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GovExe.com
DAILY BRIEFING
May 17, 2005

GAO: Lack of security clearances jeopardizes maritime security

By Chris Strohm
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The ability to prevent or respond to a potential terrorist attack at a U.S. seaport may be hampered because federal officials cannot communicate necessary information to local, state and private-sector officials who do not have security clearances, government auditors said Tuesday.

The major barrier hindering information sharing at seaports around the country is the lack of federal security clearances for nonfederal members of committees or centers, the Government Accountability Office said in a new report ([GAO-05-394](#)).

"Given that ports are sprawling enterprises that often cross jurisdictional boundaries, the need to share information among federal, state and local agencies is central to effective prevention and response," GAO said. "The lack of security clearances may limit the ability of state, local and industry officials - such as those involved in area

maritime security committees or interagency operational centers - to deter, prevent and respond to a potential terrorist attack."

Nonfederal officials include state authorities, local port operators, and representatives of private companies. For example, the Coast Guard has developed a list of 359 nonfederal maritime security committee participants who need clearances. By last February, however, only 28 had submitted the necessary paperwork.

"Much of the federally generated information about port security - such as assessments of specific port vulnerabilities or information about potential threats being monitored - is classified national security information and cannot be released, even to law enforcement personnel, if they have not undergone the necessary federal background checks and received a security clearance," GAO said. "Lacking access to such information, nonfederal officials may be at a disadvantage in their efforts to respond to or combat a terrorist threat."

In response to the GAO report, two House lawmakers - Reps. Dutch Ruppersberger, D-Md., and Tom Davis, R-Va. - introduced an amendment to the 2006 authorization bill for the Homeland Security Department. The amendment, if approved, would establish an "assistance for security clearance desk" to help state and local personnel obtain security clearances.

The ASC Desk would, among other things, provide information, assistance and guidance on the process for state and local personnel to apply for security clearances; initiate and process personnel security investigations and periodic reinvestigations; and have personnel security clearances adjudicated.

"The ASC Desk shall publish the information, assistance and guidance required ... on a government-maintained website; shall present such information, assistance and guidance in a format that is easily accessible to state and local personnel; and shall operate a live, in-person, toll-free telephone service to answer questions about the information, assistance and guidance provided," the amendment states.

<http://govexec.com/dailyfed/0505/051705c1.htm>

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GovExec.com

May 17, 2005

Partnership Between Defense And Homeland Security Departments Solid, Says Official

By Daniel Pulliam

The relationship between the Homeland Security and Defense departments has never been healthier, a top Pentagon official said Tuesday.

Since Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff was sworn in as the second head of the blended agency, a great deal has changed in the organizations' ability to work with each other, such as improved communications and the ability to perform security functions, according to Paul McHale, assistant Defense secretary for homeland defense.

"A lot of it is for the better," McHale said at a Defense Writer's Group. "I am very confident that the working relationship between the Defense Department and the Department of Homeland Security is precisely where it needs to be in terms of attitude."

McHale said the link between Defense and Homeland Security was strained at times under its previous leader, Tom Ridge, but is now "improving every day."

Fifty-five of McHale's full-time staffers are assigned solely to working with Homeland Security, and a memorandum of understanding institutionalizing the relationship early in Chertoff's tenure helped solidify the departments' ability to share information and conduct security operations, McHale said.

McHale, a former member of Congress, oversees Defense's Northern Command, the office that oversees the consolidated homeland defense and security operations for the military. He also serves as a liaison between the Defense and Homeland Security departments.

The Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support, a report being prepared by McHale's office, will call for the creation of an active, layered national defense, is in its final stages McHale said. According to a spokesman, leadership changes within the Pentagon have kept the document from officially being released.

Steps to improve the agencies' ability to communicate with each other have been taken McHale said, and agencies - particularly those dealing with air defense like the Federal Aviation Administration and the North American Aerospace Defense Command - have recently shown that they can work with each other.

"We are by no means fully prepared, but we have improved," McHale said of the agencies' capability to communicate.

<http://govexec.com/dailyfed/0505/051705p1.htm>

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Washington Times
May 18, 2005
Pg. 17

Ministry Joins China On Missile Program

JAKARTA -- Indonesia and China will work together to develop short-range guided missiles as ties between the two large Asian countries improve, the official Antara news agency reported yesterday.

Research and Technology Minister Kusmayanto Kadiman said the idea had been around since 2002, but was only made concrete when Chinese President Hu Jintao met President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in Jakarta last month. The missile agreement would be signed when Mr. Yudhoyono visits China in June or July, Mr. Kadiman said.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/worldscene.htm>

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New York Times
May 19, 2005

Iran Seeks Incentives From Europe In Nuclear Impasse

By Neil MacFarquhar

TEHRAN, May 18 - The European Union and Iran will not break the impasse over restraining Iran's nuclear development program unless the Europeans offer significant incentives like a deal for 10 nuclear reactors, a top Iranian negotiator said Wednesday.

But no incentives will persuade Iran to abandon its plans to enrich fuel, said Hossein Mousavian, a negotiator with Iran's Supreme National Security Council. That is the central demand of the United States, which suspects that Iran would divert the resulting fuel to make nuclear arms.

In an interview on Wednesday, Mr. Mousavian accused the Europeans of stalling, saying, "The maximum announced was U.S. readiness to give spare parts for used airplanes, which is just a joke as the result of three months of negotiations."

The top Iranian negotiator, Hassan Rowhani, is scheduled to meet with the foreign ministers of France, Britain and Germany in Paris on Tuesday to try to break the deadlock that stalled the last round of negotiations on April 29.

Although Iran has suspended fuel enrichment during negotiations, Mr. Mousavian emphasized that the suspension of all aspects of the fuel cycle could last only a few more months.

"We would be prepared to continue suspension of enrichment for two to three more months, or some months, to test whether there would be any outcome of negotiations," he said.

He said Iran would provide whatever guarantees or provisions for inspections might be necessary to prove that it was not diverting the fuel to build nuclear weapons. "Iran is 100 percent flexible, open, ready to negotiate, to compromise on any mechanism, but not cessation," he said.

For example, he said, Iran has proposed reaching a complete enrichment cycle in four phases over two years in order for the West to grow confident that it was not trying to build nuclear weapons. "In terms of the different phases and the time of each phase, we have not closed the door for the Europeans," he said.

The fuel cycle starts with converting uranium ore, known as yellowcake, to gas, which is then fed into centrifuges for enrichment. The level of enrichment depends on how many times the gas is fed through the centrifuge. At low levels, the fuel can be used for nuclear power; the highest level of enrichment produces fuel that can be used to make nuclear bombs.

It remains unclear that phases spread over two years would constitute much of a compromise, since some of the more technical aspects of the fuel cycle, including building the 3,000 centrifuges that Iran wants to enrich uranium, might take that long anyway.

In exchange for allowing international inspectors to monitor every stage of the process, Iran expects a major package of incentives involving its security, political stability and economic development, Mr. Mousavian noted. Iranian officials, scientists and scholars interviewed over the past few days all insisted that Iran would never give up its right as a signer of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to enrich fuel for peaceful means. Iran needs to enrich fuel to ensure a steady supply of electricity, develop related medical technologies and advance technologically, they said.

The Americans and the European Union counter that Iran forfeited the right to peaceful nuclear technology because it organized a deliberate effort to hide the activity, facilities and materials of its nuclear development program from the rest of the world for two decades.

Iran seeks to use the nuclear issue to end the international isolation it has been subjected to in varying degrees since its 1979 Islamic Revolution, analysts in Tehran believe, so it cares less about the timing of the steps than about getting an agreement.

But so far Iran has seen nothing to indicate that the European trio, backed by the United States, is even contemplating offering the level of incentives Tehran expects. "The other side is still at the point of zero," Mr. Mousavian said.

Negotiators had anticipated delaying further talks until after the June 17 presidential elections in Iran, waiting to see what kind of government would emerge. But there is widespread consensus among Iranians that the country should be allowed to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Possible compromises that would allow Iran to have a limited number of centrifuges to enrich uranium are being discussed, if not yet negotiated.

Some experts believe that it is better to allow Iran to have an open program that can be monitored rather than a clandestine one that it would probably build anyway.

"It's much better to have 500 centrifuges under the eye of everybody than 50 clandestine ones out in the desert somewhere," said one expert on nonproliferation talks who did not want his name or country linked to this proposal. A senior European diplomat familiar with the proposal said if Iran had only 500 centrifuges, it would take 10 years or so to make enough material for one bomb. However, American officials have said that even a small number of centrifuges would allow Iran to master the technology.

Iran, however, has proposed that it move step by step through the stages of uranium enrichment, including installing 3,000 centrifuges in its enrichment plant at Natanz. That level would certainly give it enough material for a bomb, and it is also the basic building block for Iran's eventual plans to build 50,000 centrifuges.

But there are concerns that Iran, as it improved its knowledge from any small program it is allowed to run, might build a secret parallel system on a military base that international inspectors could not detect.

Iran denies any interest in developing a bomb. Officials and scientists interviewed said they found the move to deny Iran nuclear technology particularly grating because before the Islamic Revolution, the West had offered to help Iran develop nuclear power. The United States had been willing to sell Iran 23 nuclear power plants, Germany was building the Bushehr nuclear reactor - which the Russians are finally scheduled to help complete next year - and France signed a contract to supply nuclear fuel.

Asked for a specific example of the kind of incentive Iran now seeks, Mr. Mousavian said, "Europe can agree in principle to a contract for 10 nuclear power plants for Iran."

Given that major American companies hold the licenses for the most advanced nuclear power plants, and that significant investment in Iran is banned under American sanctions, such a deal would be impossible without American approval. But Iran considers sanctions a problem to be solved by European negotiators, not Iran, Mr. Mousavian said.

The European trio, backed by the United States, has sought through the talks to convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program in exchange for guaranteed fuel supplies from abroad.

But in recent weeks Iran has threatened to restart the first step in the processing of raw uranium at its uranium conversion plant at Isfahan, although not the enrichment itself, if the talks remain deadlocked.

The European Union said any Iranian moves to start the fuel cycle, even the steps before enrichment, would prompt it to break off the talks and refer Iran to the United Nations Security Council for possible penalties.

Iran admits to hiding significant elements of its nuclear development program from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations watchdog against nuclear proliferation, over almost two decades. It said such subterfuge was necessary because of the sanctions against it. Iran is suspected by some proliferation experts of hiding a secret program to develop nuclear weapons.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/19/international/middleeast/19iran.html?>

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Boston Globe
May 19, 2005
Pg. 1

US, North Korea Met On Nuclear Program

First direct talks since December

By Farah Stockman, Globe Staff

WASHINGTON -- Two senior State Department officials met last Friday with North Korean diplomats in New York in a quiet effort to convince the reclusive regime to return to negotiations over its nuclear program, the State Department confirmed yesterday.

The previously unpublicized meeting, the first face-to-face encounter between US and North Korean officials since December, occurred amid the deepening crisis over Pyongyang's nuclear program. Since September, North Korea has refused to return to the six-nation talks over ending its nuclear program with the United States, China, South Korea, Russia, and Japan.

Friday's meeting, attended by Joseph DiTrani, the US special envoy to the six-nation nuclear talks, as well as Jim Foster, the head of the State Department's Office of Korean Affairs, and North Korea's representatives to the United Nations, is significant because the Bush administration has been avoiding direct communication with North Korea, saying North Korea should stop delaying and do its talking through the six-party negotiations.

But in recent weeks, the sense of urgency over getting North Korea back to the bargaining table has grown.

Pyongyang announced last week that it is harvesting plutonium for new bombs, and some US intelligence officials have said they think North Korea could be preparing for an underground nuclear test. Meanwhile, participants in the six-nation talks have grown restless, saying they will soon consider other options for dealing with North Korea.

Nancy Beck, a State Department spokeswoman, confirmed yesterday that US officials had "working-level contact with North Korean officials" on Friday, using a term that refers to diplomatic contact below the highest levels. North Korea and the United States have no formal diplomatic relations, so meetings with North Korea's UN representatives are the only form of direct communication.

"We use this channel to convey messages about US policy, not to negotiate," Beck said.

Another State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the United States initiated the contact to encourage North Korea to return to the six-nation talks, but that it was unclear whether the meeting had made any impact.

Charles "Jack" Pritchard, a former special envoy for the Bush administration to the North Korea talks, called the meeting "notable" because the State Department had publicly rejected North Korea's request for a face-to-face meeting, conveyed two weeks ago by North Korea's official news service, but days later secretly arranged one.

"It should not be unusual -- there should be contacts all the time -- but it is for this administration," said Pritchard, who said that he was routinely discouraged from meeting North Korean officials at the United Nations and that the administration severely curtailed such contacts after he left his post.

The meeting is just one in a flurry of major diplomatic moves in Washington and Asia bent on restarting the talks. Japan last week suggested convening five-party talks, without North Korea, and also mentioned the possibility of taking the issue of North Korea's weapons systems to the UN Security Council. This week, South Korea spent days in delicate talks with North Korea -- the first such face-to-face communications in 10 months -- promising the eventual delivery of a package of hefty economic aid should North Korea return to the six-nation negotiations.

China, on the other hand, increased pressure this week on Washington to be more flexible toward North Korea, announcing in uncharacteristically bald and public statements that the United States should accept North Korea's repeated requests to talk bilaterally, outside the six-nation process.

But the Bush administration has steadfastly refused to negotiate on its own with North Korea, believing that the only way to keep the pressure on the regime is to create a united front with North Korea's neighboring countries.

"The North Koreans have always been anxious to begin direct talks outside of the six-party process, and have probably made 10 or 15 approaches to the administration over the last several years for secret talks," said James Kelly, former assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, who retired in January.

Senior US officials have said North Korea's requests for private meetings are simply a tactic meant to postpone international punishment for a nuclear program the regime does not want to give up.

"These guys just want to delay it, because they have worked for 40 years to build nuclear weapons," said Kelly, who added that it was not clear that North Korea would ever agree to dismantle its weapons program, and that if it did consider a deal, the price would almost certainly be too high for the international community to pay. Kelly said he thinks North Korea already has nuclear weapons.

"I personally have never been worried about a [nuclear] test," he said. "A test would just tell us what we already know."

But Pritchard, who worked for a time under Kelly, said greater communication with North Korea might produce progress. He said the Bush administration's rigid restrictions on face-to-face meetings severely hampered the administration's ability to strike a deal.

"We, in front of others, began to look like a third world country," Pritchard said, describing how negotiators often had to read directly from talking points written in Washington. "If they want to talk, you should be listening, even if they are saying the same thing over and over again. At some point in time, you are going to hear something new. You are going to make a better analysis of what they said. . . . Over a period of 25 meetings, there comes a point in

time where we as individuals can get beyond the rhetoric, where we can say some things without having to rely on scripted talking points.

"You have got to explore that possibility of real dialogue before you declare failure. We haven't yet made a good-faith effort."

http://www.boston.com/news/world/asia/articles/2005/05/19/us_north_korea_met_on_nuclear_program/

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DAILY BRIEFING

May 19, 2005

Homeland Security secretary calls for 'worldwide security envelope'

By Chris Strohm

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Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff on Thursday called for the creation of a "worldwide security envelope" in order to screen people and cargo traveling across international boundaries.

The security envelope would help governments and law enforcement agencies distinguish between people and cargo that have been vetted versus people and cargo that need to be more closely inspected, Chertoff said during a speech at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

The secretary said he plans to discuss the idea with his European counterparts during travels next week. He said he hopes to move partnerships between the United States and European allies "to the next level."

"How do we move beyond simply partnering on an individual, episodic basis to building a true partnership that will operate in a mission-oriented focus where we will work together with our allies overseas to accomplish a mission that will secure the entire world?" he asked.

People and cargo traveling "within the security envelope" would be able to move more freely and rapidly across the globe because governments and law enforcement would have confidence that they posed no threat, Chertoff said.

Those "outside the envelope," however, would be subject to "in-depth vetting that is necessary to make sure bad people can't come in to do bad things," he added.

For example, the government would know critical details about cargo being shipped inside the security envelope, such as what it is, who made it, where it came from and whether it had been tampered with while en route. Verified freight would be able to move more rapidly. This would help the U.S. government better know which of the thousands of containers coming into U.S. ports each day need inspected, Chertoff said.

The Homeland Security Department, however, has had difficulty getting European allies to share information in the past, particularly with regard to airline passengers. For example, homeland security officials spent months in negotiations before the European Union finally agreed last year to provide the U.S. government with passenger name records of airline travelers coming to or from the United States.

Chertoff said the United States and its allies need to build a global network in order to compete with a global terrorist network. He said he hopes the countries can move forward in the areas of screening people and cargo, technology compatibility and law enforcement cooperation.

"As we talk about a strategy to deal with global terror, we have to start to think about what is a strategy for dealing with a network. And clearly, one way to look at it is we have to create our own network to compete with that network and to combat that network," he said.

"What that tells us right away is that if we're going to challenge the kind of interdependence that a terrorist network thrives upon, we have to be able to confront the network everywhere it operates," Chertoff said. "And that means we have to be able to function internationally and do it in partnership with the overseas allies."

<http://govexec.com/dailyfed/0505/051905c1.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

May 20, 2005

Iran Likely To Go Nuclear, Experts Tell Senate Panel

Undersecretary of State says there is no sign that Tehran's ambitions have changed. An analyst points to possible regional proliferation.

By Sonni Efron, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — A senior State Department official and international experts gave a Senate panel a pessimistic assessment Thursday of developments in Iran, saying they saw no signs that current disarmament efforts would deter the country's rulers from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

One expert told senators that the "most probable" outcome of the stalemate would be that Tehran would obtain nuclear weapons.

"We ought to get used to the idea of thinking about what it would be like to live with an Iranian nuclear bomb," said Gary Milhollin, director of the Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control.

Iran recently said it would resume enriching uranium — a key step in producing nuclear arms — after agreeing to freeze such work two years ago. The regime in Tehran insists that its nuclear program is for civilian energy purposes, but its statement has increased tensions with the U.S.

Undersecretary of State R. Nicholas Burns told the Foreign Relations Committee that the U.S. saw "no sign Iran has made the necessary strategic decision to abandon its nuclear ambitions."

Burns called on Iran to "maintain suspension of all nuclear-related activities and negotiate in good faith the eventual cessation and dismantling of all sensitive nuclear fuel cycle activities."

Otherwise, he said, European nations — some of which are trying to persuade Iran to abandon any effort to produce nuclear weapons — would insist that the issue be referred to the United Nations Security Council.

But Burns spurned the Europeans' suggestion that the U.S. offer more support for their negotiations. "There is no reason to believe that extra incentives offered by the United States at this point would make a difference," he said.

"We don't have any reason to think that if the U.S. were at the [negotiating] table, the Iranians would be any more open."

Geoffrey Kemp, a former National Security Council official now affiliated with the Nixon Center in Washington, said that "there is no way" U.S. or European efforts would prevent a "proud country of 70 million people with abundant resources" from acquiring an atomic bomb if it wants one.

Without "fundamental change in the Iranian leadership, combined with a willingness on the part of the Bush administration to take big risks, the United States is on course for a serious crisis with Iran at some point in the coming months," Kemp said.

If Iran were to develop atomic weapons, the United States would be forced to consider persuading Egypt, Saudi Arabia and possibly other nations in the region to not also develop nuclear weapons, Milhollin said.

At the urging of European leaders, President Bush agreed this year to offer incentives to Tehran that include selling civilian aircraft parts and dropping a long-standing objection to Iran's applying for membership in the World Trade Organization.

Senior U.S. officials have since been cool to the idea — floated by Europeans and some analysts — of offering Tehran economic benefits for a commitment to refrain from enriching uranium. In that scenario, sanctions could be imposed if Iran refused the deal.

The Europeans and Iranians are scheduled to meet again next week.

Burns repeatedly praised the European negotiators and said he was in daily contact with them. "They have been very faithful partners to us," he said. "They have been, we think, very tough — as they should be."

Some diplomats and analysts have suggested that Iranian officials could not advocate compromise with the West before Iran's presidential election, scheduled for June 17.

However, Burns and others held out no hope that the election would produce a representative government. About 1,100 people registered to run in the election, but the theocratic Guardian Council, a powerful watchdog group, is expected to approve only a dozen or so candidates, Burns said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran20may20,1,7916372.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Post

May 20, 2005

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U.S. Envoy Met With North Korean Officials At U.N.

By Glenn Kessler and Anthony Faiola, Washington Post Staff Writers

After a public appeal from North Korea, a State Department envoy met with North Korean officials at the United Nations last week to reiterate Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent statement that the Bush administration recognizes the reclusive country's sovereignty, U.S. officials said yesterday.

The secret meeting, the first such back-channel communication in five months, was a U.S. attempt to prod North Korea back to six-nation disarmament talks, after similar efforts by such allies as China and South Korea. The North

Korean officials did not respond, except to say they would pass the message to leaders in Pyongyang, the capital, but North Korea appeared to dismiss the rare direct assurances.

"U.S. recognition of sovereignty is fake," the official KCNA news service quoted a North Korean Foreign Ministry official as saying.

The issue is important to the government, which has repeatedly said it is under threat of attack by the United States and frequently seeks reassurances of its status as an equal power.

Rice sent Ambassador Joseph R. DeTrani, the U.S. special envoy to North Korea on disarmament talks, to New York last Friday after officials in Pyongyang indicated in a statement they wanted to set up a meeting with U.S. officials to confirm the U.S. position, a senior administration official familiar with the talks said. KCNA hinted that Pyongyang might be willing to return to the negotiating table if it could determine whether Rice's recent statements were sincere.

Rice decided that "this is a time of a lot of escalation, and perhaps it was not a bad time to pass the message directly," the administration official added, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the diplomatic sensitivity of the topic.

During a trip to Asia in March, Rice made a speech in Japan in which she referred to North Korea as a sovereign state-- a phrase intended to placate North Korea. In February, after she called North Korea an "outpost of tyranny," Pyongyang announced it was a nuclear-weapons state and refused to return to talks because of the administration's "hostile policy."

But Asian diplomats said Rice's attempt in Japan to soothe North Korean concerns was spoiled when President Bush during a recent news conference denounced the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, as a "tyrant" and a "dangerous person" who ran "concentration camps." North Korea fired back that Bush was a "half-baked man" and a "philistine" who had "turned the world into a sea of blood."

In last Friday's meeting, DeTrani and Jim Foster, who heads the State Department's Office of Korean Affairs, met with North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations, Pak Gil Yon, and his deputy, Han Song Ryol. The New York channel has been used by both sides to exchange messages and official positions, but U.S. officials stressed it was not a negotiating forum.

DeTrani repeated a series of recent statements by Rice -- that the United States recognized North Korea as a sovereign state, that it had no intention to attack or invade and that Washington would agree to have "direct contacts" with North Korea during six-nation talks, the official said.

Direct contacts is a euphemism for the bilateral discussions that have taken place on the sidelines of each round of the six-party talks, which involve the United States, China, Russia, Japan and North and South Korea. Washington has refused to hold direct negotiations with North Korea outside the six-nation framework, even though the other four nations have done so.

State Department spokesman Richard A. Boucher described the U.S.-North Korean encounter as the "normal kind of meeting that we've had from time to time." Briefing reporters, he added: "No offense to you, but as we make statements they get written up in various ways in different news media. The North Korean probably read different things about what our policy is or is not."

As the first anniversary of the last round of the six-party talks approaches, Asian fears of a possible nuclear test by North Korea are rising. Some diplomats have suggested that a failure by North Korea to return to negotiations by the end of June might mean tougher tactics, such as economic sanctions or referral to the U.N. Security Council, by the United States and Japan. South Korea and China have resisted increasing pressure on North Korea.

After four days of bilateral talks with North Korea this week, South Korea agreed to begin shipping 200,000 tons of fertilizer to the North. The two sides also agreed to resume higher-level ministerial talks in Seoul on June 21. Such talks have been stalled since the last round in May 2004

South Korea pressed the Pyongyang government to return to the bargaining table and formally recognize the seriousness of the crisis over its declared nuclear weapons arsenal. But the talks between the two Koreas concluded yesterday with North Korea making no such promises. The two sides instead agreed to a less specific pledge "to improve South-North relations and to work for peace on the Korean peninsula."

In comments to foreign diplomats gathered at South Korea's presidential palace on Thursday, President Roh Moo Hyun issued an impassioned call for "peace" and to avoid war "no matter what happens."

Faiola reported from Tokyo. Correspondent Joohee Cho in Seoul contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/19/AR2005051900332.html>

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U.S. Doesn't Have Needed Support In U.N. To Punish Iran, Official Says

'Anything could happen' if matter goes to world body

By Barbara Slavin, USA Today

WASHINGTON — If Iran ignores U.S. pleas not to make nuclear fuel, the United States lacks support from China in the U.N. Security Council to punish Iran, a State Department official said Thursday.

Testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns urged Iran to not resume efforts to enrich uranium but added that “anything could happen” if the matter goes to the United Nations.

Though the United States and its European allies are united, Burns said, China has not agreed with their approach. China, which has a veto on the Security Council, has growing economic ties with Iran.

Burns' comments came days before foreign ministers from Britain, France and Germany were to meet with Iranian national security adviser Hassan Rowhani. Iran suspended efforts to make nuclear fuel in November but has been threatening to resume converting uranium into a gas. That is the first step toward making fuel for civilian reactors, the purpose Iran has given, or weapons, which the United States says Iran is developing.

The program has raised concerns, particularly in Israel. The United States recently sold Israel bunker-buster bombs, but Israel wants a diplomatic solution. Burns said a military strike is “not on the agenda at this time.”

Burns appeared to echo concerns that U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan raised in an interview with USA TODAY last week. Annan said it would be risky to bring Iran to the Security Council without a consensus. Failure with Iran, he said, would “set a precedent” that would hurt future non-proliferation efforts.

European unity is not assured. On Monday, French Ambassador to the United States Jean David Levitte told the Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank, that if Iran restarted nuclear activities, the issue would go to the board of the International Atomic Energy Agency “to decide ... the next step.”

Iran hid much of its program for 18 years. In an interview Thursday with Reuters, Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a former president who is running again in elections June 17, said Iran would never abandon its “legitimate right” to nuclear technology.

The Bush administration won't join the nuclear talks with Iran or offer new incentives, Burns said. In March, the administration agreed to stop blocking Iran from joining the World Trade Organization and to sell Iran spare parts for civilian airliners.

In its first term, the Bush administration appeared torn between a State Department that talked occasionally with Iran and a White House and Defense Department that opposed engaging Iran's Islamic regime. Sen. Chris Dodd, D-Conn., thanked Burns for presenting a plan combining strong criticism and a potential willingness to talk. Burns criticized Iran's support for groups the United States considers terrorists and an “abysmal” human rights record. He also said it was Iran, not the United States, “that doesn't want to see change in the relationship” between the two nations.

Burns said the administration would accelerate efforts to reach out to ordinary Iranians, whom he praised as a “proud people” with a “great history.” Congress has approved \$3 million to promote human rights in Iran and made Iranians eligible for the money for the first time. David Denehy, a State Department spokesman, said dozens had applied. He wouldn't say whether any Iranians were among them.

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Yahoo! News
Associated Press

U.S. Weighs Consolidating Bomb Materials

By CHRISTOPHER SMITH, Associated Press Writer

Fri May 20, 4:10 AM ET

BOISE, Idaho - To guard against terrorists storming a U.S. weapons lab and setting off a crude nuclear device, the Bush administration is considering consolidating much of the nation's plutonium and bomb-grade uranium at a few highly secure sites, including concrete bunkers in Idaho.

Currently, the material is scattered at 13 sites around the country.

Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman is expected to get an advisory board's report next month on the potential cost savings and security improvements from combining the hundreds of tons of weapons fuel.

The Energy Department and a federal agency that oversees the nation's nuclear stockpile have been discussing the idea for more than a year, after a series of security lapses during mock terrorist attacks at federal weapons labs.

"The argument is by putting more of the materials in fewer places, you simply reduce security risks and therefore reduce the cost of securing the materials," said Anson Franklin, spokesman for the National Nuclear Security Administration in Washington.

Authorities fear a suicidal terrorist squad could penetrate lab security and trigger a nuclear explosion.

The United States no longer manufactures or tests nuclear weapons. But scientists still use small amounts for research, including studying how existing nuclear warheads age and how weapons might be built by terrorists or rogue nations.

Then-Energy Secretary [Spencer Abraham](#) last year proposed a series of steps to tighten security, including creating an elite federal force to guard nuclear installations and moving the most sensitive nuclear material from labs that are in populated areas or have security vulnerabilities.

But an organization that monitors nuclear security says the department has been slow to follow through because some labs have resisted.

"It's very much like the whole base-closing thing: No one is going to agree to close their own facility, they are all trying to protect their program," said Danielle Brian, executive director of the Project on Government Oversight, a Washington-based group that has lobbied for tighter security at Energy Department labs.

A new report by the group estimates consolidation of bomb-grade material would save \$3 billion over the next three years.

The group proposes removing all weapons-grade material from six sites: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, Calif.; Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, N.M.; the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near Richland, Wash.; Savannah River near Aiken, S.C., Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tenn.; and Argonne National Laboratory West near Idaho Falls, Idaho.

The material would then be placed with existing stockpiles or in unused bunkers under beefed-up security at seven sites: the Idaho National Laboratory, the Nevada Test Site north of Las Vegas; Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, N.M.; the Pantex Plant in Amarillo, Texas; the Y-12 National Security Complex at Oak Ridge; the BWXT Nuclear Products Division in Lynchburg, Va., and Nuclear Fuel Services in Erwin, Tenn.

One of the structures proposed for use at the Idaho National Laboratory is Building 691, a never-used \$450 million underground bunker with 5-foot-thick concrete walls.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20050520/ap_on_re_us/uranium_storage

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