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Baltimore Sun

April 19, 2006

Anthrax Escaped At Army Lab In '01, '02

The Army's biological weapons defense laboratory at Fort Detrick probably had multiple episodes of anthrax contamination as workers strove to process a flood of samples sent there for testing in 2001 and 2002, an internal report says.

The report contains previously undisclosed details about the sometimes sloppy practices that allowed anthrax spores to escape from biosafety containment labs at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. No one was hurt by the released spores.

Security measures were tightened after the Army acknowledged one of the accidental releases in April 2002. No other breaches of containment - the confirmed presence of agents where they should not be - have since been reported.

The 361-page report, a copy of which was obtained by the Frederick News-Post, was compiled by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, which oversees the research institute.

The report shows that evidence of anthrax spores in supposedly clean areas began appearing months before the April 8, 2002, breach as the institute processed tens of thousands of items and environmental samples, including the anthrax-laced letters mailed to Democratic Sens. Tom Daschle of South Dakota and Patrick Leahy of Vermont in the fall of 2001.

In December 2001, an institute technician told Dr. Bruce Ivins, a microbiologist, that she might have been exposed to anthrax spores when handling an anthrax-laced letter, the report says. It said Ivins tested the technician's desk area and found growth that had the earmarks of anthrax. He decontaminated her desk, computer, keypad and monitor but did not notify his superiors.

Ivins later told Army investigators he did the unauthorized testing because he was concerned that the powdered anthrax in the letters might not be adequately contained.

He said he again became suspicious of contamination April 8, 2002, when two researchers reported potential exposures after noticing that flasks they were working with had leaked anthrax, causing crusting on the outside of the glass. Ivins reported the concerns to institute officials, who then found spores on nasal swabs from one scientist involved in the incident. The scientist had been vaccinated and did not contract the disease.

http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/bal-md.sbriefs19apr19_0,5658021.story?coll=bal-local-headlines

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USA Today
April 19, 2006
Pg. 8

War Game Will Focus On Situation With Iran

Military takes look at options as tensions rise

By Matt Kelley, USA Today

WASHINGTON — Amid rising tensions between the United States and Iran over the future of Iran's nuclear program, the Pentagon is planning a war game in July so officials can explore options for a crisis involving Iran. The July 18 exercise at National Defense University's National Strategic Gaming Center will include members of Congress and top officials from military and civilian agencies. It was scheduled in August, before the latest escalation in the conflict, university spokesman Dave Thomas said.

It's the latest example of how otherwise routine operations are helping the United States prepare for a possible military confrontation with Iran. On Tuesday, President Bush refused to rule out military action — even a nuclear strike — to stop Iran's nuclear program.

“All options are on the table,” Bush said in the Rose Garden.

The exercise is one of five scheduled this year, including others envisioning an avian influenza pandemic and a crisis in Pakistan. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld started the exercises involving members of Congress in 2002 to help the legislative and executive branches discuss policy options.

Such exercises do not involve military members simulating combat. Instead, officials gather for a daylong conference and discuss how to react to various events presented in a fictional scenario.

Prodded by the United States, the United Nations Security Council has demanded that Iran stop all uranium-enrichment activities by April 28. Last week, Iran said it has mastered the technology to make fuel that could be used for power plants or bombs, but it insists its nuclear program is only meant to generate electricity. The United States and its allies say Iran is working to build nuclear weapons.

The July exercise may have real-world consequences since Iran could interpret it as evidence the United States plans to attack, said Khalid al-Rodhan, an Iran expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

“Anything the U.S. will do in the region will be seen as further provocation,” al-Rodhan said. “Given what's happening in Iraq, it's clear the Iranians are afraid of U.S. intentions.”

In the meantime, the Pentagon is also collecting and interpreting photos and other intelligence data about Iran's facilities, developing weapons to attack hardened targets and laying the policy groundwork for a possible strike, Gen. John Abizaid, head of U.S. Central Command, said in recent congressional testimony.

For example, the Department of Defense has announced several initiatives to destroy deeply buried facilities such as those used by Iran's nuclear program.

They include:

*Replacing the nuclear warheads on some submarine-launched Trident missiles with conventional explosives. The Pentagon asked Congress for \$503 million next year to begin that program.

*Putting hardened tips on existing missiles to help them penetrate further into earth or concrete.

*Setting off a huge explosion to gather data for efforts to improve bunker-busting bombs. In the test, the military's Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) plans to set off 700 tons of explosives in the Nevada desert to gather data on how to hit buried targets.

The June 2 test is meant to help solve the problems posed by hardened weapons sites in nations like Iran and North Korea, DTRA head James Tegnalia says.

July's war game will be the first on Iran to involve members of Congress, but several other military exercises have focused on Iran. Last week, for example, the British military confirmed a London newspaper's report that it joined the United States in a July 2004 war game involving Iran at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. A report in The Guardian said U.S. and British officers played out a scenario involving a fictitious country called "Korona" with borders and military capabilities corresponding with Iran's.

Similarly, a 2003 Marine Corps planning document envisioned a conflict in 2015 with Korona, again a country corresponding to Iran.

A 2004 war game coordinated by the Army's Training and Doctrine Command featured an invasion of "Nair," another Iran equivalent.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2006-04-18-war-games_x.htm

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Washington Post

April 20, 2006

Pg. 19

Envoys Remain Split On Plan Against Iran

Degree of Sanctions by U.N. at Issue

By Peter Finn, Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, April 19 -- Senior diplomats from the U.N. Security Council's five permanent members ended two days of talks about Iran's nuclear program Wednesday with consensus for action against the Islamic state, but they continued to be divided as to what form it should take, U.S. Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns said.

"Nearly every country is considering some form of sanctions, and this is a new development," Burns told reporters after the meeting. "Every country said that some type of action had to be taken . . . to, in effect, erect a barrier to Iran's progress. So the challenge for us will be what can we all agree on."

For weeks, the United States, Britain and France have been pressing for tough steps against Iran, while Russia and China have argued that a hard line might backfire. All have expressed public concern over Iran's program.

"All participants in the meeting agreed that urgent and constructive steps are demanded of Iran," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Wednesday.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said last week that Iran was pursuing the enrichment of uranium on an industrial scale, which could allow it to accelerate the development of nuclear weapons.

That and recent statements by other Iranian officials that they would expand their experimental nuclear work has led to "a greater sense of urgency" among the major powers about Iran's ambitions, Burns said. "What I heard in the room last night was not agreement on the specifics but to the general notion that Iran has to feel isolation and that there is a cost to what they are doing," he said.

In late March, the U.N. Security Council gave Iran a month to stop enrichment and answer questions from the U.N. nuclear watchdog group, the International Atomic Energy Agency. Iran says that its program is peaceful and only for the generation of electricity.

The United States has asked the Security Council to invoke Chapter 7 of the U.N. charter, which allows the world body to decide on measures, including the use of force, "to maintain or restore international peace and security."

Russia spoke against the use of Chapter 7 at the meetings, fearing it would almost certainly lead to military action, according to a source familiar with the discussions who spoke on condition of anonymity.

But Russia said it would be willing to discuss other punitive options after the IAEA issues a report on Iran's response to the Security Council statement, the source said. "We are convinced of the need to wait for the IAEA report due at the end of the month," Lavrov told reporters.

The source also said that Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai, who attended the session, was critical of Iran and had delivered a "tough message" privately to the Iranians during a stopover in Tehran before the Moscow meeting.

The diplomats discussed the pros and cons of a number of options in detail, Burns said. The United Nations, for instance, could decide to impose sanctions without invoking Chapter 7, and individual countries could also impose sanctions. The United States has had sanctions against Iran for more than 25 years.

Javier Solana, the European Union's foreign policy chief, said last week that the E.U. was considering targeted sanctions, but he added that "any military action is absolutely [off] the table for us."

An Iranian delegation arrived in Moscow on Wednesday for talks with Russian officials and, separately, with diplomats from Britain, France and Germany.

At a news conference on Wednesday, Burns also said that Washington wanted to include the former Soviet republics of Belarus, Georgia and Moldova on the agenda when leaders of the Group of Eight industrial countries meet in Russia later this year.

The United States is at odds with Russian policy toward the countries, which Moscow considers to be part of its natural sphere of influence.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/19/AR2006041902401.html>

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Baltimore Sun

April 21, 2006

Toxic Gas Mishap At APG

No injuries are reported; Army says 3 incidents in a week are unrelated; community is alarmed

By Justin Fenton, Sun Reporter

Four Aberdeen Proving Ground employees were taken to a local hospital yesterday after a report of a chemical leak, the third incident in about a week during which workers were at risk of exposure to lethal substances at the Army base in Harford County.

None of the workers was injured in the incident, the second at the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center, a 1.5 million-square-foot research and engineering facility within APG for chemical and biological defense. The center's director pledged a thorough review of safety procedures.

Yesterday's incident involved phosgene, a toxic industrial chemical used as a choking agent in World War I and to make plastics and pesticides.

Army officials say the three incidents are unrelated and their timing coincidental. Still, residents of surrounding communities, which had largely been calm since the base cleared a 1,600-ton stockpile of mustard agent last year, are worried.

"That nobody has gotten hurt in the past week, that's luck, in my opinion," said Arlen Crabb, an environmental activist and member of the Restoration Advisory Board at APG.

As part of a full-disclosure policy, base officials send alerts detailing accidents that require an emergency response. There are more than 65 tenants on the base, but of the handful of incidents disclosed in the past year, three have occurred at ECBC.

In March last year, two employees were taken to a hospital for possible exposure to phosgene after a morning experiment mistakenly coincided with maintenance work on the building's air filter system.

Last week, a power outage at an ECBC laboratory temporarily shut down the powerful fans that protect researchers from dangerous vapors. Employees working with mustard agent, GB, hydrogen cyanide and cyanogen chloride were treated on the base and released.

A similar incident the day before at U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense sent two workers to a local hospital for observation.

APG is not the only major military facility in the region facing recent concerns about dangerous materials. It was reported this week that the Army's biological weapons defense laboratory at Fort Detrick in Frederick probably had multiple episodes of anthrax contamination as workers strove to process a flood of samples sent there for testing in 2001 and 2002, according to an internal report.

The 361-page report, a copy of which was obtained by the Frederick News-Post, contains previously undisclosed details about the sometimes-sloppy practices that allowed anthrax spores to escape from biosafety containment labs at the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. No one was hurt by the released spores.

Yesterday's mishap at APG was attributed to corrosion within the thermos-bottle-size container used to store the phosgene, said Jim Zarzycki, director of the ECBC. A subsequent investigation will help determine whether additional precautions must be implemented, he said.

"We are very concerned about our work force," Zarzycki said. "We work with very dangerous materials, and we can only do our job if we know how to work safely."

Crabb noted that corroded storage containers have led to explosions in the past. He called for research facilities to consider policies that would require substances to be rotated among containers to avoid corrosion. Residents have long had a tenuous relationship with the military base. Lauded as Harford County's economic engine, APG's distinction as the region's largest employer will be bolstered in the next several years as a base realignment plan shifts thousands of jobs there.

But over the years, residents and military officials have often sparred over concerns about the base's dangerous work. Among past incidents were reports of a leaking stockpile of mustard agent and unexploded ordnance buried within half a mile of homes and schools.

"It's happening too soon and too much," said Judy Blomquist, a Havre de Grace resident and president of the grass-roots activist group Friends of Harford. "When accidents continue to happen, we would hope that there would be some accountability from the command forces and from the people who are in charge when things went wrong."

About 8 a.m. yesterday, laboratory workers were conducting experiments with phosgene when one of them smelled the gas, Army officials said. Operations were shut down, and emergency personnel later found the valve on the phosgene cylinder was not completely closed as the bottle moved from one part of the lab to another.

No phosgene was detected in the room, and any chemicals that escaped the container would have been trapped by laboratory filters and the building's environmental containment system, said APG spokeswoman Pat McClung.

Four workers were sent to Upper Chesapeake Medical Center in Bel Air for evaluation. None displayed symptoms. A spokesman for the Maryland Department of the Environment said the agency thinks the recent incidents were handled appropriately and that the MDE agrees with APG's assessment that there have been no threats to public health.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/local/harford/bal-md.ha.apg21apr21.0.4629103.story>

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Washington Post

April 21, 2006

Pg. 15

Waste From Uzbek Reactor Returned To Russia

By William J. Kole, Associated Press

VIENNA, April 20 -- Spent nuclear fuel containing enough weapons-grade uranium to produce at least two bombs was safely returned to Russia from Uzbekistan this week in a high-security and classified operation, the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency said Thursday.

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said the operation, which was completed Wednesday after six years of planning, was the first time since the breakup of the Soviet Union that fuel used in a research reactor was returned to Russia.

The material consisted of nearly 139 pounds of spent highly enriched uranium. It was transported over 16 days in four high-security shipments to Russia's main nuclear waste processing plant in Mayak, the IAEA said in a statement.

It said agency safeguard inspectors "monitored and verified" the packing of the fuel. The shipments were a joint operation by the IAEA, Kazakhstan, Russia, the United States and Uzbekistan as part of the Global Threat Reduction Initiative, an effort to ensure that high-risk nuclear and radiological materials do not fall into the wrong hands.

"There was particular concern about the Uzbek spent fuel given its significant quantity and that it was no longer 'self-protecting,'" said Pablo Adelfang, the IAEA's research reactor coordinator. "This means that the fuel has lost its high radioactivity. In other words, it would no longer injure anyone who handled it and would not deter potential thieves."

The return of the material to Russia, where it will be processed so it cannot be used in a weapon, "will contribute to the security of both Uzbekistan and the international community," Adelfang said.

The Mayak plant, near the city of Chelyabinsk, in the Ural Mountains about 930 miles east of Moscow, produced nuclear weapons in the Soviet era. It now processes most of Russia's nuclear waste.

Russia originally supplied the nuclear fuel to Uzbekistan for use in its 10-megawatt research reactor at the Institute of Nuclear Physics of Uzbekistan, outside the capital, Tashkent. That reactor is now being used for research and to produce isotopes for medical purposes, the IAEA said.

The U.N. agency is helping Uzbek authorities convert the facility to run on lower-grade fuel that cannot be used to make nuclear weapons, it said.

Over the past three years, the IAEA has been involved in similar operations in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Libya, Romania and the Balkans country Serbia and Montenegro to transfer spent reactor fuel containing highly enriched uranium back to its country of origin, agency officials said.

The nuclear agency also is working with countries to convert reactors so they can run on lower-grade fuel.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/20/AR2006042001850.html>

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Moscow Times

April 21, 2006

Pg. 3

Russia Refuses To Ditch Bushehr

By Judith Ingram, Associated Press

Russia on Thursday rejected a U.S. call to end its cooperation with Iran in constructing the Bushehr nuclear power plant.

"The adoption of a commitment on ending cooperation with this or that state in some sphere lies exclusively in the competence of the UN Security Council," Foreign Ministry spokesman Mikhail Kamynin said in a statement. "Up to now, the Security Council has made no decision on ending cooperation with Iran in nuclear energy."

U.S. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns told reporters in Moscow on Wednesday that the United States had called on countries to end all nuclear cooperation with Iran, including work on the Bushehr plant. He also said countries should stop all arms exports to Iran.

Burns said such action would send a message to Tehran that its behavior meant it would no longer be "business as usual." The United States, which believes Iran is intending to make nuclear weapons, has been pushing for tough measures because of Iran's refusal to suspend its uranium enrichment program.

Kamynin said that every country "has the right to decide with whom and how it should cooperate," and that the Bushehr project was "under the full control" of the UN nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency. The plant has no relation to Iran's work in uranium enrichment, he said.

Russia's atomic energy chief also reacted negatively to the U.S. call. Speaking in the Kyrgyz capital, Bishkek, Sergei Kiriienko said that Russia's work in building the \$800 million plant "fully meets all international norms and agreements."

"All the spent fuel will be returned to Russia for reprocessing, so this cooperation creates no problems, no threats to the nonproliferation regime," Kiriienko said on state television.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak reiterated Thursday that Russia would wait to review next week's report by IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei before making any further decisions on how to handle the standoff over Iran's nuclear program.

"We will determine our reaction depending on the contents of the report," Kislyak said, Itar-Tass reported. "The IAEA has ideas of what is happening and what is not happening in Iran. We'll be relying on these evaluations." Itar-Tass quoted an Iranian source as saying that an Iranian delegation led by Javad Vaidi, deputy secretary of Iran's National Security Council, was meeting Thursday with Russian diplomats. The source said the Russian side was briefing the Iranians on the results of this week's Moscow meetings among the five permanent UN Security Council members and Germany.

A Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said he had no information on such a meeting, and the presidential Security Council said it was not involved.

Burns on Wednesday gave an upbeat assessment of this week's Moscow talks, which also included representatives of the Group of Eight. "Nearly every country [involved in the talks] is considering some sort of sanctions, and that's new," Burns told reporters Wednesday after two days of meetings.

The United States and Britain say that if Iran does not comply with the Security Council's April 28 deadline for Tehran to stop enrichment, they will seek a resolution that would make the demand compulsory. Burns said that the political directors of the G8, which includes the United States and Russia, would meet in early May to continue talks on the next steps.

Azeri President Ilham Aliyev could serve as a mediator between Tehran and Washington, Iran's defense minister said Thursday. Aliyev is due to visit the White House next week on U.S. President George W. Bush's invitation. Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is to visit Baku in early May.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2006/04/21/011.html>

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We Can't Stay MAD Forever

By Kevin Ryan

In case you missed it, the era of mutually assured destruction and nuclear parity has ended, at least according to a paper published by Professors Keir Lieber of Notre Dame and Daryl Press of the University of Pennsylvania in the March/April edition of *Foreign Affairs*. The authors claim that modernization of U.S. nuclear weapons coupled with the degradation of Russian nukes will soon give the United States the ability to eliminate Russian (and Chinese) nuclear capabilities in a preemptive first strike. U.S. and Russian nuclear experts have roundly attacked the authors' projection of U.S. primacy, which is based more on a simplified calculus of numbers and less on the ugliness and vagaries of war. But, their assertion that MAD is dead has been made before, and it is time we came up with a replacement.

MAD has always had its drawbacks, and since the end of the Cold War defense experts have been trying to craft a successor. Former U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry proposed mutually assured security underpinned by reductions in Russian and U.S. nuclear weapons. A positive approach is important, but MAD and its successor are no longer primarily about the United States and Russia. Today there are several new nuclear powers, none of which could completely destroy another adversary, but any of which could inflict unacceptable damage. Senator Jeff Sessions, speaking during a March 29 hearing on strategic forces, pointed out that, "Today's strategic forces must provide ... a range of capabilities to address a new global security environment where rogue states are armed with weapons of mass destruction and violent extremists have to be added to the list of strategic challenges." It seems almost certain that more states will acquire nukes in the future. Any new deterrence construct must take these new actors into account.

The Pentagon and its command responsible for nuclear weapons, the Strategic Command, are working on the problem. By 2008, the Pentagon plans to begin mixing nuclear and non-nuclear missiles on Trident submarines and deploying them to provide "prompt" global strike capabilities. The concept of Global Strike, introduced in the Defense Department's 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and further refined in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review creates a new offensive deterrent: advanced conventional weapons on formerly nuclear platforms. Less reliance on nukes means more options and better stability, right? Maybe not. How, for example, would China and Russia know for certain that a Trident missile launch is non-nuclear and not intended for them? The Defense Department's answer is to rely on military-to-military communications for advanced warning and the ability of satellites to distinguish nuclear from non-nuclear warheads. These safeguards are still in the "power point" stage and lag dangerously behind the pace of the actual conversion of the U.S. triad.

Transforming the U.S. nuclear arsenal to meet new challenges is the right thing to do, but we must maintain the transparency and predictability that MAD once provided in our use of nuclear weapons. At a minimum, the new concept should contain the following elements:

- *The nature (nuclear or non-nuclear) of an attack across strategic distances must be indisputably clear to all parties: attacker, attacked and third countries. Russia, for example, must know beyond any doubt whether a missile is nuclear and where it is headed.

- *The world must know that the United States will not use nuclear weapons first. The world's greatest power can afford to wage wars without nuclear weapons.

- *A nuclear attack against the United States will be met with a commensurate response. The U.S. must define how it will do this in the case of an attack by a non-state entity.

- *Countries that lie along the path of intercontinental ballistic missiles must be confident that those missiles or their debris pose no threat to them.

MAD can no longer provide deterrence against nuclear attack from the new threats we face. Global Strike provides better offensive deterrent capabilities, but it has a destabilizing character that must be addressed. We have two years to work out the details before the first mixed Tridents deploy. That should be enough time.

Kevin Ryan, a retired brigadier general, is a senior fellow at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. He was responsible for space and nuclear policy on the Army staff from 2003 to 2005 and served as chief of staff of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command from 2000 to 2001. From 2001 to 2003, he served as U.S. defense attache to Russia.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2006/04/21/006.html>

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Bolton: Duel With Iran Is A Test For U.N.

In Phila., the ambassador also said he was frustrated with inaction on Darfur.

By Andrew Maykuth, Inquirer Staff Writer

The U.N. Security Council's impending showdown over Iran's nuclear ambitions is a critical test of the effectiveness of the world body, John R. Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., said yesterday.

"If the Security Council can't deal with that threat, then you have to ask yourself what utility the Security Council would be in dealing with terrorism and weapons of mass destruction," Bolton said at a midday appearance before the World Affairs Council of Philadelphia.

The United States and its allies say Iran is developing a nuclear bomb under cover of a peaceful civilian nuclear-power program. The 15-member Security Council has given Iran a deadline of April 28 to stop uranium enrichment, a key step in the process.

Bolton said the Bush administration was committed to resolving the crisis diplomatically. But he noted that the president had not ruled out military action.

"We have to ask ourselves at sometime, if our efforts fail, will we allow Iran to get nuclear weapons?" Bolton said.

"Now, I believe the president is very serious when he says it's unacceptable for Iran to have nuclear weapons. If it's unacceptable, that means it's unacceptable."

Bolton said the issue could be resolved diplomatically if Iran followed Libya's example and renounced its nuclear ambitions. But he said the United States would not engage in talks with Iran because Tehran had already rejected "generous" offers from Russian and Western European negotiators to halt nuclear-fuel research.

"We have nothing to say to them," he said in a morning meeting with The Inquirer editorial board.

Bolton, a long-standing critic of the United Nations whom Bush made his interim appointee last year after failing to win Senate confirmation, cast the Iran controversy in the context of efforts to force the United Nations to reform.

The blunt ambassador - his reputation for abrasiveness was one reason his appointment stalled in the Senate - said the world body maintained a strong anti-Western sentiment that reinforced resistance to reform efforts.

"You all need to come to New York for 30 days, be a part of my mission, and just listen to what goes on there," he told the editorial writers.

Bolton, whose term expires when the current Congress concludes in January, said he feared that a group of developing nations, bent on protecting U.N. patronage jobs, was about to undermine Secretary-General Kofi Annan's proposed U.N. management overhaul. The organization called the Group of 77 on Wednesday demanded studies of the effects of the reform measures.

"The G-77 are about to tank this entire reform package on the ground that they're somehow tilted toward the West... Things like, you know, better procurement systems, better auditing systems, more modern personnel systems, the introduction of information technologies."

Likewise, Bolton expressed frustration with Russia and China for blocking efforts for more than a year to get the Security Council to impose sanctions against Sudan for human-rights abuses in the Darfur region.

"When 13 months go by and the Security Council doesn't do anything, it's reasonable to ask why anybody should believe anything the Security Council says about anything else," he said.

Bolton said he intended to offer a Security Council resolution next week that would sanction four Sudanese individuals responsible for atrocities in Darfur. The targeted sanctions - which might include travel bans and freezes on assets - are considered more likely to get U.N. approval than blanket penalties against a nation.

The big test will be Iran, which Bolton called the biggest threat to international peace and security.

Bolton said it was unclear if Russia and China - which have stated their opposition to Iran's developing nuclear weapons - would support or veto sanctions.

"I don't think we know yet," he said. "I don't exclude the possibility they would support the resolutions."

He dismissed comparisons of the Bush administration's current posture on Iran to the statements it made about Iraq and weapons of mass destruction before the 2003 war. Bolton said, "Nobody seriously disputes the important findings about Iran's nuclear activity."

Bolton said he had not been surprised by his experience in the United Nations. "It's exactly what I expected," he said.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/14401719.htm>

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Russia Rejects U.S. Appeal On Iran

Disputed Sale of Missile System to Proceed, Moscow Says

By Bradley Graham, Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States appealed anew to Russia yesterday to stop the sale of air-defense missile systems to Iran, but Moscow reiterated its intention to proceed with the deal.

The public dispute underscored the considerable difficulty still confronting the Bush administration as it looks for ways to intensify international pressure on Iran to abandon its nuclear program.

At a news conference in Washington yesterday, the State Department's third-highest-ranking officer, R. Nicholas Burns, said the time has come for countries "to use their leverage with Iran" and halt exports of weapons and nuclear-related technologies. He singled out the sale of 29 Tor-M1 air-defense missile systems to Iran under a \$700 million contract announced by Russia in December.

"We hope and we trust that that deal will not go forward, because this is not time for business as usual with the Iranian government," said Burns, the undersecretary of state for political affairs.

Burns made the same appeal earlier in the week during a visit to Moscow, and he acknowledged yesterday that the Kremlin had already rejected it. Indeed, hours before Burns spoke, a senior Russian official was quoted by the Itar-Tass news agency making clear his government's determination to follow through with the delivery of the weapons, which the Russians stress are defensive in nature.

"There are no circumstances that would obstruct fulfillment of our obligations in military-technical cooperation with Iran," said Nikolai Spassky, the deputy head of the Kremlin's Security Council. "This goes for all the obligations we have made, including the commitment to provide Iran with Tor-M1 air defense systems."

In raising the case again yesterday, Burns said the aim was to show that the United States has no intention of dropping it.

In addition to refusing to give up the weapons sale, Russia this week rejected a U.S. call to end cooperation in the construction of a nuclear power plant in Bushehr, southern Iran. The Russians say the plant has no relation to any Iranian effort to develop weapons. Iran insists that its entire nuclear program is aimed at producing energy, not arms. Despite the U.S.-Russian tensions, Burns played down the international divisions over what to do about Iran's nuclear ambitions. After Iran's announcement last week that it had begun the enrichment of uranium, Burns said he detected a "change in atmosphere" and a new "sense of urgency" among the major world powers during his discussions about Iran this week in Moscow with officials representing not only Russia but also China, Britain, France and Germany.

"We all agreed that while we're willing to support efforts to see civil nuclear power made available to the Iranian people, none of us are willing to see a nuclear weapons capability produced," Burns said.

At the same time, Burns acknowledged a lack of agreement on "the specific tactical way forward."

With diplomacy now centered in the U.N. Security Council, council members are due to receive on April 28 a report on Iran's nuclear activities from the International Atomic Energy Agency. The United States, along with Britain and France, expect the report to open the way to U.N. sanctions against Iran.

But Russia appeared to harden its opposition to sanctions yesterday. A foreign ministry spokesman in Moscow said such measures should be considered only if "concrete facts" emerge that Iran's nuclear program is not exclusively for peaceful purposes.

Burns said a meeting of senior political officers from the Security Council's five permanent members -- the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France -- has been scheduled May 2 to consider the next diplomatic moves against Iran. In addition, he said, the leaders of the Group of Eight industrialized nations intend to focus on Iran during their July summit.

But given the potential for continued stalemate, Burns raised the possibility that some nations might act against Iran without waiting for a Security Council agreement.

"It's not beyond the realm of the possible that at some point in the future, a group of countries could get together, if the Security Council is not able to act, to take collective economic action or collective action on sanctions," he said.

"That's important, because those that might prevent the Security Council from acting effectively need to understand that the international community has to find a way, and will find a way, to express our displeasure with the Iranians."

Joining Burns at the news conference yesterday, Robert Joseph, the State Department's arms control chief, sought to underscore a sense of urgency. He said the Iranians "have put both feet on the accelerator" toward developing nuclear weapons. He expressed particular concern that Iran's announcement about enriched uranium signals that it is acquiring the capability of running centrifuges over a sustained period of time.

"We are very close to that point of no return," which will enable Iran to make nuclear weapons, Joseph said. On Thursday, the administration's director of national intelligence, John D. Negroponte, called Iran's enrichment claims "troublesome." But, in a talk at the National Press Club, he added that Iran is "a number of years off . . . probably the next decade" before it would have enough fissile material for a weapon, and that "we need to keep this in perspective."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/21/AR2006042101750.html>

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New York Times

April 22, 2006

U.S. Presses Other Nations To Penalize Iran On Arms

By Steven R. Weisman

WASHINGTON, April 21 — The Bush administration called Friday for Russia and Europe to penalize Iran over its suspected nuclear arms program if no agreement on sanctions can be reached soon at the United Nations Security Council.

Seeking to press Iran at a time when prospects for Security Council action appear doubtful, R. Nicholas Burns, under secretary of state for political affairs, said individual countries should work together "for the purpose of isolating the Iranians diplomatically and economically" if the Council cannot act in a "reasonable" time period. Mr. Burns said the administration preferred to work through the Security Council but, failing that effort, "it's not beyond the realm of the possible that at some point in the future" countries would act on their own "to take collective economic action or collective action on sanctions."

Despite Mr. Burns's comments, it was not clear that the Europeans or the Russians were interested in establishing penalties without the United Nations Security Council's authorization. European officials, who had to be promised anonymity before they would discuss their countries' stances in such delicate negotiations, said they would resist this approach except as a last resort.

Some went further, doubting whether actions by individual nations without Security Council backing would be effective against Iran, because Iran could just get what it needed from nations with which it still did business.

Mr. Burns's comments, at a news conference, came after weeks of faltering diplomacy on Iran, with both Russia and China resisting administration efforts to get quick Council action. Last week, Mr. Burns was in Moscow meeting with French, German, British, Chinese and Russian envoys, but came away without a specific agenda beyond the general need to increase pressure on Iran.

But Mr. Burns said there was hope that after a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna next week, most likely finding that Iran refuses to comply with requests to suspend critical uranium enrichment activities, the matter would again be brought before the Security Council in May.

The United States wants a Council resolution declaring Iran's flouting of such requests as a threat to international peace and security, implying the imposition of sanctions if Iran continued on its course.

But American and European officials are growing increasingly worried that their pressure on Iran has simply caused it to speed up its nuclear activities. "In terms of activities on the ground in Iran, it's fair to say, I believe, that the Iranians have put both feet on the accelerator," Robert Joseph, the under secretary of state for arms control and international security, said at the news conference with Mr. Burns.

He cited Iran's claim that it had 110 tons of uranium hexafluoride, a precursor for nuclear fuel in a civilian reactor but also potentially enough for 10 nuclear weapons. Iran's additional claim that it had enriched uranium to a level of 3.5 percent meant that it was on its way to higher levels for use in weapons.

The Bush administration has sought to organize a widening circle of countries to press Iran, including the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and the so-called Group of Eight leading industrial democracies. But the price of bringing Russia, China, India and other countries into this consensus has been going along with their refusal to consider penalties.

In the last two weeks, American officials say they are pleased that at least economic sanctions are being more widely discussed. The week before last, Javier Solana, the European Union's principal foreign affairs envoy, proposed possible penalties on Iran that won approval in Washington. They included stricter export controls on high technology shipments to Iran and revocation of visas for any Iranian officials linked to the nuclear program.

In addition, the European list implied that there might be a freeze of personal assets for certain officials and a halt in military-related contracts for Iran, which some European countries continue to honor.

But another senior European official noted that Mr. Solana listed the steps as "options for reflection" rather than "options for action."

Mr. Burns also acknowledged that Russian officials rebuffed an American request that Russia halt the sale of antiaircraft missile equipment to Iran.

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/22/world/middleeast/22diplo.html?_r=1&oref=slogin

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Philadelphia Inquirer

April 22, 2006

U.S.: Iran Speeding Up On Uranium

By Jonathan S. Landay, Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON - The State Department's top arms-control official alleged yesterday that Iran was speeding up its efforts to master the process of enriching uranium on an industrial scale and might be close to surmounting all technological barriers.

"We are very close to that point of no return," said Robert Joseph, the undersecretary of state for arms control and international security.

Joseph's comments coincided with the Pentagon's release of an interview transcript in which Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said he had no confidence in the current U.S. intelligence estimate that Iran was at least five years from having a nuclear weapon.

The remarks by Rumsfeld and Joseph underscored concerns in the top ranks of the Bush administration that Iran could be overcoming the most complex technological hurdles to enrichment faster than anticipated, bringing the nation closer to producing weapons.

Tehran insists its program is for peaceful purposes. U.S. and European officials say it is secretly developing a nuclear arsenal behind the cover of its civilian project.

Iran ended a more than two-year freeze on enrichment work in January and last week said it had used a pilot network of 164 centrifuges at a facility in Natanz to enrich uranium to a level suitable for fueling a power plant. Beginning late this year, Iran plans to install the first 3,000 centrifuges of a 50,000-centrifuge underground, industrial-scale plant at Natanz. The 3,000 centrifuges would be capable of producing enough highly enriched uranium for a warhead if operated for a year.

Some U.S. officials and independent experts question last week's Iranian claim and say they believe Iran is years from being able to build a nuclear warhead.

"We believe that it is still a number of years off before they are likely to have enough fissile material to assemble into or to put into a nuclear weapon, perhaps into the next decade," National Intelligence Director John Negroponte said Thursday during a speech in Washington.

Rumsfeld, interviewed Tuesday by radio talk-show host Laura Ingraham, was asked if he had confidence in the current U.S. intelligence assessment that Iran was five to 10 years from producing a nuclear weapon.

"No, I'm not confident," answered Rumsfeld, according to the transcript released yesterday. He added that U.S. intelligence agencies had had problems penetrating Iran.

"I think it's a very difficult target for our intelligence community," he said. "They work hard at it, and they're fine people, but it's a difficult thing to do. Our visibility into their circumstance is imperfect."

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/14401733.htm>

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Chicago Tribune

April 21, 2006

Saudi Ambassador: U.S. Attack On Iran Would Be 'Catastrophic'

By David Greising, Chief business correspondent

Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the U.S. warned of "catastrophic" consequences should the American military strike Iran to prevent it from building nuclear weapons and called on the U.S. to build new refineries to help reduce oil prices during a wide-ranging interview in Chicago.

"The consequences of war in our region are going to be catastrophic," Prince Turki al-Faisal told the Tribune's editorial board. "Iran is not going to just sit back and accept being bombed. They're going to strike back."

The best solution to a nuclear threat in the Middle East, he said, is for all nations—including Iran and Israel—to agree to nuclear disarmament. "Our part of the world should be free from weapons of mass destruction, including nukes, and we feel there should be a ban on all weapons of mass destruction, including Israel and Iran," Turki said.

Turki expressed hope that Iran ultimately would accept an offer from Russia to allow Iranian scientists to conduct research in Russia aimed at developing nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. In remarks after a luncheon speech to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations and the Economic Club of Chicago, Turki noted that Saudi Arabia has a particularly strong stake in the Iranian nuclear issue.

"Even a nuclear accident in a nuclear facility [in Iran] would have dire consequences for the kingdom," he said, noting that winds would carry radiation into Saudi Arabia.

Turki's remarks about Iran's nuclear ambitions came as oil prices have spiked to record highs, thanks in part to concerns over Iran's nuclear plans and the continuing fallout from the war in Iraq.

Turki warned that high oil prices can add to the threat of terrorism in the world by causing further economic hardship in poor countries. He urged the U.S. to invest heavily to increase refinery capacity to eliminate a bottleneck that affects prices as much as the rising cost of crude oil.

"Your country has to find some other way of doing things to increase your refining capacity," he said. "I think you should think of investing abroad."

Saudi Arabia is investing in China, South Korea and India, he said. The Saudis also are searching their oil fields for new reserves and are investing \$50 billion to increase production to 12.5 million barrels a day by 2009, up from 10.5 million barrels today.

Turki, the onetime Saudi security chief, became ambassador to the U.S. after the longtime Saudi ambassador, Prince Bandar bin Sultan, abruptly stepped down last July. Turki warned against political or military moves that might further destabilize the Middle East.

Turki said efforts by the U.S. and European governments to weaken the newly elected Hamas leadership of the Palestinian Authority may backfire. "Hamas uses this issue to say to the people, 'We have been fairly elected by you, and in attacking us, they're attacking you,'" he said.

As for Iraq, the debate over whether civil war has erupted misses the point, Turki said.

"What is happening is the breakdown of law and order," he said. "It undermines the establishment of a central power that can deal with the needs of the Iraqi people."

Asked whether he sees any progress in Saudi efforts to persuade the U.S. government to release 132 Saudi citizens held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, as part of the U.S. detainee program, Turki expressed measured optimism.

"There is a clear indication on both our governments' sides to remove this issue as an obstacle," he said. "None of these people have been convicted of anything, none of them have been accused of anything. It's an anomaly."

Turki is visiting Chicago for two days as part of a nationwide "listening and sharing tour" aimed at increasing American awareness of Saudi Arabia's domestic reforms, its efforts to fight terrorism and its desire to improve Saudi-U.S. relations.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-0604210184apr21,1,3952802.story?ctrack=1&cset=true>

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Miami Herald

April 22, 2006

Other Emerging Nuclear Power Has Peaceful Past

Brazil, endowed with rich reserves of uranium ore, is about to open a uranium-enrichment center much like the controversial one in Iran, also insisting that its aims are peaceful.

By Peter Muello, Associated Press

RESENDE, Brazil - As Iran faces international pressure over developing the raw material for nuclear weapons, Brazil is quietly preparing to open its own uranium-enrichment center, capable of producing exactly the same fuel. Brazil -- like Iran -- has signed the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and Brazil's constitution bans the military use of nuclear energy.

Also like Iran, Brazil has cloaked key aspects of its nuclear technology in secrecy while insisting that the program is for peaceful purposes -- claims nuclear weapons experts have debunked.

While Brazil is more cooperative than Iran on international inspections, some worry that its new enrichment capability -- which eventually will create more fuel than its two nuclear plants require -- suggests that South America's biggest country may be rethinking its commitment to nonproliferation.

"Brazil is following a path very similar to Iran, but Iran is getting all the attention," said Marshall Eakin, a Brazil expert at Vanderbilt University. "In effect, Brazil is benefiting from Iran's problems."

While Iran leads a war of words against nuclear-armed Israel and has defied a U.N. Security Council request to stop all uranium enrichment, Brazil is peaceful and democratic. It has no border disputes, is not in an arms race, and strives for good relations with other nations. Its last war ended in 1870.

"Brazil doesn't cheat on the Nonproliferation Treaty and it does not exist in an area of high tension," said David Albright, a former U.N. inspector who runs the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security. The U.S. Embassy in Brasilia referred all questions to the State Department in Washington, where spokesman Sean McCormack dismissed any parallel between Brazil's nuclear program and Iran's.

"My understanding is they have a peaceful nuclear program," he said Thursday.

Still, Brazil's enrichment program -- and its reluctance to allow unlimited inspections -- has raised suspicions abroad.

"Brazil is beginning to be perceived as a country apparently wanting to reevaluate its commitment to nonproliferation, and this is a big part of the problem," said Jon Wolfsthal, deputy director for nonproliferation at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington.

The government-run Industrias Nucleares do Brasil S.A. has been running final tests at the enrichment plant, built on a former coffee plantation in Resende, 90 miles west of Rio de Janeiro. When the plant opens this year, Brazil will join the nuclear elite.

Brazil has the world's sixth-largest uranium reserves, but until the plant comes online, the fuel can't be used for energy without shipment to and from URENCO, the European enrichment consortium.

Brazil says its plant will be capable of enriching natural uranium to less than 5 percent uranium-235, the isotope needed to fuel its two reactors. Warheads need ore that has been enriched to 95 percent uranium-235, which Brazil says it can't and won't produce.

"If you can enrich to 5 percent, you're decades away from enriching to 90 percent," Odair Dias Goncalves, president of the Brazilian Nuclear Energy Commission, told The Associated Press. "You need a whole new technology that we don't have."

But former U.N. inspector Albright said he worked with Goncalves at the Brazilian Physics Society on a project to show that the Brazilian centrifuges could be used to produce highly enriched uranium, even if that wasn't their intended use.

<http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/news/world/americas/14402189.htm>

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London Sunday Telegraph

April 23, 2006

Iran 'Models Nuclear Plan On Pakistan'

By Philip Sherwell, in Washington

The United States arms control chief has given warning that Iran is "very close to the point of no return" in acquiring the technological expertise to make a nuclear weapon.

"In terms of activities on the ground in Iran, it is fair to say that the Iranians have put both feet on the accelerator," said Robert Joseph, the senior US State Department official responsible for countering nuclear proliferation. His comments, which come as the United Nations Security Council prepares to meet to discuss the crisis this week, indicate that Washington believes that the stakes are rising rapidly in the West's confrontation with the Islamic republic.

Earlier this month, Teheran claimed to have enriched uranium for the nuclear fuel cycle. It has pushed ahead with its programme while taking advantage of a diplomatic stand-off between Moscow and Washington over possible UN sanctions.

Iran is following tactics outlined by its former chief nuclear negotiator in comments to clerics and academics previously unreported in the West. Hassan Rowhani made clear that Iran's goal was to present the world with a fait accompli over its nuclear ambitions.

"If, one day, we are able to complete the fuel cycle and the world sees that it has no choice, that we do possess the technology, then the situation will be different," he told the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council. "The world did not want Pakistan to have an atomic bomb or Brazil to have the fuel cycle, but Pakistan built its bomb and Brazil has its fuel cycle."

He delivered the speech in September, a month after Iran sparked the latest stage of its showdown with the international community by resuming uranium conversion, in breach of previous accords, following the election of its hardline president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Mr Rowhani reiterated to his audience Iran's public insistence that it is seeking nuclear technology only for peaceful civilian purposes. But his comparison to Pakistan's secret development of an atomic weapon is significant, as Iran acquired much of its nuclear know-how from A Q Khan, the rogue scientist known as the father of the Pakistani bomb.

During the speech, Mr Rowhani emphasised that Iran had intended to complete its programme in secret. "This was never supposed to be in the open. But in any case the spies exposed it," he said, in reference to the revelation by opposition exiles of Iran's clandestine nuclear operations.

Karim Sadjadpour, an Iranian analyst with the International Crisis Group, said Teheran was aiming to shape the debate with its claims.

"Iran is betting that it can redraw the West's red lines by creating facts on the ground. At the time they recommenced uranium conversion activities in Isfahan, last August, much fuss was made in the US and EU, but it eventually became an irreversible fait accompli. They may well believe that the West will eventually come to accept their enrichment activities as well."

The Security Council meets on Friday to hear a report on Iran's nuclear activities from the International Atomic Energy Agency. But although the agency's director, Mohamed ElBaradei, is certain to report that Iran has ignored the ultimatum to halt enrichment work, US, British and French hopes of moving towards imposing sanctions are slim.

Russia hardened its stand against such punitive measures last week. Its foreign ministry said Moscow would consider sanctions only if "concrete facts" emerged that Iran was developing nuclear weapons. China, which also holds a Security Council veto, leans towards the Russian position.

Iran made an apparent attempt yesterday to confuse the situation ahead of the UN meeting when it said it had reached a "basic" agreement with Moscow to enrich uranium in Russia. The announcement made no mention of whether Teheran would cease enrichment in Iran - a key UN demand.

Last week, Moscow rejected an appeal by Washington to halt the sale of air defence missile systems to Teheran in a \$700 million (£392 million) deal. "This is not the time for business as usual with the Iranian government," said Nicholas Burns, a senior US State Department official.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2006/04/23/wiran23.xml>

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Baltimore Sun

April 23, 2006

Russia Opposes Pressuring Iran

Threat of sanctions or force could hurt talks on nuclear program, diplomat says

By Associated Press

MOSCOW -- A top Kremlin diplomat warned against threatening Iran with sanctions or the use of force, saying that would only aggravate the international standoff over Tehran's suspected nuclear program, Russian news media reports said yesterday.

Rather than getting Iran to stop uranium enrichment, a tougher stance could result in Tehran's total refusal to cooperate with the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency, said Oleg Ozerov, deputy director of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East and North Africa Department, according to Itar-Tass.

"We firmly stand today for resolving the problems in and around Tehran diplomatically rather than militarily. Increasing international pressure on Iran has no prospects," Ozerov was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

The United States and European allies are pushing for sanctions because of Iran's refusal to suspend its enrichment program, as demanded by the U.N. Security Council. They suspect that Iran is trying to develop atomic weapons in violation of its treaty commitments.

The Iranian regime insists that the program has only the peaceful purpose of generating electricity. Russia, which has close ties with Iran and is building that nation's first nuclear power plant, opposes sanctions.

Despite what U.S. and Russian officials have described as increasingly close positions on the Iranian nuclear program in recent years, they appear far apart heading into the Friday deadline set by the Security Council for Iran to stop enrichment.

The United States and Britain say that if Iran doesn't meet the deadline, they will try to get the council to make the demand compulsory, which would raise the possibility of sanctions.

Seeking to avoid having the sanctions issue come before the council, Russian officials argue that the International Atomic Energy Agency should take the lead for the United Nations in trying to resolve tensions over Iran's nuclear program.

Ozerov stressed Russia's opposition to the use of force against Iran - an issue that got close attention in state-run Russian media after President Bush said last week that military action could not be ruled out.

"The forceful option is extremely dangerous and not constructive," Itar-Tass quoted Ozerov as saying during a seminar on global security.

The report added that Ozerov also warned Iran against making belligerent statements.

Moscow has been frustrated by Tehran's uncooperative attitude, and Itar-Tass said Ozerov expressed regret over the failure to reach a final agreement with Iran on a compromise proposal to have the Iranian uranium enrichment program operate on Russian territory.

The two nations announced a "basic agreement" in February on implementing the plan, which would allow closer international monitoring of Iranian enrichment program - which can produce fuel for power-generating nuclear reactors and the core material for atomic bombs.

Iran is prepared for more talks on the Russian proposal, Iran's IAEA envoy said in Moscow on Friday. But Ali Asghar Soltanieh stressed that the details were unresolved and needed much more discussion.

Iranian officials undercut the intent of Russia's plan by insisting that they would continue some enrichment work at home.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/nationworld/bal-te.iran23apr23,0,134719.story>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

Philly.com

Saturday, April 22, 2006

Anthrax inventory doesn't add up at lab

Two vials with the bacteria may be missing. State health officials said it's most likely that clerical error is to blame.

By Kristen A. Graham and Kaitlin Gurney

Inquirer Staff Writers

Two vials of a deadly bacteria may be missing from a government lab in Trenton - or officials might simply have miscounted, they said yesterday.

Over the last three weeks, officials have been readying samples from the Trenton Distribution Center - a postal facility in Hamilton where anthrax-laced letters were discovered in 2001 - for a move to a new, safer bioterrorism facility.

An inventory turned up 350 two-inch test tubes of liquid-encased anthrax spores, when 352 should have been on site at the New Jersey Public Health Environmental Laboratory where the anthrax has been stored since its removal from the postal facility.

"We think that at the end of the day, it's going to be basically a transcription error, or there wasn't an exact logging to what came in," said Eddy Bresnitz, New Jersey deputy commissioner of health and senior services. "We don't think it's going to turn out to be missing inventory."

Bresnitz and Fred Jacobs, the head of the state health department, believe that a discrepancy is likely because a more thorough count was performed in advance of the move to the new lab a short distance away.

Bresnitz said he could not explain why a more exhaustive count was not performed earlier.

For now, the state has notified the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the FBI, and the public of the potentially missing vials.

"We don't think there's any threat to the public's health," Bresnitz said. "The way we have it stored, it can't be used in its current form as a weapon of mass destruction."

In order for the samples to be weaponized, a person would have to have highly specialized knowledge and equipment and take several steps, he said.

Officials said that 11 people had access to the samples, all of whom had photo ID, access cards and a padlock key.

The 11 - research scientists and microbiologists - also had FBI background checks and were interviewed after the discrepancy was discovered.

The lab has a 24-hour security guard and is monitored by video cameras, as well.

Another count is under way, and state officials expect to release a report analyzing what happened to the anthrax on Wednesday.

Four letters containing anthrax were mailed through the Hamilton postal facility in September and October of 2001.

Four workers at the regional processing center and one postal carrier were sickened, though all recovered.

Five people died nationwide.

Letters were sent to NBC News, the New York Post, U.S. Sens. Tom Daschle (D., S.D.) and Patrick Leahy (D., Vt.), contaminating the Hart Senate Office Building.

No arrests have been made.

Fumigating and restoring the Hamilton facility cost an estimated \$100 million and took more than three years.

http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/local/states/new_jersey/14401671.htm

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Washington Post
April 23, 2006
Pg. B1

Old States, New Threats

You know these bad guys. But there is a whole other world of tyrants, dictators and despots.

By Robert D. Kaplan

Crossing a border has always carried a special drama. Moments after my train crossed from Hungary to Romania in the 1980s -- from a country run by a liberal communist regime to one under the banana republic-style jackboot of Nicolae Ceausescu -- the Romanian customs officials tried to confiscate my typewriter. It was the reverse of my experience going from Iraq to Syria: The sense of fear left me as I departed Saddam Hussein's penitentiary state and entered a merely repressive dictatorship, where the worst thing that befell me was that news sources did not return my phone calls. More recently, when I crossed from the enfeebled democracy of Georgia to a province of southern Russia, overseen by the quasi-autocratic Vladimir Putin, the thuggery of the police suddenly intensified. Borders may be eroding and stateless terrorist groups like al-Qaeda proliferating, but don't be fooled: The traditional state remains the most dangerous force on the international scene. Perhaps the greatest security threat we face today is from a paranoid and resentful state leader, armed with biological or nuclear weapons and willing to make strategic use of stateless terrorists.

These old-fashioned bad guys often have uncertain popular support, but that does not make them easy to dislodge. We don't live in a democratic world so much as in a world in the throes of a very messy democratic transition, so national elections combined with weak, easily politicized institutions produce a lethal mix -- dictators armed with pseudo-democratic legitimacy. And they come in many shapes and forms.

Of course, there are the traditional dictatorships like that of Iraq's Saddam Hussein and North Korea's Kim Jong Il, who have evoked the morbid, crushing tyrannies of antiquity, using personality cults to obliterate individual spirit and keep populations on a permanent war footing. Then there are warlord-cum-gangster states, including Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia and Charles Taylor's Liberia, where the face of the regime has been a thug in a ski mask or a child soldier bent on sadism. In these, the leader is surrounded by chaotic layers of criminal organizations that recall medieval chieftaincies and the beginnings of Nazi rule, before the brownshirts were eliminated in 1934 and Hitler consolidated power.

There are Hugo Chavez's Venezuela and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's Iran, built on economic anger and religious resentment, where oil and nuclear power have become symbolic fists raised against a perceived oppressor -- whether it be the gringos or the Great Satan. And there are the time-warp tyrannies, like that of dictator Alexander Lukashenko, who has turned Belarus into the political equivalent of a Brezhnev-era theme park, and the shadowy Burmese generals who have kept their country in a condition of sepia-toned, post-World War II poverty, even as the rest of Asia has undergone economic growth. There is the comic-opera, natural gas-rich regime of Saparmurad Niyazov in Turkmenistan, with his Disneyfied personality cult and slogans ("Halk, Watan, Turkmenbashi," ghastly echo of "Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Fuhrer"), and the grim, unrelenting thuggery of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe, where bitterness against former white rulers has become a pretext for grabbing wealth.

These categories are loose and overlapping. What they have in common is that the rulers can exploit the whole panoply of state power, without regard for the will of the people. The irony of Iran has been that, for years now, a significant portion of its population has been decidedly less anti-American than almost any other state in the Middle East, and yet the clerics and their lumpenproletariat revolutionary cohorts like Ahmadinejad have, through manipulated elections, been able to retain control of the security and foreign policy establishments. Chavez, Mugabe and Lukashenko are also hated by vital parts of their populations.

Because states are harder and more complex to rule now (the result of urbanization, rises in population and independent media), a strongman requires not only coercion but an energizing ideology to whip his supporters into a frenzy and keep opponents at bay.

Television also puts individual charisma at a premium. While advanced democracies in the West tend to produce bland, lowest-common-denominator leaders, less open electoral systems, in which a lot of muscle and thuggery is at work behind the scenes, have a greater likelihood of producing rabble-rousers.

And there also is an economic component. The fist that Ahmadinejad and Chavez hold up to America is a sign of deep unhappiness and latent instability at home. But do not expect sanctions to weaken the Iranian regime or, more particularly, the Hamas-led Palestinian government: Shared sacrifice can help mobilize the population behind a regime, especially one that has come to power through popular decree.

Social tensions have exploded as a result of the unleashing of market economies that create rapid but uneven growth. The backlash of the have-nots has led not only to Chavez's rule in Venezuela, but also to the election of the leftist populist Evo Morales in Bolivia -- an indigenous Aymara who stands against the forces of globalization. Morales has cut his salary in half and has called capitalism "the worst enemy of humanity." Upon assuming office, he made visits to Venezuela and Fidel Castro's Cuba. In moral terms, he is not a bad guy, let alone a war criminal, but he is part of a leftist drift in Latin America that poses challenges for U.S. interests.

Meanwhile, cold-turkey democracy in Russia in the 1990s has produced a backlash in the form of Putin's low-calorie autocracy, more popular among Russians than Yeltsin's regime. And the failure so far of democracy in Iraq only strengthens the hand of Syria's Bashar al-Assad next door in maintaining his sterile, Baathist grip over Damascus. For Russians and Syrians, personal security comes before Western-style freedom.

The most suffocating of these dictatorships sit atop a cauldron of anarchy. For they rule by eliminating all legitimate forms of social organization between the ruler on top and the tribe and extended family below. Removing such leaders, while morally justified, is fraught with risk. Nobody should think a regime collapse in North Korea would be any prettier than it has been in Iraq. The breakdown of a governing infrastructure, combined with the guerrilla mentality of the Kim family regime's armed forces, could spawn widespread lawlessness, with insurgencies led by former generals vying for control.

What's more, the enduring difficulties in Iraq -- I supported the invasion -- should stand as a warning for how to handle North Korea, all of whose neighbors, including China, are on much better terms with the United States than were Iraq's.

Despite the dangers they represent, such crushing, Dear Leader tyrannies are not our major concern. The future problems of the United States lie more with regimes that thrive on information exchanges with the global media, using it as their megaphone, in the way Chavez does, and ones in such a condition of underdevelopment, tribal animosity and physical insecurity (take Taylor's Liberia) that the state, to the extent it exists, becomes psychologically isolated from any mitigating global forces.

Globalization is a cultural and economic phenomenon -- not a system of international security. Indeed, the notion that a state's sovereignty carries less weight these days because the international community will not tolerate grave human rights abuses seems relevant only in the case of poor, marginal states like Liberia, Somalia and Haiti, where no great power has an overriding interest in maintaining the regimes. Nevertheless, just look at how hard it has been to get Sudan's president, Omar Hassan Bashir, to cooperate in alleviating the humanitarian catastrophe in Darfur. As for Taylor, multilateral action has finally brought him to justice, but only after the "Lord of the Flies"-style children's army he supported killed and mutilated thousands of people in Sierra Leone.

Meanwhile, the tyrants from big states continue to use the global media as an equalizing weapon against the United States and the rest of the West. They may also use what Yale political science professor Paul Bracken calls "disruptive technologies," referring to nuclear and biological weapons -- the secrets of which cannot ultimately be protected. A host of new powers, particularly in the Middle East and Asia, can, by concentrating on such technologies, render our tanks, bombers and fighter jets impotent. Our military edge against these traditional bad guys is slipping even as our military gets better because our relative power in the world depends on a status quo that cannot be maintained.

We are entering a well-armed world, with more players than ever who can unhinge the international system and who have fewer reasons to be afraid of us. That's why a resentful state leader, armed with disruptive technologies and ready to make use of stateless terrorists, poses such a threat. Hussein was a wannabe in this regard. According to a Joint Forces Command study, parts of which appeared in the May/June issue of *Foreign Affairs*, he was preparing thousands of paramilitary fighters from throughout the Arab world to defend his regime and to be used for terror attacks in the West. Looking ahead, Ahmadinejad would also be a prime candidate for such tactics, as would Chavez, given his oil wealth and the elusive links between South American narco-terrorists and Arab gangs working out of Venezuelan ports.

We face a world of unfriendly regimes, even as our European allies are compromised by burgeoning Muslim populations and the Russians and Chinese deal amicably with dictators, because they have no interest in a state's moral improvement. Never before have we needed a more unified military-diplomatic approach to foreign policy. For the future is a multidimensional game of containment.

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<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/21/AR2006042101772.html>

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How To Regulate Nuclear Weapons

The U.S. Deal With India Could Be a Good Starting Point

By Selig S. Harrison

Why should India, with a spotless nonproliferation record, be denied access to U.S. civilian nuclear technology for electricity, while China -- which helped Pakistan and Iran in their efforts to acquire nuclear weapons -- can have it? The inequitable structure of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) has resulted in built-in discrimination in favor of China and against India that has made it necessary and justifiable for the administration to conclude its civilian nuclear cooperation agreement with New Delhi.

The treaty is based on a legalistic fiction that underpins this discrimination. When it was concluded in 1968, only the five states that had already tested nuclear weapons were permitted to sign as "nuclear weapons states." China, which had tested in 1964, got in just under the wire. India tested in 1974, six years too late.

As Robert Kagan has argued [op-ed, March 12], the NPT "erected a gargantuan double standard," which he went on to call "a particularly mindless kind of double standard, since membership in the nuclear 'club' was not based on justice or morality or strategic judgment or politics but simply on circumstance: Whoever had figured out how to build nuclear weapons by 1968 was in."

Article Six of the NPT envisaged an eventual end to this double standard: The United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France and China pledged to phase out their nuclear weapons. But they have since largely ignored this commitment. Indeed, the nuclear "haves" reinforced the double standard by refusing to accept the same permanent safeguards on their civilian nuclear reactors required of non-nuclear signatories by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Without these "in-perpetuity" safeguards, all five, including Beijing, can shift fissile material from civilian to military use whenever they choose.

By contrast, India has accepted a rigid separation of civilian and military facilities under its pending nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States by agreeing to IAEA safeguards "in perpetuity." This was a major diplomatic achievement by U.S. negotiators; in fact, the Manmohan Singh government in New Delhi is being bitterly attacked for accepting a "second class" status that does not apply to China.

The Bush administration's agreement with India does not conflict with the NPT. But a 1978 U.S. law went beyond the treaty and does bar civilian nuclear technology sales to non-signatories. It is this legislation that the administration is now seeking to amend.

The 1978 law is a relic of earlier decades, when the United States was trying to stop New Delhi from acquiring nuclear weapons. Congress saw denial of civilian technology as one aspect of a campaign to pressure India into signing the NPT and forswearing nuclear weapons. But India felt that it was entitled to keep the nuclear option open, given Chinese and Chinese-assisted Pakistani nuclear capabilities, unless the United States and the other four original nuclear powers started to honor Article Six.

It is often forgotten that India made an extraordinary offer on June 9, 1988, to forgo nuclear weapons in exchange for a long-term commitment by the existing nuclear powers to move toward nuclear arms reductions. The late prime minister Rajiv Gandhi called on the United Nations to negotiate a new treaty, replacing the NPT, that would commit the nuclear "haves" to carry out Article Six by phasing out their nuclear arsenals over a 22-year period ending in 2010. Effective immediately upon conclusion of this "new NPT," India and the other non-nuclear states would be committed under inspection "not to cross the nuclear threshold." When the United States rejected this offer, the advocates of nuclear weapons in New Delhi steadily gained ground, and in 1998 India formally demonstrated its ability to deploy nuclear weapons.

So why not invite New Delhi to sign the NPT as a "nuclear weapons state," thus opening the way for civilian nuclear cooperation under the 1978 law? The administration decided against this option for two principal reasons. First, Indian accession to the NPT could not legally go into effect until the next NPT Review Conference in 2010. Second, it could invite requests for admission to the nuclear club by Pakistan and North Korea, which would pose more complex problems than admitting India. New Delhi has scrupulously observed the prohibition on transferring nuclear technology in Article One of the NPT. By contrast, Islamabad's former nuclear czar, A.Q. Khan, ran a global nuclear Wal-Mart, and Pyongyang has proliferated missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

What the U.S. administration seeks for India is a "halfway house" that would give it implicit recognition as a nuclear power by formally separating its civilian and military nuclear facilities.

In retrospect, it is clear that the United States made a colossal blunder by rejecting India's 1988 offer to stop its nuclear weapons development. The Indian proposal for gradual nuclear disarmament was pragmatic. Indeed, it could provide a basis even now for a new approach to carrying out Article Six. Such a new approach is desirable not only for its own sake, to defuse the danger of nuclear war, but also as an essential prerequisite for a more effective

nonproliferation regime. To be sure, regional security concerns are the primary reason countries seek the nuclear weapons option. But the inequity of the global power structure, in which nuclear weapons are necessary for great power status, can be used by national leaders to justify their posture to international and domestic public opinion, as the case of Iran has demonstrated.

Picking up where it left off in 1988, India should reaffirm its readiness to cap and wind down its modest nuclear arsenal during the final stage of a process of nuclear arms reductions that would start with U.S. and Russian cuts and would then move on to embrace Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan and Israel. The Bush administration is, of course, heading in the other direction by seeking to upgrade U.S. nuclear weapons. But India should join with Japan, the only victim of nuclear attack, and with Russia, which cannot afford its nuclear arsenal, to promote a reappraisal of U.S. policy.

Many U.S. critics of the agreement with New Delhi fear that the administration's failure to get India to cap its nuclear arsenal may lead to Sino-Indian and Indian-Pakistani nuclear arms races. India could deflect this criticism with a nuclear disarmament initiative in which it would no longer be a non-nuclear power on the sidelines, as in 1988, but a de facto nuclear power now recognized as such by the United States. The keystone of this initiative should be the inclusion of all three de facto nuclear powers -- India, Pakistan and Israel -- along with the five de jure nuclear powers, in a collective approach to progressive nuclear arms reductions. North Korea should also be included when and if it is found to possess nuclear weapons.

Israel would be uncomfortable with such an invitation, because it does not acknowledge its nuclear weapons capabilities, but forcing it to do so would be desirable. A resolution of the nuclear crisis with Iran presupposes regional security trade-offs in which a freeze of Israel's Dimona reactor could be one element of a settlement that also includes changes in U.S. military deployments perceived as threatening by Iran, in exchange for a fully verifiable Iranian commitment ruling out weapons-grade uranium enrichment.

Having implicitly recognized India as a nuclear weapons state, the administration should now give Pakistan and Israel the same recognition by working with all three to map a scenario for progressive global nuclear arms reductions. Only with such an all-embracing approach will the de jure nuclear powers feel that it is safe to wind down their arsenals, and only when the prospect of meaningful nuclear disarmament becomes credible will would-be nuclear powers reassess their ambitions.

The writer, a former South Asia bureau chief of The Post, is the author of "India: The Most Dangerous Decades" and "Japan's Nuclear Future." He is director of the Asia Program at the Center for International Policy and a senior scholar of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

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Christian Science Monitor

April 24, 2006

In Moscow, Buzz Over Arms Race II

An article in premier US foreign policy magazine has Russians worried about nuclear threat.

By Fred Weir, Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor

MOSCOW - The cold-war paradigm of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) between the US and Russia never really went away, and experts warn of a replay of the old superpower arms race.

"There are many nuclear-armed countries in the world, but only Russia and the US have this MAD relationship, in which each sees it as necessary to maintain the means to deter the other," says Dmitri Suslov, an analyst with the independent Council on Foreign and Defense Policy in Moscow. "We need to get away from that, to find a new basis of stability, but I'm afraid we're not going in that direction right now."

An article in the current issue of US journal "Foreign Affairs" rang alarm bells in Moscow this month. "The Rise of US Nuclear Primacy" argues that the deterioration of Russia's nuclear arsenal, coupled with recent US technology breakthroughs, means Russia can no longer count on deterring the US with its nuclear capabilities.

The authors, American professors Kier Lieber and Daryl Press, say Russia's fraying radar and satellite systems "would give Russian leaders at most a few minutes of warning before American weapons destroyed Russia's retaliatory forces." By contrast, they say, the US is actively modernizing its nuclear arsenal with stealthy and highly accurate new weaponry. "Unless they reverse course rapidly, Russia's vulnerability will only increase over time," the authors say.

While Russian experts concede there's truth in the article, the reaction to it in Russian security circles was "very nervous," says Mr. Suslov.

"Many people think it's not a coincidence, that such an article was 'ordered' by someone," he explains. "At the very least, this article has postponed any chance of talking about removing the MAD framework from our relations with the US."

President Vladimir Putin issued a statement following the article's publication last month, insisting that Russia will increase its weapons spending and do whatever necessary to keep its strategic edge. "Maintaining the minimum level of nuclear armaments required for nuclear deterrence remains a top priority," he said.

But Vitaly Shlykov, a strategic analyst formerly with the Soviet military intelligence agency GRU, says the Foreign Affairs article was "a major blow to Putin's prestige. It made him look vulnerable to charges ... that he doesn't pay enough attention to Russia's defense. Now he will pull out all the stops and spend whatever necessary to modernize Russia's nuclear deterrent."

At a press conference last week Alexei Arbatov, a senior arms control expert with the Carnegie Center in Moscow, said that Russia today has 39 percent fewer strategic bombers, 58 percent fewer intercontinental ballistic missiles, and 80 percent fewer nuclear missile submarines than the former Soviet Union had in 1991. Mr. Arbatov said Russia should step up its production of the newest Topol-M missiles from the current rate of eight per year to about 30 annually. "I'm not calling for an arms race, but for modernization [of Russia's strategic nuclear forces]," Arbatov said.

Yuri Solomonov, Russia's top missile designer, said last week that Moscow will "notify Washington within two months" of key changes in Russia's strategic forces, which could include stepped-up missile production and new types of weapons.

Russian experts say that President Bush's 2001 decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty made Moscow determined to deploy a new generation of nuclear missiles that could penetrate any possible US defense shield. Those weapons are now coming online, they say, with the first regiment of mobile Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missiles, which feature warheads that can evade interceptors, due to become operational this year. By 2008, Russia will begin stationing its new Bulava missiles, each carrying six independently-targeted warheads, on a new fleet of nuclear submarines.

"Russia is no longer capable of competing on the same level as the US, but you do not need to copy the same technologies or have the same number of missiles to respond," says Danil Kobyakov, an analyst with the independent PIR Center in Moscow, which specializes in nuclear issues. "Russia can retain its basic ability to destroy the US in retaliation for an attack; that's the logic of MAD."

Former Russian Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, who now heads a prominent liberal institute in Moscow, has warned that the perception of Russian (and Chinese) vulnerability projected by the Foreign Affairs report might even prompt a revival of cold war-style military blocs. "If someone had wanted to provoke Russia and China into close cooperation over missile and nuclear technologies, it would be difficult to find a more skilful and elegant way of doing so," Mr. Gaidar wrote in a letter to the Financial Times this month.

The old arms race was eventually reined in by a net of arms control treaties between the superpowers. Though most of those treaties are now redundant, a 2002 agreement between Putin and Bush committed to reduce their strategic arsenals to 2,200 warheads each by 2012, but placed no limits on technological innovations. Currently, Russia has 3,800 strategic warheads and the US 4,530.

Some Russian experts say the shadow of MAD can be banished only through fresh US-Russia talks that would lower nuclear stockpiles to fewer than 1,000 strategic nuclear weapons apiece. "We can only eliminate MAD if we eliminate those weapons," says Mr. Kobyakov. "Even if you have good relations and good intentions, as long as you have those potentially devastating nuclear forces, there will always be fear and suspicion of the other side."

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