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New York Times  
January 12, 2006

## **North Korea And Iran Win Special Notice At Spy Center**

By Douglas Jehl

WASHINGTON, Jan. 11 - The director of national intelligence, John D. Negroponte, has created new "mission managers" for Iran and North Korea, adding those two countries to a short list of top-priority challenges for American intelligence agencies.

Iran and North Korea join counterterrorism and nuclear counterproliferation as areas of focus for senior management posts that were recommended last year by a high-level presidential commission.

The new managers for Iran and North Korea will be responsible, among other things, for identifying and filling gaps in intelligence on those two countries, Mr. Negroponte's office said Wednesday in announcing the appointments.

Joseph DeTrani, who has served most recently as the American special envoy to the six-party talks on North Korea, has been given the rank of ambassador and is taking on the North Korea portfolio; S. Leslie Ireland, a career intelligence officer and Middle East specialist, is to become mission manager for Iran.

Ambassador DeTrani and Ms. Ireland are to provide strategic leadership over American intelligence agencies' work on North Korea and Iran, whose nuclear-weapons programs remain a major concern of the Bush administration, in part because so little is known about them. In its report last year, the Robb-Silberman commission, an independent panel appointed by President Bush, described American intelligence on Iran and North Korea as woefully inadequate.

The other two mission managers appointed by Mr. Negroponte have already assumed their roles. They are Vice Adm. John Scott Redd, retired, director of the National Counterterrorism Center; and Kenneth Brill, the director of National Counterproliferation Center.

Admiral Redd served as executive director of the Robb-Silberman commission, which recommended the creation of the mission-manager posts. Mr. Negroponte has said that the mission managers have his full proxy, and should be expected to play the same role that he would if he could devote his full day to a single issue.

Ambassador DeTrani, who speaks Chinese and French, spent a number of years in East Asia and the Middle East during a career that included senior assignments at the Central Intelligence Agency, according to his official biography. At the C.I.A., his posts included director of European operations, director of the crime and narcotics center, and director of East Asia operations.

Ms. Ireland has served most recently as the executive assistant to Porter J. Goss, the C.I.A. director. According to her official biography, she is also a recipient of the Intelligence Commendation Medal. Over a 20-year career, she has also served as deputy chief for Arab-Israeli issues and special adviser for Iran collection issues, and as country director for Iran and Kuwait in the office of the Secretary of Defense.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/12/politics/12intel.html?pagewanted=all>

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Washington Times

January 12, 2006

Pg. 11

## China Seen Unlikely To Press Nuke Issue

By Andrew Salmon, The Washington Times

SEOUL -- Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions are likely to figure in any negotiations North Korean leader Kim Jong-il holds in China this week, but Asian analysts see little chance that Beijing will use its growing economic clout to bring its neighbor to heel.

Analysts say China has become virtually the sole provider of consumer goods to North Korea, as well as a conduit for most foreign aid, giving it substantial economic leverage over the North.

But as Mr. Kim travels through China on an unannounced trip with a mysterious itinerary, those same analysts see little chance that Beijing will threaten him with an economic cut-off if his country does not return to six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

"Nothing would convince [the Chinese] to use their leverage," said Choi Jin-wook of Seoul's Institute of National Unification. "China said it does not tolerate North Korea's nuclear programs, but it does not want North Korea to collapse."

South Korea also has been reluctant to bring economic pressure on Pyongyang, partly for fear of falling further behind China in a long-term competition for trade opportunities in its northern neighbor.

The result is a narrowing of policy options for the United States, which reportedly was rebuffed by China last April when Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill asked it to cut off fuel supplies to North Korea.

Mr. Hill arrived in South Korea yesterday, a day after Mr. Kim was reported to have arrived in China by train. He said the timing was coincidental, but expressed hope that the Chinese will have "some very fresh news" about the North Korean leader's nuclear plans.

There still has been no official announcement about Mr. Kim's trip, and Mr. Hill said it "was a surprise to all of us." China has previously announced Mr. Kim's visits only after his return to Pyongyang.

However, the North Korean has plenty to discuss with China besides the nuclear talks -- including economic and trade issues and new financial sanctions imposed by the United States in response to evidence his government is counterfeiting U.S. currency.

U.S. officials, ranging from Mr. Hill to Vice President Dick Cheney, have called in recent months for China to use its influence to press North Korea for greater cooperation in the nuclear talks.

But Peter Beck, regional director of the International Crisis Group, said that "China's top concern is stability" and that it was unlikely to do anything to undermine its neighbor's economy.

"They don't want border instability," agreed Moon Chung-in, a foreign-policy analyst at Seoul's Yonsei University and an adviser to South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun.

China already faces international criticism for forcibly sending North Korean refugees -- variously numbered at between 100,000 to 300,000 -- back to their homeland, where many face severe penalties. Heightened instability would almost certainly drive much larger numbers across the 600-mile frontier.

Chinese leaders also are reluctant to overrule the old guard in the Chinese Communist Party, which remembers the "blood alliance" forged between the two countries during the 1950-1953 Korean War.

China still maintains a 1961 treaty with North Korea which, on paper at least, places Beijing on Pyongyang's side in any military confrontation with Washington.

Nevertheless, Beijing's economic clout in North Korea is large and growing. Visitors to the North note that goods traded in markets are almost exclusively of Chinese origin.

"North Korea will, left to itself, become an economic province of China -- and can do very well," said a European businessman with close experience with the country, speaking on the condition of anonymity. "That is a route it can take, independent of aid."

He added that Chinese businessmen have experience in operating within a communist system that South Korean investors lack, as well as the advantages of lower labor costs.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/12/international/middleeast/12insurgent.html?pagewanted=all>

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Washington Post

## **Russia Won't Block U.S. on Iran**

Commitment Is Cited by Officials Pressing for IAEA Vote

*By Dafna Linzer*

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, January 12, 2006; Page A18

The Bush administration, working intensely to galvanize international pressure on Iran, has secured a guarantee from Russia that it will not block U.S. efforts to take Tehran's nuclear case to the U.N. Security Council, American and European officials said yesterday.

The commitment, made in a Tuesday night phone call between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, will likely help the United States and its European allies win support from key countries weighing a tougher line in response to Iran's resumption of sensitive nuclear work.

Vice President Cheney and British Prime Minister Tony Blair suggested yesterday that Iran now faces the possibility of U.N. economic sanctions if it does not halt nuclear enrichment research it began Tuesday.

According to three senior diplomats who were briefed on the call, Lavrov told Rice that Russia would abstain, rather than vote against U.S. efforts to move the issue from the International Atomic Energy Agency to the Security Council. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack confirmed to reporters that Rice had spoken with Lavrov and other foreign ministers but did not divulge details.

Russia's pledge was good only for when a vote takes place inside the IAEA. U.S. officials said they remain uncertain as to how Moscow, a traditional ally of Iran's, would react if the issue gets to the Security Council, where Moscow is one of five countries with veto power.

Still, Bush administration officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity saw the Russian decision as a victory and said they would spend the next several weeks lobbying China for a similar commitment. "We spent much of our time working on the Russians, but we're now moving the focus to China," said one administration official who would only discuss the backroom diplomacy on the condition of anonymity.

The White House is hoping the IAEA board will refer Iran's case to the Security Council before President Bush delivers the State of the Union address at the end of the month, according to two senior administration officials.

Four years ago, in his annual address, Bush referred to Iran as a one of three "axis of evil" countries, along with Iraq and North Korea. But his administration has been criticized by friends and opponents for failing to come up with a strategy to curb Iran's nuclear program.

The White House has been pushing for more than two years to bring Iran's case before the Security Council, but only now -- as a result of Iran's recent actions -- has it found a chance to win enough international support to do so. The timing is ideal, U.S. officials said. John R. Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, takes over the presidency of the Security Council for one month beginning on Feb. 1, giving Washington the opportunity to place Iran at the top of the council agenda.

In an interview yesterday with Fox News Radio, Cheney said "the number one item on the agenda" at the Security Council would be a "resolution that could be enforced by sanctions." He cautioned that the process, still in flux, was "speculative at this point" but added, "that will be the next step once the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency meets and concludes that the diplomatic track they've been on isn't going to work."

In London, Blair told parliament that sanctions are a serious option. "We don't rule out any measures at all," Blair said. "It is important Iran recognizes how seriously the international community treats it."

The foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany, who are now closely allied with Washington's position on Iran, are expected to call today for an emergency meeting of the IAEA board to vote on sending Iran's case to New York.

They are assured of winning a majority of the votes from the board's 35 members. But diplomats from all three countries, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said the meeting may not take place in time for Bush's speech,

saying they may need several more weeks to lobby China and other influential board members, such as India.

Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns will travel to India next week to press for its support.

"We expect the meeting will most likely take place around the beginning of February," one European official said. Robert Einhorn, who was assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation until 2001, said it would be best to press Russian and China for more than abstentions. "What we need to do now is get the Russians and Chinese to tell the Iranians they won't be in a position to help them out in the [Security] Council if they go forward with this work," he said. "If the Russians and Chinese told them that, it would have quite an impact in Tehran."

Iran says its program is designed solely to generate electricity, but the Bush administration is convinced Tehran is using it as a pathway to a nuclear bomb. So far, the IAEA has not found proof of a weapons program, but Iran's cooperation with inspectors has been shaky, and many questions remain unanswered.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/11/AR2006011102124.html>

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New York Times

January 13, 2006

Pg. 1

## Europe Joins U.S. In Urging Action By U.N. On Iran

By Richard Bernstein and Steven R. Weisman

BERLIN, Jan. 12 - The leading nations of Europe joined with the United States on Thursday to declare an end, for now, to negotiations with Iran over dismantling its suspected nuclear weapons program and to demand that Iran be referred to the United Nations Security Council for possible sanctions.

The Europeans' announcement was made at a news conference in Berlin two days after the Iranian authorities removed internationally monitored seals on nuclear facilities involved in the enrichment of uranium that Western nations say could be used in a bomb.

"Our talks with Iran have reached a dead end," the German foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, said at the news conference after meeting here with his French and British counterparts and the European Union's foreign policy chief, Javier Solana. "From our point of view, the time has come for the U.N. Security Council to become involved."

Shortly afterward, in an apparently orchestrated response, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice declared in Washington that the United States fully supported the European action. Iran's actions, she said, "have shattered the basis for negotiation."

[On Friday morning, Iran threatened to stop cooperating with international monitors, including allowing strict controls over its nuclear program, if the matter was handed over to the Security Council, Reuters said the official Irna agency reported.

[Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki was quoted as saying that "the European countries will lose the means which are currently at their disposal" because "the government will be obliged, in conformity with the law adopted by Parliament, to end all its voluntary measures of cooperation."]

Despite the new resolve by the Americans and Europeans, and very probably by Russia and China, on getting Iran to reverse course in the nuclear area, many experts and diplomats say the process of actually coercing that step could take a long time and may never work.

Iran is believed to be years away from making bombs but only a year or two from having the expertise to do so. For its part, the Iranian government has insisted that its nuclear program is only for peaceful commercial purposes.

Many Western experts say that its government appears determined to press ahead even if sanctions are imposed and the country becomes isolated diplomatically. There is no sign that leading nations are ready to cut off oil purchases, because such a step would send oil prices rocketing, possibly damaging the world economy.

American and European diplomats said, however, that several days of intense diplomacy had convinced them that Russia and China would join in a growing consensus that the International Atomic Energy Agency board, comprising 35 countries, should refer the matter of Iran to the Security Council, if only to register a nearly worldwide condemnation of the Tehran government.

A senior State Department official in Washington said that Russia had indicated that it would not oppose a referral at the board but that the West was trying to get Russia to go further and vote yes. On Thursday, Ms. Rice spoke about this matter to the Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov, as she had done earlier in the week. Mr. Lavrov said in Moscow that Russia was putting a heavy premium on Iran's compliance with international regulations on nuclear development.

"Iran has removed the seals from a uranium enrichment plant and therefore urgent consultations are needed," Mr. Lavrov said, according to the Interfax news agency.

The senior State Department official said, "I'm not saying that Russia is in the yes column, but they're moving in that direction." If Russia abstains on a referral or even votes yes, American and European diplomats say, China will probably go along and there will be a greater chance for approval of an anti-Iran measure by India, Brazil and other so-called nonaligned members of the atomic energy agency board.

The move toward referral to the Security Council did not necessarily mean that the Council itself would impose penalties without giving negotiations still another chance to resolve the matter, several diplomats said. An initial action simply condemning Iran and calling on it to change its behavior, with the threat of punishment in the background, appeared the most probable step once the matter gets to the Council.

"We've always said that going to the Security Council is not an end in itself and did not signal an end to negotiations," said Robert Joseph, under secretary of state for arms control and international security. "Going to the Council provides a menu of options that can be used to try to get Iran to reverse course."

The campaign to raise pressure on Iran involved telephone calls from Ms. Rice and her top aides and plans for an extraordinary meeting on Monday in London of senior envoys from the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China and Russia.

American officials said this meeting would be focused on a strategy for a resolution aimed at referring the matter to the Security Council, to be adopted at an emergency meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency board as early as later this month. American and European officials said they were prepared to be flexible on both the timing of the resolution and its wording, to get a maximum number of countries on board.

There remained concern among some Western diplomats that while Russia and China seemed willing to abstain in a resolution of referral to the Security Council, they could demand delays or watered-down wording changes that would undercut the effort.

The possibility of more negotiations with Iran, perhaps soon, was raised again, however, by the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, who said Thursday evening that he had spoken earlier in the day to Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, to head off a looming confrontation.

Iran was still interested in "serious and constructive negotiations," Mr. Annan said, adding that the only viable solution to the dispute with Iran was "a negotiated one."

But American and European diplomats saw little prospect of any talks with Iran soon, at least not unless Iran took major steps to back away from a confrontation, like returning to its suspension of the conversion of raw uranium into a gas, and the enrichment of that gas into a concentrated form that could eventually be used for nuclear fuel or a bomb.

For two years, the United States has repeatedly declared that after many instances of Iran failing to disclose its nuclear activities to international inspectors, its conduct should be subject to condemnation or sanctions at the Security Council. But until this week, the United States' major European allies have declined to endorse that step.

Only after allowing the Europeans to negotiate with Iran and to offer possible incentives for suspending its activities, and encouraging Russia to make a separate offer to operate a joint uranium enrichment program on Russian soil, has the United States brought these partners around to more overt pressure.

Iran has repeatedly maintained that it has the right to develop nuclear fuel on its own soil, but the West argues that it has forfeited that right by its habit of concealing its activities.

*Richard Bernstein reported from Berlin for this article, and Steven R. Weisman from Washington.*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/13/international/middleeast/13iran.html?pagewanted=all>

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New York Times

January 13, 2006

## **Israel Wants West To Deal More Urgently With Iran**

By Steven Erlanger

TEL AVIV, Jan. 12 - With Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, calling for Israel to be "wiped off the map," Israeli officials have special reasons for concern now that Iran has defied the West and said it will resume enriching uranium.

The Israelis are engaged in a careful effort to press the United States and the Europeans to deal more urgently with Iran. Israel has no intention for now of trying to deal with Iran alone or through military means, officials say.

But Israeli officials are worried that politicians in the United States and Europe are focusing on estimates of when Iran might actually have a bomb - rather than concentrating on the "point of no return," perhaps within the next year, when they argue Iran may gain enough technical knowledge to make the fissile material needed for a weapon. After that point, in the Israeli view, it is simply a matter of time until Iran is nuclear-armed.

Maj. Gen. Aharon Zeev-Farkash, who retired Jan. 5 as Israel's director of military intelligence, said Israel believed that the moment was no more than a year away, although estimates differ among governments, based on different views of how advanced Iranian technology has become. Once Iran starts enriching uranium, the general said, it will need just six months to a year to achieve the ability to produce fissile materials.

In a report released Thursday, David Albright and Corey Hinderstein of the Institute for Science and International Security described a number of technical problems Iran had to solve before it could begin testing its enrichment technology.

"Absent major problems," they wrote, "Iran will need roughly six months to one year to demonstrate successful operation" of its pilot operation. "Iran could have its first nuclear weapon in 2009," they went on to say, though they noted that that estimate "reflects a worst case assessment, and thus is highly uncertain."

General Farkash had a similar estimate, saying that within another two and a half to three years, Iran will have enough fissile material for a nuclear bomb, if it is able to construct and run 2,000 to 4,000 centrifuges, the machines that enrich uranium.

"We have a crucial six months to a year to do something," he said, adding that "unfortunately when I say this to our friends and allies, they like to focus on the third step," the production of the bomb, "rather than the first step."

"The first step is the most crucial, when Iran will achieve independent research and development capacity to enrich uranium - we all agree," the general said. "Then it's not an intelligence problem, but a political decision."

Iran's announcement has sent governments scurrying to come up with estimates about how much time they have left until Iran can produce its first nuclear weapon. The Israelis say they think that Iran can produce its first bomb within four to five years. European officials estimate a weapon will take five years, and American officials have offered estimates of 6 to 10 years.

Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control in Washington, is skeptical about the American estimate.

He said that "what's important is the ability to build a successful centrifuge and get it to work in a cascade," a series of 164 centrifuges, and then tie a series of cascades together.

"People feel the Iranians can do that now," he said. "But whether they've done it or not is less clear." He said his own sources thought that the Iranians could solve the various technical problems.

"How long will it take? No one really knows," Mr. Milhollin said. "But I think that if the Iranians decide to go all out, they could make a bomb's worth of material a year with 2,000 centrifuges running."

He viewed Israel's estimates as a sophisticated form of lobbying, but said he thought that the Israeli estimates were not out of line. "I'd be surprised if the Iranians don't make it in five years with one, two or three bombs," he said.

The problem for intelligence agencies, General Farkash said, is that "while we have hard evidence about a lot of things" supporting Iran's intention to make nuclear weapons, "we don't have the smoking gun" proving that Iran is violating its pledge to enrich for civilian use only.

He said: "So I told my people, we have to bring for the States and everyone the smoking gun. And then they have to face it and decide what to do."

Intelligence assumptions are not enough these days, the general said. "We as intelligence chiefs need to bring a smoking gun if we want to influence policy makers, especially after Iraq," he said, alluding to the fact that assertions that Saddam Hussein possessed an active program to make nuclear and other prohibited weapons, used to justify the invasion of Iraq, proved to be wrong.

Meir Dagan, the chief of Israel's espionage service, Mossad, recently testified before the Israeli Parliament's foreign affairs and defense committee in similar terms. He said that Iran would attain technological independence in producing fissile material in "a matter of months" and that subsequent development of a nuclear bomb would be only a matter of time and the number of centrifuges Iran could operate.

He emphasized Israel's view that "there exists a strategic Iranian decision to reach nuclear independence and the capability to produce bombs," no matter what the Iranians say, and that Iran will produce a number of them.

General Farkash, Mr. Dagan and Israeli policy makers all agree that a military option against Iran's nuclear facilities cannot be ruled out. Lt. Gen Dan Halutz, the Israeli chief of staff, said recently that the West had the ability to destroy the main elements of Iran's nuclear program.

But Israel believes that diplomatic efforts at preventing or at least delaying Iran's ability to produce nuclear weapons should continue with more intensity - at the United Nations Security Council, through economic sanctions, because of Iran's heavy reliance on imported parts, but also through an oil embargo or other means to affect the Iranian government and population.

"Economic sanctions take too long, but we can blockade oil and use Western strategic reserves," said Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University. "Let the Iranians and the government feel some heat. Right now they don't feel any heat. Oil is just money, so let the Americans put their money where their mouth is."



The diplomatic process has already delayed Iran's program by some two years, the Israelis believe. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, speaking on Jan. 3, in his last interview before his stroke, made the same case as General Farkash and Mr. Dagan. "In any event, time is not working in favor of anyone who wants to prevent Iran from becoming nuclear," he said. Israel, Mr. Sharon said, "is not the spearhead, but we are working together when it comes to intelligence and evaluation with the United States, together with European countries." Israel is also being careful not to react too strongly to the violently anti-Semitic comments of the Iranian president, Mr. Ahmadinejad.

David Menashri, the director of the Center of Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University, said: "The less Israelis speak about Iran the better. Ahmadinejad is trying to turn the Iranian nuclear issue into the problem of Israel, and by responding to his statements we just play into his hands."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/13/international/middleeast/13israel.html?pagewanted=all>

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Los Angeles Times

January 13, 2006

## U.S. Approach On India Has Some Crying Foul

*Critics say the nuclear deal the White House seeks would threaten the nonproliferation treaty.*

By Paul Watson, Times Staff Writer

NEW DELHI — As the U.S. steps up pressure on Iran and North Korea to abandon suspected nuclear weapons programs, American officials are working to complete a deal with India that critics call a threat to nonproliferation efforts.

After discussing an accord on civil nuclear cooperation with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Democratic Sen. John F. Kerry said Thursday that congressional approval would depend on the success of negotiations in the coming days.

President Bush and Singh agreed in July at a Washington summit to resume nuclear cooperation in energy and other civilian fields even though India refuses to sign the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Under the Atomic Energy Act, Bush needs congressional support to open the door to nuclear cooperation between the U.S. and India.

Former presidential hopeful Kerry, who sits on the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he supported the deal in principle and called it "a very positive step forward." But the Massachusetts senator echoed concerns that it would allow India to keep producing the weapons-grade material it needs to build more nuclear bombs.

The U.S. led international moves to isolate India after it first tested a nuclear bomb in 1974, when India was a close ally of the Soviet Union. Sanctions were tightened when India and neighbor Pakistan carried out a series of tit-for-tat nuclear weapons tests in 1998.

But the Sept. 11 attacks, and India's growing economic and military strength, have radically changed Washington's view of South Asia.

The Bush administration has moved quickly to forge a close "strategic partnership" with India, including accords for closer cooperation in high-tech fields such as spaceflight, satellites and missile defense.

Administration officials have sought to assure Congress that talks to work out details of the July agreement will help bring India into what lead U.S. negotiator R. Nicholas Burns called "the international nonproliferation mainstream." Robert Joseph, undersecretary of State for arms control and international security, has warned that Congress could kill the accord by "piling on conditions."

"It would be better to lock in this deal and then seek to achieve further results in subsequent nonproliferation discussions," he said.

Bush plans to visit India before spring, and he and Singh appear eager for a final agreement before then.

Congressional critics of the civil nuclear cooperation say Washington is damaging the decades-old nonproliferation system and giving up too much.

"We're kind of twisting these rules into a pretzel for India's sake," said Henry Sokolski, who was a senior nonproliferation official in the Defense Department from 1989 to 1993.

India has agreed to allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency to monitor its civilian nuclear facilities. But India will decide which are civilian, and any that are designated military will remain off-limits and free to make more weapons as the nation builds more sophisticated missiles to deliver them.

U.S. officials who have defended the agreement before Congress insist that it simply recognizes the reality of India as a nuclear-armed emerging power. But Sokolski and other critics suspect something else is behind the policy to quickly embrace India: a strategy to contain China.

American officials argue in private, Sokolski said, "that with China rising, you need to hitch your star to something else that is going up."

"It is a private argument that's being made behind closed doors, and in the vaguest of terms," he added. "Now, I'm not suggesting that India is hostile to China. They're not. But expectations can be raised, even with friends, that generate bad feelings."

China has already expressed its anger at the nuclear cooperation deal. The Communist Party newspaper People's Daily warned that the accord would "bring about a series of negative impacts."

"A domino effect of nuclear proliferation, once turned into reality, will definitely lead to global nuclear proliferation and competition," a Nov. 2 editorial said.

Though India refuses to stop producing weapons-grade nuclear material, it has a moratorium on testing. Kerry said Singh had assured him that India would sign a fissile material cutoff treaty if one was drawn up.

"The question is: Can you arrive at that" treaty, Kerry said. "That is something that I think is going to have a lot more visibility in the days ahead. A lot of people are going to want to look at where that reality may or may not be, and what can be done to address those concerns."

The Bush administration is also trying to persuade countries in the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group that it is sensible to lift a ban on nuclear trade with India.

India is believed to have 30 to 40 deployed nuclear warheads, and longtime enemy Pakistan has up to 50 nuclear weapons ready for use, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

China has an estimated 400 deployed weapons, according to the institute, which publishes an annual report on the world's militaries, the global arms trade and other security issues.

The U.S. has not offered Pakistan, which also refuses to sign the nonproliferation treaty, a deal on civil nuclear cooperation like the one with India. The tilt toward New Delhi worries the government of Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, which is criticized by powerful Islamic parties and extremists for allying itself with Washington's war on terrorism.

Britain's Financial Times newspaper recently reported that Pakistan was in talks with China, its longtime ally, to buy six to eight nuclear reactors, starting as early as 2015.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry dismissed the report as "baseless."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-indianuke13jan13.0.3533510.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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