



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 467, 29 November 2005

Articles & Other Documents:

[Defense Department helps secure former Soviet 'antiplague' sites](#)

[U.S. Says Tehran Is Pursuing Nuke Arms](#)

[Nixon Was Torn By Prospect Of Nuclear War, Papers Show](#)

[Atomic Agency Delays Action On Iran](#)

[Defending Nuclear Ambitions, Iranian President Attacks U.S.](#)

[Iran Offers N. Korea Oil For Nukes](#)

[Venezuela's Leader Covets A Nuclear Energy Program](#)

[Iran Seeks Nuclear Fuel Guarantee](#)

[U.S. Alters Nuclear Weapons Policy](#)

Welcome to the CPC Outreach Journal. As part of USAF Counterproliferation Center's mission to counter weapons of mass destruction through education and research, we're providing our government and civilian community a source for timely counterproliferation information. This information includes articles, papers and other documents addressing issues pertinent to US military response options for dealing with nuclear, biological and chemical threats and attacks. It's our hope this information resource will help enhance your counterproliferation issue awareness.

Established in 1998, the USAF/CPC provides education and research to present and future leaders of the Air Force, as well as to members of other branches of the armed services and Department of Defense. Our purpose is to help those agencies better prepare to counter the threat from weapons of mass destruction. Please feel free to visit our web site at www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/awc-cps.htm for in-depth information and specific points of contact. Please direct any questions or comments on CPC Outreach Journal to Jo Ann Eddy, CPC Outreach Editor, at (334) 953-7538 or DSN 493-7538. To subscribe, change e-mail address, or unsubscribe to this journal or to request inclusion on the mailing list for CPC publications, please contact Mrs. Eddy.

The following articles, papers or documents do not necessarily reflect official endorsement of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or other US government agencies. Reproduction for private use or commercial gain is subject to original copyright restrictions. All rights are reserved

GovExec.com
DAILY BRIEFING
November 23, 2005

Defense Department helps secure former Soviet 'antiplague' sites

By David Ruppe, [Global Security Newswire](#)

The Defense Department has been increasingly engaged in efforts to secure from proliferation dozens of former Soviet pathogen collection and research stations, a senior U.S. official said recently.

Still, most of the "antiplague system" institutes and regional and field stations across 11 former Soviet states lack sufficient safety and security and their scientists on average are poorly paid, a nongovernmental expert said.

The Pentagon has budgeted \$61 million for security at facilities in six countries in fiscal 2006, Andrew Weber, senior adviser for Cooperative Threat Reduction policy at the Office of Secretary of Defense, said this month at a panel discussion on the antiplague sites.

By comparison, the Defense Department provided only \$2 million toward the effort in 1998, he said.

"We have now a much more comprehensive program than when we started in the mid-1990s and we have an extraordinary team of experts both directly working for the DOD team, and other U.S. government agencies, and also in the NGO community," he said.

The annual amount significantly increased following the 2001 anthrax attacks in the United States, he said. Other U.S. and foreign agencies also assist in securing the facilities, he said.

Dual-Use

The antiplague system facilities, 88 sites established by czarist Russia and Soviet Union as a means of detecting, assessing and thwarting the spread of dangerous diseases and most still existing today, are viewed today as potential proliferation and public health threats.

Located in regions where many dangerous diseases such as anthrax, bubonic plague and tularemia are endemic, or through which exotic diseases might spread, some facilities also fed deadly pathogens into the Soviet Union's biological weapons program and continue to collect and retain such material.

While viewed a proliferation risk today, the stations with improvements could provide an effective network for early detection and prevention of the spread of infectious disease, though such activities have been decreasing due to insufficient funding, staff and equipment, experts say.

Security concerns regarding the facilities are described in a draft report prepared by the Monterey Institute's Center for Nonproliferation Studies that was funded by the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Problems identified included improperly stored samples, aging research facilities, weak or nonexistent security, and underpaid scientists with expertise in biological weapons-related work who might sell their expertise for cash.

U.S. funding, Weber said, supports physical security upgrades, biosafety improvements, modernization of research and storage equipment, consolidation of research and storage activities, and collaborative research programs intended to engage former military scientists in peaceful work.

Assistance efforts have been under way for several years in Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia, and new programs began this year in Azerbaijan and Ukraine, he said.

He noted the program is funding in Georgia construction of a central, national reference laboratory, where all of the country's dangerous microorganism specimens will be relocated.

Collaborative activities are somewhat limited in Russia for lack of a U.S.-Russian government bilateral agreement, Weber said.

"We've made some progress but it's been difficult," he said. "We need an authorized executive agent from the central government so we ... can better meet Russian Federation priorities and better understand Russian Federation priorities at the government level," he said.

Concerns Persist

Despite efforts so far, much work needs to be done to secure antiplague system facilities, according to panel speaker Sonia Ben Ouagrham, co-author of the Monterey Institute study.

"One of the main proliferation threats is the risk of brain drain," she said.

Salaries of facility scientists now average from \$20 to \$100 per month, varying by country, Ben Ouagrham said.

The potential diversion of pathogens is another main threat, she said.

"Most of the facilities we visited have extensive collections of pathogens that are highly dangerous. These pathogens ... most of them have been isolated from nature. But in some cases they are highly virulent, naturally highly virulent, and antibiotic resistant. They also have pathogens that were engineered for BW [biological weapons] purposes during the Soviet times," she said.

"Very few of the facilities have a sufficient security system," she said, citing for instance insufficient personnel and upkeep of facilities.

Ben Ouagrham said the study's authors found no evidence of proliferation since the Soviet network broke apart. She said, though, that good information would be difficult to obtain because of poor security and record keeping, and perhaps because of facilities' interest in avoiding negative attention.

The Defense Department does not yet have programs in five of the former Soviet states with facilities - Moldova, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

Weber said he anticipates more U.S. funding in the future could go to securing the stations as work is completed on other Cooperative Threat Reduction programs.

"I think as some of the legacy programs, really high-ticket programs in the area of nuclear disarmament and nuclear security finish some of their major infrastructure investments ... in future years the portion of overall funding that goes to biological threat reduction will continue to increase," he said.

http://govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=32873&dcn=todaysnews

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

U.S. Says Tehran Is Pursuing Nuke Arms

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

U.S. intelligence agencies are convinced that Iran is working to build nuclear weapons in secret based on a confidential report produced last week by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and on information from a former Iranian opposition figure.

Administration officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity said the intelligence on the Iranian nuclear program is circumstantial, but includes information on the country's missile program and work on a nuclear payload-sized warhead for the Shahab-3 missile.

"In terms of Iran's pattern of behavior, it's a very clear picture that they are hiding and deceiving the world about their nuclear-arms program by claiming it is for peaceful purposes," one official said. "They have clearly lied, and they keep getting caught in one lie after another."

Documents from an Iranian laptop computer obtained from an Iranian source in 2004 are at the center of the intelligence case for Iran's nuclear-arms program.

The intelligence shows that from 2001 to 2003, Iran was working to configure the Shahab-3, a 620-mile-range mobile missile, to deliver a warhead that has all the physical characteristics of a nuclear warhead, in terms of its size and shape.

The documents show details about development work on nuclear weapons and design problems, but not all the papers are considered authentic.

However, the material reveals that the Iranians are involved in actual development work and not theoretical design. "It proves that there is something more than a physics program, but it doesn't prove that there are weapons already," one official said.

Officials familiar with the intelligence said the data is different from that nuclear weapons information that Iran obtained from the covert supply network headed by Pakistani Abdul Qadeer Khan. The network supplied uranium-enrichment technology to Libya, Iran and North Korea, and documents uncovered as part of the network in Libya included Chinese-language reports on how to make a small warhead that could be carried on a missile.

Intelligence agencies have not been able to determine whether the warhead documents were supplied to Iran and North Korea, but officials suspect that they were part of the package of goods and technology offered as part of the Khan network.

Eight secret Iranian nuclear-related facilities have been revealed since 2002, including the military uranium facility at Natanz, uranium-enrichment plants at Lashkar Abad and Tehran and a uranium-processing plant in Ardekan.

An IAEA report dated Nov. 18 and presented to the governing body in Vienna, Austria, stated that Iran disclosed in October and November additional documents on its uranium-enrichment equipment supplied by the Khan network.

Among the documents was material from the 1970s and 1980s showing that Iran, through the Khan network, obtained plans on how to fashion enriched uranium into pits for nuclear warheads.

Alireza Jafarzadeh, a former spokesman for the National Council of Resistance of Iran, said at a press conference Monday that he has identified a large-scale Iranian military program to develop nuclear-capable missiles hidden in tunnels in a region known as Khojir. The network, built with extensive help from North Korea, spans an area of about 4 miles by 12 miles southeast of Tehran and includes facilities at Parchin, Hamsin and Towchal.

The group has presented reliable information in the past on Iran's nuclear activities based on its dissident sources in Iran.

"The significance of this is that now the Hemmat Missile Industries and the regime has the ability to produce missiles, to combine it with the nuclear program and fit a nuclear warhead to it and also carry out the whole operation underground -- all within the very same vicinity around them," Mr. Jafarzadeh said. "This is something they didn't have before."

Gregory L. Schulte, U.S. ambassador to the IAEA, said that the facts show Iran has a long record of lying, covering up and withholding data on its nuclear program and that the program is linked to the Iranian military.

He said Iran lacks deposits of natural uranium for fueling even a small-scale program to produce electrical power.

"The deposits are sufficient, however, to enrich into weapons-grade material for a sizable stockpile of nuclear weapons," Mr. Schulte said. "This is not the sign of a peaceful program."

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20051124-113242-1914r.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

November 25, 2005

Nixon Was Torn By Prospect Of Nuclear War, Papers Show

WASHINGTON, Nov. 24 (AP) - Widely considered a military hawk, President Richard M. Nixon fretted privately over the notion of any no-holds-barred nuclear war, newly released documents from his time at the White House reveal.

The recently declassified papers, from the first days of the Nixon presidency in 1969 until the end of 1974, show that Nixon wanted an alternative to the option of full-scale nuclear war - a plan for a gentler war, one that could ultimately vanquish the Soviet Union while avoiding the worst-case situation.

The papers provided a glimpse behind the scenes at efforts to find choices other than "the horror option," as the national security adviser, Henry A. Kissinger, called the worst-case scripts for all-out nuclear war that were then in place.

Qualms about causing so much death were hardly the only motivation. American officials worried that their nuclear threat lacked credibility because it was so awful that adversaries questioned whether the United States would ever use it.

In a 1969 diary entry, Nixon's chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, recalled the president's taking part in an exercise that day aboard the Boeing 707 outfitted to conduct nuclear warfare from the air.

"It was pretty scary," Mr. Haldeman wrote. The president asked many questions about "kill results," he wrote, adding about his boss: "Obviously worries about the lightly tossed-about millions of deaths."

The picture was pieced together by William Burr, a researcher at the National Security Archive at George Washington University, from papers released by the National Archives as well as documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

The documents reveal Mr. Kissinger's chilling insight that government budget-crunchers would prefer complete nuclear warfare because it was already planned for and would be cheaper than recasting American capabilities to permit limited strikes.

"They believe in assured destruction because it guarantees the smallest expenditure," he said in August 1973 at a National Security Council meeting in the White House Situation Room. "To have the only option that of killing 80 million people is the height of immorality."

The papers show Mr. Kissinger struggling with a reluctant military and intelligence apparatus to sell them on the idea of limited nuclear strikes. Many doubted that the Soviet Union would settle for a tidy little nuclear war. They feared that a conflagration would quickly follow, devouring cities and killing millions.

But until Nixon took up the matter, the only options in the nuclear playbook involved the highest stakes possible and unspeakable death, and that apparently unsettled him even as he engaged North Vietnam in a war that was claiming civilian casualties.

By one official estimate, the United States, even if crippled by unprovoked Soviet missiles, could retaliate with missiles killing 40 percent of the Soviet population, or 90 million people. Many more would be killed if the United States struck first. That estimate remains classified.

Countless studies flowed from the effort to expand nuclear options to include "smaller packages." But it was not until 1974, the year Nixon resigned in the Watergate scandal, that he signed a directive setting that process in motion.

Mr. Burr said the United States eventually achieved an expanded range of nuclear options, in part because of the development of more accurate missiles and other weapons.

Historically, Nixon is known as "unsentimental and sort of callous in some ways," Mr. Burr said, but the documents also show a president "worried about the huge number of casualties involved."

But the prime concern may have been the credibility of the American threat. Mr. Burr noted that the narrower options under review singled out centers of the Soviet government and economy, not just military assets, and that any such attack would have created untold casualties, too.

Mr. Kissinger pushed the idea even as the Watergate crisis unfolded. "My nightmare is that with the growth of Soviet power and with our domestic problems, someone might decide to take a run at us," he said at a meeting in August 1973.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/25/politics/25nixon.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 25, 2005

Atomic Agency Delays Action On Iran

By Richard Bernstein

VIENNA, Nov. 24 - The International Atomic Energy Agency delayed taking any action on Iran's nuclear program on Thursday, even as the British delegate, speaking for Europe, said that a process described in documents offered to Iran, which came to light last week, "has no other application other than the production of nuclear warheads."

The widely anticipated move to delay consideration of sending Iran's case to the United Nations Security Council was aimed at reopening negotiations on a Russian proposal for a compromise which would allow Iran to enrich uranium, but only in Russia and under strict controls.

The charges made by Peter Jenkins, the British delegate to the atomic energy agency, refer to a report issued last week by the agency's director general, Mohamed ElBaradei, indicating that Iran recently turned over documents showing that in 1987 a Pakistani nuclear expert offered it equipment for machining enriched uranium into a hemispherical form normally used in nuclear weapons.

The European Union "is disturbed to see that Iran has now admitted to having in its possession a document which related to the casting and machining of enriched uranium metal into hemispherical forms," Mr. Jenkins said in a statement to the board.

"Such a process has no application other than the production of nuclear warheads," he added, speaking on behalf of the European Union and several other countries.

Iran insists that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful energy purposes. It also says that it never sought the engineering drawings the Pakistani expert offered.

It was noteworthy that the criticism was made by Europe, which has been negotiating with Iran over its nuclear program, instead of the United States, which has pressed most strongly to refer Iran's program to the Security Council for possible penalties.

When Dr. ElBaradei released the report last Friday, he did not draw any conclusions about whether the documents showed that Iran was pursuing a nuclear weapons program. However, experts said that while it was possible that some of the material described in the report could be applied to nuclear reactors, it pointed heavily in the direction of weapons research.

The United States contends that Iran is trying to develop a nuclear warhead to fit atop its Shahab missile, which can reach Israel and other Middle Eastern countries. But the evidence has been sketchy and open to dispute.

The decision not to go immediately to the Security Council was also aimed at giving Russia and, perhaps, China, time eventually to support the Europeans and the United States on the Iranian matter.

Despite several strong statements to the effect that Iran, after three years of prodding by the atomic energy agency's inspectors, is still apparently concealing aspects of its nuclear program, the Europeans and the United States have agreed informally to reopen negotiations in Iran based on the Russian formula.

Diplomats said the sides had agreed to meet, under Russian auspices, on Dec. 6, though there has been no formal announcement of a meeting.

"We have acceded to the request of several board members who have asked for more time for diplomatic dialogue on the future of Iran's nuclear program, particularly as Russia has proposed some ideas which deserve serious consideration," Mr. Jenkins told reporters.

"But Iran should not conclude that this window of opportunity will remain open in all circumstances," he added.

The longstanding effort by three European countries, Britain, Germany and France, to strike a deal with Iran over its nuclear program, was suspended in September after Iran announced that it would resume uranium conversion at a nuclear plant in Isfahan, an activity that it had promised to cease as long as negotiations were taking place.

Now, however, in apparently agreeing to reopen those talks, the Europeans, with American consent, seem to have given up on trying to prevent Iran from all conversion activities, which turn a solid uranium compound into a gas, which can then be enriched to produce nuclear fuel.

The object of the negotiations would seem to be to obtain an Iranian agreement to forgo enrichment activities, a process technologically more difficult than mere conversion, and one that would essentially give any country that could perform it the ability to produce fuel for nuclear weapons.

But in past statements Iran has insisted not only on its right to convert uranium but to enrich it on Iranian soil as well.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/25/international/europe/25vienna.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times
November 27, 2005

Defending Nuclear Ambitions, Iranian President Attacks U.S.

By Nazila Fathi

TEHRAN, Nov. 26 - Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said Saturday that the Bush administration should be tried on war crimes charges and that it had no right to question Iran's nuclear program.

The conservative president was speaking at an event celebrating the 26th anniversary of the Basij volunteer paramilitary force, which supported Mr. Ahmadinejad during the presidential election campaign in June.

"You, who have used nuclear weapons against innocent people, who have used uranium ordnance in Iraq, should be tried as war criminals in courts," said Mr. Ahmadinejad, ISNA news agency reported. He was apparently referring to the United States' use of munitions made with depleted uranium, an extremely dense metal.

"Who do you think you are in the world to say you are suspicious of our nuclear activities?" he asked. "What kind of right do you think you have to say Iran cannot have nuclear technology? It is you who must be held accountable, and you have no right to ask questions. You act as though you are the lord of the world."

The Basij paramilitary force was founded after the 1979 revolution to defend Islamic and revolutionary values. Its members fought in the eight-year war with Iraq and suffered high casualties.

President Ahmadinejad has repeatedly announced his loyalty to the Basij and pledged to promote the force, which has an efficient network and a prominent presence in mosques around the country. It has become known for its radical tendencies in recent years.

State television reported that more than nine million Basij members formed human chains in different parts of the country to honor the anniversary. Some members also formed a human chain around the uranium enrichment facility near the city of Natanz, calling on the government to resume processing activities that were suspended after an agreement with Europe last year.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/27/international/middleeast/27iran.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Jerusalem Post

November 27, 2005

Iran Offers N. Korea Oil For Nukes

By Jpost Staff

The German daily *Der Spiegel*, citing western intelligence sources, reported on Saturday that Iran has offered North Korea oil and natural gas in exchange for assistance in developing nuclear missiles.

According to the report, brought forth by Army Radio, a senior official from the Iranian government visited Pyongyang, North Korea's capital, in October in order to propose the deal. It was not clear, however, what the North Korean response was to the Iranian offer.

Iran's Shihab 3 long-range surface-to-surface missile, capable of reaching Israel and some European countries, is based on North Korean missile technology.

Diplomatic sources added that Iran was continuing in its efforts to acquire nuclear capabilities despite international pressure on Iran to cease their pursuit of enriched uranium.

The Iranians have maintained that its nuclear aspirations are strictly for "peaceful purposes."

Also on Saturday, Iran's hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad called for US President George W. Bush's administration to be tried on war crimes charges related to Iraq and denounced the West for its stance on Iran's nuclear program, state-run Iranian television reported.

"They say Iran has to stop its peaceful nuclear activity since there is a probability of diversion while we are sure that they are developing and testing (nuclear weapons) every day," Ahmadinejad said. "They speak as if they are the lords of the world."

"Who in the world are you to accuse Iran of suspicious nuclear armed activity?" asked the Iranian president during a nationally televised ceremony marking the 36th anniversary of the establishment of the volunteer Basij paramilitary force.

--AP

<http://www.jpost.com/servlet/Satellite?cid=1132475627592&pagename=JPost%2FJPArticle%2FShowFull>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

New York Times

November 27, 2005

Venezuela's Leader Covets A Nuclear Energy Program

By Larry Rohter and Juan Forero

BRASILIA - With his country sitting on top of some of the world's largest oil and gas reserves, and with his constant talk of socialist revolution and criticism of the Bush administration, President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela has acquired a certain notoriety in Washington and with some of his Latin American neighbors.

But he has seldom sent eyebrows so high as when he recently announced plans to start a nuclear energy program with the help of Brazil and Argentina. Coupled with his talk of a spending binge on weapons like rifles, ships and combat aircraft, and his support of Iran's right to develop a nuclear program, his moves have set off a debate about his motives.

Mr. Chávez and his government dismiss the concerns, saying the world should worry less about what is happening in Caracas than in Washington.

"It cannot be that the countries that have developed nuclear energy prohibit those of the third world from developing it," Mr. Chávez argued recently. "We are not the ones developing atomic bombs, it's others who do that," he added in an interview with a Brazilian newspaper.

In early November, Bernardo Álvarez, Venezuela's ambassador to Washington, said: "It is absolutely ridiculous the idea that Venezuela would want to be a nuclear power and become a nuclear threat. Latin America is completely respectful of nonproliferation treaties, but of course that does not mean that nuclear energy cannot be pursued, just as it is in Europe and elsewhere. Venezuela says it has a right to explore these possibilities."

So far, the Bush administration has cautiously reacted to Mr. Chávez's ambitions. The Venezuelan president has sought to position himself as the nemesis of "American imperialism" and a defender of Cuba and Fidel Castro, and to criticize him publicly would only add to his popularity in Latin America.

"We are watchful, but not worried," said one American diplomatic official who spoke on condition he not be identified because of the political delicacy of the issue. "Chávez says a lot about a lot of things," he added.

"Sometimes he ends up doing them, and sometimes he doesn't."

Mr. Chávez first broached the subject of nuclear power in May, saying that he was interested in starting negotiations with Iran so as to diversify Venezuela's energy supplies. He returned to the theme early in October but this time named Brazil and Argentina as his preferred partners.

He has found support for the idea. When Mr. Chávez spoke at a summit meeting in Spain in October of acquiring as many as a dozen reactors, Brazil initially reacted with enthusiasm. "Any country that wants to share with Brazil its peaceful-use programs will be welcomed," Marco Aurélio Garcia, national security adviser to President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, said at the conference.

But after an immediate uproar here, the Brazilian Foreign Ministry began backpedaling. "There is no accord yet, only an idea," said Celso Amorim, the foreign minister and Mr. Garcia's rival for control of foreign policy. "This is a theme that needs to be examined when we receive a concrete proposal."

In reality, Brazil and Venezuela already have a very broad agreement, a memorandum of understanding signed over a dozen years ago, to cooperate in the nuclear field. Almost nothing has been done since then, but both countries are interested in reviving the accord as part of what a Brazilian government official called a broader "process of approximation and integration" that has grown since Mr. da Silva and his leftist Workers' Party took office in 2003. Just last year, Brazil itself tangled with the International Atomic Energy Agency over inspectors' access to a plant to produce nuclear fuel. Brazil claims to have developed a proprietary centrifuge technology for processing enriched uranium and wanted to limit inspectors' ability to certify that use of the centrifuges complied with international regulations.

The director of Brazil's National Commission on Nuclear Energy, Odair Gonçalves, declined a request for an interview on prospects for a deal with Venezuela, saying through a spokesman that his agency was ordered not to discuss the subject. But in an interview with O Estado de São Paulo in October, he made it clear that Brazil was not interested in selling the centrifuges to Mr. Chávez.

Any nuclear cooperation program with Venezuela "would not signify the transfer of technology," he said.

"Transferring uranium enrichment technology is unthinkable."

Argentina, too, has said that Mr. Chávez recently made overtures about buying a reactor. "We are ready and willing to cooperate with all countries that are part of the Nonproliferation Treaty, and Venezuela is one of them," Deputy Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana said in October.

Though Brazil's nuclear program is more advanced than Argentina's, experts say that Argentina offers the best fit for Venezuela. It specializes in small reactors of a type appropriate for medical research and generating power, which it has sold to Australia, Egypt, Peru and Algeria.

"The technology is quite advanced, and because of the system of safeguards and inspections, there is no way to divert it" into weapons programs, said Elías Palacios, an Argentine scientist who is co-secretary of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials. "If it's economically profitable for Argentina, there's no reason why it shouldn't be done."

Like Brazil, Argentina had a nuclear arms program when it was ruled by a military dictatorship in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Civilian governments in the two countries later shelved them, however, and "because of economic factors and other priorities over the last 15 years, a lot of activity has had to be slowed or postponed," Mr. Palacios said.

With relations between the Bush administration and Mr. Chávez so hostile, Washington has little leverage over Venezuela. But that is not the case with Brazil and Argentina, which have extensive ties, and the United States seems to have decided to focus its efforts there.

"We consider partners like Brazil and Argentina to be responsible partners on issues like nuclear power and proliferation," said Thomas A. Shannon, the assistant secretary of state for hemispheric affairs. "We fully expect them to act in a responsible fashion."

But while Brazil and Argentina do not want to appear to be encouraging Mr. Chávez's nuclear ambitions, they also do not want to offend him. With his country eager to join the Mercosur trade group that they lead, Mr. Chávez has promised to invest heavily in regional energy projects, including the construction of a \$10 billion, 3,700-mile natural gas pipeline from Venezuela to Argentina, and to supply energy on favorable terms to the group's four nations. José Goldemberg is a physicist who as minister of science and technology in the 1990's led the dismantling of Brazil's nuclear weapons program. While he says he worries that even a flirtation with Venezuela will hurt the reputation of two countries that have won praise for renouncing their nuclear arms programs, he does not think much will come of Mr. Chávez's campaign.

"This is braggadocio," he said. "It's a way of challenging Bush, of making themselves feel important and forcing the United States to pay attention."

But Lawrence Scheinman, who was assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation and disarmament in the Clinton administration, notes there is "a prestige factor involved" in having nuclear reactors, and prestige has always interested Mr. Chávez. No matter what Mr. Chávez says now, if Venezuela acquired the technology to produce nuclear energy, he would have uranium and fuel that could be used to build a bomb.

"One has to contemplate that possibility," Mr. Scheinman said. "We do have a problem here of a country that's very antagonistic toward the United States and linking itself with Cuba. There is reason to be vigilant."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/11/27/international/americas/27venezuela.html>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

Philadelphia Inquirer

November 28, 2005

Iran Seeks Nuclear Fuel Guarantee

It wants its program at home, not relocated to Russia as called for in one compromise plan.

By Nasser Karimi, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran - Iran said yesterday that a meeting with European negotiators should include a guarantee that its nuclear fuel cycle remain in Iran, seemingly rejecting a proposal to move the process to Russia to prevent the production of weapons-grade uranium.

Diplomats in Vienna said this month that senior French, British and German officials would make a last-ditch effort to convince Tehran to accept a compromise on its nuclear program. Iran wants an unfettered nuclear program, while the United States wants Iran hauled before the U.N. Security Council for violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"In our view the agenda is clear," Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid Reza Asefi said. "It should contain a guarantee for realizing the nuclear fuel cycle inside Iran."

Under the compromise proposal, Iran would continue its program, but uranium enrichment would be moved to Russia to ensure it cannot be secretly used for weapons.

State television reported yesterday that the French, British and German ambassadors had sent Iran's top nuclear negotiator a letter saying they were prepared to resume nuclear talks next month.

No further details were provided on the letter's contents, but any European-Iranian talks are expected to consider the Russian proposal, which has been touted as the offer most likely to resolve the nuclear dispute with the international community.

"Any proposal that contains producing nuclear fuel inside Iran will be supported by Iran," Asefi said, adding that Iran had not heard from Russia about the enrichment plan.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/philly/news/nation/13272747.htm>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)

U.S. Alters Nuclear Weapons Policy

Congress rejects 'bunker busters' for more reliable arms

By James Sterngold, Chronicle Staff Writer

After struggling in recent years to redefine U.S. nuclear policy, Congress turned the country in a new direction this month by giving millions of dollars for a program aimed at producing a smaller arsenal of more reliable warheads. Lawmakers killed the widely criticized nuclear "bunker buster" concept, which critics regarded as too aggressive, and instead appropriated \$25 million for research on what is called the reliable replacement warhead, or RRW. Though that initial sum is relatively modest, it signifies an important policy shift that could end up costing many billions of dollars.

Even some arms control advocates have applauded the decision, because many see the new program as a sharp scaling back of the Bush administration's once soaring nuclear ambitions.

Democrats as well as Republicans were so enthusiastic that they voted for almost three times the amount of money requested by the White House, in large part because the program is viewed as an exercise in restraint.

"This is about tinkering at the margins of the existing weapons systems, nothing more," said Rep. Ellen Tauscher, D-Walnut Creek, a member of the House Appropriations Committee's energy and water subcommittee, which controls the nuclear weapons budget. "They (the White House) aren't getting what they wanted."

But while the vote was decisive, just what the nuclear future will look like is not. Some experts caution that more than tinkering may be involved.

"The answer to every question at this point is, 'It depends,'" said Philip Coyle, a senior Pentagon official in the Clinton administration and a nuclear scientist at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory for 33 years. "A new warhead can be new in a wide variety of different ways, and nobody knows what that will mean yet."

Indeed, the reliable replacement warhead is a strikingly elastic concept that, at this stage, each side can define as it likes. One of the few clear guidelines is that Congress has ordered that, whatever it is, it must be deployed without new underground testing, which President George H.W. Bush banned in 1992. But few agree on whether that is even feasible.

Beyond that, experts generally agree, the new program will mean spending billions of dollars to ensure that nuclear weapons remain a fundamental element of military planning, at a time when many other countries -- some friendly, some not -- are making similar calculations. The commitment is, in short, part of a global trend.

"It's not just that the Cold War is over, the post-Cold War period is over, too," said Nikolai Sokov, a senior research associate at the Monterey Institute for International Studies and a former Russian arms control negotiator. "What you're seeing now is a whole wave of policies of this kind being discussed in Russia and the United States and other places. There is an active process in a wide variety of countries. They are all exploring the option of nuclear weapons."

He added, "We're not talking about disarmament, we're talking about optimization. What you're doing is reducing the warheads to a more appropriate size." To those who believe in nuclear restraint, the program is a modest upgrading of existing weapons. For instance, optical fiber detonator cables would replace electrical wires and safer high explosives would be used to initiate the implosion of the radioactive core, which starts the nuclear chain reaction.

"This is not a sneaky way to get a whole new powerful warhead type of thing in the future," insisted Rep. David Hobson, R-Ohio, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's energy and water subcommittee, and the most influential voice for restraint. "We're not trying to do separate missions than those the warheads were designed for today."

Nuclear weapons proponents, however, see it in more expansive terms. Although the initial funding is just for research, and Congress will have to approve any further steps, nuclear proponents regard the program as an efficient new production platform for rapidly developing new warheads for specialized missions.

For some government officials, the code word is capability. When the talk turns to warheads with new capabilities, or of dealing with new threats, the implication is that whole new weapons designs will be required.

"Part of the transformation will be to retain the ability to provide new or different military capabilities in response to (the Department of Defense's) emerging needs," Linton Brooks, administrator of the National Nuclear Security Administration, which builds and maintains the stockpile, said at a Senate hearing earlier this year.

That increases the possibility, many experts say, that the warheads may need not only testing, but also the development of heavily modified missiles or new missiles to deliver them, adding billions of dollars more to the ultimate cost.

William Schneider Jr., chairman of the Defense Science Board, an influential advisory body to the Pentagon, said in a report last year that "the nature of the potential threat demands that we consider solutions that go beyond improvement on the margin," and that the country should build "weapons more relevant to the future threat environment," including nuclear warheads.

Cutting through the distrust and disagreements, there are critical areas of bipartisan agreement. First, the method of maintaining the Cold War-era stockpile -- the so-called life extension program -- cannot last indefinitely because the warheads are aging. Some experts dispute this, but Congress seems to have accepted the view that a new approach is required.

Second, the U.S. nuclear weapons manufacturing capability, all but halted after the Cold War, needs to be resuscitated. It could cost tens of billions of dollars over the coming decades and, as some envision it, could give the United States the capacity to produce more than a hundred warheads a year.

How the new warheads would be delivered to their targets has been little discussed, but expensive missile improvements are a prospect, even though Hobson and others insist this will not be called for. But making the new warheads more reliable and safer, weapons experts say, could make them heavier and bulkier. At the least, that would require extensive retesting of missiles.

The first warhead to be upgraded will be the W76, which is deployed on the submarine-based Trident missiles. But whether that missile will still work as designed with a new warhead, without substantial modifications, is yet to be proven.

"You can't just have a conversation about the warheads -- it has to be about the delivery systems and even the military's command and control," said John Browne, a weapons designer and former director of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. "These things are part of an interrelated system. That's what people forget."

The rethinking of the U.S. nuclear posture began after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Underground nuclear testing was banned, warhead production was stopped, and thousands of weapons were decommissioned.

Some demanded that the nuclear stockpile, with more than 10,000 warheads, be scrapped. Instead, the Clinton administration started increasing the budgets for the nuclear design labs, at Livermore, Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratory, for what was called "science-based stockpile stewardship," a program of maintaining and refurbishing aging warheads.

While the nuclear weapons budget has more than doubled since the mid-1990s to about \$6.5 billion, some now argue that the old warheads are growing less reliable with age and are not suited for deterring new types of enemies, such as North Korea or Iran, in part because they are too powerful.

In 2001, a conservative Washington think tank, the National Institute for Public Policy, called for the development of new types of specialized warheads, such as "bunker busters" -- warheads in super hard casings that would allow them to burrow deep into the earth before exploding -- to destroy deeply buried targets or caches of chemical and biological weapons.

That report became the backbone of the Bush administration's new nuclear strategy, the Nuclear Posture Review, issued in 2002. Half a dozen members of the group that drew up the 2001 study assumed senior positions in the Bush administration, including Brooks at the National Nuclear Security administration, Schneider at the Defense Science Board and Stephen Hadley, now the president's national security adviser.

In 2003, the White House won funding in Congress for the bunker buster study and research into other new types of warheads.

But that is when Hobson, concerned that the weapons could spur a new arms race, surprised fellow Republicans by pushing back. He later slashed some of the funding and strongly criticized some of the White House plans. He wanted, he said, a more restrained policy, one that would survive pressure from nuclear hawks.

"My problem is I can only be chairman for six years," Hobson said. "That's why I'm trying to lock in place a footprint for the future. I'm trying to kill things so they don't come back."

But California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a member of the Senate's energy and water appropriations subcommittee, said she did not trust the administration and expected to fight the same battle again.

"This administration continues to try to reopen the nuclear door," she said. "So we must remain vigilant in ensuring that the reliable replacement warhead program does not lead to the development of new nuclear weapons and the resumption of nuclear testing."

Hobson and others say they fully expect the government to try at some point to expand the program, and they insist they are prepared to fight back. But some nuclear proponents are angry at what they see as a weakened Bush administration backing off at all.

"This 'modernization' is not a modernization of the weapons' capabilities," said Kathleen Bailey, a senior associate of the National Institute for Public Policy and a co-author of the 2001 nuclear study. "That's what is needed. But the administration has already shown it doesn't have the willingness to stand up and go to bat on this. So I can't imagine the Republicans or the Democrats in the future doing so."

Surprisingly, one of the few groups that seems not to have engaged directly in the debate is the military. William Odom, a retired lieutenant general trained in nuclear warfare and former director of the National Security Agency, said one reason was that professional military leaders regarded the weapons as too dangerous and too difficult to protect and maintain, given the modest probability that they would ever be used, particularly as conventional bombs become more powerful and more accurate.

"Once you get through all the imponderables of using these things, you increasingly lose your enthusiasm for the desirable effects of the weapons," said Odom, who also helped put together the 2001 study but has a limited belief in the usefulness of nuclear weapons. "From a professional's perspective, it's damn hard to work up any excitement about them. Eventually, they'll go the way of chemical weapons."

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2005/11/28/MNGIKFV3FK1.DTL&hw=&sn=001&sc=1000>

[\(Return to Articles and Documents List\)](#)