



USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
Maxwell AFB, Alabama

Issue No. 347, 14 June 2004

Articles & Other Documents:

[U.N. Agency Poised To Rebuke Iran On Nuclear Program](#)

[Nuclear-Weapons Challenges Rise](#)

[Powell Calls Report 'A Big Mistake'](#)

[The Netherworld Of Nonproliferation](#)

[Indian held in Dubai for selling nuke secrets](#)

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 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

Washington Post
June 14, 2004
Pg. 12

U.N. Agency Poised To Rebuke Iran On Nuclear Program

Cooperation on Inspections at Issue

By Karl Vick, Washington Post Foreign Service

TEHRAN, June 13 -- Eight months after celebrating a diplomatic breakthrough designed to address concerns about Iran's nuclear program once and for all, Iranian officials are bracing for a fresh rebuke from the U.N.'s nuclear monitoring agency.

The board of governors of the 35-nation International Atomic Energy Agency convenes for a three-day meeting in Vienna on Monday, and the U.N. body is likely to officially "deplore" Iran's erratic cooperation with IAEA inspectors, who will continue exploring the country's atomic infrastructure for months, according to diplomats and Iranian officials.

The resolution would echo a March warning by the same board and a resolution last week by the Group of Eight leaders who met in the United States. The sting of the language is all the sharper because it is being pushed by three leading European nations that last October coaxed Iran to unveil its clandestine nuclear program.

"We now see the Europeans and the Americans have come together against us," Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, a former president and now a senior government official, said at Friday prayers at the University of Tehran, the weekly showcase for hard-line doctrine in this theocracy.

The air of official complaint was palpable in the Iranian capital this weekend, after state-run media heightened expectations that the IAEA would issue Iran the clean bill of health that its leaders insist it deserves. Despite 18

years of secrecy and the country's vast oil and gas reserves, senior Iranian officials declare that the country's nuclear program is intended to produce only electricity, not weapons.

"We are against using it for military purposes," Rafsanjani said, warning that "if they are going to put pressure on us, everybody knows his duty."

The issue shows no sign of going away. U.S. officials, who insist Iran is pursuing atomic weapons, have been pleased that IAEA inspectors have emerged from Iranian nuclear facilities with new questions about Tehran's intentions. The inspectors' latest report noted that Iran had failed to disclose the purchase of magnets needed to enrich uranium and that Iran insists on preparing feed stock for centrifuges, despite its October vow to suspend enrichment activities as a "confidence-building" measure. The IAEA also continues to investigate the radioactive contamination of centrifuges.

Diplomats added that they are concerned by Iran's announced intention to build a heavy-water reactor to produce isotopes for benign applications that could also be produced by a light-water reactor. The heavy-water version would also be able to produce plutonium, used in bombs.

The continuing controversy is testing Iran's pledge to adhere to the October agreement that opened its nuclear program to inspection in the first place.

Each additional disclosure has irritated Iranian opponents of the agreement. Senior conservatives have publicly suggested following the example of North Korea, which last year withdrew from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) after its weapons program was discovered.

"If IAEA gives in to U.S. pressure, we will react strongly to defend Iran's national interest," said Mahdi Kouchakzadeh, one of several members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards elected to parliament in February, after conservative overseers disqualified about 2,400 reformist candidates, thereby ensuring conservative control.

"As a lawmaker, I think Iran has to stop cooperation with IAEA and seriously consider withdrawing from NPT," he said in remarks quoted by the Associated Press.

"Pinpricks are hardening the core," said one foreign diplomat resident in Iran. "The way they're circling the wagons, they obviously have something they're protecting there."

The suspicions intensified after the February discovery that Iran had failed to disclose it was assembling P2 gas centrifuges, which would enrich uranium far more efficiently than the model cited in the "comprehensive" declaration it submitted in December. After documenting other apparent deceptions and contradictory explanations, inspectors were delayed for weeks from entering workshops operated by Iraq's Defense Industries Organization. Diplomats here now say they expect that Iran's file at the IAEA board will be remain open until at least November and likely into early 2005. Absent information that conclusively reveals a weapons program, Iran might avoid a referral to the U.N. Security Council, which the Bush administration wants to impose sanctions. But the extended process might aggravate frictions among Iran's ruling elite.

"There's a lot of anger around, based on their unreasonable expectation they would get the issue put behind them in June," said another resident diplomat.

"I don't think they'll cut off their links to the EU-3," the diplomat said, referring to France, Britain and Germany.

"There is an element of risk in putting forward an honest resolution."

A senior Iranian official, who asked not to be quoted by name because of the sensitivity of the matter, suggested that the government was unlikely to leave itself without a negotiating partner. "I personally believe this ultimately is going to be managed somehow between the Europeans and the Iranians," the official said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A39094-2004Jun13.html>

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

Christian Science Monitor

June 14, 2004

Nuclear-Weapons Challenges Rise

Bush and Pentagon call for new kinds of nukes - and a missile defense system - as bombs' toxic legacy lingers.

By Brad Knickerbocker, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

At a time when all eyes are on fighting what the Pentagon calls the "Global War on Terrorism," the United States is having to address the past, present, and future of nuclear conflict.

*Sixty years after the Manhattan Project produced the first and only atomic bombs ever dropped on an enemy, the US continues to struggle with how to permanently dispose of the radioactive and chemical byproducts of its cold-war weapons of mass destruction. The Senate recently voted to allow the Energy Department to reclassify such waste so that it could stay in place, even though some of it is leaking into the air and ground water.

*As the nature of warfare changes, the Bush administration is considering new kinds of nuclear bombs. These include smaller "tactical nukes" meant to pack a bigger punch than any conventional weapon, as well as "bunker busters" designed to penetrate an enemy's deep command and weapons-storage sites.

*And in case Russia, North Korea, or some other nuclear power should fire missiles at the US, the administration is pushing ahead on ground-based systems to try to knock down incoming warheads.

Some experts see signs that space-based missile defenses - of the type envisioned in former President Reagan's "star wars" initiative 20 years ago - may be in the works as well.

All of this is highly controversial and very expensive.

Defending against missile attack

Last month, 31 former government officials urged the Bush administration to delay the national missile-defense deployment scheduled for later this year. Interceptor missiles are to be deployed in Alaska and California. These former senior defense and arms-control officials, representing every administration since Dwight Eisenhower's, say the Bush program is "missing major components." "This is like rolling out a new automobile that is missing tires, steering wheel, and brakes and hasn't been tested on the open road," says Philip Coyle, former Pentagon chief of operational test and evaluation.

In his first year as president, Mr. Bush unilaterally withdrew the United States from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which had been designed to preserve the longstanding regime of "mutual assured destruction" by denying either the US or the former Soviet Union the ability to launch a first strike and survive. Like Mr. Reagan, Bush and other critics of the ABM Treaty believe the US should be able to defend itself not only from Russian missiles but from those launched by North Korea or other "rogue states."

Critics point to more likely threats not addressed by ballistic missile defenses: low-flying cruise missiles or "dirty bombs" filled with smuggled radioactive material.

Still, many see deployment of missile defenses as logical if not required for national security. "The threat has changed since the cold war," says military analyst Loren Thompson of the Lexington Institute. "There are more countries with ballistic missiles, and their behavior is less predictable."

Nukes that go smaller, deeper

This same concern about a more complicated and more dangerous world also drives the administration's desire to accelerate research on nuclear weapons designed for 21st-century threats. "Nuclear attack options that vary in scale, scope, and purpose will complement other military capabilities [to deter] adversaries whose values and calculations of risk ... may be very different from and more difficult to discern than those of past adversaries," states the Pentagon's most recent Nuclear Posture Review.

That range of options is reflected in the Defense Authorization Bill now being considered by the Senate. It includes \$27.6 million for the development of the 100-kiloton bunker buster and \$9 million for new "low yield" weapons (less than 5 kilotons, or about one-third the size of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima).

The programs don't cost much, in Pentagon terms. But much is scheduled to be spent in coming years. And, coupled with Bush's attack-first approach to dealing with perceived enemies, a modernized nuclear arsenal raises alarms. "I am deeply concerned that this administration may well be encouraging the very nuclear proliferation we seek to prevent - through its policy of preemption combined with the pursuit of new nuclear weapons," says Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D) of California.

A House subcommittee last week refused to provide money for a bunker buster, a low-yield nuke, and for a new plant to produce plutonium triggers for the warheads. The spending is also under attack in the Senate, as Senators Feinstein and Edward Kennedy (D) of Massachusetts seek this week to eliminate this year's funding for next-generation nukes.

Reclassifying weapons-site waste

Meanwhile, dealing with the oldest generation of nuclear weapons remains a serious problem. In South Carolina, Idaho, and Washington State, nuclear waste - some of it highly radioactive - has been stored for decades, waiting for a more permanent solution. In Washington, some of those buried storage tanks at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation have begun leaking, sending their toxic brew of radioactivity and chemicals used to produce plutonium into the ground water that flows into the nearby Columbia River.

A federal judge has ruled that under the 1982 Nuclear Waste Policy Act, the US Department of Energy (which oversees nuclear weapons programs) must dispose of high-level radioactive waste in deep underground vaults beneath Yucca Mountain, Nev. But as part of a defense authorization bill, the Senate recently voted to allow the Energy Department to reclassify sludge in some tanks so that it can stay in place. Safely turning it into a grout-like substance, proponents argue, could save billions of dollars. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D) of Washington tried to amend the bill to remove that provision, but lost on a tie vote. She vows to keep fighting.

"There are 50 million gallons of radioactive waste at Hanford and I want it cleaned up," Senator Cantwell says.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0614/p02s01-usmi.html>

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

Washington Post
June 14, 2004
Pg. 13

Powell Calls Report 'A Big Mistake'

State Dept., CIA Probe Terror Study

By Dan Eggen, Washington Post Staff Writer

Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said yesterday that a State Department report claiming a global decline in terrorist incidents last year was "a big mistake," but he said there was no intent to "cook the books" for political purposes.

Powell said during appearances on Sunday talk shows that the State Department was working over the weekend with the CIA to determine what went wrong, and he plans to meet with officials on the issue today.

"It's a numbers error," Powell said on ABC's "This Week." "It's not a political judgment that said, 'Let's see if we can cook the books.' We can't get away with that now. Nobody was out to cook the books. Errors crept in."

The "Patterns of Global Terrorism Report," released in April, had said that the number of terrorist incidents worldwide had dropped last year to 190, which would have been the lowest level in more than three decades and a decline of 45 percent since President Bush took office in 2001.

But State Department officials conceded last week that the report was in error, in part because it omitted acts of terrorism after Nov. 11, 2003 -- including a suicide bombing in Istanbul that killed 61 and injured more than 700.

The original report's accuracy had been challenged by Rep. Henry A. Waxman (D-Calif.), and the Congressional Research Service urged a review of the report's "structure and content."

The complaints about the terrorism report are the latest in a series of controversies over the accuracy of information compiled and distributed by the U.S. intelligence community, including ongoing debate over faulty reports of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Bush administration officials, including Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage, had praised the State Department terrorism report as evidence of the country's progress in the war on terrorism.

Powell indicated yesterday that the information contained in the report was compiled by the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, a newly formed clearinghouse that is run by the CIA. Powell said problems with the data include the November cut-off date -- which officials have previously attributed to a printing deadline -- and differences in the way that "insignificant events" were counted from previous years.

"We are still trying to determine what went wrong with the data and why we didn't catch it in the State Department," Powell said on "This Week," adding: "It's a very big mistake and we are not happy about this mistake."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A38339-2004Jun13.html>

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

New York Times Magazine
June 13, 2004
Pg. 48

The Netherworld Of Nonproliferation

Is Iran developing a nuclear weapons program? Whose job is it to know? How can they know? And what's to be done if the answer is yes?

By James Traub

President Dwight D. Eisenhower saw nothing even remotely paradoxical about the expression "Atoms for Peace" when he delivered a speech of that name to the United Nations General Assembly on Dec. 8, 1953. Eisenhower had come to disclose "a new conception": that "if the fearful trend of atomic military buildup can be reversed, this greatest of destructive forces can be developed into a great boon." Atomic energy could be applied to "agriculture, medicine and other peaceful activities" and "provide abundant electrical energy in the power-starved areas of the world." This speech led directly to the establishment of the International Atomic Energy Agency, under the aegis of the United Nations, and, 15 years later, to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Both were founded on a grand bargain: countries that agreed to place their nuclear programs under a system of international inspection and forgo the development of nuclear weapons (if they didn't already have them) would gain access to the expected atomic bounty.

Today the premise of that bargain seems almost quaint. Nuclear energy has never achieved anything like the World of Tomorrow promise it enjoyed half a century ago; meanwhile, the world feels menaced by the threat of nuclear

weaponry in a way unimaginable in Eisenhower's day. Authoritarian and, even worse, potentially unstable states like Pakistan and North Korea have opted out of the nonproliferation system in order to develop a bomb; terrorist groups seek weapons of mass destruction; and a global black market delivers nuclear fuel, equipment and weapons designs to states that aspire to join the nuclear club. The United States has already fought what may be thought of as the first war of counterproliferation; the fact that Iraq turned out not to possess weapons of mass destruction shows, among other things, how extraordinarily difficult it is to gain certain knowledge of an adversary's nuclear capacities.

Tomorrow the board of governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency will meet, and the principal item on the agenda will be, as it has been for the last year, Iran's nuclear program. The Bush administration is convinced that Iran is secretly trying to build a bomb. The Iranian officials I spoke with in a visit to Tehran last month insist that they are merely trying to improve their "energy mix" by adding nuclear power to their abundant oil supplies. But even in the unlikely event that that is so, an Iran capable of producing weapons-grade uranium is plainly unacceptable, not only to the Bush administration but also to its chief allies. What is not at all clear is how to make the Iranians surrender that capacity.

The nuclear bargain has become hopelessly one-sided, and the instruments created to sustain that bargain seem unequal to the task. Bush administration officials describe the current impasse over Iran as a test that the international community, and specifically the I.A.E.A., is failing. Even the I.A.E.A.'s director general, Mohamed ElBaradei, says that the entire nonproliferation system is in danger of collapse, though he would include American bellicosity among the forces that are endangering it. President Bush and ElBaradei, along with a wide range of scientists and policy makers, have proposed a variety of designs for a new and much more comprehensive nonproliferation system. Whether a new network of laws and institutions can plug the holes faster than terrorists, brokers, freelancing scientists and rogue states can fill them is an open question.

The bargain at the heart of Atoms for Peace made the I.A.E.A. a very conflicted agency from the start. It was responsible for developing peaceful uses of nuclear energy and ensuring the safe handling of nuclear materials, but also for monitoring the facilities and stockpiles of the world's nuclear powers. Even today, the curving halls of the agency's circular headquarters building in the urban hinterland beyond Vienna's Ringstrasse are lined with the offices of scientists working out nuclear applications for seed development and medical imaging. Until the last decade, nuclear verification routinely gave way before the demands of nuclear promotion. Inspectors were to serve as accountants, not policemen. Over the years, they logged countless hours earnestly cross-checking the statements of harmless countries like Canada and Sweden. As ElBaradei put it, "Inspections were often Mickey Mouse."

It was an almost invisible organization until the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war, when it discovered that Iraq had advanced its nuclear weapons program beyond the gaze of inspectors and under the noses of the world's intelligence services. This past March, when I was at I.A.E.A. headquarters in Vienna, I went to the office of Olli Heinonen, the agency's head of verification for the Middle East and much of Asia, and he showed me an aerial photograph of Iraq's Tuwaitha complex taken after it was bombed in 1991. In the years before the war, Heinonen explained, the Iraqis would lead inspectors on a mazelike journey through the one-kilometer-square complex and then deposit them at an innocuous building. And every year the I.A.E.A. gave Iraq a clean bill of health. After the war inspectors returned to Tuwaitha with a license to roam at will. Heinonen pointed to the map and said: "The building next to that is where they did the centrifuge testing. This is where they first separated plutonium. Here in these two buildings they did the electromagnetic separation." And so on.

I asked Richard Hooper, who conducted inspections in Iraq from 1991 to 1993, if the inspectors couldn't have demanded to see a neighboring facility before the war, and he said, "The Iraqis would have just refused." Visits were governed by elaborate agreements and subagreements that stipulated exactly where, when and how inspectors could operate. The agency could have invoked its power of "special inspections," but this would have constituted an act of confrontation wholly foreign to the I.A.E.A.'s nature.

The I.A.E.A. had no intelligence-gathering capacity of its own, and the 35-nation board of governors was reluctant to let the agency use data gathered by national intelligence services. This changed in 1993, when inspectors in North Korea scrutinized a fuel-reprocessing plant designed to recover plutonium. Tests showed that the North Koreans had produced plutonium more frequently than they declared. Inspectors were at a loss to explain the discrepancy until the Clinton administration made available to Hans Blix, then the I.A.E.A.'s director, a series of satellite photos that showed, first, a waste-storage facility, then a row of trees tall enough to screen the facility from the road to the reprocessing plant, then finally a patch of fresh sod where the facility had been buried.

Blix showed the pictures to the board of governors to support his request for a special inspection. As Richard Hooper recalls: "Blix arranged to show the photographs in the boardroom. The board members were literally stunned into silence." The North Korean delegates "sat there with their mouths open -- but not for long. They walked out, and then they announced that they were withdrawing from the safeguards."

In some ways, North Korea's withdrawal was more mortifying to the I.A.E.A. than Iraq's duplicity had been. The agency had, for once, been successful in exposing a clandestine program -- and for that very reason, it lost control

over the program. ElBaradei, who was then the I.A.E.A.'s chief legal official, says that the ensuing approach to the issue "was really a model of how things should not be done." At the time, the North Koreans might have responded to harsh criticism from the United Nations Security Council, but the Chinese blocked any action. Looking for an alternative, the Clinton administration agreed in 1994 to help the North Koreans build up their nuclear-energy program in exchange for halting work on weapons. But the inspectors were no longer on hand to monitor compliance. As ElBaradei says, the North Koreans "got five, six, seven years without inspections, and they managed to keep the spent fuel" -- the plutonium -- "as a Damocles sword." A nuclear-armed North Korea may now be a fait accompli. Worse yet, the North Koreans may already have gone into the proliferation business. Inspectors recently unearthed evidence that suggests that the country shipped two tons of uranium to Libya in 2001.

The agency never got a second chance in North Korea, but it did in Iraq. After the gulf war in 1991, when I.A.E.A. inspectors returned to Iraq as part of Unscm, the United Nations body whose chief responsibility was chemical and biological weapons, inspectors quickly found evidence of Iraq's secret weapons program not only in Tuwaitha but also across the country. Iraqi officials tried to frustrate the inspectors at every turn, and critics charged that agency officials were all too willing to climb down from confrontation -- proof of the institutional timidity that came of years of passive monitoring. Yet by the time Unscm left Iraq in late 1998, inspectors believed that they had discovered and eliminated virtually every vestige of Iraq's nuclear program. (They were subsequently proved right.) It was, of course, the run-up to the Iraq war last year that afforded the I.A.E.A. its first real taste of public notoriety. In November 2002, the Iraqis let inspectors return to search for weapons of mass destruction. It took only a few weeks for inspectors to realize that Iraq's technological capacity had, if anything, deteriorated since 1998. "It was embarrassing when we came back," one of the inspectors told me recently. In his report to the Security Council on Jan. 27, 2003, ElBaradei said that his inspectors had, at that point, found no evidence of renewed activity, and he asked for a "few months" more as "a valuable investment in peace."

This was, of course, precisely what the Bush administration did not want to hear. Vice President Dick Cheney said the previous September that he knew "with absolute certainty" that Saddam Hussein was actively seeking to purchase uranium-enrichment technology. President Bush had told the American people about "high-strength aluminum tubes" that Saddam was trying to acquire for his nuclear program, and about the uranium Saddam had sought to buy in Africa. (Secretary of State Colin Powell would repeat many of these claims in his speech to the Security Council in early February.) The I.A.E.A. investigated each one and found them baseless. The most flagrantly unsubstantiated, of course, was the tale of the uranium from Niger. It was Jacques Baute, a veteran I.A.E.A. inspector, who discovered that the underlying documents were fraudulent. This triggered an internal debate that spoke volumes about the agency's relationship to the Bush administration. Could they say "forgeries," which is just what they were -- or would that provoke the administration? ElBaradei, ever the peacemaker, opted for "not authentic." Nevertheless, Baute says, "I feared that I was sending him to the front to be blown up."

The I.A.E.A. did come under full assault from the Bush administration. On March 16, 2003, days before the war began, Vice President Cheney said on "Meet the Press" that the I.A.E.A. had "consistently underestimated or missed what it was Saddam Hussein was doing," though he did not elaborate on those supposed mistakes. The vice president added, "I don't have any reason to believe they're any more valid this time than they've been in the past." There were public broadsides as well from Powell and from Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser. Some I.A.E.A. officials say that they had several very bad weeks in the spring of 2003, waiting to see if the U.S. military would find something they had missed. But nothing turned up. And then came vindication: in October, David Kay, a former I.A.E.A. official and longtime thorn in the agency's side whom the administration appointed to hunt for W.M.D. in Iraq, stated that he found no evidence of significant post-1998 nuclear activities. He also said that "the inspectors in the early 1990's did a tremendous amount."

ElBaradei, who guards his feelings closely, does not admit to a sense either of resentment or of vindication. (Others in the agency freely admit to both.) He does, however, view the war in Iraq, like the current impasse in North Korea, as an instance of failed diplomacy. The Iraqis, he said, "had been cheating the system for years" and needed to be constantly challenged and confronted over their duplicity. At the same time, he added: "We never gave the Iraqis the feeling that there was light at the end of the tunnel. They complained that it didn't matter what they did." ElBaradei said that he recognized that closing the nuclear file, or lifting some sanctions, might have affixed to Saddam's rule precisely the seal of approval that he sought. But he also argued (if not altogether convincingly) that doing so might have afforded Saddam an incentive to cooperate on his chemical and biological weapons programs. It is in ElBaradei's nature, as it is in the nature of Secretary General Kofi Annan of the United Nations, to err on the side of engagement, and to acknowledge the interests and concerns of even the most odious interlocutor. At the end of a long conversation in his elegant apartment in Vienna, ElBaradei said: "One of the supreme lessons you learn in life is compromise. And you have to compromise by putting yourself in the other person's shoes."

Like Iraq in the 1980's, Iran through much of the 1990's received a clean bill of health from the I.A.E.A. Iran reported that it had only a "limited nuclear program," and inspectors duly certified that it was so. American and

foreign intelligence agencies felt certain that Iran was hiding something, but the agency, as one inspector put it to me, "was sleeping on its ear." Then, in the summer of 2002, an Iranian resistance group disclosed the existence of several secret nuclear facilities, chief among them an enrichment plant in the town of Natanz. ElBaradei and a team of inspectors visited the compound the following February and discovered a highly sophisticated facility with an array of the centrifuges necessary for enriching uranium.

The Iranians claimed that Natanz was intended for civilian purposes; and since the exact same technology is used to make the low-enriched uranium required for a power plant and the highly enriched uranium required for a bomb, this was a plausible claim. But Iranian officials began to make matters much worse by lying about almost everything else. The inspectors immediately recognized that the centrifuges were a Pakistani variation on a Dutch design, known as the P1, but the Iranians insisted they had been domestically designed. The Iranians called Natanz a "pilot plant," though plainly it was intended for large-scale enrichment. The Iranians said that they had never run uranium through the machines, though the inspectors later found evidence that they had. And this pattern of deceit, evasion, delay and literal-minded legalism continued for months.

At the time, the Bush administration had its hands full with war in Iraq, and European diplomats seized the situation as an opportunity to affirm the virtues of diplomacy. In October of last year, the foreign ministers of England, France and Germany journeyed to Tehran, where they offered trade opportunities that Iran craved in exchange for a suspension of nuclear activities and a complete disclosure of the program. This surprising display of deference, possibly coupled with growing American threats to bring the matter before the Security Council, persuaded the Iranians to sign a joint statement with the E.U.-3, as the delegation has come to be known. In the so-called Tehran Declaration, issued in October, the Iranians agreed to suspend all activities associated with enrichment; to offer a complete accounting of the nuclear program; and to accept an "additional protocol" to the Nonproliferation Treaty that expands the ability of inspectors to look for facilities that the host country has not disclosed.

So by last fall the Iranians, the Europeans and the I.A.E.A. all had reason to feel that a new, cooperative paradigm might be at hand, an alternative both to war (as in Iraq) and to the stalemate in North Korea. At that very time, however, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi decided to trade Libya's secret nuclear program for better relations with the West. One by-product of his decision was a bumper crop of information about the nuclear-arms trade. Agency experts became convinced that the Iranians must have received the same designs for an advanced centrifuge, known as the P2, that the Libyans had. And when Olli Heinonen confronted Iranian officials in December, they admitted that it was so. The Iranians then made matters worse by concocting one of their legalistic defenses; they didn't think "research and development" had to be disclosed.

When I arrived in Vienna for the board meeting in March, the Americans and their allies -- chiefly, the Canadians, the Australians and the British -- were demanding a resolution harshly criticizing Iranian noncompliance. Rumor had it that John Bolton, the U.S. under secretary of state for arms control and a scorching critic of international bodies generally (and the I.A.E.A. in particular), had been sighted haunting the hallways. A few weeks earlier, Bolton sent a spine-stiffening letter to his chief European counterparts designed to remind them of the threat Iran posed to international peace and security. The rumor turned out to be the product of a fevered imagination; but Mohamed ElBaradei seemed to be hearing footsteps. In remarks to reporters before the session, he said that Iran was in "violation" of its obligations to fully disclose its nuclear program -- unusually strong language for him.

When I first spoke to ElBaradei, at the beginning of the week, he said that he welcomed a tough resolution to keep pressure on the Iranians, though he also felt that the moderates in Iran needed some gesture to keep the conservative clerics at bay. Above all, he was hoping to stay clear of the rhetorical battlefield. I said to ElBaradei that his situation was very much like that of Kofi Annan, forever trying to prove to Americans that he is not hopelessly conflict-averse without making developing countries dismiss him as a stooge of the West. "Actually," he said, "it's even worse than that. I have the right to sit in judgment, where Kofi Annan does not. And that makes many countries uncomfortable. We're in the driver's seat, and they're not. That's why impartiality for us is an absolute key. If we try to offer our own interpretation of the facts, we'll be shot down in no time."

ElBaradei, who is 61, is a habitually cautious man, with a lawyer's faith in process as well as a diplomat's belief in engagement and compromise. He earned his Ph.D. in international law at New York University, and his father was the president of the Egyptian Bar Association. You hear grumbling among hard-liners in the Bush administration that ElBaradei is a third-world man or an Egyptian nationalist, but he has spent far more of his adult life in New York and Vienna than in Cairo. We had a lengthy colloquy on the merits both of the Yankees' acquisition of Alex Rodriguez and the Knicks' of Stephon Marbury.

With his large head, shining pate, little round glasses and bottlebrush mustache, the director general is an endearing rather than an imposing figure. He seems perpetually flustered, falling all over his own sentences and darting off in new directions. He is fond of American idioms, which he occasionally mangles. He is, according to his aides, very shy and has only slowly adapted to the public demands of his job. And yet he is given a great deal of credit for changing the culture of the agency. Gary Milhollin, a nonproliferation expert who has often mocked the I.A.E.A. for

its timidity, says that ElBaradei has projected "a much more muscular image" for the agency and that inspectors have "done a good job of challenging the Iranians and demanding that the Iranians explain the inconsistencies in their story." Senior Bush administration officials tend to be less charitable. One confidently assured me that the Iranians "are stiffing the inspectors, but ElBaradei won't say it" -- which the inspectors themselves deny -- and speculates that he is soft-pedaling the truth in service to "higher ambitions": to head the Arab League, or even to qualify for the Nobel Peace Prize.

ElBaradei spent much of that week in Vienna fielding complaints from the Iranians, who wanted him to stand up to the Bush administration. But they had lost him after the discovery of the P2 centrifuge design. ElBaradei told me he had said to top Iranian figures, "I stick my neck to try to help you, and then we see that." ElBaradei worried about the damage the revelation had done to the I.A.E.A. "It goes to our credibility as an institution," he said. "We are balanced, and we are weighing our words carefully, but we do not want to be fools." ElBaradei would be going to Washington at the end of the week to meet with President Bush as well as with George Tenet, the C.I.A. director; the I.A.E.A. receives intelligence from U.S. agencies as well as from the intelligence services of several other nations, but only intermittently. "We must communicate that the agency is not a blue-eyed bureaucrat sitting in Vienna," he told staff members one morning. Also, he instructed, no gloating about who was right about Iraq, and no meeting during the visit with emissaries from the John Kerry camp. ElBaradei wanted to lay out a vision for putting the nuclear genie back in the bottle that was different from President Bush's; but, he said, "we need to get them to see that our view complements their view."

The week ended on a good note for ElBaradei. The Iranians had won the support of countries in the Non-Aligned Movement, few of whom evince much concern with nonproliferation issues; and the two sides had been hopelessly deadlocked on language for the resolution. It didn't help matters that the Americans and Iranians refused to be in the same room with the other, so the Canadian ambassador had to run back and forth, bearing proposed changes. Late on Thursday night, ElBaradei was awakened by a call from Secretary Powell asking him to become personally involved. ElBaradei would go to almost any lengths not to say no to a request from Powell, whom he considers his greatest champion inside the Bush administration. The following day, the two sides began meeting -- separately, of course -- in ElBaradei's office, and by Saturday morning they had agreed on a draft that had enough "deplores" in it to satisfy the Americans, and enough caveats to mollify the Iranians.

ElBaradei flew off to Washington the next day. I had a cup of coffee with him in the midst of his tour, and he said, with no little relief, "We're coming at a good time, because they're very pleased." He had already met with Republican congressmen, several of whom seemed to be under the impression that the I.A.E.A. was denying that Iran had a nuclear program; he tried to explain the difference between a nuclear program and a weapons program. He met with several administration officials and was delighted by the professional and nonideological tone of the discussions. "Now that we have this relationship," one moderate said, "don't be surprised if we turn to you even more in the future." ElBaradei then left for his meeting with President Bush. When he returned, ElBaradei said that the president, obviously well briefed, broke the ice by saying, "So, I hear you're a Yankees fan." They talked about A-Rod and then about family. In the course of a 40-minute discussion, ElBaradei raised the need to secure nuclear material in Russia; to criminalize the export of nuclear weapons technology; and to improve the quality of intelligence. I asked whether he carried a message from the Iranians, as I was told he might have, seeking a deal with the United States. ElBaradei declined to answer. He did say that the president was obviously pleased about the resolution on Iran. He realized, however, that the mood could prove transitory.

When I visited Tehran last month, my plan was to accompany the I.A.E.A. inspectors as they visited the country's nuclear sites. The agency agreed to let me do so, and so, apparently, had the Iranians. On my first morning, however, it became plain that officials from the Foreign Ministry had no idea what to do with me. They sent me across town to get a press card from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, which ultimately refused to give me credentials. When I returned to my hotel, I was told that a caller, who had not identified himself, left instructions that I was to appear at a police station the following morning. Still later, the I.A.E.A.'s chief inspector in Iran, Christian Charlier, knocked on my door to let me know that the general director of the Foreign Ministry himself approved of my plans for the next day. But by the following morning, that official had been overruled by the Atomic Energy Organization. And that was the end of my nuclear tour of Iran.

Iran turns out to be a very peculiar kind of totalitarian state, one that seeks iron control over public behavior and expression yet is subject to constant improvisation. The Islamic Revolution never fostered an entirely coherent authority structure. Underneath the supreme authority, Ayatollah Khamenei, are councils and ministries that have a more or less horizontal relationship and continually vie to fill whatever vacuums are left by the Leader. Ali Salehi, a nuclear physicist who was serving as Iran's representative to Vienna when the truth about his country's nuclear program first began to come out, told me that "at the outset, there was not one particular organization that would say the last word; one would not know where to get the authorization and permission. This is because high officials here are all on an equal footing and power is shared among so many." Salehi said he grew so frustrated with the secrecy

back home that he began leaking information to the Iranian press, at which point he was swiftly relieved of his position.

I had been caught up in the same internal contest that Salehi had -- that between the forces of more-or-less transparency and those of defensive withdrawal. The Foreign Ministry, which apparently gained control over the nuclear program from the Atomic Energy Organization, generally pushes for openness toward the world; sometimes it wins, often it loses. In my case, it seemed to have lost, to both the Atomic Energy Organization and the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. But Iran is not a one-man state, like Libya or North Korea. Diplomats point out that the Tehran Declaration represented a major victory for the forces in Iran that, however tentatively, seek engagement with the larger world; if Iran is seen to get nothing in exchange for the risk it took, those forces will be discredited.

The Iranians were, in fact, very eager to let the world know how thoroughly they had been misunderstood, and I received a call from Ali Asghar Soltanieh, deputy director general of the division of international political affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, asking me to meet with him. I was bowed into Soltanieh's office by various supernumeraries. It was a very big office filled with ponderous, high-backed, carved wooden chairs. On one wall was the official photographic triptych: Ayatollah Khomeini and Ayatollah Khamenei flanking Mohammad Khatami, the country's increasingly marginalized president.

Soltanieh heard of my travails, and he was profoundly apologetic and solicitous. Tea was served, as were sweets. Soltanieh also had prepared a monologue for my benefit. He was, he said, a nuclear physicist who had served in the Atomic Energy Organization in the days of the shah. America was then eager to support Iran's fledgling nuclear program, and Germany was all too happy to begin work on a reactor in Bushehr. "At that time, we had oil," Soltanieh observed; "but nobody questioned, 'What is the justification for going nuclear if you have oil?'" He then went on to serve as his country's representative to the I.A.E.A. from 1982 to 1987, a period when the West was blocking all shipments of uranium to Iran. How was Iran to acquire fuel to get its nuclear power program under way? "The country had no option other than working on the fuel cycle," he said. (The fuel cycle is the process required to transmute uranium metal mined from the ground into fissionable material.) "We had to try all the routes possible -- plutonium, gas centrifuge, laser enrichment." And of course it had to be clandestine, since the West wouldn't stand for Iran having its own nuclear ability.

Soltanieh proceeded to offer me a litany of patently absurd explanations for Iran's undisclosed nuclear facilities. He explained, for example, that Natanz could not be described as "clandestine" because the villagers all around knew very well what it was. I could see why Iran is so widely believed to be harboring a secret weapons program; why else would authorities be concocting such laughably transparent lies? And yet, Soltanieh himself may have been kept in the dark about the nuclear program, and then did his best to brazen it out. Inspectors say Iranians from the Foreign Ministry often seemed as amazed as they were by many of the discoveries.

Is it possible, then, that all those lies don't add up to a terrible truth? John Bolton ridiculed ElBaradei last fall for reporting that no evidence had yet emerged that Iran was developing a nuclear weapons program. And yet ElBaradei was stating a fact. Last summer inspectors found particles of uranium enriched as high as 54 percent, far above the 3 to 4 percent needed to produce energy; but the material may have entered as contaminants on foreign equipment the Iranians purchased from their intermediary. Officials like Soltanieh have been so oblique on the subject that it's impossible to tell. Nor have the Iranians yet provided convincing explanations for experiments involving polonium and other radioactive materials. But inspectors have found no weapons, no weapons drawings, no evidence of weapons research. "Everything seems to be lined up to support enrichment of 3 to 4 percent to produce fuel," said Christian Charlier, an I.A.E.A. inspector. While he finds all the lies maddening, "so far, we don't have any facts that say they have a nuclear weapons program."

You would think, given the humiliating experience in Iraq, where no evidence of an active nuclear weapons program has been found, that the Bush administration would subject the evidence in Iran to exacting scrutiny. But it hasn't. In fact, its position amounts to "Where there's smoke, there's fire." One White House official explained to me that "there is no other rational explanation" for Iran's nuclear program than the development of weapons. But of course there was no other rational explanation for Saddam Hussein's stonewalling of inspectors. You would think that by now "no other rational explanation" might have been discredited as a cause of action.

One Western diplomat I met with in Tehran said: "The Americans are right in saying that a nuclear energy program in this country with these enormous oil reserves does not make sense. At the same time, what is clear is that this country for national security reasons wants to have a nuclear industry. There is agreement across the board to the point of saying, 'We need to have a nuclear capacity to a certain level.' The level is not clear. I am absolutely not sure that there is a decision even by the religious leadership to go for a bomb."

If Iran is developing a bomb, the Iranian officials I talked to are much better liars than I give them credit for being. On this subject, there was not a hint of waffle. The official line is that Iran must have the capacity to produce its own enriched nuclear fuel. When I asked why they couldn't just buy fuel from others -- they are already working on a

deal with Russia to do just that for the Bushehr reactor -- I was told that experience taught them they couldn't rely on others. But that wasn't really the point. When I pressed Dr. Seyed Hossein Mousavian, a top official with Iran's Security Council, he said bluntly, "To stop Iran from a legitimate right of NPT [the Nonproliferation Treaty], which is to enjoy the peaceful technology of nuclear power, is not acceptable to Iran." Mousavian spoke -- repeatedly -- of "the double standard," of "discrimination." Why should Iran, he asked, be denied benefits available to Japan? The answer, of course, is that Japan is not a theocratic state with a history of support for terrorism, and it is not located in the Middle East. Mousavian was not much impressed with this point. He said he expected that "in a very short time -- I would say two years -- we should reach the full transparency and confidence" promised in the Tehran Declaration, and then the suspended fuel-enrichment activities would resume.

But this almost certainly will not happen. The reason it won't happen is that the bargain enshrined in the Nonproliferation Treaty -- the bargain Iranian authorities wish to see fulfilled -- is effectively defunct. The distinction between peaceful and warlike uses of nuclear power has become hopelessly blurred. The threshold issue in nuclear nonproliferation is not the hardware -- bombs are no longer so hard to make -- but the capacity to enrich uranium. In the case of the "fuel cycle," the same technology serves military as well as civilian uses. It's only a matter of time, and not much time at that, to go from the harmless to the lethal. If Natanz is permitted to go back online, and if the Iranians go back to manufacturing centrifuges, they could soon have a facility capable of converting low-enriched uranium to the highly enriched uranium needed for a weapon. Nobody would know until it was too late. And that is why what is nonnegotiable to the Iranians is unacceptable to the Bush administration, the E.U.-3 and EIBaradei himself.

Can the Iranians be persuaded to mothball their entire enrichment industry? That depends on whether you think the Iranians are a pack of unscrupulous liars, as many Bush administration officials do. For them, the debate over Iran offers more proof that the international community and its institutions are not up to the challenge of confronting evildoers. Administration policy makers are growing increasingly impatient with both the Iranians and European diplomats who have, they say, a "delusional" faith in the value of further negotiations -- just as they did with Iraq. This time, of course, there will be no calls for war -- Iraq has seen to that. What the administration wants the I.A.E.A. board to do is refer the matter to the Security Council as a threat to international peace and security, though officials recognize that they have not won that battle. Instead, as one says, "We have to raise the issue higher than we have" by calling on allies to at least threaten to impose economic sanctions and political isolation on Iran. The Europeans take a very different view -- and this time the British, who have taken a fearful pasting over Iraq, will not stray far from the French and the Germans. For one thing, American credibility on the issue of weapons of mass destruction is not what it used to be. The Europeans, too, see the smoke, but they are not convinced of the fire. As one E.U.-3 diplomat says, "We have been through so many surprises that I cannot rule out" a clandestine program, but "we have never seen any additional convincing evidence." Nor do the Europeans agree that the Iranians have grossly abused the commitments they made last October. Neither is there an appetite either for Security Council resolutions or for sanctions. "We consider that the I.A.E.A. process is the best game in town" is how an official with the British Foreign Office put it.

The European approach is to keep the pressure on the Iranians but to offer them a glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel -- a limited expansion of trade relations, perhaps, when the Iranian Parliament ratifies the additional protocol, thus committing Iran to transparency. And the problem of the fuel cycle? Keep the "temporary" suspension in place for as many years as it takes for the mullahs to finally go home in favor of a new government able to see the light of reason. In other words, stall. A Western diplomat in Tehran suggested to me that this is not a moment to seek "truth, justice and clarity" but rather "what is pragmatically possible." This is, of course, just the kind of counsel that registers as the moral fatigue of Old Europe in certain quarters of the White House and the Pentagon.

Iran is unlikely to make good on its threats to eject the I.A.E.A., which would lead to just the kind of isolation the Bush administration would like to impose. But a policy of unyielding pressure would almost certainly lead the Iranian Parliament to refuse to adopt the additional protocol and generally strengthen the hard-liners. Iran also has the capacity to cause enormous mischief among the Shiites of Iraq. Perhaps something of EIBaradei's empathy is required. Iranians feel encircled by unfriendly countries and threatened by Israel and are now surrounded by U.S. troops. The fuel cycle has taken on a talismanic power for them not only as a matter of national pride and autonomy, but perhaps also as a deterrent (though they won't admit as much). That doesn't mean they get to keep it, but their motivations and political worries and calculations go well beyond "evil."

Each of the shocks of the last 15 years has exposed a different failure in the nonproliferation system -- in Iraq, the absurdity of the gentlemen's agreement; in North Korea, the benefits of noncompliance as well as the dangers of diplomatic irresolution; in Libya, the ease and impunity with which the black market in nuclear supplies operated; and in Iran, the legal protections extended to fuel-cycle activities. A new international architecture of nonproliferation, if there is to be one, must address all of these problems.

The I.A.E.A. began to rewrite the gentlemen's agreement when it began promoting the additional protocol in 1997. The additional protocol permits I.A.E.A. inspectors to visit any building that they have reason to believe might contain nuclear facilities, and to conduct spot inspections with as little as two hours' warning. Inspectors say that the protocol gives them all the latitude they need to find what is findable. The problem is that some countries with nuclear programs (including the U.S.) have signed but not yet ratified it. President Bush has proposed that many of the benefits that flow from the Nonproliferation Treaty should be made conditional on ratification of the protocol. But even the countries that do sign up can still bamboozle the inspectors, as the Iranians may or may not be doing. The I.A.E.A. will always have to rely on surveillance conducted by the major intelligence agencies, as it has, sporadically, since the North Korean incident in 1993; officials say that the C.I.A. has promised to work closely with the agency in the future.

And if a country withdraws from the NPT, as North Korea did, or refuses to sign it, as Pakistan, India and Israel have, or blocks inspectors, as Iraq did, the I.A.E.A. is helpless. ElBaradei has proposed making the Nonproliferation Treaty obligatory, like the convention on genocide, so that withdrawal would be illegal. But the international community has to be prepared to deal with the outlaws, as it was not with North Korea. Jessica Mathews, head of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, points out that the mechanism for referring nuclear delinquents from the I.A.E.A. board to the Security Council is hopelessly creaky, but that is largely because most of the members of the 35-nation board care much more about getting access to peaceful technology than about blocking proliferation. Countries like Malaysia have consistently taken Iran's side over the last year. The problem, at bottom, is political will; nonproliferation must move closer to the top of the global agenda than it is now, and not just for nations that see themselves as potential victims of nuclear terrorism.

How can we choke off the black market in nuclear material and know-how? The Bush administration, which is given higher marks for its engagement with this issue than it is on most other international fronts, has promulgated what it calls the Proliferation Security Initiative, a set of agreements with a widening range of countries to work together to interdict nuclear materials; the seizure of centrifuge parts from a ship bound for Libya late last year was the most spectacular success of the P.S.I. so far. The administration also promised to spend \$450 million to secure tons of uranium and plutonium originally manufactured by the United States and Russia. (In a speech earlier this month, Senator John Kerry said securing this nuclear material would be his highest security goal as president, and vowed to do it much faster than President Bush would.) But Russia is scarcely the only proliferation problem. Many countries do not now ban the sale of nuclear material, and ElBaradei often speaks of the need for a new regime of export controls.

Clearly the nuclear bargain must be rewritten so that states no longer have the right to make their own enriched fuel. ElBaradei has proposed that the manufacture of enriched uranium for export be placed under multinational control. The supply of nuclear fuel would be guaranteed by international agreements, giving countries like Iran no legitimate grounds to insist on a program of their own. President Bush laid out an alternative vision in a speech last February in which he proposed to vest control over enrichment in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, a 40-member community of nations with nuclear programs. ElBaradei says that the problem with allowing only some countries to sell enriched fuel is that "the representative from South Africa" -- a country that volunteered to surrender its nuclear program -- "is going to say, 'How can we accept that Pakistan, India and Israel, which are rogue states so far as the NPT is concerned, are in and we are out?' " And how will Iran be induced to dismantle its own nuclear program if others -- Brazil and Japan -- get to keep theirs?

ElBaradei insists that the differences between him and the Bush administration are matters not of "ideology" but of "perception." But it is also the difference between a preference for universal, treaty-based solutions as opposed to ad hoc ones like the Bush administration's Proliferation Security Initiative. Nonproliferation would seem, in fact, to constitute the supreme test of the world's ability and willingness to act in concert. A proposal for a "Strategy of Universal Compliance," to be issued next week by the Carnegie Endowment, gives the Bush administration credit for forcing a change in "international threat assessments" and in the calculus of noncomplying states, but also notes: "The core problem is that stopping the spread of nuclear weapons requires more international teamwork than the Bush administration recognizes, and more international resolve than previous administrations could muster. . . . The United States cannot defeat these threats alone, or even with small coalitions of the willing. It needs sustained cooperation from dozens of diverse nations to broaden, toughen and enforce nonproliferation rules."

How can we get that cooperation? Many nonweapons states complain that the U.S. wants to rewrite the rules so that they cannot produce nuclear fuel and must sign the additional protocol -- but itself flagrantly violates the commitment to pursue disarmament enshrined in the NPT. What's more, the Bush administration has begun research on a new generation of tactical nuclear weapons. Is this not, as the Iranians would have it, a double standard?

ElBaradei says he believes that it is. In a speech last month before the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, he said, a bit more provocatively than is his custom, "There are some who have continued to dangle a cigarette from their mouth and tell everybody else not to smoke."

This is not considered a serious argument inside the Bush administration. One official said that the professed concern about American disarmament was "rhetorical" rather than real, and in any case failed to account for the destruction of weapons and fuel stocks. (John Kerry says he would also stop development of any new nuclear weapons.) When ElBaradei came to Washington, Brent Scowcroft, the Republican sage and Bush family friend, suggested he keep a lid on the disarmament stuff, and ElBaradei was prudent enough to do so. After all, no responsible president would ever expose the United States to the possibility of nuclear blackmail. Nonetheless, just as we are unlikely to persuade Iran to eliminate its fuel-cycle program through a campaign of threats, so we are unlikely to enlist allies in erecting a new global nonproliferation order if we treat ourselves as wholly exempt from some of its central requirements.

In his "Atoms for Peace" speech, Eisenhower said, "I know that the American people share my deep belief that if a danger exists in the world, it is a danger shared by all; and equally, that if hope exists in the mind of one nation, that hope should be shared by all." It is, perhaps, an archaic sentiment. And yet Eisenhower recognized a central tenet of a world into which the destructive power of the atom has been unleashed: as we are collectively menaced, so we must collectively act.

James Traub, a contributing writer for the magazine, is the author of "The Devil's Playground: A Century of Pleasure and Profit in Times Square."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/13/magazine/13NUKES.html>

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

The Times of India

Indian held in Dubai for selling nuke secrets

TIMESOFINDIA.COM [SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 2004 10:23:23 PM]

A 35-year-old Indian businessman has been arrested by Dubai police for allegedly trying to sell secrets of Indian nuclear development programme obtained from his brother, who is said to be a nuclear scientist in India.

The arrest came almost two years after security officials mounted an intensive surveillance operation to find out whether he had worked with a network and to ascertain his claims, reports *Khaleej Times*.

Police said that the man had been trying to sell secrets to regional states since the time of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Lieutenant-General Dhahi Khalfan Tamim, Commander-in-Chief of Dubai Police, said Akhtar Hussain Qutbuldin Ahmed, was a resident of Dubai and "had attempted to sell nuclear secrets to the diplomatic missions of a number of brotherly countries in the UAE", the report in the online newspaper quoted as saying.

He added that the suspect had contacted the UAE ambassador to India, who brought the matter to UAE security agencies who placed Akhtar on a surveillance list.

Akhtar came to the UAE later and opened a business. The suspect, in his efforts to promote his "services", made arrangements for a symposium where his brother, atomic scientist Dr Ahmed Hussain, would be the chief speaker. The scientist actually came to the UAE and delivered a lecture attended by UAE University students and teaching staff. However, Akhtar failed to attract the attention of government officials.

Following his failure to draw interest from the UAE officials, Akhtar turned his attention to embassies and consulates of "brotherly" countries in the UAE. "He offered to sell them nuclear secrets, but envoys informed the authorities here about him", said Lt Gen Dhahi.

He did not reveal how much the businessman asked for his service, but said that would amount to millions of dollars. Surveillance efforts intensified significantly after the revelation that the man was attempting to sell nuclear secrets to regional states.

Lt Gen Dhahi said that security operatives made efforts to ascertain whether or not the man was acting alone or within an organised network. He also said that investigation teams verified that the man did not possess any materials or documents of a sensitive or dangerous nature.

"Then, we decided to arrest him and extradite him to his home country, for his case to be treated in accordance with (Indian) rules and regulations. The case of this man and his brother are related to India's national security," said Lt Gen Dhahi.

On interrogation, Akhtar said that his aim was to make financial gains. "He said he did not have any actual mechanism to transfer nuclear technologies from his brother to the countries with which he was seeking to establish contacts. But he made attempts to seize the opportunity that his brother was working with the Indian Nuclear Programme to stroke any deal that could bring him money", explained the police commander in chief.

Lt Gen Dhahi downplayed Akhtar's actual capabilities, but said security personnel dealt with the case responsibly to face any eventuality.

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/735146.cms>

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