking there's nothing but bad news these days about the spread of nuclear weapons.

But behind the scenes, one piece of good news has been unfolding: While there's a great deal more to do, much of the world's potential nuclear bomb material, scattered in hundreds of buildings in dozens of countries around the world, is notably more secure than it was before Sept. 11, 2001, which means that it's harder for terrorists to steal. And the critical effort to remove such material entirely from the world's most vulnerable sites is picking up steam. Remarkably, more than 130 research reactors around the world use as their fuel highly enriched uranium (HEU) -- the easiest material in the world for terrorists to use to make a nuclear bomb. Many of these sites have very little security and pose serious risks of nuclear theft.

For decades the U.S. Energy Department has had several small programs working on aspects of the effort to reduce this civilian HEU danger, but each was plodding along in its own stovepipe, without the resources or political leadership needed to get the job done rapidly.

So in 2004 the Bush administration launched the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, an integrated effort to convert these reactors to low-enriched uranium (LEU) fuels that cannot be used to make a nuclear bomb; to ship the HEU back to secure sites; and to beef up security at vulnerable sites in the meantime.

Now these efforts are producing some real payoffs. In August the Energy Department helped return 40 kilograms of HEU from Poland to Russia. In July a cooperative project airlifted three kilograms of it from Libya to Russia (following some 16 kilograms shipped in 2004). Libya's reactors have been converted and will never again need highly enriched uranium. In April the Energy Department and Russia finished shipping roughly 62 kilograms of lightly irradiated HEU fuel out of Uzbekistan -- home of an armed militant movement closely linked to al-Qaeda. Work on converting Uzbekistan's reactors to LEU and getting the last HEU out of that country continues.

The Energy Department has collaborated with a French company to remove about 85 kilograms of HEU from several European facilities, and Canada returned 23 kilograms to the United States in April. Even in the United States, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative completed the conversion of reactors at the University of Florida and Texas A&M University in September.

The pace of these efforts -- both converting reactors and removing HEU -- has picked up substantially since the Global Threat Reduction Initiative was created. The people at the Energy Department and elsewhere who have made these and similar successes possible deserve credit for real contributions to world security. But there is much more to do; the scale and the urgency of the terrorist threat demand an even faster and bolder response.

The administration must act to ensure that securing nuclear stockpiles and removing them from vulnerable sites is at the top of the national security agenda -- an item to be discussed with every country that has stockpiles to secure or resources to help and at every level and every opportunity until the job is done. Congress should come back ready to provide the additional funding that the Global Threat Reduction Initiative will need to provide targeted incentives to persuade states and facilities to convert fuels from HEU to LEU and to permit their HEU stocks to be removed. Greater funding also will be needed to speed up efforts to address the substantial quantities of material and sizable numbers of HEU-fueled reactors not yet covered by the initiative.

Every building that has all its nuclear bomb material removed means one less possibility that thieves and terrorists can get their hands on a bomb's essential ingredients. The successes of the past two years represent bombs that will never go off. But these successes, though real, are only the beginning. The world needs to move as quickly as possible to ensure that security upgrades and material removals get to all of these nuclear stockpiles before thieves and terrorists do.

The writers, who have served in government positions dealing with nuclear security and nonproliferation, are with the Managing the Atom Project at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. They are co-authors of "Securing the Bomb 2006."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/17/AR2006111701591.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Post
November 20, 2006
Pg. 12

Pacific Rim Statement On N. Korea Falls Short Of What Bush Sought

By Michael A. Fletcher, Washington Post Staff Writer

HO CHI MINH CITY, Vietnam, Nov. 19 -- President Bush arrived in this bustling financial center Sunday after achieving mixed results in his effort to persuade Pacific Rim countries to press North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons.

The two-day Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Hanoi concluded with its members agreeing to an oral statement urging North Korea to follow through on pledges to dismantle its nuclear weapons program.

Bush pressed the leaders at the summit, including Chinese President Hu Jintao in meetings Sunday, to implement a coordinated effort on North Korea. Bush has restated his willingness to offer North Korea incentives, including security guarantees and economic help, if it agrees to disarm, but has promised further isolation if the country refuses.

Bush had hoped for a formal, written declaration from APEC members on the issue but was forced to settle for the statement read aloud by Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet at the summit's closing session.

The statement expressed "strong concern" about North Korea's first nuclear test, which took place in October, and missile launches in July, and called on the country to take "concrete and effective" steps toward abandoning its nuclear weapons as called for in a U.N. resolution.

David McCormick, a deputy national security adviser, called the statement a step forward and said it reflected a "common view on the importance of successful implementation of the resolution."

Weeks after the nuclear test, North Korea agreed to resume negotiations with the United States, Russia, China, Japan and South Korea on ending its program. No date has been set to restart the so-called six-party talks, but Bush administration officials say they want to be certain that North Korea will not use a continuation of the talks to ward off international pressure while it continues to develop weapons.

Bush also met with Russian President Vladimir Putin after the signing of an agreement between the two countries supporting Russia's entry into the World Trade Organization.

"This is a good agreement for the United States," Bush said. "And it's an equally important agreement for Russia." Bush and Putin discussed the North Korean nuclear question and a proposal for U.N. sanctions against Iran for its nuclear program.

Though the North Korea issue dominated Bush's agenda at the summit, APEC leaders agreed to explore several trade issues, including the possibility of establishing a free-trade zone that would span the Pacific Rim. The leaders also endorsed a plan aimed at preventing the spread of avian flu and AIDS.

APEC, which brings together the leaders of its 21 member nations, also serves as a meeting place for hundreds of leading business executives from around the globe who travel to its annual conferences in search of new opportunities and markets.

The event has served as an opportunity for Vietnam, a one-party Communist state, to showcase its dramatic economic growth and vast economic potential since embracing private enterprise over the past two decades.

During his brief visit to Ho Chi Minh City, Bush was scheduled to attend a meeting of business leaders and visit the stock market.

Three decades after this city, formerly known as Saigon, fell to Communist forces, ending the Vietnam War, its business center is bursting with activity. Gleaming hotels, chic coffee bars and neon-lit karaoke joints increasingly attract an international clientele to the high-paced hub of commerce.

Bush was set to travel next to Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation. He is scheduled to meet with President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and attend a dinner, but not spend the night. Word of Bush's visit has sparked large protests in Indonesia, as well as threats against Bush from Islamic radicals.

After leaving Indonesia, Bush will fly to Honolulu, where he plans to have breakfast with U.S. troops and meet with military commanders before returning to Washington.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/19/AR2006111900188.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 20, 2006

India, Too, Tests A Medium-Range Missile

BHUBANESHWAR, India, Nov. 19 (AP) — India on Sunday successfully test-fired a medium-range missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads days after its rival, Pakistan, had launched a similar missile. The Indian missile, called the Prithvi, was fired into the Bay of Bengal from a test range in Chandipur in the eastern state of Orissa, a Defense Ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity under ministry rules. The test came three days after Pakistan carried out a similar test of its nuclear-capable Ghauri missile, also known as the Hatf-5.

The two countries recently concluded a crucial round of peace talks in New Delhi in an effort to resolve their differences, including the thorny issue of their territorial dispute over the Himalayan region of Kashmir. India and Pakistan have fought three wars, two over Kashmir, since 1947.

The missile test Sunday was “routine” and “part of the country’s air defense exercises,” an unidentified official said, according to the Press Trust of India news agency.

India routinely test-fires missiles it is developing for military use, as does Pakistan.

A Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Tasnim Aslam, said Sunday that India had informed Pakistan ahead of time, as is its standard procedure.

On Saturday, district authorities in Chandipur evacuated about 2,750 villagers living near the testing range to two large shelters about a mile away, the news agency said.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/20/world/asia/20missile.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 20, 2006
Pg. 1

As Iran Seeks Aid, Atom Agency Faces Quandary

By William J. Broad

At a place called Arak in the desert southwest of Tehran, behind barbed wire and anti-aircraft guns, Iran is building a heavy-water nuclear reactor. The government says it will produce radioactive isotopes for medical treatments. As an unavoidable byproduct, it will also make plutonium, one of the primary fuels for atom bombs.

At the International Atomic Energy Agency, inspectors are trying to make sure that Tehran never uses its nuclear infrastructure to make weapons. Indeed, for just that reason, the agency’s board has repeatedly called on the Iranians to abandon the Arak reactor. Yet when the board meets this week in Vienna, it will consider an Iranian request for technical help in safely completing the reactor, which is to go online as soon as 2009.

Traditionally, technical aid has been routinely granted, part of the agency’s efforts to nurture the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Now, though, amid growing international suspicion about Iran’s real nuclear intentions — and especially about a far more publicized part of its nuclear program, the enrichment of uranium — the Arak proposal is provoking bitter and unusual debate.

Calling the reactor an arms threat, the United States and its allies say the agency should deny Iran’s request. Helping make Arak’s operations safe, they say, would only speed the reactor’s completion — and Iran’s emergence as a nuclear power.

But some developing nations say that a rebuff to the Iranians would set a bad precedent that could threaten their own peaceful atomic pursuits. Echoing an argument that Iran has often used in its recent nuclear diplomacy, they frame Arak as a new front in a war between the world’s nuclear haves and have-nots.

In recent days, the dispute has produced a rush of speeches, lobbying and behind-the-scenes arm twisting among members of the agency’s 35-nation board.

“It’s a big deal,” said Daryl G. Kimball, executive director of the Arms Control Association, a private group in Washington. “This is the first test of the I.A.E.A.’s resolve to pressure Iran to halt this project. If it moves forward, it could give Iran a second track to making nuclear material for bombs.”

Agency officials say a rejection of technical assistance would be unprecedented, and some of them want to press ahead. Last week, the agency’s secretariat said it had found no legal basis to deny the request, diplomats said.

Arak, in short, shows the increasingly delicate nature of the atomic energy agency's long-running balancing act — part nuclear policeman, part promoter of atomic science and safety. By its nature, the same nuclear technology that lights cities can, with a little extra effort, fuel bombs. A question Arak poses for the agency is whether it must adjust its dual role in a time of heightened concern about nuclear proliferation, not just in the Middle East, but worldwide. Ali Asghar Soltanieh, Iran's ambassador to the agency, based in Vienna, denied that the Arak reactor had any use for weapons, saying it would aid hospitals, agriculture and industry.

"The world should know the other side of the coin, not just what the White House says," he said in an interview.

"The international community has the right to see the reality of the exclusively peaceful nature of our activities and our full cooperation with the agency."

Mr. Soltanieh said Iran had won support for agency assistance to Arak from such international bodies as the group of developing states known as the G-77. "Technical cooperation should not be politicized," he said. "Iran should be encouraged to use the agency's technical expertise for nuclear safety."

But Robert J. Einhorn, who directed nonproliferation at the State Department from 1999 to 2001 and now works at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said the agency's board should reject aid to "a project conceived long ago as providing Iran another route to a nuclear weapons capability." Arak, he added, "will be capable of producing enough plutonium for about two bombs a year."

Mr. Einhorn conceded that the reactor could have peaceful uses, though implausibly so. "A 12-inch hunting knife," he said, "also could be used to spread jam on your toast in the morning."

To opponents of the Arak project, it would be surprising were the board to approve the Arak proposal just days after the atomic energy agency reported that inspectors had found unexplained traces of plutonium in Iran, and that Tehran continued to withhold answers to important questions about its nuclear activities.

And it was the agency's board that, in February, after Iran defied agency demands to halt its uranium enrichment program, decided to report the case to the United Nations Security Council. That set in motion a search for sanctions that still divides the world's nuclear powers.

The agency's aid to Iran is part of a wide program of "technical cooperation" that is poorly known outside specialist circles. Still, it accounts for about one-third of the annual agency budget; the agency is spending roughly \$100 million on such programs this year. In a way, the projects are a carrot the agency offers to offset its intrusive policing of civilian technologies to bar nations from the secret pursuit of atom bombs. But critics say the deal is intrinsically bad. "Atoms for peace," they insist, is an illusion that no amount of policing can make real, with dishonest states always able to turn civilian nuclear technologies to destructive ends.

Today, the technical aid program involves more than 100 nations. The agency assisted Iran's hunt for uranium in the 1980s and currently has 14 cooperative projects with Tehran, including helping it prepare to operate its Bushehr reactor, which is designed to make electricity.

"We provide expert services, so they can learn to do things for themselves," said M. Peter Salema, an agency official who helps run the Iranian projects. The paramount aim, he added, is reactor safety. "If there is a bad incident, it affects the whole nuclear industry everywhere, like Chernobyl."

Iran's new request seeks agency aid not in designing or building the 40-megawatt Arak reactor, but in ensuring its safe operation. Western diplomats say that includes everything from helping Iran learn how to avoid catastrophic plant failure to minimizing radiation dangers in the handling of spent fuel rods, which would bear the plutonium. That plutonium is the reason Arak has been a subject of concern since construction first came to light in 2002. Atom bombs use two main fuels — plutonium and uranium. In recent years, world attention has focused mainly on Tehran's efforts to enrich uranium. But weapons designers often prefer plutonium, because it takes less to produce a significant blast, making it ideal for compact missile warheads.

What's more, experts say heavy-water reactors like Arak are inherently dangerous for nuclear proliferation because they are better at producing weapons-grade plutonium than light-water reactors like Bushehr. Heavy water, so called because it contains a heavy form of hydrogen, slows down speeding neutrons so uranium fuel can absorb them. In some cases, this merging splits uranium atoms in two. In other cases, the uranium is transformed into plutonium. Engineers remove the plutonium from spent fuel in a step known as reprocessing.

The Arak reactor, experts say, is similar in design to heavy-water reactors that Israel, India and Pakistan use to make plutonium for nuclear arms.

The Arak complex holds both the half-built reactor and a sprawling plant for the production of heavy water that President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad formally inaugurated in August, saying, "The Iranian people are determined to take big steps."

The wrangling over aid to Arak began last week at preparatory meetings in Vienna. Egypt and some other developing nations argued for preserving the status quo and trusting the secretariat's judgment that there was no basis for denying the aid.

The American ambassador to the atomic agency, Gregory L. Schulte, said in an interview that objections had arisen because Arak made little sense from a civil perspective but great sense for making weapons. Moreover, he said, Iran had failed to explain inconsistencies that the agency uncovered in a clandestine Iranian program to separate plutonium from spent reactor fuel.

"The United States and other board members," he said, "cannot agree to have the I.A.E.A. assist the project."

Some Western diplomats suspect that Iran expected to have the reactor aid denied, and that its real goal was to show that the United States and its allies want to keep the developing world in a state of atomic backwardness.

In a speech last Thursday at the University of Vienna, Mr. Schulte predicted that the agency's board "will not fall for Iran's attempt to politicize and misuse the I.A.E.A.'s technical cooperation program." He stressed his country's longstanding financial support for technical aid, saying the United States had contributed more than \$200 million since 2003. But he added, "Technical cooperation is meant for peaceful purposes, not to help countries build nuclear bombs."

At the meetings last week, Iran also warned against the politicization of technical aid. An Iranian representative said conservatives in Iran would use a decision to deny the aid as evidence of the West's malice. "Don't give fuel to the hard-liners, who are ready to put everything in jeopardy," he said, according to a diplomat present.

In the interview, Mr. Soltanieh said Washington was wrong to see Arak as a step to acquiring nuclear weapons, insisting that Iran had no plans to build a reprocessing plant that could extract plutonium from Arak's spent nuclear fuel. "Their calculations and physics are very weak," he said of American officials. "They make so many mistakes." From Monday through Wednesday, a committee of the agency's board is to study hundreds of proposed aid projects, and the full board is to vote on them when it meets Thursday and Friday. The board, currently led by Slovenia, does not include Iran.

While the United States has lobbied hard on the Arak issue and says it expects to prevail, there are countries on the board that may back Iran, including Bolivia, Cuba and Syria, diplomats said. It takes a simple majority of the board to back or kill a measure.

A possible compromise, some said, would have the issue of Arak aid deferred rather than rejected outright.

Diplomats said that only twice before had technical aid projects drawn political fire. The United States questioned aid to Cuba around 1990 and to North Korea in 1991, but both projects moved ahead, the diplomats said.

Nuclear experts doubt that an aid denial would do much to slow the eventual completion of Arak, given the growing skill of Iranian engineers and Iran's aggressive nuclear stance.

"No matter what, we are going to continue the construction," Mr. Soltanieh said. "There's no way to stop it."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/20/world/middleeast/20nukes.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Washington Times

November 20, 2006

Pg. 13

Extremist Vying To Become Top Ayatollah

Cleric supports suicide attacks against Israel

By Colin Freeman, London Sunday Telegraph

TEHRAN -- A hard-line cleric who opposes all dialogue with the West is a leading contender to become Iran's next supreme spiritual leader.

In a move that would push the country even further into the diplomatic wilderness, Ayatollah Mohammad Taghi Mesbah-Yazdi, 71, who publicly backs the use of suicide bombers against Israel, is campaigning to succeed Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 67, as the head of the Islamic state.

Considered an extremist even by fellow mullahs, he was a fringe figure in Iran's theocracy until last year's election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a fellow fundamentalist who views him as his ideological mentor.

He is known to many Iranians as "Professor Crocodile" because of a notorious cartoon that depicted him weeping false tears over the imprisoning of a reformist journalist.

Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi and his supporters will attempt to tighten the fundamentalists' political stranglehold next month, by standing in elections for the Assembly of Experts, an 86-strong group of theologians that would be responsible for nominating a replacement for Ayatollah Khamenei, whose health is rumored to be failing.

Opposing them will be a coalition of moderate conservatives led by Hashemi Rafsanjani, a former president, and members of the increasingly marginalized reformist movement, who have formed an alliance to prevent what both groups fear is a drift toward political extremism.

Appointing Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi as supreme leader would be a massive blow to Western efforts to get Iran to cease its nuclear program and backing of militants in Lebanon and Iraq and among the Palestinians. Although he has

never spoken publicly on the issue, Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi is thought to support the idea of an Iranian nuclear bomb.

Ali Ansari, an Iran specialist at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, said: "Mesbah-Yazdi is on the hard right and very authoritarian. He doesn't even believe in democracy. Having him in power would lead to a much more hard-line, puritanical rule in Iran. It would not be good news for the West."

The Assembly of Experts is elected every eight years and has the power to appoint, supervise and impeach the supreme leader, who, in practice, wields ultimate power. Although Ayatollah Khomeini, who has been in office since 1989, is expected to remain for the time being, the assembly elected next month is almost certain eventually to decide his successor.

The run-up to the vote has been marred by complaints of rigging in favor of hard-liners. The Guardian Council, a hard-line body that vets candidates, is accused of vetoing reform-minded clerics from taking part. Around half of nearly 500 applicants have been barred from standing.

In a letter to the council last week, Mehdi Karroubi, a reformist cleric, accused the council of "injustice" and misjudgment, saying that it would lead to "people's distrust in the authorities and the clergy."

The reformists' despair has been deepened by fears that few of their disillusioned supporters will vote, despite the possible consequences of a hard-liner victory. Constant political interference in the electoral process has persuaded many Iranians that it is not worth voting, an attitude that many reformists concede helped Mr. Ahmadinejad to win the presidency last year.

"Many reformists have lost faith, although the hard-liners will hope to organize a mass turnout among their own supporters," Mr. Ansari said.

Ayatollah Mesbah-Yazdi, who will be standing for election to the Assembly of Experts, regularly meets with Mr. Ahmadinejad, whose presidential bid he endorsed in a fatwa, or holy order.

The cartoonist whose drawing earned "Professor Crocodile" his nickname suffered the same fate as the journalists whose frequent imprisonment was depicted. He, too, was sent to prison.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20061119-111823-3650r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Boston Globe

Boston.com

China and India on verge of nuclear deal

It would enable buying, exchange of technology

By Jehangir S. Pocha, Globe Correspondent

November 20, 2006

BEIJING -- China and India are poised to sign a civilian nuclear cooperation deal during President Hu Jintao's four-day state visit to the South Asian giant that begins today, Indian officials said yesterday, similar to the recent agreement between the United States and India.

The deal would foster the exchange and purchase of nuclear technology between the two emerging Asian powers, and is expected to be announced in a joint statement at the end of Hu's visit on Thursday, according to two officials familiar with the impending accord who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Chinese nuclear specialists are in India conducting meetings with Indian counterparts, one of the officials said.

While the exact terms of the potential China-India nuclear agreement have not been finalized, they are expected to be similar to the terms of the civilian nuclear agreement India concluded with the United States on July 18 last year, when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India visited Washington.

That deal also was announced in the joint statement the two sides issued at the end of Singh's visit, and gives India access to high-tech nuclear technology it was denied previously.

If China and India enter into a nuclear cooperation agreement, it will mark a new stage in the increasing competition between China and the United States for India's friendship.

President Bush branded China a "strategic competitor" as soon as he came to office in 2001. Since India's burgeoning economy and muscular military can tip the balance of power in Asia, over the last year the United States and China have been trying to build closer ties with India, said Sun Shihai, deputy director of the Institute for Asia Pacific Studies at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing.

"The US always said it wants to use India to balance China," Sun said. "China feels it needs to engage India more [and] develop some kind of Russia-China-India cooperation" that can balance US hegemony. "So there is some kind of competition happening."

The White House's July 2005 decision to enter into civilian nuclear cooperation was widely seen as a critical step in attracting India into the US orbit.

India and Pakistan had conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests in 1998 and refused to join the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, so the global community, led by the United States, had denied them formal recognition as nuclear power states. This limited both countries' ability to procure the latest nuclear technology.

Bush's willingness to provide India with new civilian nuclear technology -- while refusing to do the same with India's archrival, Pakistan -- was widely seen as a de facto acceptance of India as a nuclear weapons state.

Initially, China had criticized the Indo-US deal and said it violated international nonproliferation principles. India and China had fought a brief but bitter war in 1962, and New Delhi had pointed to the threat it faced from a nuclear-armed China when it conducted its nuclear tests in 1998.

But Sun said Hu persisted in repairing ties with India, and an official in New Delhi knowledgeable about the nuclear negotiations with China said the nuclear deal would largely be the fruit of Hu's efforts.

"We had been talking to the Chinese for a while but China's military, foreign ministry, and defense ministry had all been against the deal" the official said. "Hu and the Communist Party were the ones pushing it through, and they seem to have taken control of China's India policy."

On the Indian side, it was Mayankote Kelath Narayanan, Singh's national security adviser, who brokered the deal, the official said.

One reason many Indian officials want a deal with China is that they believe it will restore some balance to India's foreign policy.

"Traditionally, India's always been nonaligned and had an independent foreign policy," said an official in New Delhi familiar with the negotiations. "Recently, India had been moving very close to the US and with this deal India will become equidistant between the US and China."

India is also worried that the deal Bush signed with Singh still needs to be ratified by the US Congress. "One reason we went for the Chinese offer is that we think the final [nuclear cooperation] bill Bush signs, after all the amendments from Congress tags onto it, will not be acceptable to India," said a senior Indian intelligence official. Although the Senate overwhelmingly approved a bill supporting nuclear cooperation with India last Friday, Singh has said the process of reconciling the Senate and House bills could end up changing the original terms of the pact he signed with Bush. For example, the Senate bill added a stipulation that would cease nuclear supplies to New Delhi if it did not cooperate "fully and actively" in helping to contain Iran's nuclear program. India has close energy and defense ties with Tehran.

Another factor is that just as China apparently hopes its warming ties with India will draw India away from the United States, India hopes closer relations with China will dilute Beijing's close relationship with Pakistan. Over the last two years, China had indeed cooled ties with Pakistan. While Hu is also expected to sign nuclear agreements with Pakistan when he goes there straight after his India visit, "the Pakistanis will get much much less than what they want," an Indian official said.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2006/11/20/china_and_india_on_verge_of_nuclear_deal/

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Reuters, UK

Iran probably has germ weapons, possibly N.Korea-US

Mon 20 Nov 2006 15:51:08 GMT

(Adds Iran reaction, paragraphs 6-7)

By Richard Waddington

GENEVA, Nov 20 (Reuters) - Iran probably has germ warfare weapons, North Korea may have developed them and Syria could have carried out research into such banned weaponry, the United States told an arms control conference on Monday.

Addressing the opening session of the sixth review conference of the Convention on Biological Weapons (BWC), U.S. delegation head John C. Rood said those countries were of particular concern given their "support for terrorism".

"We believe that Iran probably has an offensive biological weapons programme in violation of the BWC," Rood said. "We also believe North Korea has a biological weapons capability and may have developed, produced and weaponised for use.

"Finally, we remain seriously concerned that Syria ... has conducted research and development for an offensive BW programme," he said.

Both Iran, which Washington also accuses of seeking nuclear weapons, and North Korea, which has them, are members of the 31-year-old BWC. Syria has signed, but not ratified the pact.

Iran firmly rejected the U.S. accusation, but there was no immediate response from either Syria or North Korea.

"I categorically reject what the U.S. delegation has said about my country," Iranian ambassador Alireza Moaiyeri

told the conference. "Their baseless allegations are contrary to the spirit of the review conference."

The conference, held every five years, will review the working of the 155-state treaty which prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons, and will seek to agree a programme of future work.

Rood declined to detail his accusations against the three states. He referred journalists to a 2005 report by the United States on various countries' compliance with the BWC.

The United States has also accused other countries, including Russia and China, of not fully abiding by the treaty.

GROWING THREAT

Opening the three-week conference, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged stronger efforts to protect the world against biological weapons, which he said posed a growing threat due to advances in science and technology.

Awareness of the dangers was heightened by the global concern with terrorism and new highly infectious natural diseases such as bird flu which had underlined the ability of viruses to kill, he said. But years of negotiation on a new protocol to strengthen the treaty ended in failure in 2001 because the United States opposed measures such as spot checks on laboratories.

Washington had long been sceptical about the chances of putting in place an effective system of verification of compliance with the treaty and said spot checks could just encourage industrial espionage.

However, states agreed to work on improving cooperation in areas such as disease surveillance, the strengthening of national legislation against germ weapons and tightening codes of conduct for scientists.

In the coming five-year period, Washington wants enforcement of national laws to be addressed to ensure that non-state actors seeking such weapons are caught and punished.

<http://today.reuters.co.uk/news/CrisesArticle.aspx?storyId=L20649826&WTmodLoc=World-R5-Alertnet-3>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

International Herald Tribune

November 20, 2006

Annan tells countries to address biological weapons threats

The Associated Press

GENEVA: Nations should step up efforts to combat biological weapons and address the threat posed by terrorist and criminal groups seeking to obtain them, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Monday.

Annan was addressing an international conference, the same one that broke down five years ago when the United States rejected a plan to enforce a global ban as unverifiable.

"The horror of biological weapons is shared by all," he told countries meeting in Geneva to review the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, which has been ratified by 155 governments.

He said nations must address terrorism and crime "to ensure that peaceful uses of biological science and technology can safely reach their potential."

Public health experts say the most dangerous threats include lethal diseases such as smallpox, botulism, tularemia and anthrax — which killed five people when it was sent through the mail in the United States in 2001 — and viruses such as Ebola.

The convention, which bans the development and stockpiling of germ-based weapons, has never had serious enforcement measures because the threat of biological warfare was believed to be minimal when it was drafted during the height of the Cold War.

Some countries that signed the convention, including the Soviet Union and Iraq, were later found to be developing biological weapons in what appeared to be civilian facilities. Efforts to strengthen the treaty gained speed after concerns that Iraq would use biological weapons during the Gulf War.

But talks were suspended in 2001 after the United States ended attempts to continue negotiating enforcement procedures, saying it wouldn't be able to detect violations and such a program would give away defense and commercial secrets.

"Five years ago, in this very room, you faced the dire prospect of stalemate and deadlock," Annan told the conference. "Deep and bitter divisions threatened to bring collective efforts against biological weapons to a permanent halt."

He urged countries to build on what progress they had made since and "take further steps to ensure that the convention will continue to serve as an effective barrier against biological weapons." The international Red Cross also said additional measures should be taken to completely exclude the possibility of biological agents and toxins being used as weapons.

Masood Khan, the Pakistani ambassador chairing the session, said last week he did not expect international verification to be a major topic at the conference. Some observers have speculated that Iran or another country might raise the issue to focus attention on Washington's reluctance to allow inspections.

"We must not allow this review conference to be sidetracked into ideological debates or hijacked by the destructive agenda of proliferators," said John C. Rood, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for international security and nonproliferation.

Rood, heading the U.S. delegation to the meeting at the United Nations in Geneva, told reporters that the conference should instead focus on improving disease surveillance, biosecurity, national enforcement of legislation and oversight on research — but all without an international monitoring system.

He said the U.S. believes Iran "probably has an offensive biological weapons program" and cited North Korea and Syria as other countries of concern. When asked to elaborate, Rood said he would not discuss intelligence matters, but added the claim that those countries support terrorism.

Rood also urged the conference to work toward making the ban on biological weapons universal. He said Egypt and Syria were two significant countries that have yet to ratify the treaty, but made no mention of Israel, which hasn't even signed the convention.

http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/11/20/news/UN_GEN_UN_Biological_Weapons.php

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)