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USA Today
October 27, 2005
Pg. 7

U.S., North Korea See A Bit Of A Thaw

By Barbara Slavin, USA Today

WASHINGTON — The United States and North Korea are making goodwill gestures two weeks before a new round of talks on North Korea's nuclear program.

The Bush administration has given permission to a North Korean diplomat to give a rare speech Thursday on Capitol Hill, a week after North Korea hosted New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. North Korea has promised flexibility on demands for a civilian nuclear reactor in return for giving up its arms program, Richardson said.

Along with Richardson, American tourists were given visas to visit North Korea this month to mark the 60th anniversary of the defeat of Japan in World War II and the founding of the country's ruling Communist Party.

The gestures could improve the chances for progress at talks next month.

North Korea has enough fuel for nine nuclear bombs, according to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a think tank.

Diplomats from North and South Korea, China, the United States, Russia and Japan agreed Sept. 19 that North Korea would abandon its nuclear program in return for energy aid, security guarantees and a promise of better

relations with the United States. Many aspects of the agreement were vague, however, and final details need to be settled in future talks.

Han Song Ryol, the North's deputy ambassador to the U.N., will speak today on the "road to peace in the Korean Peninsula," says Sang Joo Kim, executive vice president of the Institute for Corean-American Studies, a group that sponsors forums on U.S.-Asian affairs.

The State Department says the last time a North Korean official came to Washington was in June 2004, during a previous round of nuclear talks. North Korean diplomats must get permission to travel more than 25 miles outside New York, where they represent their country at the U.N., because the United States and North Korea lack formal diplomatic relations.

No one is predicting a breakthrough when negotiations resume, probably on Nov. 7.

Adam Ereli, a State Department spokesman, said the United States was "realistic" about the challenges ahead. He said, however, that at least "we have a basis on which to build" after talks in August and September led to an agreement on the broad outlines for a deal.

Ereli said the Pentagon provided a plane to send Richardson to Pyongyang as a courtesy to a former Cabinet officer. There Richardson, who has dealt with the North Koreans in the past as a congressman, U.N. ambassador and Energy secretary, said he told top officials that "they should take advantage" of new U.S. flexibility.

North Korea extended the invitation to Richardson in May. He said he coordinated the timing with the State Department.

U.S. diplomats, led by Assistant Secretary of State Chris Hill, now have leeway to negotiate directly with North Korea. However, Jack Pritchard, a former U.S. negotiator with the North Koreans, said he was "concerned that Hill's leash is not as long or as elastic as I hoped."

At the same time the Bush administration is negotiating, it is trying to limit North Korea's sales of missiles and other dangerous arms.

Richardson, in a telephone interview, said he pressed the North Koreans to stop activities at Yongbyon, where it has a nuclear reactor and reprocessing plant, return to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and allow U.N. arms inspectors to return.

http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2005-10-26-us-nkorea_x.htm

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Washington Post

October 28, 2005

Pg. 16

World Leaders Condemn Iranian's Call To Wipe Israel 'Off The Map'

By Mary Jordan and Karl Vick, Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Oct. 27 -- Leaders around the world on Thursday condemned a call by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that Israel be "wiped off the map," and a top Iranian official said that mass demonstrations in his country on Friday would rebuff the rising criticism from abroad.

"I have never come across a situation of the president of a country saying they want to . . . wipe out another country," British Prime Minister Tony Blair said at a summit outside London of the 25 leaders of the European Union's member states.

Blair said Ahmadinejad's comment was "completely and totally unacceptable."

In a joint statement, the E.U. leaders "condemned in the strongest terms" the Iranian president's call, saying it "will cause concern about Iran's role in the region and its future intentions." President Jacques Chirac of France told reporters that Ahmadinejad risked Iran "being left on the outside of other nations."

Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, in Israel, called the Iranian president's statement "unacceptable."

The statement was widely reported in the Arab world; leaders there reacted for the most part with silence. Most Arab countries have no diplomatic relations with Israel. But the Palestinian negotiator, Saeb Erekat, said, according to the Associated Press: "We have recognized the state of Israel and we are pursuing a peace process with Israel, and . . . we do not accept the statements of the president of Iran. This is unacceptable."

U.S. and European leaders have grown increasingly worried about the bellicose attitude of Iran at a time when it is pursuing a nuclear program that they have said may be intended to produce a nuclear weapon.

The E.U. has engaged in contentious and so far unsuccessful negotiations with Iran to try to persuade it to drop parts of the program that could be used to make bombs. Iran says its nuclear program is entirely peaceful and aimed at generating electric power for its citizens.

Iran's foreign minister said mass public demonstrations were planned for Friday in Tehran, the Iranian capital, to show support for the country's president. Manouchehr Mottaki was quoted on state-run television saying that the "Zionist regime is illegitimate" and that "the world will see the anger of the Islamic world against this regime." Ahmadinejad made his remarks in a speech Wednesday to 4,000 students attending a conference called "The World Without Zionism." He was quoting the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 Islamic revolution that established Iran's theocratic government and made fierce opposition to Israel a matter of political orthodoxy. Ahmadinejad also called the 1948 establishment of Israel, on territory also claimed by Palestinians, the fall of "the last trench of Islam."

Virulent anti-Israel sentiment remains strong in the hard-line circles from which Ahmadinejad emerged to win the presidential election in June. "Israel Should Be Wiped Off the Map" was the slogan draped on a Shahab-3 ballistic missile during a military parade in Tehran a month ago. Six of the missiles, which, with a 1,250 mile range, could reach Israel, were the high point of the parade. "We Will Trample America Under Our Feet," read another banner. The landslide that carried Ahmadinejad into office was grounded in promises of economic improvement, tapping broad public appetite for social justice similar to the sentiments that fueled the 1979 overthrow of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Since taking office in August, Ahmadinejad has moved to share the wealth from Iran's oil exports, offering legislation to establish what officials call a "love fund" to distribute cash to newlyweds.

But as a foreign policy novice, he has stumbled frequently in dealings with the outside world. The strident tone of a speech he delivered to the U.N. General Assembly in September alienated many of the diplomats who Iran was trying to influence before a possible vote on its nuclear program.

"He has not yet moved from a leader of an ideological faction to the presidency of the country," said Nasser Hadian-Jazy, a political science professor at Tehran University who has known Ahmadinejad since childhood.

By contrast, Ahmadinejad's predecessor, Mohammad Khatami, was known for erudition and for softening Iran's international image with frequent calls for "a dialogue between civilizations."

At Friday prayers last week, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's supreme leader, appeared to subtly distance himself from the new president and at the same time urged Iranians to give his government time "to get on with it."

"It is a short period of time since the establishment of the government, some two or two-and-a-half months," Khamenei said. He then continued on to attack Israel and the "war-mongering and extremist American administration, attempting to create an empire and to dominate the world."

In Tel Aviv, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres said: "I don't see such a crazy declaration being made by a head of state, a member of the United Nations. . . . It is unbearable. He cannot remain a member."

In Washington, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said Iran must "start behaving in a responsible manner as a member of the international community, cease its pursuit of nuclear weapons under the cover of a civilian nuclear program, end its support for terror, and stop oppressing its own people."

Vick reported from Istanbul. Correspondent Scott Wilson in Jerusalem and staff writer Robin Wright in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/10/27/AR2005102702221.html>

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Washington Times

October 29, 2005

Pg. 6

Nuclear Talks Shape Hu Visit

By Lindsay Beck, Reuters News Agency

BEIJING -- Chinese President Hu Jintao got a bear hug from North Korean leader Kim Jong-il after arriving in North Korea yesterday on a visit that underscores China's role in persuading Pyongyang to dismantle its nuclear programs.

The trip, ahead of a new round of six-party nuclear talks, follows a flurry of Chinese diplomatic overtures to North Korea -- Vice Prime Minister Wu Yi met with Mr. Kim earlier this month, and Li Bin, a Chinese diplomat responsible for Korean affairs, went last week.

"Hu ... voiced his belief that under Kim's leadership, the DPRK people will score greater accomplishment in exploring a development path suited to its own conditions and building a strong and prosperous country," Xinhua news agency said of his statement delivered at Pyongyang's airport.

Thousands of people, many waving fake flowers and dressed in colorful traditional Korean robes, lined the streets, dancing, singing and chanting slogans as Mr. Hu's motorcade wove through the capital. It was his first visit there as president.

The United States has put pressure on China to try to use its position as North Korea's closest ally and key aid provider to keep the Stalinist country at the table and ensure some results at the next round of six-party talks. "Hu Jintao's visit is in part to encourage a breakthrough at this very important moment," said Shi Yinhong of the People's University of China. "China wants North Korea to show more flexibility."

The visit may encourage North Korea to make concessions at the fifth round of talks likely to open in Beijing on Nov. 8. Mr. Kim reaffirmed to Mr. Hu that his country would participate in the talks.

The challenge now is to begin implementing a landmark joint statement agreed upon at the last session in September.

North Korea agreed in the document to dismantle its nuclear weapons programs and renew compliance with the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in exchange for aid and better ties with Washington and Tokyo.

Yesterday, Mr. Kim called the document "positive," Chinese state television reported, but tough questions remain over the timing of concessions.

There are also disagreements among the six parties -- North and South Korea, the United States, Japan, Russia and host China -- over Pyongyang's demands for a light-water reactor to generate atomic energy.

Taking a tough stance, a North Korean diplomat told South Korea's Yonhap news agency on Thursday that the North would disclose no details of its nuclear programs and atomic weapons until the light-water reactor had been built for it.

Han Song-ryol, deputy chief of the North's U.N. mission, added that Pyongyang had no interest in Seoul's offer of electricity if it was meant as an alternative to the reactor.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20051029-010447-1267r.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

October 30, 2005

Vast Chemical Dumping Found At Sea

Records show the Army's former practice of disposing of lethal weapons in the ocean was far more extensive than once thought.

By John Bull, Newport News Daily Press

NORFOLK, Va. — A clam-dredging operation off the coast of New Jersey last summer pulled up an old artillery shell. The long-submerged World War I-era explosive was filled with a black, tar-like substance.

Bomb-disposal technicians from Dover Air Force Base in Delaware were brought in to dismantle the shell, and they found it was filled with mustard gas in solid form. Three of the technicians were injured.

What was long feared by the few military officials in the know had come to pass: Chemical weapons that the Army dumped at sea decades ago had finally ended up on shore in the United States. Although it has long been known that some chemical weapons were dumped in the ocean, records obtained by the Daily Press show that the previously classified weapons-dumping program was far more extensive than had been suspected.

The Army now admits it secretly dumped 64 million pounds of nerve and mustard gas agent in the sea, along with 400,000 chemical-filled bombs, landmines and rockets, and more than 500 tons of radioactive waste either tossed overboard or packed into the holds of scuttled vessels.

A Daily Press investigation also found:

*These weapons virtually ring the country, concealed off the coast of at least 11 states — six on the East Coast, two on the Gulf Coast, and California, Hawaii and Alaska. Few, if any, state officials have been informed of their existence.

*The chemical agents could pose a hazard for generations. The Army has examined a few of its 26 dump zones, but not in the last 30 years.

*The Army can't say exactly where all of the weapons were dumped from World War II to 1970. Army records are sketchy or missing, or were destroyed.

*More dumpsites probably exist. The Army hasn't reviewed WW I-era records, when ocean dumping of chemical weapons was common.

"We do not claim to know where they all are," said William Brankowitz, a deputy project manager in the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency and a leading authority on the Army's chemical weapons dumping.

"We don't want to be cavalier at all and say this stuff was exposed to water and is OK," he said. "It can last for a very, very long time."

A drop of nerve agent can kill within a minute. When released in the ocean, it lasts up to six weeks, killing every organism it touches before breaking down into its nonlethal chemical components. Mustard gas forms a concentrated, encrusted gel in seawater that lasts for at least five years.

Sea-dumped chemical weapons may be slowly leaking from decades of saltwater corrosion, resulting in a time-delayed release of deadly chemicals and an unforeseeable environmental impact.

The Army's secret ocean-dumping program spanned at least three decades, from 1944 to 1970. The dumped weapons were deemed to be unneeded surplus. They were hazardous to transport, expensive to store, too dangerous to bury and difficult to destroy.

In the early 1970s, the Army publicly admitted it had dumped chemical weapons off the U.S. coast. Congress banned the practice in 1972. Three years later, the U.S. signed an international treaty prohibiting ocean disposal of chemical weapons.

Only now have Army reports come to light that show how much was dumped, what kind of chemical weapons they were, when they were thrown overboard, and rough nautical coordinates of where some are located. The reports contain bits and pieces of information on the Army's long-running ocean dumping program.

The reports were released to the Daily Press as part of the newspaper's investigation of offshore dumping.

"The perception at the time was the ocean is vast — it would absorb it," said Craig Williams, director of the Chemical Weapons Working Group in Kentucky, a grass-roots citizens group. "Certainly, it is insane in retrospect they would do it."

Based on the information available, the Army presumes most of the weapons are in very deep water and unlikely to jeopardize divers or commercial fishing operations that dredge the ocean bottom. But boaters, divers, fishermen and commercial seafood trawlers have no way to steer clear of the dumpsites, because the Army has put only one of its 26 known chemical weapons dumps on nautical charts, according to records kept by the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.

The impact of the chemical dumping has never been studied. Few scientists knew it was done, so studies of the decline in sea life have never focused on the possibility of leaking chemical weapons, officials said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/asection/la-na-chemweapons30oct30.1.7624417.story>

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Los Angeles Times

October 30, 2005

Chinese Visitor Gives A Boost To North Korea

The trip by the president of the nation's closest ally gives Pyongyang a chance to glorify itself, and shows that it is not completely isolated.

By Mark Magnier, Times Staff Writer

PYONGYANG, North Korea — North Korea's leader rarely greets visiting leaders at the airport. But when Chinese President Hu Jintao touched down for a three-day summit that ends today, Pyongyang pulled out all the stops.

Trailing North Korean leader Kim Jong Il on the tarmac at Pyongyang International Airport were the nation's prime minister and defense minister and dozens of other senior Communist Party leaders. Soldiers goose-stepped, and an honor guard fired a 21-gun salute.

The visit by Pyongyang's closest ally has provided the regime with an opportunity to glorify its role and reinforce many of the core themes its people hear from birth.

Extensive coverage on state-run television and newspapers has hammered home the message that this powerful neighbor, allied in socialism, acknowledges the importance of its relationship with North Korea and recognizes the greatness of North Korea's leadership, past and present.

It has also underscored that Pyongyang is not internationally isolated, and that the Chinese-North Korean friendship forged in battle against the Japanese and Americans more than half a century ago will remain strong at a time when the country is under pressure from all sides.

A well-briefed Hu showed proper respect for the touchstones of North Korean political power. After a bearhug with Kim at the airport, he stopped and bowed to each of the three military services and greeted leaders of North Korea's Workers' Party. He also placed a wreath in honor of the country's late founder, Kim Il Sung, who is afforded near-godlike status here.

Behind the scenes, however, Hu was expected to deliver a pointed message concerning nuclear weaponry: that China is North Korea's biggest donor and doesn't tend to ask for much in return, but that it now wants North Korea's cooperation in six-nation talks aimed at dismantling Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

"China's way of dealing with North Korea in public is to try and be nice and smooth," said Chu Shulong, a professor of international relations at Beijing's Qinghua University. "But in private, we make the context very clear."

It would be in China's interest to help pave the way for a nuclear-free Korean peninsula. Further progress would also help its relations with Washington, strained by China's rising trade surplus and slow progress in freeing up its currency.

The next round of nuclear talks is expected to take place the week of Nov. 7, and is aimed at fleshing out a deal signed in September under which North Korea would dismantle its nuclear program in return for economic assistance, security guarantees and greater diplomatic recognition. The talks involve the two Koreas, China, the U.S., Japan and Russia.

"Hu Jintao knows this is a very crucial stage for the six-party talks," Chu said. "We've now reached a basic agreement. Our experience with North Korea over the past decade shows that implementation is much more difficult than reaching an agreement."

North Korea often gives contradictory signals. In a statement issued a day after signing the September deal, it added conditions, including construction of a civilian nuclear reactor opposed by Washington.

On Thursday, a North Korean diplomat said in an interview with South Korea's Yonhap news agency that Pyongyang would not disclose any details about its nuclear program before receiving the reactor. And Saturday, North Korea said talks were in jeopardy unless Washington dropped its pressure over human rights.

But state media Saturday also quoted Kim Jong Il as saying his country would participate in the next round of talks. "North Korea is committed to the denuclearization of the [Korean] peninsula," he was quoted as saying on Chinese television.

China is also likely to dangle more aid if North Korea cooperates. China recently gave North Korea a glass factory, named the Dae An Friendship Factory, which the two leaders visited Saturday.

This year, North Korea's rice and corn harvests are looking up, and there appear to be more consumer Chinese goods in the hard-currency and state-run shops, although North Koreans are fond of complaining about their low quality.

China's vibrant economy and rapidly growing exports, even to isolated North Korea, underscore the very different paths taken by the two socialist countries.

North Korea has been selective in interpreting China's success. The Friday edition of the Rodong Sinmun, a workers' paper, devoted a full page to China's economy but attributed the success in part to Chinese people donating money to their government. North Korea has long urged its people on to greater heights through self-sacrifice and patriotic acts in the face of economic hardship.

China is reluctant to apply too much economic or political pressure on North Korea, however, wary that political instability might result in millions of refugees crossing their 850-mile shared border.

"I assume Hu will read them the riot act," said a foreign diplomat in the region. "But Kim Jong Il is banking on the fact that Hu Jintao won't push too hard."

China also has an interest in North Korean minerals, coal and other resources. Chinese investment in North Korea's iron ore industry has reportedly risen several-fold in the last year.

Government officials said the ceremony for Hu was the biggest for an arriving dignitary since then-South Korean President Kim Dae Jung visited Pyongyang in 2000.

Men in suits and women in traditional *chima chogori* national dress lined the 15-mile route from the airport, waving red, pink and purple cloth flowers distributed by their cooperatives. Flags of the two countries decorated the route and banners proclaimed strong ties as the two leaders stopped their stretch Mercedes limousine behind a phalanx of motorcycles to accept bouquets.

"Koreans are very happy to have the Chinese president come," said Ryu Ok Hui, 41, a guide at a Korean War museum in Pyongyang, rapping a red-tipped pointer on an exhibit labeled "American Atrocities." "This visit is very good."

Ryu was one of the tens of thousands of North Koreans who lined the streets to greet the Chinese leader.

"A warm welcome to Korea," one banner read. "Long live the solidarity between Korea and China."

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-norkor30oct30,1,7894513.story>

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USA Today.com

Science & Space

Posted 10/30/2005 9:41 PM

Can billions of dollars build biodefenses?

By Charles J. Hanley, Associated Press

CAIRO — The bacteria lie dormant, freeze-dried in sealed ampules, in a refrigerator on a teeming university campus beside the Nile. They're among Earth's most common germs — clostridia perfringens, a cause of food poisoning, a specimen for research. But this pathogen can also be a weapon: Iraqi scientists worked for years to mobilize this "Agent G" for Saddam Hussein's wars.

In an America nervous over bioterrorism, new laws clamp controls on clostridia and other "select agents," demanding registrations, reporting, background checks on scientists. Egypt, in a region roiled by terrorism, has no

such laws, although the bacteria at Ain Shams University are kept in a locked refrigerator, accessible by one authorized technician, in a laboratory protected by foolproof electronic keys, said Nabil Magdoub, microbe collection director.

"We have to be alert," he said, but not "unreasonable."

After all, Magdoub said, any hospital is also rife with dangerous microorganisms. "The American people have become so sensitive towards a lot of normal, ordinary matters," he said, echoing a sentiment heard increasingly in America, where microbiologists fear that ever-stricter controls might stifle their ability to exchange samples and conduct research.

Four years after the Sept. 11 attacks, terrorist use of disease agents to inflict mass casualties looms more and more as the bottom line of America's sum of all fears. Tom Ridge, former homeland security secretary, has said authorities don't believe terror groups can build nuclear bombs, and so bioweapons become the greater threat.

"Anthrax is a concern," said Donald Van Duyn of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division. "You could do as much damage with anthrax and other substances" as with a nuclear bomb, the FBI analyst said in a Washington interview. One attack scenario now used in U.S. planning sees more than 300,000 people in an American city exposed to aerosolized anthrax bacteria spread by terrorists via a truck sprayer, with more than 13,000 dying.

The fear is reflected in the U.S. budget's bottom line as well: Spending on civilian "biodefense" has leaped 18-fold since 2001, to \$7.6 billion this year. Project Bioshield, to develop bioterrorism countermeasures, awarded its first contract last November, \$877 million for 75 million doses of a new anthrax vaccine.

The anthrax scare began when someone mailed anthrax powder through the U.S. postal system in late 2001 and five people died. As a result, "I'd say we get five white-powder threats a week, people calling saying, 'I found white powder. What do I do?'" said Van Duyn.

Because of the high quality of those 2001 anthrax spores, however, experts believe the perpetrator, still at large, was not linked to foreign terrorists, but possibly to the U.S. government's own anthrax program. That research began decades back as an offensive weapons program, but is now considered defensive.

Even a terror group as well-financed and educated as Japan's Aum Shinrikyo, whose homemade sarin chemical agent killed 12 people in 1995, failed to isolate a virulent strain in four years' work on anthrax.

Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda also pursued anthrax in Afghanistan, captured documents showed. But it turned the job over to a Malaysian with a mere bachelor's degree in biology, U.S. investigators found. He, too, apparently failed to find a virulent strain — let alone a workable way to "weaponize" anthrax — before being arrested in 2001 after returning to Malaysia.

Drying and refining anthrax spores into particles readily inhaled, and then engineering equipment to spread them extensively, is a formidable challenge, U.S. congressional researchers noted in a 2004 study. "Even a Ph.D. microbiologist doesn't know the dark arts of putting microbes into weapons," said Jonathan Tucker, a bioweapons expert with California's Monterey Institute for International Studies.

It took Iraqi scientists five years to weaponize anthrax in the 1980s. Meanwhile, others in Saddam's secret program were working on "Agent G," U.N. arms inspectors later learned. The toxin-spewing *Clostridium perfringens*, applied to shrapnel, would kill the wounded by spreading virulent gas gangrene in their shrapnel wounds.

The Iraqis apparently never weaponized Agent G, however, and eventually reported to inspectors they had destroyed all 900 gallons they made.

Today *Clostridium perfringens* is one of 49 microbes on the U.S. list of "select agents" considered potential "severe threats." American laboratories handling the germ must register with the government, their personnel must undergo background checks, and transfers of cultures must be reported.

That list's length, from the toxin abrin to the plague bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, tells some that billions of U.S. dollars won't go far, since only three on the list — anthrax, smallpox and botulinum toxin — are being addressed so far in stepped-up biodefense research programs. And that's not counting any new genetically re-engineered microbes.

"What's going to come at you is impossible to predict," molecular biologist Roger Brent told a U.S. House panel in July.

Others question whether anything will come, in view of what Tucker calls al-Qaeda's "gap in technical sophistication." Milton Leitenberg, a bioweapons authority at the University of Maryland, contends the threat has been "systematically exaggerated."

Few question the need, however, to tighten security at microbe collections worldwide. Only 500 of the estimated 1,500 major repositories — which maintain, exchange and sell samples for research and diagnostics — subscribe to the World Federation for Culture Collections' voluntary security guidelines.

Magdoub's Egypt Microbial Culture Collection is one. But a team of Egyptian microbiologists noted in a recent study that smaller collections have proliferated in Egypt, which has no "biosecurity" laws. Team member Youssef Hamdi told The Associated Press all such resources should be combined in a single "National Culture Collection" to "insure purity, conservation and security."

Internationally, "the problem is the ones you don't know about," said Barry Kellman, director of the International Weapons Control Center at Chicago's DePaul University. Perhaps one-third of the world's microbe collections are poorly protected, he estimated.

The World Health Organization plans a "guidance document" next year promoting laboratory biosecurity, but only individual governments can enforce restrictions.

Kellman, meanwhile, agrees with those who doubt that al-Qaeda, "in a cave in Afghanistan," poses a bioterrorism threat. He worries more about a homegrown menace, asking, "What if Ted Kaczynski" — America's notorious Unabomber — "had been a biology professor instead of a math professor?"

http://www.usatoday.com/tech/science/2005-10-30-bioterror-defenses_x.htm

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Arizona Daily Star (Tucson)

October 30, 2005

Pg. 1

Terrorists Inept At Waging War With Chemicals

By Charles J. Hanley, Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan - After the warehouse raid in northern Jordan, the word from authorities horrified the people of Amman.

Terrorists linked to al-Qaida had assembled a fearsome array of chemicals and planned a bombing that would send a 2-mile-wide "poison cloud" over this Middle East capital, killing as many as 80,000 people, military prosecutors said.

Osama bin Laden's foot soldiers had finally concocted a weapon of mass destruction.

A year later, in the hard light of scientific scrutiny, that sinister scenario looks more fictional than factual.

"Eighty thousand! That would have been like Hiroshima. And that was an atomic bomb," says Samih Khreis, one of the alleged plotters' lawyers.

The defense attorneys aren't alone in scoffing at the "WMD" claim. International experts checking the suspects' supposed list of chemicals - from the industrial compound ammonium to the explosive nitroglycerin - say that either the defendants or the Jordanian authorities, or both, had little inkling about the makings of a chemical weapon.

The poison cloud of Amman is one more dubious episode in the story of the terrorist quest for doomsday arms, a dark vision that has become an axiom of today's counterterrorist strategy. Four years into the global war on terror, half the Americans surveyed this summer said they worry "a lot" about the possibility of such a WMD attack, according to the U.S. polling firm Public Agenda.

Amid all the warnings, boasts and chilling tales, however, the daunting difficulties of fielding such weapons usually go unmentioned - along with al-Qaida's glaring lack of expertise and stable home base, the unreliability of Internet "formulas," and the progress made worldwide in locking down the raw materials of the most destructive weapons.

Mass-casualty weapons

Concerns emerged in the 1990s when the Soviet Union's collapse left nuclear and other arms vulnerable to theft. Worries grew as "recipes" for mass-casualty weapons flashed around the Internet. In 1998, al-Qaida leader bin Laden told Time magazine that acquiring such arms to defend Muslims "is a religious duty." Three years later in Afghanistan, the U.S. military found al-Qaida documents, crude equipment and other evidence of chemical and biological experimentation.

Al-Qaida's intent is clear, says a key U.S. intelligence analyst.

"The intent is there and you can see it in the 'fatwas' justifying the use" of WMD, Donald Van Duyn of the FBI's Counterterrorism Division said in a Washington interview.

But Amman's story is one of many exaggerated threats or ill-conceived plans. Among others:

*British police last year arrested eight people on suspicion of plotting a bombing that would spread osmium tetroxide, a dangerous corrosive compound. But this volatile chemical would have burned up in any explosion, scientists say.

*The long-jailed Jose Padilla, an American al-Qaida member accused of planning a radioactive "dirty bomb" in the United States, is said by U.S. officials to have hoped to use uranium. But uranium has low radioactivity, and would have had no more impact than lead in a bomb, scientists note.

*Eight Algerian and Libyan defendants accused of conspiracy to manufacture chemical weapons were freed in London last April after authorities acknowledged tests showed a substance found in one of their apartments was not highly lethal ricin, as earlier alleged. The plant extract, effective as a poison dealt to individuals, was long ago dismissed by military arms-makers as an impractical mass-casualty weapon.

*American WMD specialists in Iraq reported that insurgents there last year recruited a Baghdad chemist to make the blistering agent mustard, a chemical weapon developed in World War I. They said he had the right ingredients, but he couldn't produce the compound.

Nerve agent used in Japan

The only known terrorist use of a chemical weapon occurred in 1995 in the Tokyo subway system, when Aum Shinrikyo cult members punctured plastic bags of sarin, unleashing nerve-agent vapor that felled thousands of commuters.

The cult, including scientists, is believed to have spent millions of dollars on the demanding, dangerous production process, but came up with only impure sarin. It killed 12 people - hardly a mass-fatality terror attack, specialists point out.

"Regardless of what people say, this is very difficult to do, to inflict mass casualties with chemical or biological weapons," said Jonathan Tucker, an authority on unconventional arms with California's Monterey Institute of International Studies. "One really needs large quantities."

Dr. Robert Hendrickson, Oregon toxicologist, calculates that terrorists would need 1,900 pounds of sarin - more than 200 gallons - to kill half the people in a typical open-air baseball stadium. So much liquid, with dispersal devices, would be extremely difficult to produce and to conceal.

Thousands of tons of sarin and VX nerve agent already exist in old U.S., Russian and other military arsenals. But those weapons' potency has degraded and they're being destroyed under the 1997 treaty banning them. Security around the storage sites has been tightened since the Sept. 11, 2001, U.S. terror attacks.

Some analysts say the facts of chemistry may mean little in the end for those who want to terrorize populations - their threats to use chemicals are enough to frighten the public.

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Washington Times

October 30, 2005

Pg. B4

Understanding Pyongyang's Psyche

By James G. Zumwalt

Efforts to reach an agreement with the North Koreans to terminate their nuclear weapons program again have hit a snag. While an agreement among all six parties to the talks was reached last month, within 24 hours after signing the document, Pyongyang, unsurprisingly, announced a contrary interpretation. The unsuccessful outcome of any agreement into which Pyongyang enters stems, in part, from the North Korean psyche -- one devoid of truth, one committed to garnering prestige for its leader, Kim Jong Il, and one seeking to maximize Pyongyang's return at the other side's expense.

As one who has traveled to North Korea 10 times, I came to realize firsthand my hosts were incapable of confronting truth, even as it stares them in the face.

Visiting Pyongyang, one cannot help but notice the most prominent feature on the city's landscape. Downtown stands an unfinished hotel, soaring more than one hundred stories high, in the shape of a narrow pyramid. When I first observed the building in 1994, not only was it unoccupied, there were not even signs of construction activity to complete it. Despite what was obvious, I was informed the hotel was still under construction. In making my last trip to Pyongyang 10 years later, I still noted no progress but, once again, was informed the hotel was under construction. What my hosts refused to acknowledge was it would never be finished -- for North Korean building design errors resulted in windows on higher floors popping out. But, rather than admit this or seek foreign engineering assistance, the North Koreans insisted on denying the truth. (I often wonder which will be the first to collapse in Pyongyang -- the hotel or the regime; my fear is it will ultimately be the hotel.)

The North Korean psyche in furthering the prestige of Kim Jong Il has been evident over the years. Five years ago, following a visit to the U.S. by a high-ranking North Korean official, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright traveled to Pyongyang to meet with Kim Jong Il. These visits gave new hope to Americans that a rapprochement -- after decades of glaring at each other across the DMZ -- might be possible. But in the final analysis, the visits only served to further Kim Jong Il's status at home, while the U.S. gained nothing for its efforts.

Earlier in 2000, South Korean President Kim Dae-jung had made an historic visit to Pyongyang as well, to meet with Kim Jong Il in an effort to improve relations between the two Koreas. The meeting improved the North Korean leader's image in the eyes of the international community. The agreement reached by the two governments beforehand, however, provided there would be two meetings between these leaders -- the first in Pyongyang with a follow-up meeting in Seoul. The second meeting has yet to take place as the North Korean psyche finds a reciprocal

visit unnecessary since "the mountain has already come to Muhammad." (It should be noted, although unknown at the time, Seoul paid Pyongyang hundreds of millions of dollars for Kim Jong Il to agree to the meetings.) Two months ago, the North Koreans sent up a trial balloon, suggesting a willingness to remove what has served as an irritant between Washington and Pyongyang for 37 years. In 1968, in a brazen violation of international law, the North Koreans seized the virtually unarmed U.S. spy ship Pueblo as it sailed just outside that country's territorial waters. One US sailor was killed and, after 11 months of captivity, the remaining 82-man crew was released -- although the Pueblo still remains in North Korean hands. Pyongyang has now let it be known the vessel (the first American warship captured since 1807) could be returned to the U.S. in return for an official visit by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Once again, Pyongyang seeks to gain prestige for its leader by having "the mountain come to Muhammad" in return for little of consequence by the North Koreans.

U.S. negotiators have a daunting task ahead of them in reaching an agreement with a government devoid of truth and good faith, that looks to strip assets from any agreement it enters, leaving behind liabilities, and that seeks only to enhance the prestige of its leader at the expense of the other side's shattered hopes for peace.

Realistically, such a North Korean psyche leaves the U.S. with but three options: (1) Concede Pyongyang's right to continue production of nuclear weapons; (2) Reach an agreement so detailed in verification and monitoring terms that even the North Koreans -- with no intention of abiding by it anyway -- would not sign it; or (3) Take a more aggressive course to force discontinuation of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons program.

Unfortunately, absent a regime change, options (1) and (3) may be the only viable ones -- with the only decision whether we deal with the threat sooner versus later.

James G. Zumwalt, a Marine veteran of the Persian Gulf and Vietnam wars, is a contributor to The Washington Times.

<http://www.washtimes.com/commentary/20051029-102314-6167r.htm>

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New York Times

October 31, 2005

U.S. Nuclear Deal With India Criticized By G.O.P. In Congress

By Joel Brinkley

WASHINGTON, Oct. 30 - Senior Republicans in Congress are angry with the Bush administration for proceeding with a deal to help India build civilian nuclear power plants without involving Congress so far, especially given that Congress will have to change one or more laws to make the deal viable.

"As it stands, the situation is both strange and unusual in that the Indian authorities know more about this important proposal than we in Congress," Representative Henry J. Hyde of Illinois, chairman of the House International Relations Committee, complained last week in an unusual public rebuke of the administration by a loyal Republican. Republican aides said several members of Congress were outraged. Recently, the Republican chairmen and senior Democrats on both the Senate and House foreign affairs committees wrote to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, urging her in atypically sharp language "to begin substantive discussions with our respective committees as soon as possible." The stated concern is procedural, but behind it lies a larger unease about bypassing nonproliferation rules for India, where "we still don't have transparency," as a Senate aide put it.

R. Nicholas Burns, the under secretary of state for political affairs, is negotiating the deal with India. In an interview, he said he had taken pains in recent days to explain to senior members of Congress that, on a recent trip to India, all he did was explain to the Indians their specific obligations and try to work out a timetable for fulfilling them.

Congress will not be asked to take any action until next year, after India has begun to act. As a result, "we feel like we are just beginning with Congress," Mr. Burns said. "We understand completely that it can't happen without Congressional authorization."

India developed a nuclear weapons program in secret over several decades and then startled the world when it conducted an underground test in 1998. A 1978 law forbids the provision of nuclear-energy assistance to nations with nuclear weapons. Congress will therefore have to act to make the administration's deal possible.

"There may be a myriad of laws that have some relevance," said Andy Fisher, spokesman for Senator Richard G. Lugar, the Indiana Republican who is chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee.

Mr. Burns said he would tell Congress that the administration would propose legislation next year to address all the problems raised by the agreement with India. Even with the concerns, some in Congress have offered conditional support for the nuclear-power deal, part of a larger "strategic partnership" agreement signed by President Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in July.

"India has, in effect, agreed to an international commitment not to test" nuclear weapons again, said Representative Tom Lantos of California, who is the senior Democrat on the International Relations Committee.

Still, administration officials acknowledge that they may face an uphill battle convincing Congress. If that proves true, India may find that it is the biggest loser in the debate over Iran's nuclear program.

Shortly after India voted in a Sept. 24 meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency in favor of referring Iran to the United Nations Security Council because of its nuclear program, Iranian officials announced that they would cancel a \$21 billion deal to build a natural-gas pipeline to India. The Iranians have backed away from that in part, but a senior Indian official said the Iranians had made it clear that they would cancel the deal if India voted against Iran again when the issue comes up for a second vote before the nuclear agency in late November.

Indian and American officials say India's leaders have assured Washington they will in fact vote again to refer Iran to the Security Council, if Iran does not stop enriching uranium and return to negotiations over its nuclear program. Bush administration officials, who had opposed the Iran-India pipeline deal, countered that if Iran did cancel it, the United States offer to help India build nuclear power plants would fill that energy gap. But the support needed from Congress is far from certain.

India's civilian and military nuclear programs are commingled. In New Delhi this month, Mr. Burns informed Indian officials that they would have to begin separating the military and civilian programs before the administration would submit the agreement to Congress - "a very complex, very difficult and very time-consuming process," he said.

Some Indian officials reacted with consternation and dismay, and there were angry recriminations from government coalition partners and opposition parties. As an example, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, a state president of the main opposition party, complained last week that the government was "pawning" the nation's autonomy.

A senior Indian official said India was proceeding with the separation project nonetheless. He declined to be identified under his government's rules.

The agreement with Washington also requires India to institute stringent new nonproliferation rules and procedures. India enacted an export-control law last spring. But doubts about India's abilities and intentions underlie much of the Congressional concern, despite India's relatively clean record in this area.

In testimony before Mr. Hyde's committee on Wednesday, David Albright, president of the Institute for Science and International Security, warned, "With a weak and poorly enforced export-control system, Indian companies could become major suppliers to the nuclear weapons programs of adversaries of the United States, in some cases using technology which the United States originally provided."

Under the agreement, India would allow inspection of its civilian nuclear-power programs by the International Atomic Energy Agency. But its military programs, the more likely source of contraband material, would remain secret.

"We're not talking about a perfect world here," Mr. Burns said. "We can continue to isolate India and have no impact. Or, we can do what we're doing: engage India, work to bring it into compliance with international nonproliferation standards and know that all the civilian facilities are inspected.

"That," he said, "is a good deal for the U.S."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/31/politics/31diplo.html>

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New York Times

October 31, 2005

Chinese Upbeat After Talks With North Korea

By Joseph Kahn

BEIJING, Oct. 30 - The North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, has told President Hu Jintao of China that he is committed to ending the North's nuclear weapons program and that he will push forward with multinational negotiations on the matter soon, Chinese officials said Sunday.

The upbeat assessment of the nuclear talks was issued shortly after Mr. Hu concluded a state visit to North Korea, his first since becoming China's top leader in 2002. Mr. Hu promised during the visit to provide aid to neighboring North Korea's struggling economy "within China's means."

Wang Jiarui, chief of the Chinese Communist Party's international department, said that it was difficult to forecast the results of a new round a nuclear talks, but that both sides intended to carry out a framework agreement that North Korea signed with the United States, South Korea, Japan, Russia and China in September. The talks are expected to resume in early November.

"I am no fortuneteller, but from my observations we have reason to believe that the fifth round of talks will be held on schedule and will lead to results," said Mr. Wang, who helped arrange Mr. Hu's visit.

In September, six nations signed a communiqué in which North Korea made a commitment to ending its nuclear weapons program in exchange for diplomatic, security and economic benefits. The accord is a delicately worded document that leaves the most delicate issues of timing, inspections and the delivery of aid for future negotiations. Shortly after it signed the agreement, North Korea contested the American interpretation of what North Korea had committed itself to do, and said it would not move toward nuclear disarmament until the United States and other countries provided it with a new light-water nuclear reactor. In the text of the agreement, the other five countries had promised only to consider North Korea's demand for a light-water reactor at some stage.

More recently, North Korea has taken a softer line and signaled its willingness to resume talks based on the earlier agreement.

Mr. Wang avoided answering a question about whether the light-water reactor would be an obstacle in the November round, but reiterated China's view that the six parties were making slow but steady progress and that North Korea had not sought to back out of its earlier promises.

"Both sides reiterated their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the Korean nuclear issue by dialogue," Mr. Wang said.

Mr. Hu's visit to North Korea was the first by a Chinese leader since his predecessor, Jiang Zemin, made the trip in 2001. While China had not publicly linked a visit by Mr. Hu to progress in the six-party talks, an earlier trip by him was postponed last year at a time of concern that North Korea was refusing to engage in serious discussions about its nuclear program.

China has energetically served as host of the nuclear talks and has prodded the participants, especially the United States and North Korea, to make concessions. China has opposed imposing diplomatic or military sanctions on North Korea, and has said many times that any solution to the nuclear problem must preserve peace and stability in the region.

Chinese officials often complain privately about the difficulty of dealing with North Korea. The two countries, which fought together against the United States in the Korean War, have not acted as close allies for many years. But China has worked to prevent an economic collapse of North Korea and has provided large amounts of food and energy aid.

Mr. Hu was given an elaborate reception in North Korea, reminiscent of the ideological warmth Communist brethren routinely displayed toward one another during the cold war. Tens of thousands of people lined the streets and waved banners to greet him, calling him a "friend emissary of the Chinese people."

Mr. Hu and Mr. Kim also discussed North Korea's economic troubles, Mr. Wang said. He said the Chinese delegation toured North Korean farms and was given a briefing on the country's efforts to revive its agriculture after several years of severe food shortages.

But he added that the industrial sector was still sluggish and that power and transportation woes had hobbled the overall economy.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/31/international/asia/31china.html>

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