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New York Times
February 12, 2005
Pg. 1

'01 Memo To Rice Warned Of Qaeda And Offered Plan

By Scott Shane

WASHINGTON, Feb. 11 - A strategy document outlining proposals for eliminating the threat from Al Qaeda, given to Condoleezza Rice as she assumed the post of national security adviser in January 2001, warned that the terror network had cells in the United States and 40 other countries and sought unconventional weapons, according to a declassified version of the document.

The 13-page proposal presented to Dr. Rice by her top counterterrorism adviser, Richard A. Clarke, laid out ways to step up the fight against Al Qaeda, focusing on Osama bin Laden's headquarters in Afghanistan. The ideas included giving "massive support" to anti-Taliban groups "to keep Islamic extremist fighters tied down"; destroying terrorist training camps "while classes are in session" and then sending in teams to gather intelligence on terrorist cells; deploying armed drone aircraft against known terrorists; more aggressively tracking Qaeda money; and accelerating the F.B.I.'s translation and analysis of material from surveillance of terrorism suspects in American cities.

Mr. Clarke was seeking a high-level meeting to decide on a plan of action. Dr. Rice and other administration officials have said that Mr. Clarke's ideas did not constitute an adequate plan, but they took them into consideration as they worked toward a more effective strategy against the terrorist threat.

The proposal and an accompanying three-page memorandum given to Dr. Rice by Mr. Clarke on Jan. 25, 2001, were discussed and quoted in brief by the independent commission studying the Sept. 11 attacks and in news reports and books last year. They were obtained by the private National Security Archive, which published the full versions, with minor deletions at the request of the Central Intelligence Agency, on its Web site late Thursday.

Under the heading "the next three to five years," Mr. Clarke spelled out a series of steps building on groundwork that he said had already been laid, adding that "success can only be achieved if the pace and resource levels of the programs continue to grow as planned."

He said the C.I.A. had "prepared a program" focused on eliminating Afghanistan as a haven for Al Qaeda. It would feature "massive support" to anti-Taliban groups like the Northern Alliance and the destruction of training camps occupied by terrorists. "We would need to have special teams ready for covert entry into destroyed camps to acquire intelligence for locating terrorist cells outside Afghanistan," he wrote, saying that this would either require Special Operations troops or some other "liaison force capable of conducting activity on-the-ground inside Afghanistan." Predator drones, some of which could be armed, would support those forces, he wrote.

Some of what he proposed in the way of support for the Northern Alliance or for Uzbekistan, which borders Afghanistan to the north, was deleted from the document before it was declassified. But some of the actions he proposed were not intended to be kept secret, like "overt U.S. military action" aimed at the command and control of Al Qaeda and the Taliban's military.

The previously secret documents were at the heart of a fiercely partisan debate over Mr. Clarke's contention, in a book and in public statements, that the Bush administration had ignored his warnings of the imminent danger posed by Mr. bin Laden and his terrorist organization.

The shorter memorandum was written in response to a request for "major presidential policy reviews" worthy of a meeting of "principals," the president's top foreign policy advisers. It began: "We urgently need such a Principals level review on the al Qida network." The word "urgently" was italicized and underscored; the "al Qida" spelling was used in both documents.

"We would make a major error if we underestimated the challenge al Qida poses," the memorandum said.

The principals' meeting on Al Qaeda took place, but not until Sept. 4, 2001, a week before the attacks on New York and the Pentagon.

The longer document was titled "Strategy for Eliminating the Threat From the Jihadist Networks of al Qida: Status and Prospects." It included a detailed description of the network, saying it was "well financed, has trained tens of thousands of jihadists, and has a cell structure in over 40 nations. It also is actively seeking to develop and acquire weapons of mass destruction."

The strategy paper recounted past Qaeda plots against Americans abroad and at home and said an informant had reported "that an extensive network of al Qida 'sleeper' agents currently exists in the U.S." After reviewing steps taken since 1996 to combat Al Qaeda, the document listed further actions required to make the network "not a serious threat" within three to five years.

Dr. Rice, now the secretary of state, and other administration officials have asserted that the documents did not amount to a full plan for taking on the terrorist network.

"No Al Qaeda plan was turned over to the new administration," Dr. Rice wrote in an op-ed article for The Washington Post last March. She wrote that Mr. Clarke and his team "suggested several ideas, some of which had been around since 1998 but had not been adopted."

Mr. Clarke had served in high-level government posts since the Reagan administration and stayed on from the Clinton administration. He resigned in February 2003 and last year published a memoir, "Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror." (Mr. Clarke began writing a column on security matters for The New York Times Magazine this month.)

Nearly nine months before the Sept. 11 attacks, the papers described the danger posed by the bin Laden network and sought to focus the attention of the new administration on what to do about it. But the texts are unlikely to resolve the debate over whether they should have led to more urgent action by the administration.

"I think Condi Rice has at least an arguable case that it's short of a plan," said Michael E. O'Hanlon, a security analyst at the Brookings Institution.

Mr. O'Hanlon called Mr. Clarke's memorandums a set of "very dry data points. There's not a heightened sense of, 'Now our homeland is at risk.' "

But Matthew Levitt, who was an F.B.I. counterterrorism analyst in 2001, disagreed. He called the 13-page strategy memorandum "a pretty disturbing document."

Mr. Levitt, now director of terrorism studies at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said that whether the document constitutes a "plan," as Mr. Clarke averred and Dr. Rice denied, is "a semantic debate." But he said the experience of reading the original documents for the first time Friday left him with a strong impression of the danger Al Qaeda posed.

"I think it makes the threat look pretty urgent," Mr. Levitt said. "I look at this and I see something that to my mind requires immediate attention."

Asked about the documents at a press briefing on Friday, Richard A. Boucher, the spokesman for the State Department, declined to expand on Dr. Rice's previous comments on the administration's response to Mr. Clarke's warnings.

"The fact that now the memo or letter has been released has - just provides you more information, but I think she's really already discussed all these matters pretty thoroughly," Mr. Boucher said.

Mr. Clarke did not respond to a request for comment.

The two papers were declassified by the National Security Council on April 7, one day before Dr. Rice testified before the 9/11 commission, but were not released publicly until the National Security Archive filed a Freedom of Information Act request.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/12/politics/12clarke.html>

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Washington Post

February 12, 2005

Pg. 15

White House Dismisses Idea Of Direct Talks With North Korea

By Glenn Kessler and Philip P. Pan, Washington Post Staff Writers

The United States yesterday swiftly rejected a reported demand from North Korea that it conduct one-on-one talks with the reclusive communist state as a price for restarting negotiations on dismantling its nuclear programs. U.S. officials held firm to their position that the talks must include Pyongyang's neighbors as they intensified diplomatic efforts to persuade North Korea to return to the bargaining table.

"It's not an issue between North Korea and the United States," White House press secretary Scott McClellan said.

"It's a regional issue."

The request for direct talks, made by a senior member of North Korea's U.N. delegation in an interview with a South Korean newspaper, suggested Pyongyang remains willing to discuss scrapping its untested nuclear arsenal under the right terms, despite its "indefinite" withdrawal Thursday from the six-nation talks hosted by China.

U.S. officials have met with North Korean officials on the sidelines of the six-nation sessions for discussions lasting more than two hours, but North Korea's request for direct talks appears to be aimed at trying to split the fragile unity of its bargaining partners. In the past, China and South Korea have been sympathetic to North Korea's claims that the United States has not bargained in good faith.

While U.S. officials are still debating how to respond, "everyone agrees that now is the time to turn up the pressure on China and South Korea," a U.S. official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because of diplomatic sensitivities.

Vice President Cheney met yesterday with South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon in a previously scheduled meeting and he questioned Ban on the budding economic relations between North and South Korea, according to a South Korean official who attended the meeting. Ban told Cheney that South Korea is reviewing a North Korean request for 500,000 tons of fertilizer and Cheney did not request that trade between the countries be halted, the official added.

Throughout the two years of talks, North Korea has sought to win upfront, direct benefits from the United States as a condition for agreeing to end its nuclear programs. Despite pleas from South Korea, the Bush administration has refused even symbolic gestures until North Korea gives up its programs and its claims are verified by U.S. intelligence.

The White House has supported efforts by its allies to provide energy assistance if North Korea declares it will end its programs. Once North Korea's claims have been verified, the administration has indicated, it would take other steps, such as joining in a multilateral guarantee of North Korea's security, that could ultimately result in a restoration of relations. But U.S. officials have been purposely vague about the details.

Now, in the wake of North Korea's declaration that it possesses nuclear weapons, pressure may mount on the United States to demonstrate greater flexibility in the talks. U.S. officials have said they will not modify their offer, presented last June, until North Korea formally makes a counteroffer.

Bush administration officials say they will not conduct bilateral negotiations because they do not want to repeat the experience of the Clinton administration. In 1994, President Bill Clinton struck a deal with North Korea that froze its nuclear programs, but in 2002, President Bush accused North Korea of violating it.

The demand for a direct dialogue with the United States represents a return to the negotiating position that North Korea staked out before China persuaded it to join the multilateral talks that began in August 2003. The new statement from North Korea appeared to bolster the assessment of many officials in the region that Pyongyang's surprise announcement Thursday was a gambit to win additional economic and diplomatic concessions from Washington and its allies.

"We will return to the six-nation talks when we see a reason to do so and the conditions are ripe," Han Sung Ryol, deputy chief of Pyongyang's U.N. mission, told Seoul's Hankyoreh newspaper Thursday in New York. "If the United States moves to have direct dialogue with us, we can take that as a signal that the United States is changing its hostile policy toward us."

"We have no other option but to regard the United States' refusal to have direct dialogue with us as an intention not to recognize us and to eliminate our system," Han was also quoted as saying.

But in a subsequent interview, Han appeared to backtrack, telling Associated Press Television News, "No, we do not ask for bilateral talks." He said the key issue for North Korea is whether Washington plans to attack North Korea. Bush and other U.S. officials have repeatedly said they have no plans to attack or invade North Korea. But three years ago Bush labeled North Korea part of an "axis of evil" that included Iran and Iraq, a country the United States later invaded.

In his inaugural speech last month, Bush said he will push to eliminate tyranny around the world -- and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in her confirmation hearings that North Korea is an "outpost of tyranny." North Korea's statement declaring it will leave the talks linked the two remarks.

Asian officials conceded that the North's declaration seriously complicated the already stalled talks, and that disarming the North would be far more difficult. "There's no doubt that there are new questions about North Korea's intentions now," said an Asian diplomat.

Another Asian official said the predominant view in his government is that this is a negotiating ploy, particularly because North Korea's negotiating partners had made it clear Pyongyang needed to make a counteroffer to the U.S. proposal. But he said there is a minority view that North Korea will not give up its weapons and thus a change in tactics is necessary.

This official said the North Korean announcement might offer a silver lining, because it was clear the "six-party talks were getting a little stale" and a fresh approach was needed. Eight months have passed since the last meeting, and only three sessions have taken place, with little apparent progress.

Many in the region turned their attention to China, which enjoys leverage over North Korea because it supplies the country's feeble economy with critical food and fuel shipments. Until now, China has insisted it was not clear whether its communist ally had developed nuclear weapons.

Diplomats involved in the talks said China has been reluctant to pressure North Korea, instead offering incentives to Pyongyang to keep negotiating.

Pan reported from Beijing. Correspondent Anthony Faiola in Tokyo contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A16214-2005Feb11.html>

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Washington Post

February 12, 2005

Pg. 12

U.S. Reviewing Its Intelligence On Iran

Council Working on New Assessments of Country's Rulers and Arms Programs

By Dafna Linzer and Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writers

The intelligence community is conducting a broad review of its Iran assessments, including a new look at the country's nuclear program, the future of its ruling clerics and the impact of the Iraq war on Tehran's powerful position in the region, according to administration officials and congressional sources.

Two separate reports -- a wide-ranging National Intelligence Estimate and a second memo focusing exclusively on Tehran's chemical, biological and nuclear capabilities -- will reflect an updated consensus within the intelligence community. The documents are meant to guide the Bush administration as it continues to deliberate on a policy for dealing with Iran and its nuclear ambitions.

The review, which began last month, comes after several weeks in which President Bush, Vice President Cheney and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have challenged Iran to halt an alleged nuclear weapons program. The

pattern and tone of the administration's comments have struck some as similar to claims made in 2002 about weapons of mass destruction in Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Five months before the invasion of Iraq, the administration produced a National Intelligence Estimate that listed among its key findings that Hussein was reconstituting his nuclear weapons program, one of several errors in the intelligence community's prewar assessments.

Now, the intelligence community's past assessments on Iraq -- as well as its judgments on Iran and North Korea -- are under review by a presidential commission studying U.S. intelligence, and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence recently warned CIA Director Porter J. Goss that it also will review the intelligence being gathered on Iran.

A senior administration official said yesterday that there will be "a rigorous scrubbing of the intelligence" before the new Iran assessment is complete, and that "extreme care" will be taken in reaching conclusions.

The last published intelligence report on Iran's program, released publicly in November, said that "Iran continued to vigorously pursue indigenous programs to produce nuclear, chemical and biological weapons." It went on to say, "The United States remains convinced that Tehran has been pursuing a clandestine nuclear weapons program in contradiction to its obligations as a party to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty."

But it stopped short of concluding Iran has nuclear weapons, and did not include any details to clarify how the assessment was reached. Iran has maintained that its nuclear program was built for civilian energy purposes, not weapons.

The upcoming intelligence assessment was ordered by David Gordon, acting chairman of the National Intelligence Council, according to a senior administration official. The council, a group of government and academic intelligence experts, taps senior analysts from the CIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency and other components of the intelligence community to work on National Intelligence Estimates.

Administration officials said the intelligence estimate on Iran will be conducted without any input from Bush administration policymakers. "The policy people can't even look at until it's a finished product," one U.S. official said.

Bush administration officials are avoiding taking detailed public positions on Iran until the papers are completed and the administration decides on a policy, officials said. This is one reason, they said, that Rice last week refused to directly answer questions from reporters in Europe about whether the United States favors regime change in Iran. According to officials, all of whom discussed the classified process on the condition of anonymity, the new estimates will examine the strength of Iran's clerical regime, the nation's economic strength and nuclear issues. There is no deadline for the report's completion, but several officials said they expect the comprehensive review to be ready by March. The second document is also expected to be completed in the coming weeks. Known as a "memo to holders," it will focus only on Iran's weapons capabilities and will be for limited circulation among the most senior officials.

"It will reassess the timeline for getting nuclear weapons, reassess Iran's motivations and what it would take to make them give up fissile material capability," said one official.

Since 2003, Britain, France and Germany have been negotiating with Iran toward a deal to ensure that its nuclear energy program is not used for developing weapons. The United States has declined to join those talks.

Administration officials have increasingly questioned Iran's nuclear capabilities and intent. Cheney said on Fox News last Sunday that the Iranians claim their move to uranium enrichment is "only for peaceful purposes, although there's some evidence to suggest that they have military aspirations and they're trying to acquire nuclear weapons." David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security and a physicist who has studied the Iran program, said yesterday that much is known about Iran's nuclear efforts from inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency but that "there is no direct information on a decision to build nuclear weapons."

"They want a capability, but it's all inferential that they are building a weapon," he said. He went on to point out that much of the intelligence about Iraq having a nuclear program "was also inferential."

Staff writer Glenn Kessler contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17526-2005Feb11.html>

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London Daily Telegraph

February 12, 2005

Russians Knew West's Germ Warfare Secrets

By Ben Fenton

Britain and America's most guarded germ warfare secrets have been known to the Russians for decades and spies continue to operate at the heart of the West's biotechnology industry, a former KGB spymaster says today.

Alexander Kouzminov also discloses that covert Soviet sabotage agents prepared secret sites where phials of lethal bacteria would be left, ready to poison western military establishments, civilian settlements and even assassinate political leaders in the event of war with the Soviet Union.

The scientist, once a senior member of the KGB unit responsible for biological espionage, says that the secrets of Porton Down and the Pentagon's equivalent, Fort Detrick in Maryland, were discovered through the work of deep-cover Russian espionage agents.

Dr Kouzminov's unit was Department 12 of Directorate S, the part of the KGB that ran its "illegals", or deep-cover spies, around the world.

The department concentrated on biological warfare and was so secret that even the defectors Oleg Gordievsky and Vasiliy Mitrokhin did not know what it did.

Before the publication today of Dr Kouzminov's book, *Biological Espionage*, nobody in the West had any real idea of Department 12's role in penetrating biological research programmes around the world and stealing secrets of research that could be used for the benefit of the Soviet, and later Russian, state.

Nigel West, the author and espionage expert, said: "None of this material has ever been disclosed before and we have never had a defector from this unit, which is obviously of huge significance. I found it all pretty damn surprising because we just didn't know any of this."

Dr Kouzminov, who has lived and worked in New Zealand since leaving Russia with his wife in 1994, having left the KGB two years before, said yesterday in an interview that he was certain that the KGB's activities were still being carried out by its successor, the SVR.

"Can you imagine such power being abandoned just because of detente and democratisation?" he said.

"Would all the efforts and money expended in training and developing our people be forgotten?

"Would all our agents be stood down and the 'illegals' recalled just because Russia was taking part in the next round of biological weapons talks in Geneva? I wouldn't bet on it."

He said he was sure that Fort Detrick was penetrated and said that a long-term agent codenamed Rosa had reached the inner sanctum of Britain's biological weapons programme, which is centred on Porton Down.

Another highly-placed Department 12 source, who Dr Kouzminov believed was British or based in Britain, reached high levels in Nato's headquarters at Mons in Belgium.

Another agent ran a spy ring inside the World Health Organisation.

His disclosures about the use of "dead drops" to hide biological weapons of mass destruction in the event of a global war will send shudders down the spine of the western defence community.

"I was asked to carry out analysis of the suitability and effectiveness of the places selected for the potential clandestine storage of containers with dangerous biological materials and toxins so that when needed they could be used to disable or destroy objectives.

"I remember one of the operational files given to me for analysis – five pages of typed text with attached diagrams and clandestine photos of places selected for dead drops close to a naval base in Australia, which was used by the US navy.

"I had to evaluate whether the places selected were suitable for infecting or poisoning the naval garrison through, for example, a local water supply system, or by using transport entering the base, or through the dispersal of bacteria near air-conditioning and ventilation systems."

Although Dr Kouzminov would not identify the base, it is almost certainly Townsville, the Queensland naval port much used by the United States navy.

He believes that as many as 60 agents were operating against western biological programmes at any one time and that at least one "package" of live biological samples was being sent to Moscow from Britain or Germany every month.

Dr Kouzminov said that in the early 1990s at least two of his colleagues who regularly handled these packages died suddenly and in mysterious circumstances, presumably from leakages of the deadly contents.

He added that one of the great discoveries of his department was that any exchange of biological weapons during the last stages of the Cold War would have been one-sided because the West had no plans for such a strike.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/02/12/nspies12.xml>

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Washington Post

February 13, 2005

Pg. 1

U.S. Uses Drones To Probe Iran For Arms

Surveillance Flights Are Sent From Iraq

By Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Bush administration has been flying surveillance drones over Iran for nearly a year to seek evidence of nuclear weapons programs and detect weaknesses in air defenses, according to three U.S. officials with detailed knowledge of the secret effort.

The small, pilotless planes, penetrating Iranian airspace from U.S. military facilities in Iraq, use radar, video, still photography and air filters designed to pick up traces of nuclear activity to gather information that is not accessible by satellites, the officials said. The aerial espionage is standard in military preparations for an eventual air attack and is also employed as a tool for intimidation.

The Iranian government, using Swiss channels in the absence of diplomatic relations with Washington, formally protested the incursions as illegal, according to Iranian, European and U.S. officials, all speaking on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

A U.S. official acknowledged that drones were being used but said the Iranian complaint focused on aircraft overflights by the Pentagon. The United States, the official said, replied with a denial that manned U.S. aircraft had crossed Iran's borders. The drones were first spotted by dozens of Iranian civilians and set off a national newspaper frenzy in late December over whether the country was being visited by UFOs.

The surveillance has been conducted as the Bush administration sharpens its anti-Iran rhetoric and the U.S. intelligence community searches for information to support President Bush's assertion that Tehran is trying to build nuclear weapons.

The Washington Post reported Saturday that the intelligence community is conducting a broad review of its Iran assessments, including a new look at information about the country's nuclear program, according to administration officials and congressional sources. A similar review, called a National Intelligence Estimate, formed an important part of the administration's case for war against Iraq.

Bush's senior advisers, including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, said last week that a U.S. attack on Iran is not imminent but that the option remains available.

In late December, Iranians living along the Caspian Sea and on the Iraq border began reporting sightings of red flashes in the sky, streaks of green and blue and low, racing lights that disappeared moments after being spotted. The Iranian space agency was called in to investigate, astronomy experts were consulted, and an agreement was quickly signed with Russian officials eager to learn more about the phenomena.

But the mystery was laid to rest by Iranian air force commanders, some of whom were trained more than 25 years ago in the United States and are familiar with U.S. tactics. They identified the drones early last month, a senior Iranian official said, and Iran's National Security Council decided not to engage the pilotless aircraft.

That action is considered a major policy decision and reflects Iran's belief that an attack is unlikely anytime soon. The U.S. National Security Agency, which conducts and manages overseas eavesdropping operations, said it had no information to provide on the reconnaissance missions over Iran.

The drones are one of several tools being used to gather information on Iran's nuclear programs and its military capabilities, U.S. officials said. The United States believes Iran is using its nuclear energy program to conceal an effort to manufacture nuclear weapons, but no one has found definitive evidence to substantiate that.

Iran is engaged in diplomacy with France, Britain and Germany aimed at ending a 2 1/2-year crisis over Tehran's nuclear ambitions that began when Iranian defectors exposed a large uranium enrichment facility in August 2002. Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency have been in and out of the country since then investigating nuclear facilities.

U.S. officials confirmed that the drones were deployed along Iran's northern and western borders, first in April 2004, and again in December and January. A former U.S. official with direct knowledge of earlier phases of the operation said the U.S. intelligence community began using Iraq as a base to spy on Iran shortly after taking Baghdad in early April 2003. Drones have been flown over Iran since then, the former official said, but the missions became more frequent last year.

The spring 2004 flyovers led Iran's military to step up its defenses around nuclear facilities in the southern cities of Isfahan and Bushehr, where locals first reported the UFO sighting. Defenses were added around those sites and others last month, Iranian officials said, after it became clear they were being observed by the drones.

A Dec. 25 article in the Etemaad newspaper, translated from Farsi by the CIA, reported on "the presence of unidentified flying objects in the Bushehr sky on a number of occasions, particularly in recent weeks." After Moscow experts were called in, the Russian daily Pravda reported on "UFO mania" sweeping Iran.

One U.S. intelligence official said different types of drones with varying capabilities have been deployed over Iran. Some fly several hundred feet above the earth, getting a closer view of ground activities than satellites, and are equipped with air filter technology that captures particles and delivers them back to base for analysis. Any presence of plutonium, uranium or tritium could indicate nuclear work in the area where the samples were collected.

The last drone sightings were in mid-January, about the same time that Iran's National Security Council met in Tehran to discuss them, according to an Iranian official.

"It was clear to our air force that the entire intention here was to get us to turn on our radar," the official said. That tactic, designed to contribute information to what the military calls an "enemy order of battle," was used by the U.S. military in the Korean and Vietnam wars, against the Soviets and the Chinese and in both Iraq wars.

"By coaxing the Iranians to turn on their radar, we can learn all about their defense systems, including the frequencies they are operating on, the range of their radar and, of course, where their weaknesses lie," said Thomas Keaney, a retired U.S. Air Force colonel and executive director of the Foreign Policy Institute at Johns Hopkins University.

But it did not work. "The United States must have forgotten that they trained half our guys," the Iranian official said. After a briefing by their air force three weeks ago, Iran's national security officials ordered their forces not to turn on the radar or come into contact with the drones in any way.

"Our decision was: Don't engage," the Iranian official said. Leaving the radar off deprives U.S. forces of vital information about the country's air defense system, but it also makes it harder for Iran to tell if an attack is underway.

The Iranian government lodged a formal protest through the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, which passed it on to the State Department, a Bush administration official said. The complaint was then forwarded to the Pentagon and to senior Bush administration officials, the official said.

Asked last Sunday about Iran, Rumsfeld told ABC's "This Week" that he had no knowledge of U.S. military activities in Iran. Rice, who helped plan the Iraq war, said during her European trip last week that an assault on Iran was not on the agenda "at this time."

So far, the drones have added little information to Iran's nuclear file, according to U.S. intelligence officials familiar with the mission.

Estimates vary on when Tehran could build a nuclear weapon using material from its energy program. Iran has agreed to stop enriching uranium, a key ingredient for a bomb, while it is engaged in talks with Europe. Mohamed ElBaradei, the director general of the IAEA, said if Iran resumes that work, it could have enough highly enriched uranium for a bomb within two years and could complete a weapon within three years.

Iranian officials have said repeatedly that their country has no intention of building nuclear weapons.

Staff writer Glenn Kessler contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19820-2005Feb12.html>

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New York Times

February 13, 2005

Chinese News Media Critical Of North Korea

By Keith Bradsher and James Brooke

BEIJING, Sunday, Feb. 13--China on Sunday publicly called for the Korean peninsula to be free of nuclear weapons and urged North Korea to return to regional talks regarding its nuclear program. State-run Chinese media and censored Internet chat rooms were uncommonly critical of Pyongyang for having announced Thursday that it had manufactured nuclear weapons.

The official New China News Agency reported Sunday morning that Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing of China had spoken by phone on Saturday night with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Mr. Li called for the regional negotiations to resume as soon as possible and for the "denuclearization" of the peninsula, the agency said.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry had made similar points late Thursday night but at a much more junior level, with the statement issued in the name of Kong Quan, the chief spokesman. Bush administration officials have made little secret of their hope of recruiting China's help to put pressure on North Korea.

China has more influence with North Korea than any other country does, providing it with much of its fuel, food and other supplies - although even Chinese influence has proved limited at times.

The broad criticism by state-run media is important because the Chinese government has tended to take a protective position, at least in public, toward North Korea, its neighbor and sometime ally.

National television news on state-run CCTV gave heavy coverage on Saturday to international condemnation of North Korea and demands that it return to regional talks about its nuclear program. Little effort was made to explain North Korea's position - that it needs a nuclear deterrent to prevent the United States from attacking someday.

"Usually the CCTV reports will be more balanced, or even take a more preferential stand" in favor of North Korea, said Jin Canrong, the associate dean of the School of International Studies at People's University.

Shi Yinhong, a professor of international relations at People's University, said, "The Chinese government is really angry in their hearts about the declaration of North Korea, so they take a permissive attitude toward the media," allowing greater criticism of North Korea.

Two large sister newspapers, The Beijing News and Southern Metropolitan Daily in Guangzhou, ran a scathing commentary on Saturday by Dongfang Shuo, whom the two newspapers identified simply as a Beijing scholar. Dongfang Shuo is a pen name sometimes used for articles that reflect an evolving or unofficial view among Chinese experts on North Korea.

North Korea's statement on Thursday "can only make the North Korean nuclear issue more complicated and can't have a good result," the commentary said. "Because North Korea always engages in these kinds of marginal tactics, no country in the world would trust that North Korea is now playing a true game."

The commentary suggested that North Korea was mainly trying to attract international attention, as part of an effort to attract foreign aid.

Government censors have tended to delete criticisms of North Korea from Chinese Internet sites in the past. But hundreds of such postings could easily be found on Saturday on Sina.com, a popular news site.

The postings did not question that some countries might need nuclear weapons - China has them - but suggested that North Korea should not be a nuclear power.

"A kitchen knife is used to cut food, but it can't be held by children and crazy people," one posting said. "This is why North Korea can't be allowed to hold nuclear weapons."

To be sure, a similar number of postings defended North Korea, where many Chinese served during the Korean War, and government propaganda has often defended it since then. But postings favorable to North Korea had far outnumbered critical postings in the past. "The enemy of your enemy is your friend," one said. "Nobody likes North Korea, but we should support everyone who opposes the United States."

Television, newspaper and news agency reports here were quite mild in the first hours after North Korea issued its statement on Thursday afternoon. They focused initially only on North Korea's decision to pull out of the regional talks, and said little about the country's statement that it had manufactured nuclear weapons.

The low-key initial response of Chinese media and the Foreign Ministry to Pyongyang's announcement shows that the North Korean statement "was a surprise to China," said Chu Shulong, a foreign policy expert at Qinghua University.

But the Chinese news media have stopped short of suggesting a popular idea among some of North Korea's harshest critics in the Bush administration: trying to change North Korea's government by sending in radios, or other steps to help the country's residents realize how poor and isolated they are.

That idea drew support in Japan on Saturday from Robyn Lim, a Nanzan University professor influential in defense policy circles, who wrote in an essay: "The crisis will be resolved either by war or by regime change. Let's try for regime change."

In South Korea, where the liberal government of President Roh Moo Hyun has pursued an engagement policy of aid and investment with North Korea, conservative newspapers urged him Saturday to take a hard line on the North's nuclear weapons program.

Keith Bradsher reported from Beijing for this article, and James Brooke from Tokyo.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/13/international/asia/13korea.html>

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London Sunday Telegraph

February 13, 2005

Our Man Sold Secrets To Iran, Admits Pakistan

By Massoud Ansari, in Islamabad

Pakistan has conceded for the first time that Dr A Q Khan, the rogue nuclear scientist who is under house arrest in Islamabad, passed secrets and equipment to Iranian officials and is now considered the "brain" behind the programme that has put Teheran on the brink of acquiring nuclear weapons.

An investigation by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency, details of which have been disclosed to The Telegraph, confirmed that Khan, a hero in Pakistan as the "Father of the Bomb", and his associates sold nuclear codes, materials, components and plans that left his "signature" at the core of the Iranian nuclear programme.

The admission came during private talks in Brussels at the end of last month between European Union officials and senior ministers from Pakistan and India. The EU officials were told that cooperation between Teheran and Khan, 68, and associates from his Khan Research Laboratories began in the mid-1990s and included more than a dozen meetings over several years.

Most of these meetings were between Mohammad Farooq, a centrifuge expert from KRL, and Iranians in Karachi, Kuala Lumpur and Teheran. Pakistani investigators have told the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that centrifuge drawings acquired by Iran closely resemble the design of the first-generation Pakistan-1 centrifuge. Khan also helped the Iranians to set up a secret procurement network involving companies and middlemen around the world, ISI investigators found. The IAEA told Pakistani officials that centrifuges they had discovered at the Doshan Tapeh military base in eastern Teheran closely resembled the more advanced Pakistan-2 centrifuges. Apparently motivated by Islamic zeal in addition to financial gain, Khan, who was arrested in November 2003, devoted more than a decade to the spreading nuclear technology around the world. With increasing focus in Washington on a showdown with Iran, Khan's activities are being viewed with growing alarm. Pakistan had previously resisted admitting Khan's role in Iran's nuclear plans for fear of diplomatic repercussions. It remains reluctant to co-operate fully with either the IAEA or President George W Bush, who has pressed Pervez Musharraf, the Pakistani President, to allow the CIA to interrogate Khan. The IAEA has not yet found conclusive evidence that Iran has a weapons programme and Teheran claims that it "plans to enrich only to the levels that are used to generate nuclear fuel". A CIA report, however, concluded this was a lie. The ISI found that Khan and his associates had approached some potential buyers of weapons of mass destruction, including Saddam Hussein's regime. "Iraqi officials initially agreed but later backed out because they thought it might be a sting operation or a ploy by the US to implicate them," said one official. Pakistani investigators found that Khan's network tried not only to satisfy existing demand but also to create new markets for their proliferation activities. "They started working it both ways. They provided options to those who wanted to buy this sensitive material but also developed new markets for their wares." Western diplomats believe that Pakistan is afraid that making Khan available to the CIA directly would lift the lid on an extensive network of its army officers loyal to Khan. "This could expose the role of the Chinese in this international black market, or that of other countries that Pakistan cannot afford to antagonise," said an official involved in the investigations.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2005/02/13/wiran113.xml>

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New York Times
February 14, 2005
Pg. 1

U.S. Is Shaping Plan To Pressure North Koreans

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 - In the months before North Korea announced that it possessed nuclear weapons, the Bush administration began developing new strategies to choke off its few remaining sources of income, based on techniques in use against Al Qaeda, intelligence officials and policy makers involved in the planning say. The initial steps are contained in a classified "tool kit" of techniques to pressure North Korea that has been refined in recent weeks by the National Security Council. The new strategies would intensify and coordinate efforts to track and freeze financial transactions that officials say enable the government of Kim Jong Il to profit from counterfeiting, drug trafficking and the sale of missile and other weapons technology. Some officials describe the steps as building blocks for what could turn into a broader quarantine if American allies in Asia - particularly China and South Korea - can be convinced that Mr. Kim's declaration on nuclear weapons last week means he must finally be forced to choose between disarmament and even deeper isolation. China and South Korea have been reluctant to impose penalties on the North. To some degree the effort arises from Washington's lack of leverage over North Korea, and the absence of good military options, and it is far from clear that the administration's development of what one official calls "new instruments of pressure" will work. More than four decades of economic embargos of Cuba, tried by nine presidents, have failed, largely because European, Canadian and Latin American allies have not joined in. Nor have they succeeded against the Burmese, also a major source of drugs. The Secret Service has tried for years to halt North Korean counterfeiting dollars, and Australia and Japan have tried to end its sales of amphetamines and heroin. In interviews over the past three weeks, administration officials have denied that the renewed effort is part of an unstated initiative to topple Mr. Kim. But several officials say North Korea has stepped up its illicit trafficking and counterfeiting in part to make up for lost missile sales and a crackdown on cash transfers from North Koreans living in Japan, some of which are illegal.

"We think they are desperate to put more money into the nuclear program and we're trying to cut that off," said one senior official.

Some officials acknowledge that undermining Mr. Kim's hold on power could be a side effect of the program, if it was successful. "That wasn't the intent in drafting it," said one senior official involved in the process. "Whether it could be one of the results is anyone's guess."

Several officials cautioned, however, that the new "tool kit" did not yet constitute a plan of action because the United States was only slowly trying to engage other nations in the strategy. They said some of the new techniques had already been carried out, but would not say which ones.

Details were described by officials in one intelligence agency and two other government agencies. One official of a foreign government who has been briefed on parts of it confirmed some of the elements. On Sunday evening, Scott McClellan, the White House press secretary, cast the effort as "complementary to our continued diplomatic efforts," but insisted that some of the techniques had been used for some time.

"We have been working with our allies and partners for some time now to stop North Korea's illegal activities, especially in counterfeiting and narcotics," he said. "We have a responsibility to protect our citizens, our allies and our economies. North Korea cannot continue its involvement in illegal activities. It must make a strategic decision and eliminate its nuclear weapons program."

Other officials said that while different agencies had been pursuing the North, the new effort represented the first time the White House was coordinating and expanding the tactics to put more pressure on Mr. Kim.

Several officials confirmed that the most recent proposal was drafted by Robert Joseph, the counter-proliferation chief at the National Security Council, before he left the administration in November.

Mr. Joseph is widely expected to be nominated for the post of under secretary of state for arms control and international security.

Two American officials cited, as an example of new pressure tactics, a Japanese law that goes into effect on March 1 that requires all ships to carry liability insurance against spills and other accidents. Almost no North Korean vessel meets the requirement, so it could halt most shipping traffic with North Korea.

Although the nuts and bolts of the proposed measures are not clear, officials appear to be working from lists they have been collecting of banks and companies that the North Koreans have been using. Tracking North Korean financial transactions has long been difficult; it often deals in cash, and through shell companies and unregulated banking centers.

White House officials have declined to say what role President Bush has played in the new strategy. But his dislike for Mr. Kim is well known, and his involvement in strategies to deal with him was described by one former official as "a lot more intense than you might think."

Advisers, military officials and American and foreign diplomats who deal with Mr. Bush on North Korean issues say he frequently criticizes Mr. Kim's human rights abuses, referring to him as "immoral" and "a tyrant," according to one official who sat in on a recent meeting. In a meeting in December with President Roh Moo Hyun of South Korea, Mr. Bush spoke about how Mr. Kim lets his people starve.

"Roh said to him, 'Yeah, he's a bad guy, but we don't have to say it in public,'" said one official who has reviewed notes of the session. Mr. Roh's point was that turning the nuclear dispute into a personal confrontation, the way the Bush administration did with Saddam Hussein, could undercut any chance of diplomatic success in disarming North Korea.

Mr. Bush, the official recounted, responded, "'Alright, I won't say it publicly,' or words to that effect, and so far he hasn't."

Officially, the Bush administration has never declared that "regime change" is its objective in North Korea, and Mr. Bush has expressed a willingness to offer a "security assurance" to North Korea pledging that the United States will not invade. Such an attack is considered nearly impossible, given North Korea's ability to destroy Seoul, South Korea's capital, about 40 miles from the border, and the fact that American intelligence does not know where the North's nuclear arms or all of its nuclear facilities are.

But Mr. Bush has never made any such assurances about attacking North Korea's economic lifelines. On Sunday, former Secretary of State James A. Baker III, who served under Mr. Bush's father when North Korea was making what the C.I.A. later concluded were its first two nuclear bombs, raised the possibility of a broad economic crackdown.

Appearing on the ABC News program "This Week," Mr. Baker told the host, George Stephanopoulos, that "there's a big gap" between abandoning the six-nation negotiations that had been sporadically under way for the past 18 months "and going to military force."

"There are many things we can do," Mr. Baker added.

"Quarantine?" Mr. Stephanopoulos asked.

"Quarantine is one," Mr. Baker said. "And perhaps the best one, of course, is sanctions by the United Nations Security Council for North Korea's violation of her promises to the International Atomic Energy Agency and the global community."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/14/politics/14korea.html?>

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Los Angeles Times
February 14, 2005

China Vows To Help Revive N. Korea Talks

Amid demands that it use its influence with Kim Jong Il's regime, Beijing says it will try to restart six-party nuclear negotiations.

By Associated Press

SEOUL — China has pledged to try to revive talks aimed at ending North Korea's nuclear program after the isolated, Stalinist state declared that it had atomic weapons and would continue to boycott disarmament negotiations, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said Sunday.

The United States and other countries involved in the six-party talks have urged China to use its influence over North Korea. Beijing is Pyongyang's last major ally and a key supplier of food and energy to the impoverished dictatorship.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing has told Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice that Beijing firmly supports a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, the Chinese government said Sunday.

Li told Rice by phone Saturday night that "China will stay in touch with all relevant parties ... so that the six-party talks could be resumed as soon as possible," the Foreign Ministry said. The discussions also involve South Korea, Russia and Japan.

In addition, South Korea's foreign minister said he had discussed with U.S. officials "views that China should strengthen efforts to persuade the North," South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported. Ban Ki Moon, in Washington on a previously scheduled trip, is to meet with Rice today.

North Korea announced Thursday that it had built nuclear weapons to defend itself from a U.S. invasion — raising tensions in the two-year nuclear standoff. Washington has denied that it intends to attack.

A North Korean diplomat reportedly has requested direct talks with Washington as a way out of the impasse.

But the White House rejects such a move and insists that the six-party framework, which includes Japan and Russia, is the only appropriate setting for talks. Three rounds of multiparty negotiations have been held in Beijing with no breakthrough.

On Sunday, a North Korean district official in Pyongyang said the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean peninsula would help revive six-party talks.

Han Song Nam, a deputy chairman for a district in Pyongyang of the country's Communist party, said it "would be a practical measure in the withdrawal of the United States' hostile policy," according to Yonhap, which monitors North Korea's Radio Pyongyang.

Washington has been South Korea's key security ally since the 1950-1953 Korean war, and keeps thousands of troops there and in neighboring Japan.

Ban, the South Korean foreign minister, said in an interview on CNN's "Late Edition" on Sunday that he was confident in Washington's ability to deal with any emergency on the Korean peninsula.

Asked whether he was concerned the Iraq war might leave U.S. forces stretched too thin, Ban said: "We think that the United States has enough capabilities to deal with all these regional conflicts while they are concentrating their military forces in Iraq. I think the United States and Koreans in close combined defense capabilities can maintain and can deal with any threats."

North Korea did not say how many nuclear bombs it had, but Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Sunday that his country suspected it had two or three. He also warned that North Korea's declaration could spur proliferation in Asia.

Delaware Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., the top Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, said Pyongyang's move could push Japan to "go nuclear."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-northkorea14feb14,1,7211605.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post
February 15, 2005
Pg. 4

U.S. Missile Defense Again Fails Key Test

By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer

For the second time in as many months, the Bush administration's new missile defense system failed to complete a key test yesterday, automatically shutting down a few seconds before an interceptor missile was to launch toward a mock enemy warhead.

Defense officials said initial data pointed to a malfunction in support equipment at the launch site in the Marshall Islands in the central Pacific Ocean, rather than a failure on the missile itself.

The failure could fuel debate in Congress over the costs and benefits of the multibillion-dollar system, which some lawmakers and scientists say the Pentagon is rushing to deploy before it is proved effective. President Bush first pledged to build the system in the 2000 campaign.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has so far refrained from putting the system on alert -- a move that had been expected last fall when the first six interceptors were installed at a launch facility near Fairbanks, Alaska. The system, intended to protect the United States against a long-range missile attack, envisions the creation of a multilayered network of land- and sea-based interceptors and space-based weapons.

Yesterday's miscarried test was created to duplicate a Dec. 15 trial that also failed. Both tests were to have marked the first flights of the advanced interceptor missile. Earlier tests had used a slower, less sophisticated interceptor.

The latest tests called for the interceptor's booster rocket to shoot into space and release a "kill vehicle" that closes in on a mock enemy warhead and destroys it in a high-speed collision.

In both recent tests, the mock enemy warhead was launched successfully from Kodiak, Alaska, but the interceptor failed to get off the ground. Defense officials said each test appears to have failed for a different reason.

In the Dec. 15 test, a software failure on the interceptor itself led to a communications breakdown between the flight computer and the component that steers the missile, which caused the test to automatically abort 23 seconds before launch.

Yesterday, the countdown went well beyond that stage, suggesting that problem, which officials had described as a very minor software glitch, had been solved. Instead, initial reports suggest yesterday's trouble lay with the "command launch equipment" on the ground, which can automatically halt a launch if a problem is detected.

"The problem last night had nothing to do with the interceptor. It could be the silo," said Rick Lehner, spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency here. The 85-foot-deep concrete-and-steel silo has sensors that measure temperature, fumes and other safety criteria, Lehner said.

The target missile carrying a mock warhead launched from Kodiak at 1:22 a.m. Eastern time yesterday and flew toward the southwest. The interceptor was scheduled for takeoff about 15 minutes later from a test site on Meck Island in the Marshall Islands. When the intercept failed, the mock warhead crashed north of Wake Island, about 4,000 miles from Kodiak.

Investigators are sifting through all the launch data to determine the exact cause of the failure, Lehner said.

Since 1999, the Pentagon has conducted 10 tests of the missile defense system, five of which have resulted in hits. But only the last two tests have used the actual interceptor designed for real-world missions; earlier tests employed surrogates.

David Wright, co-director in the global security program at the Union of Concerned Scientists, said in a statement that yesterday's failure showed "the program is being pushed ahead for political reasons regardless of its capability." Defense officials stressed that the last two tests were far more realistic, and thus more technologically challenging than the previous ones.

"This was a much more robust and difficult test," said Chris Taylor, another spokesman for the Missile Defense Agency. He said the average cost of the tests is \$85 million, although in this case it could be less because the interceptor was preserved.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A23242-2005Feb14.html>

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New York Times

February 15, 2005

Rice Assures South Korean Of U.S. Pressure On North

By Joel Brinkley and James Brooke

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14 - Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in a meeting with the South Korean foreign minister on Monday, pledged to continue using diplomatic means to pressure North Korea to end its nuclear program and give up the nuclear weapons it claimed last week that it possesses.

For his part, the foreign minister, Ban Ki Moon, told Ms. Rice that his country believed that North Korea might be bluffing, an administration official said. That contention was amplified in Seoul on Monday by Chung Dong Young, South Korea's minister of unification, in a speech to the National Assembly in which he noted that the North had

made similar claims at least 10 times since 2003. "We see it as a claim to own nuclear weapons, not an official statement of being a nuclear weapons state," Mr. Chung said.

Along with the nuclear weapons announcement last week, North Korea also said it was pulling out of the six-party talks on ending its nuclear weapons program in exchange for security and economic considerations. No talks have been held since last June. North Korea wants direct negotiations with Washington, an idea the Bush administration rejects.

Richard A. Boucher, the State Department spokesman, said: "I think you will see a very active pace of discussions between the various parties to the six-party talks. We've already been in touch with many of the other parties through our embassies in the capital, and we'll continue to pursue an active diplomacy aimed at making these six-party talks work."

Mr. Boucher noted that the administration had asked Christopher R. Hill, ambassador to South Korea, to be the American representative to those talks, should they resume. The other three members are Japan, China and Russia. Diplomatic contacts among the five nations have intensified in recent days. On Saturday, Japan plans to send both its foreign and defense ministers to Washington for discussions on North Korea.

In Seoul, Mr. Chung dismissed the North's claims as nothing more than a bargaining ploy intended to "compel the United States to change its stance." His Unification Ministry promotes peaceful coexistence with the North and rarely voices skepticism of it. But Mr. Chung also heads South Korea's National Security Council, and his comments seem to contradict a South Korean Defense White Paper issued 10 days ago.

According to that policy document, North Korea probably has assembled one or two nuclear weapons and is believed to have conducted an aerial blast test, a step that could precede an actual nuclear weapons test.

Also, analysts note, while North Korea has blustered about having nuclear capacity, last Thursday was the first time it publicly used the phrase nuclear weapons to refer to its nuclear program.

Minutes after Mr. Chung's speech, a member of the conservative opposition called for his resignation.

"As all rosy predictions regarding the six-party talks and others regarding North Korea have failed, is it not right for the Unification Minister to step down?" asked Hong Jun Pyo, a leader of the Grand National Party, part of a conservative force that controlled the National Assembly for half a century until upset elections in April.

Conservatives are pressing the South Korean president, Roh Moo Hyun, to curb South Korean trade, aid and investment programs that funnel hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the cash-starved Communist state.

With the South Korean government determined to maintain its policy of economic aid and investment with the North, many analysts here agree that China is the only nation with leverage on North Korea. A Chinese mission is expected to travel to Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, later this week.

"China is the only country that has carrot and sticks, and that is willing to use both," Peter M. Beck, Northeast Asia director for the International Crisis Group, an aid organization, said in an interview here on Monday. Referring to South Korea, he added, "When you have half of your population in artillery range, when you have a relationship with the North that is so tenuous, you walk very cautiously."

According to Mr. Ban, South Korea is not yet ready to abandon its policy of engagement. "With this increased and intensified diplomatic efforts," he said, "I am confident that in the end North Koreans will come back to the dialogue table."

Joel Brinkley reported from Washington for this article and James Brooke from Seoul.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/02/15/international/asia/15rice.html>

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Washington Times

February 15, 2005

Pg. 13

U.S. Opposing Pyongyang's 'Illicit Activities'

By Nicholas Kralev, The Washington Times

The Bush administration said yesterday that North Korea should not be offered any incentives to return to six-party talks on its nuclear program and that Washington is working to counter Pyongyang's "illicit activities."

South Korean officials, meanwhile, were quoted as saying they had proposed a new round of high-level military talks with the reclusive state.

"We and the others agree that this is not the moment to start changing the playbook," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher told reporters.

North Korea officially pulled out of the six-party discussions — which include the United States, Japan, South Korea, China and Russia — on Thursday. It blamed Washington's "policy to isolate and stifle" it.

"They had originally promised to come back to talks in September, and this continued delay by North Korea should not be the reason to offer them further rewards," Mr. Boucher said.

"It remains fundamental, though, that the talks are the place to solve the issues, and we remain committed to that," he said.

Mr. Boucher also said that U.S. authorities, in collaboration with other governments, are trying to counter illegal international activities by North Korea, such as narcotics and smuggling activities, counterfeiting and proliferation of weapons technology.

"We have been aware for some time of North Korea's illicit activities," he said. "They have been a concern to the United States and other nations for decades."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met yesterday with South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki-moon, who suggested that Pyongyang's claim to possess nuclear weapons may be simply a bluff.

Nevertheless, he said, "we agreed to intensify our efforts among the parties concerned" in the six-nation talks.

Mr. Boucher said that, "for a long time now, the United States has assumed that North Korea has been able to produce enough material for nuclear weapons.

"Therefore, the premise of our policy all along has been the prospect, the probability, that they, in fact, had nuclear weapons," he said.

On Friday, after Pyongyang's statement made headlines around the world, officials in Seoul reached out to North Korea by offering military talks.

"We proposed by a telephone message on Feb. 11 to hold the third round of generals' talks as soon as possible," South Korea's Yonhap news agency quoted a Defense Ministry official as saying.

If such a meeting takes place, it would be the third since last year, when generals from the two countries agreed to ease military tensions on the peninsula, which was divided after the 1950-53 Korean War.

The North Korean Foreign Ministry said Thursday in a statement issued in English by its official Korean Central News Agency: "We ... have manufactured nukes to cope with the Bush administration's ever more undisguised policy to isolate and stifle [North Korea]."

"Nuclear weapons will remain [a] nuclear deterrent for self-defense under any circumstances," the ministry said.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20050214-094548-4404r.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

February 15, 2005

News Analysis

Charm, Fear May Help China Lure N. Korea Back To Arms Talks

By Mark Magnier, Times Staff Writer

BEIJING — China is likely to employ a combination of incentives, arguments and mild scare tactics in coming weeks as it tries to persuade North Korea to resume negotiations aimed at ending its nuclear weapons program. But it won't be easy to succeed, analysts say, given the complexities of dealing with the isolationist state, even for Pyongyang's neighbor, fellow communist regime and closest ally.

Probably the greatest incentive China can offer North Korea is an enhanced aid package, possibly with South Korea's help, essentially a sweetener to convince the Stalinist state to rejoin six-nation talks that also involve the United States, South Korea, Japan and Russia. Beijing has pledged as host of the talks to try to bring Pyongyang back to the table.

In the past, North Korea has tended to look for immediate, up-front benefits for any concession, no matter how small. China, which already provides tens of millions of dollars in food and energy aid to North Korea each year, has resisted funneling its largess through multilateral agencies such as the United Nations, where its leverage would be diluted.

In Washington, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Monday that "the North Koreans shouldn't be rewarded for causing difficulties in the reconvening of talks."

China will also attempt to play on Pyongyang's fears and its vanity, analysts said. The North Korean regime is, above all, concerned with staying in power, and Chinese diplomats will suggest that this objective is best served by negotiating, not by issuing bellicose threats that could make a confrontation with the U.S. into a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Beijing may also try to build trust by citing the communist ideology that both countries share. And it could massage North Korea's ego by arguing that Pyongyang is an extremely important power in the region whose opinions are taken seriously.

The Bush administration has on more than one occasion given verbal assurances that it is not keen to mount a military attack against North Korea. China may refer to this pledge in its bid to reassure the regime of North Korea leader Kim Jong Il. That said, it doesn't want to align itself too closely with any U.S. argument lest it undermine its broker role, nor does it know for certain what the Bush administration will ultimately do.

Chinese negotiators may also hint at cooler Beijing-Pyongyang relations should North Korea decide to walk away from the talks altogether. The two allies have drifted apart in the last two decades as China became more integrated with the outside world and North Korea kept the world at bay. Even so, the prospect of losing one's last significant friend is daunting, even for a hermit nation like North Korea.

Finally, China may ask the U.S. and North Korea to make small face-saving concessions to get things back on track, despite U.S. assertions that it will never make economic concessions. This might include an increase in food aid by the U.N. or other international groups to North Korea, or some format that allows for bilateral U.S.-North Korea meetings under the umbrella of the six-nation format.

North Korea formally announced Thursday that it had nuclear weapons and that it intended to walk away from the talks, prompting statements of concern from capitals around the world. Analysts say Pyongyang chose the moment well to create maximum surprise, turn the spotlight back on itself and ultimately raise the settlement price it might hope to exact for giving up its weapons program.

China was all but shut down last week for Chinese New Year, the biggest holiday of the year, with many of its senior negotiators visiting their ancestral hometowns. The Bush administration was distracted by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's European tour and ongoing Middle East issues. And the announcement fell into something of a global news vacuum, between Iraq's national election day and the announcement of the voting results.

Whether North Korea has nuclear weapons, how many it might possess and how powerful they might be remain issues of intense speculation. South Korea's point man on North Korea, Chung Dong Young, said Monday in Seoul that it was premature to call North Korea a nuclear power despite its claims, since it had yet to conduct a nuclear test.

In Beijing, Zhang Liangui, a Korea expert with the Central Party School, said the North Korean regime wants to remain in place, and "they believe the most powerful way to make that happen is to possess nuclear weapons."

In Washington, South Korea's foreign minister predicted after a meeting with Rice that the North Koreans would agree to resume the talks.

China's desire to restart a dialogue and see it succeed goes beyond the immediate goal of curbing North Korea's nuclear program.

Although China has a big interest in a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, the talks also represent the best avenue for Beijing to show its value in Washington, gain a reputation as a responsible player and build confidence.

"If North Korea talks fail, U.S.-Sino cooperation will face more problems," said Guo Shuyong, an international relations expert at Shanghai's Jiao Tong University. "It's a way to build mutual trust."

In its bid to become a major global player, China needs the cooperation of the U.S., which can help or hinder its development in areas as diverse as trade, diplomacy, military modernization and relations with Taiwan and Japan. China also holds out hope that successful talks could segue into a regional security grouping with Beijing at its center, further strengthening its clout.

China also needs North Korea talking again to vindicate its argument that Washington will gain more by gentle persuasion than by threats and ultimatums. Beijing has expended a good deal of political capital trying to persuade Washington to lower the rhetorical volume and would lose face if it turned out to be a flawed approach.

Beijing is also keen to blunt calls in the U.S. for a tough embargo against North Korea because that could result in tens of thousands of impoverished refugees fleeing into China across their 850-mile shared border. And Beijing is intent on the U.S. not using force in its neighborhood, an act that would weaken China's sphere of influence.

A senior diplomat with one of the six negotiating nations said the U.S. would try to appear patient for the time being, if for no other reason than to show the Chinese and other negotiating partners that it had tried to exhaust every diplomatic option for dealing with North Korea.

He predicted that American patience with North Korea might last six months, Beijing's up to a year, and South Korea's five years.

Times staff writer Paul Richter in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-china15feb15,1,1899699.story>

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New York Times
February 15, 2005

U.N. Nuclear Watchdog Chides Egypt

VIENNA, Feb. 14 (Reuters) - The United Nations' nuclear monitoring agency chided Egypt in a confidential report on Monday for failing to declare nuclear sites and materials but said its inspections had so far found no evidence that Egypt was seeking nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said in the report that Egypt had not understood that it had to declare some nuclear sites and materials, including a plant for separating plutonium, which can be used in an atomic weapon.

"The repeated failures by Egypt to report nuclear material and facilities to the agency in a timely manner are a matter of concern," the I.A.E.A. said in the report, which was circulated to diplomats ahead of its Feb. 28 board of governors meeting and was obtained by news agencies.

The agency said it was still investigating, but added, "The nuclear material and facilities seen by the agency to date are consistent with the activities described by Egypt."

Egypt says its nuclear work is for peaceful purposes only.

The agency began looking closely at Egypt last year after learning its scientists had worked with uranium and other materials that could be used to make atomic weapons.

One facility Egypt failed to report was a hydrometallurgy pilot plant intended to separate small amounts of plutonium, which Egypt said it never completed. Egypt signed construction contracts for the laboratory with a foreign company in the late 1970's and should have declared it under a safeguards agreement which came into force in 1982.

Egypt said it conducted tests at the plant in 1987 that would not have produced plutonium, the report said.

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