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(Editor's Note: Hyperlinks to commentary and referenced report follows article.)

Washington Post

## **Report Warns of Threat to Milk Supply**

Release of Study Citing Vulnerability to Bioterrorism Attack Was Opposed by U.S. Officials

By Rick Weiss

Washington Post Staff Writer

Wednesday, June 29, 2005; Page A08

About a third of an ounce of botulism toxin poured by bioterrorists into a milk truck en route from a dairy farm to a processing plant could cause hundreds of thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in economic losses, according to a scientific analysis that was published yesterday despite efforts by federal officials to keep the details secret. The analysis by researchers at Stanford University, posted yesterday on the Web site of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, seeks to quantify security weaknesses in the nation's milk-supply chain and makes recommendations for closing those gaps.

Although some suggested changes are underway, federal officials felt the material had enough potential for misuse to warrant a last-minute effort to halt publication. That effort, which delayed the report's release by a month but ultimately did not keep it from becoming public, proved to be as contentious as the publication itself. It has assured the report's place in the scientific canon as one of the first test cases of how to balance scientific freedom and national security in the post-Sept. 11 era.

Study leader Lawrence M. Wein, whose previous research had forecast the likely effects of terrorist attacks involving anthrax and smallpox, said he was surprised by the government's push to block publication, which involved a flurry of phone calls and meetings with officers of the National Academies. The organization advises the federal government on matters of science and publishes the journal.

Last fall, Wein said, he briefed high-ranking officials of the departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services, along with dairy industry representatives, on his work.

"It was clear the dairy people were nervous about this paper coming out," Wein said. But when federal officials did not follow up, he said, he assumed they had concluded -- as had every reviewer at the National Academies -- that the information in the article was publicly available and easily obtained through a Google search.

Bill Hall, a spokesman for HHS, said yesterday that his department still opposes publication but was not in a position to block release of the data, which are not classified.

"We don't see eye to eye on this," Hall said. "If this ends up being the wrong decision down the road, the consequences could be quite severe and HHS will have to deal with it, not the National Academies."

The analysis by Wein and graduate student Yifan Liu considered what might happen if terrorists poured into a milk tanker truck a couple of gallons of concentrated sludge containing as much as 10 grams of botulinum toxin, a potent bacterial nerve poison now popular in low doses as a wrinkle eraser.

Because milk from many sources is combined in huge tanks holding hundreds of thousands of gallons, the toxin would get widely distributed in low, but potentially lethal, concentrations and within days be consumed by about 568,000 people, the report concludes.

The researchers acknowledge that their numbers are very rough. But depending on how thoroughly the milk was pasteurized (which partially inactivates toxins) and how promptly the outbreak was detected and supplies recalled, about 400,000 people would be likely to fall ill, they conclude.

Symptoms of botulism food poisoning arise within hours and progress from cramps, nausea and vision problems to paralysis and death by asphyxiation. Although only 6 percent of victims would generally be expected to die, the death rate could easily hit 60 percent, they conclude, because there would not be nearly enough mechanical ventilators or doses of antitoxin to treat so many victims.

Children could be hit first and hardest, because milk goes directly from processing plants to schools, avoiding the grocery-distribution system.

"They'd be the canaries," Wein said.

The report concludes that the most efficient ways to reduce such risks are to insist that latches on tanker trucks have locks; improve pasteurization processes; and develop tests that can detect contamination before milk is delivered to outlets -- changes, the team concludes, that are likely to cost just a few pennies per gallon.

Publication was scheduled for the week of May 30, but was abruptly postponed days before that date when HHS officials contacted the National Academies with concerns that the paper might inadvertently aid terrorists, according to an accompanying editorial written by Bruce Alberts, president of the Academies.

Those concerns were discussed in detail on June 7, after which the Academies decided to publish. By then, a preprint of the article had been widely distributed to journalists as part of the journal's standard procedures, and the New York Times had published a summary by Wein in an opinion piece.

Barry R. Bloom, dean of the Harvard School of Public Health, who oversaw an independent review of the paper earlier this spring, said he is convinced that the report did more good than harm by quantifying the risks posed at each point in the milk-delivery system -- a difficult job that now allows the industry and regulators to concentrate security efforts where they are most needed.

"This paper didn't just slip in with no one thinking about it," Bloom said. "But science depends on openness and the free exchange of ideas. And being aware of threats gives us a better chance of protecting against them than not being aware of them and having only the terrorists aware of them."

A national security directive signed by President Ronald Reagan and still in force demands that fundamental scientific information remain openly accessible unless it is formally classified.

Chris Galen, a spokesman for the National Milk Producers Federation in Arlington, criticized the Academies' decision, saying the information "could inform someone with malicious designs on food safety, even just as a prank."

The need for improved pasteurization "is something that has already been addressed" by the industry, he said, as has the need to keep locks on truck latches.

He acknowledged, however, that those improvements, encouraged by the Food and Drug Administration in recent years, are not mandatory. And although he said the newer standards are being "widely followed," he conceded he had no data to indicate what proportion of dairies and milk processors are adhering to the tougher recommendations. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/06/28/AR2005062801330.html>

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## Science Sunday: "security by secrecy" and biological research

by [Plutonium Page](#)

Sun Jul 3rd, 2005 at 16:16:56 PDT

Anyone who's in academia, whether it's in science or some other area, knows that when you submit a paper for publication, it goes through a review process. Sometimes a paper is accepted for publication (with or without required revisions), and sometimes it's rejected. Of course, that's just a very general description of what happens; all cases are different.

Recently, there was one case that was rather out of the ordinary. A variety of news outlets reported the story; here's an excerpt from the *Washington Post* [article](#): . . . (Continued at link below.)

<http://reality-based-mom.dailykos.com/story/2005/7/3/191656/9257>

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## Analyzing a bioterror attack on the food supply: The case of botulinum toxin in milk

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Edited by Barry R. Bloom, Harvard University, Boston, MA, and approved April 20, 2005 (received for review November 16, 2004)

We developed a mathematical model of a cows-to-consumers supply chain associated with a single milk-processing facility that is the victim of a deliberate release of botulinum toxin. Because centralized storage and processing lead to substantial dilution of the toxin, a minimum amount of toxin is required for the release to do damage. Irreducible uncertainties regarding the dose–response curve prevent us from quantifying the minimum effective release.

However, if terrorists can obtain enough toxin, and this may well be possible, then rapid distribution and consumption result in several hundred thousand poisoned individuals if detection from early symptomatics is not timely. Timely and specific in-process testing has the potential to eliminate the threat of this scenario at a cost of <1 cent per gallon and should be pursued aggressively. Investigation of improving the toxin inactivation rate of heat pasteurization without sacrificing taste or nutrition is warranted. . . . (Continued at link below.)

<http://www.pnas.org/cgi/reprint/0408526102v1.pdf>

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New York Times

July 9, 2005

## Rice Has No Plans To Improve Offer To North Korea In Arms Talks

By Joel Brinkley

ANCHORAGE, July 8 - Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Friday that she intended to rebuff a South Korean request to enhance an offer that five nations made to North Korea in exchange for dismantling its nuclear weapons program.

The South Korean government has urged Washington to add a rich package of incentives to a proposal given to North Korea a year ago, during the last session of six-nation nuclear disarmament negotiations. Chung Dong Young, South Korea's unification minister, presented new offers to Kim Jong Il, North Korea's leader, during a meeting last month in the North Korean capital.

After a visit to Washington last week, Mr. Chung seemed to believe the administration had agreed to his government's plan to combine the two proposals. "Both sides agreed that the next six-party talks, when they reopen, will gain momentum if they combine the proposals from the previous talks and South Korea's important proposal," he told Korean reporters.

But speaking Friday on her plane en route to China, her first stop on an Asian tour, Ms. Rice said: "We are not talking about enhancement of the current proposal. I will listen to what people think. But I think it is important to get a response to the proposal already made."

During her trip, Ms. Rice intends to visit three of the six nations involved in the disarmament talks, China, South Korea and Japan. (The other three are the United States, North Korea and Russia.) From China and South Korea, she is almost certain to hear requests that Washington improve the offer on the table, which includes security guarantees, energy assistance and other aid. Russia has expressed the same view.

North Korea never responded to the current offer. Chinese officials say the North Koreans found it disappointingly long on requests and short on rewards. For months, however, the Bush administration has been saying Washington is unwilling to offer anything more until North Korea responds to the first offer.

"Then we will be in a negotiation," Ms. Rice said.

During her previous trip to the region in March, Ms. Rice urged the Chinese to use their leverage over North Korea to convince them to return to the talks. Since then, the administration has given up its expectation that China will do more. This time, she said, "I am not going with a list of things I want the Chinese to do." Instead, she said, she will be "prepared to hear what the Chinese are prepared to do."

After meeting with Mr. Kim last month, Mr. Chung said Mr. Kim told him that North Korea was prepared to come back to the talks. Since then, Washington has been waiting for North Korea to set a date.

Hopes were raised once again on Friday when Japan's prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, said conversations he had had this week at the meeting of industrial nations in Scotland led him to believe the six-nation talks would soon resume. "From comments made by leaders at the meeting, I received the impression that North Korea will soon return to the six-way talks," he said at a news conference, Reuters reported.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/09/international/asia/09diplo.html?adxnnl=1&adxnnlx=1121117930-FjFgA+hC2eXz6RH8BS0ziQ>

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Washington Post

July 9, 2005

Pg. 8

## **Chinese To Press N. Korea On Talks**

*Official From Beijing to Brief Leader After Weekend Meetings With Rice*

By Edward Cody and Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Foreign Service

BEIJING, July 8 -- A senior Chinese official will travel to North Korea after Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice holds talks in Beijing this weekend, as China seeks the resumption of negotiations on North Korea's nuclear weapons program, the government announced Friday.

The trip, by Tang Jiaxuan, state councilor and a former foreign minister, is part of Chinese efforts to narrow differences between the North Korean government and the Bush administration over the possible return of North Korea to six-nation talks it has boycotted for the last 13 months.

Although the announcement by the Foreign Ministry did not detail Tang's plans, the veteran diplomat was expected to report to North Korean officials on U.S. ideas for getting the talks back on track.

Prior to opening weekend talks with Chinese officials, Rice strongly suggested Friday that the United States and its allies would not permit North Korea access to nuclear power for its energy needs even if it gave up its nuclear weapons programs.

"There are attendant proliferation risks with nuclear power that are hard to minimize given the history with North Korea," Rice told reporters as she flew to Beijing for the first leg of a five-day swing through Asia to convince North Korea to return to stalled disarmament talks.

Hopes of a resumption of the negotiations have risen recently. The North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, told South Korea's Unification Minister, Chung Dong Young, that he would authorize a resumption of talks this month if the United States showed respect toward the North.

In the rare face-to-face meeting on June 17, Chung told Kim, in return, South Korea was willing to help finance a massive energy assistance package but that it would not include nuclear power, according to a senior U.S. official briefed on the discussions.

Chung's comments on nuclear power, which have been not been made public, pleased U.S. officials who have been wary of any agreement that involved the transfer of nuclear technology to Pyongyang.

Rice noted she had met with Chung when he visited Washington last week. "I thought the South Koreans had some very useful thoughts, and that is something I would like to follow up with when I'm here," Rice said, without elaborating.

But a Chinese official said it was still unclear whether the promise of resumed talks can be realized anytime soon. Chinese diplomats are uncertain whether the first move should come from North Korea or the United States in order to create an atmosphere permitting new negotiations, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the matter's diplomatic sensitivity. As the host and sponsor of the six-nation talks, and as North Korea's main ally, China has played a key role as go-between, trying to prevent a definitive breakdown despite the wide gap between Washington and Pyongyang.

The Bush administration has ignored suggestions from Chinese officials that softer language could foster a more cooperative attitude from Kim. Specifically, Rice has refused to cede to North Korean demands that she apologize for calling North Korea an "outpost of tyranny."

Rice emphasized Friday that if North Korea returns to the negotiations, it must be prepared to bargain hard. "We do believe that coming back means not just coming back and sitting at a table but actually actively trying to resolve the issues," she said.

The talks, comprising North Korea, South Korea, Japan, China, Russia and the United States, began in August 2003 in Beijing. Two more rounds, in February and June 2004, were held here before North Korea balked, citing the Bush administration's tough rhetoric.

China, which is North Korea's neighbor, has invested heavily in keeping the negotiations alive, saying it, too, is eager to remove the danger of nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula. But Bush administration officials repeatedly have complained that the Beijing government refuses to use all the tools at its disposal, including oil deliveries, to pressure Kim into giving up his weapons.

A previous agreement with North Korea, reached in 1994 by the Clinton administration, envisioned the building of two light-water reactors to supply North Korea with energy after a plutonium reactor was shut down. Construction of the reactors had begun, but was halted in 2002 after the Bush administration accused North Korea of violating the 1994 agreement with a clandestine uranium-enrichment program.

North Korea has since restarted the plutonium facility and extracted weapons-grade material from its spent fuel rods. U.S. intelligence analysts estimate that North Korea now possesses enough nuclear material to construct at least nine weapons.

*Kessler reported from Anchorage.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/08/AR2005070802186.html>

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Los Angeles Times

July 9, 2005

## **Expanded Pact On Safety Of Nuclear Materials Approved**

*Amended treaty would strengthen safeguards against smuggling and terrorism at atomic sites.*

By Associated Press

VIENNA — An 89-nation conference on Friday approved a beefed-up treaty on protecting enriched uranium and other dangerous nuclear substances, a move that the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said would help prevent terrorism.

The Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material originally obligated the 112 countries that accepted it to protect nuclear material during international transport. The amended version, which still has to be ratified by those countries, expands such protection to materials at nuclear facilities, in domestic storage and during domestic transport or use.

The IAEA said that under the toughened treaty, countries would work more closely to track down and recover stolen or smuggled nuclear material and "mitigate any radiological consequences of sabotage."

Conference approval is only the first step. The amended treaty enters into force only after ratification by at least two-thirds of the 112 nations, a process expected to take years.

Still, IAEA director Mohamed ElBaradei called it an "important step towards greater nuclear security by combating, preventing and ultimately punishing those who would engage in nuclear theft, sabotage and even terrorism."

ElBaradei, whose Vienna-based agency acts as the U.N. nuclear nonproliferation watchdog, said the agreement demonstrated "a global commitment to remedy weaknesses in our nuclear security regime."

The agreement comes amid disturbing revelations of continuing attempts to steal nuclear material, particularly in poorer countries with less developed security measures.

In the former Soviet republic of Georgia there have been four known incidents of attempted uranium smuggling over the last three or four years, said Soso Kakushadze, head of nuclear and radiation safety at Georgia's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection.

Although building a nuclear device is a complicated process, there are fears terrorists could easily construct a "dirty" bomb, which would use conventional explosives to spread radiation.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-nukes9jul09.1.2056156.story>

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Washington Post

July 10, 2005

Pg. 1

## **N. Korea Agrees To Rejoin Talks**

### ***Nuclear Arsenal On Table After Year-long Boycott***

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

BEIJING, July 10 -- North Korea has agreed to return this month to six-nation talks aimed at eliminating its nuclear arsenal, ending a year-long boycott, U.S. officials and the North Korean government said Saturday.

The agreement to restart the talks was reached at a rare dinner meeting here between a senior U.S. envoy and his North Korean counterpart, held shortly before Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice arrived Saturday night for talks with Chinese officials on the North Korean issue.

During the meal, Kim Gye Gwan, the North Korean deputy foreign minister, told Assistant Secretary of State Christopher R. Hill that North Korea was willing to attend talks in Beijing the week of July 25, according to a senior U.S. official traveling with Rice. In what U.S. officials took as an encouraging sign, they reported that Kim said the purpose of the talks was the "denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" and that North Korea intended to make progress at the negotiations.

Rice met with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and other Chinese officials Sunday morning. She then was to fly to Phuket, Thailand, for a scheduled tour Monday of damage from last winter's Indian Ocean tsunami. She then planned to return to East Asia for talks with Japanese and South Korean officials, also focusing largely on the North Korean issue.

Rice, after meeting with Li, said China and the United States agreed that resumption of the talks "is only a first step. The real issue now is to make progress at these talks."

Li added the two countries had a "shared goal -- a Korean peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons."

China has already announced that State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan -- a former foreign minister who also plans to meet one-on-one with Rice -- will visit Pyongyang this week as Hu's personal envoy, apparently to report on the discussions with Rice.

The diplomatic breakthrough comes five months after North Korea declared it had nuclear weapons and would never return to talks because of what it called the Bush administration's "hostile policy." The statement was made shortly after Rice, in her confirmation hearings, said that North Korea was one of six "outposts of tyranny" -- and President Bush, a few days later in his State of the Union address, pledged to combat tyranny around the world.

The United States' partners in the talks, particularly China, have complained that the Bush administration's rhetoric concerning North Korea and its leader, Kim Jong Il, was making it difficult to draw the reclusive nation back to the sessions. In recent months, U.S. officials have sent signals that they respected North Korea's sovereignty, though Rice has declined to retract her "outpost of tyranny" comment. Bush, who received the ire of North Korea after referring to Kim as a "dictator," began saying "Mr. Kim" when referring to him.

North Korea's official KCNA news agency, in a statement Saturday night confirming the talks, appeared to claim a victory in the change of tone when it described the dinner between Hill and Kim.

"The U.S. side clarified its official stand to recognize the DPRK as a sovereign state, not to invade it and hold bilateral talks within the framework of the six-party talks," the statement said, using the initials for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "The DPRK side interpreted the U.S. side's expression of its stand as a retraction of its remark designating the former as an outpost of tyranny and decided to return to the six-party talks."

Hill said that his dinner conversation with his counterpart lasted more than two hours, and was conducted in a correct and careful atmosphere. The men focused on "a process that is going to lead us to a solution," Hill said. "We agreed that we can't have dueling speeches. We need to have results" that meet specific objectives, he said.

The envoys agreed that "we have to look at ways to make each round count," Hill said, "and we need to make sure that each round builds more momentum for the next, so when we push that rock up the hill it doesn't come back to the bottom each time."

U.S. officials stressed that the meeting between Hill and Kim did not amount to negotiations, but an exchange of diplomatic messages. They said Hill's statement was similar to comments made at two recent meetings between mid-level officials at North Korea's U.N. mission, which helped set the groundwork for North Korea's agreement. Still, it was the highest level contact between the two countries in more than a year.

The Bush administration has insisted it will not hold bilateral negotiations with North Korea, except as part of the six-nation negotiating rounds that also include China, Russia, Japan and South Korea.

Only three sessions have been held in the past two years, the last in June 2004, with little progress. In the meantime, U.S. intelligence analysts have said they believe North Korea's stockpile of weapons-grade plutonium has increased fourfold during the same period, enough to make about nine nuclear weapons.

The United States also pressed China and South Korea to send tough signals to North Korea about the implications of its continued refusal to return to the negotiating table. Those countries instead appear to have swayed North Korea by suggesting that a successful negotiation would result in significant assistance. China rebuffed a U.S. suggestion in April that it temporarily cut off North Korea's supply of oil and lured North Korean officials to the three previous sessions with huge payments and concessions.

Rice, speaking to reporters traveling with her to Beijing, said the United States had no plans to update its proposal, advanced at the talks a year ago, but was prepared to negotiate if North Korea came forward with a serious counteroffer.

Under the U.S. proposal, if North Korea agreed to end its plutonium and uranium programs, South Korea and other U.S. allies could provide immediate energy assistance to the North. Pyongyang would have three months to disclose its programs and have its claims verified by U.S. intelligence. Only then would the United States and its allies give provisional security assurances and enter a process that might result in direct U.S. aid and a permanent security guarantee.

"There is something there for the North Koreans to react to if they choose to," Rice said. "It is not as if we are starting from a blank slate and everybody has to make it up."

At past sessions, North Korea has made a series of proposals, none of which have been acceptable to the United States. North Korea denies it has a uranium-enrichment program and has proposed only a long-term freeze of its plutonium program. It has also called for a long list of concessions, including billions of dollars in aid.

*Staff Writer Elizabeth Williamson in Washington contributed to this report.*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/09/AR2005070901136.html>

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Washington Times

July 11, 2005

Pg. 10

## **Missile Defense Woes Hamper Future Tests**

By Associated Press

Flight tests of the nation's missile defense system will not resume until this fall at the earliest as the military revamps the program after two failures in the past seven months, a military official says.

The military may conduct two tests by year's end, with the earliest possibly this fall, said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because no schedule has been announced.

It is uncertain whether the military will have a target missile ready for launch, however, and the first test may not involve an attempt to hit a target.

The delay further hampers Pentagon efforts to validate a multibillion-dollar program that supporters say will help protect the nation from ballistic missiles such as those being deployed by North Korea and other nuclear-armed rogue states.

Even though the military occasionally activates interceptor bases in Alaska and California, they are not on around-the-clock alert as envisioned. The system has not had a successful intercept of a target since October 2002. Three tests have ended in failure. The Bush administration had said the system would be working by the end of 2004.

An independent review, performed this year for the Pentagon's Missile Defense Agency, suggested that the rush to deploy the defenses led to inadequate quality control during the tests.

The report was posted online by the Center for Defense Information, a liberal defense policy think tank in Washington.

Missile Defense Agency spokesman Rick Lehner said the report raised some issues regarding quality control that, "quite frankly, we didn't pay enough attention to, and now we are."

President Bush is seeking \$9 billion for the program in the upcoming budget year, \$1 billion less than previously planned.

In the two most recent tests, each costing \$85 million, the interceptors from Kwajalein Island in the Pacific Ocean failed to get out of their silos to intercept a target launched from Kodiak Island, Alaska.

On Dec. 15, the test missile did not launch because of a problem with communications software. The second test, on Feb. 14, failed because an arm that holds up the interceptor did not fully retract in the moments before it launched, officials said.

The Missile Defense Agency is putting together a schedule for future tests, Mr. Lehner said. The goal is to make the tests more rigorous for the interceptor missiles and less likely to fail from test equipment woes.

Whatever becomes of the testing, the Pentagon will forge ahead this summer with installing 10 new interceptor missiles at its base in Fort Greely, Alaska, officials said. Greely has six interceptors in place.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20050710-110041-4190r.htm>

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Washington Times

July 11, 2005

Pg. 1

## **U.S. Open To Ties With North Korea**

*Pyongyang first must quit nukes*

By Nicholas Kravlev, The Washington Times

BEIJING -- Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice yesterday left open the door to establishing diplomatic ties with North Korea if it abandons its nuclear ambitions.

She tempered this first for the Bush administration, however, by cautioning that the North's return to six-party talks on its nuclear program is not yet cause for celebration.

Pyongyang, Miss Rice warned, "has a bar to pass" when the negotiations resume later this month.

"The issue now is for North Korea to make a strategic choice to give up its nuclear weapons programs," she said when asked about diplomatic ties with Pyongyang at a press conference in Beijing. "So let's do that, and we will see what else comes."

Five years ago, the Clinton administration offered the North the prospect of formal relations with the United States for the first time since the communist state's creation in 1948. This remains one of Pyongyang's top goals, but until now the Bush administration has rebuffed the North every time the topic comes up.

Miss Rice's vague, open-ended response came during a visit with Chinese leaders in which she also spoke of the "great momentum" in U.S.-China relations despite the latter's "troubling" arms buildup.

She had said several times in recent months that Washington considers North Korea a "sovereign" state. The term apparently was of significance for Pyongyang, which agreed Saturday to rejoin the multiparty talks.

U.S. diplomat Christopher Hill reportedly provided an explicit assurance on the point at a "steak and cheesecake" dinner Friday with North Korean officials. He also told his counterparts that Washington had no plans to attack North Korea, the Associated Press reported.

The next round of talks is to be held the week of July 25, but Miss Rice said it is only "the first step" toward resolving the nuclear standoff.

"It is a good thing that we are going back to the talks, but it's only a start," the secretary of state said. "It is not the goal of the talks to have talks, [but] to make progress."

Miss Rice spoke about the "bar" North Korea faces at the fourth session in Beijing in an interview with Fox News. She was alluding to fruitless earlier rounds, the last of which took place in June 2004.

"We shouldn't spend too much time celebrating," she said, because difficult work lies ahead.

The agreement on a date for the talks, in which China, Japan, South Korea and Russia also will participate, was reached between Mr. Hill, assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, and Kim Kye-gwan, a North Korean deputy foreign minister who led his country's delegation at the earlier sessions.

Miss Rice met yesterday with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing and State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, who plans to travel to Pyongyang tomorrow.

At her solo press conference, the secretary voiced a frank assessment of the U.S.-China relationship, saying it is "obvious" that "there are some elements of it that are troubling."

She referred specifically to trade and economic disputes, human rights and Beijing's increased military spending, but she said China does not necessarily pose a threat.

"There is no doubt that we have concerns about the size and pace of the Chinese military buildup, and it's not just the Pentagon; I've made clear to people that this is a view held by the U.S. government," Miss Rice said.

"That does not mean that we view China as a threat," she said.

On balance, she said, "this relationship has great momentum. It still has more positives than negatives."

Miss Rice also said she had asked her hosts "that China reach out to, in particular, the Dalai Lama, who is for Tibet a man of considerable moral authority but who really is of no threat to China."

Beijing calls Tibet's spiritual leader, a Nobel Prize-winning monk, a separatist, but he says he seeks only greater autonomy for Tibet.

Miss Rice is on her second trip to Asia since becoming secretary of state in late January. After she left Beijing yesterday, she flew to Phuket, the Thai resort town swamped by the December tsunami.

She is scheduled to visit Tokyo today and Seoul tomorrow to plot strategy for the six-party talks.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/world/20050711-120417-4958r.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

July 11, 2005

## **N. Korea Takes Pride In Arsenal**

By Barbara Demick, Times Staff Writer

MT. KUMGANG, North Korea — From a glance at the tumbledown villages and the rusted-out railroad equipment, it would seem the North Koreans don't have much to boast about.

But if there is one undisputed point of pride in this country with a per capita income among the lowest in the world, it is the nuclear bomb.

To many North Koreans, the development of nuclear weapons vaults them into an exclusive club with the United States and China and the other great powers of the world.

"We're a nuclear power. We're not like Iraq, or Yugoslavia or Afghanistan. We can defend ourselves," boasted Kim Myong Song, a 30-year-old North Korean who was standing guard on the hiking trails at Mt. Kumgang, one of the few parts of the reclusive country open to visitors.

Pounding his fist in the air, Kim said that North Korea's nuclear weapons could demolish U.S. interests in the event of a war.

"We will turn the U.S. bases in South Korea into ashes. No U.S. base will be safe in Guam, Japan, Hawaii. Even the mainland United States won't be safe," he said.

"If we say we have nuclear weapons, you better believe it — we do," said another guard, a 34-year-old in tinted glasses who gave his name as Mr. Kim.

U.S. intelligence agencies have believed for several years that North Korea has developed a nuclear bomb. But there is disagreement about whether the government in Pyongyang can mount it on a missile and whether those missiles could reach any part of the United States.

Brian Myers, an academic and literary critic who studies North Korean literature and media, says nuclear weapons have become a key element of domestic propaganda, used by the government to convince an impoverished population that they are as well-off as anybody else despite increasing evidence to the contrary.

"Nuclear weapons are crucial to the North Koreans' sense of dignity, especially vis-a-vis the South. Without them, they are mere beggars," said Myers, who teaches in South Korea.

The North Koreans' abiding pride in their nuclear weapons is one reason it is so difficult for the government to barter them away. For more than a year, Pyongyang has boycotted six-nation talks on its nuclear program, despite offers of a modern-day Marshall Plan to rebuild the country in exchange for denuclearization.

But over the weekend, North Korea agreed to resume the negotiations at the end of this month. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, on a six-day trip to Asia, said the decision was "only a start," echoing U.S. admonitions that Pyongyang must be ready to bargain when it returns to the table.

Washington is mindful that North Korea could return to the negotiations only to stall for time to reprocess more plutonium for nuclear weapons. By some estimates, North Korea may already have enough plutonium for up to nine nuclear devices.

Previous rounds of the disarmament talks have lasted two or three days, but this month's meeting may last longer, as the United States and its partners, South Korea, China, Japan and Russia, will want to see concrete results before adjourning, a senior administration official said.

Peter Hayes, the head of the Nautilus Institute, a San Francisco-based think tank, said that the more closely North Korea associates its image with nuclear weapons, the harder it will be to strike a deal.

"There is a kind of nuclear nationalism that you are seeing here," Hayes said, adding that North Korea's proximity to Hiroshima and the threat of a nuclear strike by the United States during the 1950-53 Korean War has created a mind-set in which nuclear weapons have an almost mystical power.

"For four or five decades, they have been at the other end of the nuclear barrel, so it is not surprising that they are obsessed with it," Hayes said.

At Mt. Kumgang, South Korean tour guides instruct foreign tourists not to talk to North Koreans about politics — especially not about the bomb. But the guards patrolling the hiking trails appear eager to boast about their nuclear program.

North Koreans have been taught for years that they have some mysterious, all-powerful weapon that could devastate the United States, but only recently has it been explicitly named as a nuclear bomb. Those interviewed at Mt. Kumgang said they were thrilled their government announced unequivocally this year that it had developed nuclear weapons.

"There was no celebration, but people feel really good about it," said a North Korean trail guard in her 20s, elegantly dressed in a fake Burberry jacket and matching scarf, but as belligerent as her male counterparts.

"We're not afraid of the Americans," she said, then added a note of political correctness, North Korean style, "not just because of our nuclear weapons, but because of our great general" — a reference to North Korean leader Kim Jong Il.

"If any country has nuclear weapons, all countries should have the right to nuclear weapons," said Kim Myong Song, the 30-year-old guard, echoing another theme of the official propaganda. He said he so keenly believed in the right to nuclear weapons that "if the United States were to attack us, I'd carry a nuclear bomb in my backpack all the way to America."

By the same token, the guard said that he wished for a nuclear-free world — yet another theme of North Korean propaganda.

"But if there is nonproliferation," he said, "it should be nonproliferation for everyone."

*Times staff writer Sonni Efron in Phuket, Thailand, contributed to this report.*

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-pride11jul11.0.1231708.story?coll=la-home-world>

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New York Times

July 11, 2005

**News Analysis**

## **Setting The Table For North Korea's Return**

By Joel Brinkley

PHUKET, Thailand, July 10 - Just hours before North Korea agreed to return to the six-nation talks on its nuclear program, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice reiterated that the United States would not sweeten the offer laid on the table more than a year ago. "We are not talking about enhancement of the current proposal," she said Saturday. But it was the promise of a better deal that appears to have persuaded North Korea to return to the talks, several administration officials acknowledged privately.

The offer - details of which have not been disclosed - came last month from South Korea, allowing the Bush administration to appear to remain faithful to the hard line that some senior officials have insisted on. Yet at the same time, they can accede to the demands of allies for some kind of softening. "South Korea, they are the ones who made this work," a senior Asian diplomat said.

On Sunday, after North Korea ended the yearlong stalemate and agreed to return to the talks, the other five parties - the United States, South Korea, China, Japan and Russia - began urging North Korea to take the negotiations seriously.

"It is not the goal of the talks to have talks," Ms. Rice said Sunday in Beijing. "It is the goal of the talks to make progress."

The Japanese and South Korean Foreign Ministries made similar remarks. In a statement issued Sunday, North Korea vowed to "do its utmost" to make the talks succeed.

A senior Bush administration official said the talks this month were likely to last several days.

"We're going to try to stick with it until we make some progress," he said, speaking Sunday to reporters on Ms. Rice's plane. "We don't want to have just plenary speeches, just talking past each other."

The official spoke on condition of anonymity, as did others, because they did not want to upstage the secretary of state and did not have authorization to speak on the record.

Almost as soon as the initial American offer was laid on the table during the last negotiating session in June 2004, North Korea told China and South Korea that it considered the offer inadequate. Chinese officials said the North

Koreans viewed the offer, of limited fuel aid and security assurances, to be long on immediate demands and short on promises in return.

So, over the last year, China, South Korea and Russia have repeatedly urged the United States to improve the offer, saying that is what is needed to persuade North Korea to disarm. The Bush administration insisted, though, that North Korea respond to the proposal on the table before any new offers were made.

Last month, South Korea made a new offer anyway. Chung Dong Young, South Korea's unification minister, presented the new incentives to Kim Jong Il, North Korea's leader, in a meeting on June 17 in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang.

He also said continuing improvement in relations between the Koreas hinged on North Korea's agreement to return to the talks. During that meeting, Mr. Kim told Mr. Chung that North Korea would agree to return if the Americans showed respect for North Korea.

The South Koreans have not made details of their proposal public, but South Korean press reports have described a package of energy and financial aid. Shortly after his visit to Pyongyang, Mr. Chung traveled to Washington to brief officials on the offer and the North Korean response. He told Korean reporters that the Korean ideas were well received.

But in comments to reporters on Sunday, one senior official belittled the South Korean offer, calling it "the so-called significant proposal." Asked about it in a news conference Sunday, Ms. Rice said, "This has been a period of pretty intense diplomacy," but "I can't speak to any discussion of specifics." She did add, "I know the South Koreans have talked about helping the North Koreans with their energy needs."

North Korea appeared to take the South Korean offer seriously. Shortly after Mr. Chung left Pyongyang, North Korea asked the United States for a visa so that a Foreign Ministry official, Li Gun, could attend an academic conference in New York.

There he met with officials from the United States, Japan and South Korea. During that meeting, on the margins of the conference, Mr. Li said North Korea wanted another meeting to fix the terms and the date for the next round of talks.

That meeting came in Beijing on Saturday night.

Over a dinner of steak and cheesecake, Christopher Hill, an assistant secretary of state, and Kim Kye Gwan, North Korea's deputy foreign minister, agreed to hold the talks the week of July 25.

According to the senior administration official traveling with Ms. Rice, Mr. Hill told Mr. Kim that North Korea should finally respond to the proposal during the talks late this month, and Mr. Kim agreed.

"We look forward to hearing about their concerns," the official said. "I understand they think it was too front-loaded with demands. But what exactly do they feel was so front-loaded?"

A second official added: "It was a proposal, not a demand. They wanted heavy fuel right away. We wanted a strategic decision that they would disarm" before any reward was offered.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/11/international/asia/11assess.html?>

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## **China Key To New North Korea Talks**

*After more than a year, North Korea has agreed to rejoin six-party talks on its nuclear program the week of July 25.*

By Robert Marquand, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

BEIJING – For most of Kim Jong Il's reign in North Korea, relations between China and his isolated country have alternated between extreme suspicion and a grudging politeness based on mutual need.

The most intensive diplomacy between North Korea and China has taken place since Mr. Kim began to use his nuclear card two years ago. Now, as Kim agrees to rejoin the six-party talks in Beijing this month to discuss eliminating his nuclear-weapons program, many experts say that relations between the two states are ever more important.

China, in fact, has profited greatly from its role in the talks: It has drawn closer to both North and South Korea as a result of negotiations, while Washington has not.

Washington has counted heavily on China to persuade Kim to stop making a bomb - but in an international atmosphere in which the US is perceived to be bogged down in Iraq, China appears to have shifted its policy from "the nuclear problem in Korea, to the stabilization of North Korea," as Shin Sang Jin of Kwangwoon University in South Korea puts it.

Troubles between the two are longstanding, even if not well known. When the young Kim was brought to Beijing by his father, Kim Il Sung, in 1983, amid signals the son would take over the North one day - China didn't want a meeting. The 30 minutes finally accepted by Deng Xiaoping was secret. In serious communist states, dynastic rule is taboo - a point that China often made to the elder Kim. Nor was Deng impressed with the young Kim, say senior Chinese diplomats.

Fearing what his father often warned him of - creeping control of North Korea by China - Kim Jong Il has regularly purged military officers seen as too sympathetic to China. Beijing, for its part, practically shut off relations with North Korea after Kim took power in 1994. For the next seven years, only two low-ranking diplomats were sent to Pyongyang - and China accepted no important visitors from the North between 1991 and 1999, an extraordinary span, despite reports that Kim was seeking a meeting.

In recent months, US chief Asia diplomat Christopher Hill has reportedly pushed China to cut off its flow of oil to North Korea if Kim doesn't drop his program.

Such a step would involve a major commitment of political will, and a new strategic approach that seems out of keeping with the tone adopted by the Hu Jintao government. However, participation by the North in the upcoming talks could well forestall efforts to bring the North Korean case to the UN Security Council, something China has in the past passionately opposed.

"China can make or break North Korea," says Alexandre Mansourov of the Asia-Pacific Center, "But it is not in Beijing's interest to break. What China wants is a stable buffer between itself and US troops in the South."

Well-placed foreign sources in Beijing report that while it is unclear who has been paying Kim to participate in the nuclear talks, one of the six-party members "certainly" has been. It is generally regarded that only China and South Korea would offer Kim cash to participate.

Currently, relations between China and the North seem characterized by pragmatism, experts say, and this may be a relative improvement. Various phases of chill or warmth are often diplomatic or political window dressing.

However, it seems clear that the old days when the two were as close as "lips and teeth," the era after the Korean War and into the 1960s - are long gone. Old ties of loyalty, ideological comradeship, and leadership relations - all have dissipated during the Kim Jong Il era. Kim has been unable to get an official invitation to visit China, though he did visit unofficially in 2000 and 2001.

Yet relations appear to have been sensitive dating back decades. In the 1960s, Kim Il Sung sought help from Mao in making a nuclear device, according to Don Oberdorfer's book "Two Koreas." Mao did not want such a project on his border.

The senior Kim often played Moscow off Beijing. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao sanctioned a campaign to criticize Kim Il Sung for this policy. Posters began to appear around Beijing describing the senior Kim as a barnyard animal "who sits on two chairs."

According to Krzysztof Darewicz, a Polish journalist who lived in Pyongyang during the transition to the younger Kim, the father calculated that his son's succession would cut down on factional infighting. The senior Kim was also deeply distrustful of China, and felt that without a strong family figure at the helm, it would be relatively easy for Beijing to "in time, exert its own will and influence in Pyongyang," he says.

Hu Jintao, then a Standing Committee member, visited Kim Il Sung in Pyongyang in 1993, but only two minor visits took place after that - until President Jiang Zemin visited in 2001, nearly a decade after he took power.

China has urged economic reforms for North Korea; that was the main message from Beijing under Jiang. It is thought that the Bush agreement with China to cooperate on the North was made with Mr. Jiang when he visited Bush's ranch two years ago, not long before he left power. President Hu will visit the US in September.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0712/p01s04-woap.html>

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