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New York Times
June 15, 2004

Agency Presses Iran To Disclose Nuclear Activities

By Mark Landler

FRANKFURT, June 14 - Frustrated with Iran's "changing and at times contradictory" stories about its nuclear program, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency demanded Monday that Tehran provide a full accounting "within the next few months."

The remarks by the director, Mohamed ElBaradei, were uncharacteristically blunt, according to diplomats meeting in Vienna this week to review Iran's compliance with the United Nations watchdog agency.

Iran is likely to be sharply criticized in a resolution that the United States and other members of the agency's board are scheduled to vote on later this week.

The White House said it shared Dr. ElBaradei's "serious concerns," and urged Iran to "come clean and abide by its international agreements."

The American ambassador to the agency, Kenneth C. Brill, said Dr. ElBaradei's statement "showed how clear the contrast is between what the Iranians say and what the I.A.E.A. finds the reality is."

The Bush administration welcomed the director general's statement, and officials expressed hope that it would add to pressure from Europe and Russia - as well as the United States - to force Iran to disclose its nuclear activities.

They said they would leave open the possibility of seeking action at the United Nations Security Council if current efforts failed.

"Our view is that the I.A.E.A. has documented already 18 years of clandestine nuclear activities in Iran," said Richard A. Boucher, the State Department spokesman. "Tehran has repeatedly failed to declare significant troubling aspects of its nuclear program. It's interfered with and suspended inspections, and it's failed to cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency in resolving outstanding issues related to its program."

Much of the debate in Vienna has centered on whether the agency should impose a deadline for Iran to cooperate - something the United States has sought. Dr. ElBaradei has not called for a deadline, though his statement to the agency's board suggested he was running short of patience.

Nor is it considered likely that the resolution, which is being drafted by Britain, France and Germany, will set a deadline, a diplomat involved in the deliberations said.

Iran says it has cooperated with the agency and is trying to soften the resolution.

It insists its activities are geared toward producing commercial nuclear energy. But feelings toward Tehran have soured in the wake of fresh disclosures, according to diplomats.

The agency said in a recent report that Iran was continuing to produce parts for centrifuges, which can be used to enrich uranium to a grade suitable for weapons. It is also preparing to make uranium hexafluoride, the material that is fed into centrifuges to produce enriched uranium.

Dr. ElBaradei said it was "premature to make a judgment" about whether Iran's program was military. But the agency has been in an increasingly tense standoff with the Iranians in the two years since it began investigating a program that Iran covered up for nearly two decades.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/15/international/middleeast/15nuke.html>

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Los Angeles Times

June 16, 2004

Senate Supports Funding To Study 'Bunker-Buster'

GOP promotes measure on new types of nuclear bombs. Democrats fear a renewed arms race.

By Richard Simon, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — The Senate on Tuesday endorsed funding to study new kinds of nuclear bombs, despite objections that doing so would undermine U.S. efforts to promote nuclear nonproliferation around the world.

The action — defeating a proposed amendment that would have cut the funding from the defense authorization bill — came as the Senate attached to the same bill a long-debated measure to expand federal hate crime laws. A similar measure was endorsed by the House and the Senate in 2000, also as part of the defense bill, but it was stripped out of the legislation's final version by congressional Republican leaders.

Siding with the Bush administration, the Republican-controlled chamber voted down a Democratic-led effort to cut \$36 million for studying the new weapons, including a 100-kiloton nuclear "bunker-buster" capable of burrowing underground and destroying deeply buried targets where adversaries might conceal weapons and command centers. The vote against cutting the money was 55 to 42.

"We will make our nation, and our allies, less secure — not more — if the United States opens the door to the development, testing and deployment of new nuclear weapons," Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) said in the debate. Feinstein and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) led the effort to try to eliminate \$27.6 million for study of the bunker-busters, also called "robust nuclear earth penetrators," and \$9 million for research on development of nuclear weapons, including low-yield bombs for use against smaller targets.

The programs are part of a bill that would authorize \$447 billion for Pentagon programs for the 2005 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1. The House bill includes funding for the programs, virtually ensuring that they will remain in the final version of the legislation authorizing that money be spent.

But a battle is expected when it comes time for the House and Senate negotiators to appropriate money. A House Appropriations subcommittee voted to delete funding for the weapons program, but its Senate counterpart was expected to approve it.

In arguing against the funding, Kennedy told his colleagues: "Our goal is to prevent nuclear proliferation. How does it help for us to start developing a new generation of nuclear weapons?"

Supporters said the funding was critical to ensuring the country's security after Sept. 11.

Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) urged his colleagues not to "blind ourselves to emerging threats" from terrorists and rogue nations.

"It is not realistic to think that we can put the nuclear genie back into the bottle," Sen. Pete V. Domenici (R-N.M.) added. "It is in our nation's best interest to ensure that our nuclear weapons serve as a credible deterrent to a wide range of threats."

Funding supporters said that it would be provided only for a study. But opponents said that unless funding was cut now, weapons would be developed, at a cost of more than \$1 billion, setting off a new arms race.

Joining Feinstein in opposition was her California Democratic colleague, Sen. Barbara Boxer.

The hate crimes measure, which passed 65 to 33, would expand the law to cover acts of violence based on gender, sexual orientation and disability.

"Hate crimes tear at the very fabric of our nation. They seek to intimidate entire groups of Americans and divide our nation," said Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.), a sponsor.

A similar measure was endorsed by the House and the Senate in 2000, gaining ground after the 1998 killing of Matthew Shepard, a gay Wyoming college student who was beaten and left to die tied to a fence, and the 1999 shooting attack on a Jewish community center in the San Fernando Valley.

Conservatives opposed the measure, contending it was unnecessary. Feinstein and Boxer supported it.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/nation/la-na-defense16jun16,1,1876711.story?coll=la-headlines-nation>

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Washington Post

June 16, 2004

Pg. 16

N. Korea To Resume Nuclear Talks; Neighbors Not Optimistic

By Anthony Faiola, Washington Post Foreign Service

TOKYO, June 15 -- North Korea agreed to a new round of six-nation talks next week aimed at dismantling its nuclear weapons programs, officials announced Tuesday. But representatives of the four Asian countries involved immediately sought to play down the prospects of a quick resolution to the 20-month crisis in which the North Koreans are believed to have expanded their nuclear arsenal.

High-level disarmament talks are scheduled for June 23-26 in Beijing, after a two-day round of mid-level negotiations starting June 21, according to Chinese, Japanese and South Korean officials.

The talks -- involving the United States, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea and North Korea -- follow two rounds of high-level negotiations and one round of mid-level meetings, which all failed to yield significant results.

Since the nuclear issue erupted in October 2002, U.S. intelligence has increased its estimates of North Korea's military capabilities from possessing as many as two to as many as eight nuclear devices. But few diplomats held out hope for speedy progress. In a sign of how low expectations are running, even officials from the participating nations appeared to see little immediate promise of a breakthrough.

"The Korean Peninsula's nuclear problem is very complicated," Zhang Qiyue, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, told reporters in Beijing. "It is very difficult for any side to expect to resolve all the issues in one round or two rounds of talks."

The Bush administration is locked in a stalemate with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Il over U.S. calls for the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of all of the Pyongyang government's nuclear weapons programs, known as CVID. For their part, North Korean officials have offered a partial freeze of the programs -- and then only if financial and diplomatic incentives are provided upfront, something the Bush administration has dismissed.

The search for common ground to date has left the two key parties -- the United States and North Korea -- drifting further and further apart. At the same time, North Korea seems to be enjoying a measure of success in its strategy of dividing the five nations seeking its disarmament, observers have said.

Chinese authorities, for instance, expressed new doubts about the U.S. stance that North Korea possesses a uranium enrichment program in addition to its admitted program to enrich plutonium for use in nuclear weapons. The U.S. government has insisted that North Korea's public admission of the existence of the uranium program is key to any agreement.

Alarmed that Kim is advancing with his nuclear ambitions while the talks have stalled, the closest U.S. allies in Asia -- Japan and South Korea -- have also moved independently to engage the government in Pyongyang in bilateral talks, an approach the Bush administration has rejected.

Japan's Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi held a summit with Kim last month, offering him \$10 million in humanitarian aid in exchange for the release of five children of Japanese nationals abducted by North Koreans for use in spy training camps during the 1970s and 1980s. South and North Korea, meanwhile, have forged ahead with high-level military talks which resulted in a series of agreements this month to ease tensions along the most heavily militarized border in the world as well as to open new roads and rail lines linking the divided nations by this fall.

North Korea's success in negotiations with Japan and South Korea -- and continuing brisk economic trade with China -- may have emboldened Kim to avoid giving any major concession next week, according to analysts. Instead, the North Koreans may offer more limited promises -- or nothing at all -- to bide time until U.S. presidential elections in November, analysts have said. Sen. John F. Kerry of Massachusetts, the presumed Democratic candidate, has said he favors engaging the Pyongyang government directly in bilateral talks.

During the last round of talks in February, South Korea presented a phased proposal to resolve the crisis, starting with a "temporary halt" -- essentially a freeze -- to North Korean nuclear programs. A halt, once verified, would be followed by a South Korean promise, already accepted by China and Russia, to ship heavy oil to North Korea. The United States would join the other parties at the table in offering North Korea security assurances.

But that plan failed in part because the North Koreans refused to admit to the uranium program. According to U.S. officials, the North privately acknowledged in October 2002 that it had a program, in violation of a 1994 agreement with the Clinton administration. But South Korean officials familiar with the talks also said U.S. negotiators refused North Korean requests to broadly outline what type of rewards it might receive if it agreed to a halt.

South Korea is still pushing its plan, but there is little sense that either the United States or North Korea has budged. "We have no indication to demonstrate that the U.S. has become more flexible," Jiro Okuyama, spokesman for Japan's Foreign Ministry, said in an interview. He said Japan still "closely shared" the U.S. position, and would continue to press North Korea for a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling.

North Korea has also vacillated on what it would do. Last month, Kim appeared to draw a step closer to compromise during his summit with Koizumi by offering what the Japanese described as a "verifiable freeze" of his country's nuclear efforts. But North Korea's official news agency KCNA on Tuesday reverted to its old line that any freeze must also carry a "reward."

Special correspondent Sachiko Sakamaki contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A42562-2004Jun15.html>

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Christian Science Monitor

June 16, 2004

Pg. 1

Back To The Future: New US-Russia Arms Race

By Scott Peterson, Staff Writer of The Christian Science Monitor

MOSCOW – When the US earmarked billions of dollars for a new national missile defense and broke ground in Alaska, Washington emphasized that it would be "no threat to Russia."

Then, with the inevitability of a cold-war counterpunch, President Vladimir Putin saw fit to reassure Russians that America's shield could be defeated, with a silver bullet successfully tested in February.

"No country in the world as yet has such arms," Putin declared of the new weapon, which amounts to a space cruise missile. It will be "capable of hitting targets continents away with hypersonic speed, high precision, and the ability of wide maneuver."

Welcome back to the future of US-Russian rivalry. Analysts say that a combination of US military efforts - including missile defense, plans for new low-yield nuclear weapons, and expansion up to Russia's western doorstep - are chilling relations with Moscow and spurring a new, higher-tech arms race.

Despite American declarations of goodwill, Russian interpretations of US military shifts are tangled up with a deep history of rivalry, and a current fear of being left behind. A strategy rethink is under way in Moscow. Senior officers speak of an "asymmetrical" response to counter US strength without matching Washington's expenditures.

"I understand America's measures as a continuation of the arms race," says Viktor Baranets, military columnist for the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper. "With our slim budget we are making an effort to catch up with the rich American chariot."

"They think that we're kind of crazy to be pursuing [missile defense]," says Marshall Goldman, of the Davis Center for Russian Studies at Harvard. "It is just another example in their minds of how the US is still fighting the cold war."

And missile defense is not the only issue.

Work by the US on new types of nuclear weapons helped prompt the largest Russian military exercises since the Soviet era earlier this year. Russia is especially alert to the "possible reemergence of nuclear weapons as a real military instrument," which it views as an "extremely dangerous tendency that is undermining global and regional stability," Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov wrote in the journal *Russia in Global Politics*. "Even a minor reduction in the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons would require Russia to revise ... the use of its units."

Mr. Ivanov also warned in March that if "anti-Russian elements" persist in any NATO "offensive military doctrine, Russia will have to adequately revise its military planning ... including its nuclear forces." In April, four Belgian F-16 fighter jets deployed to Lithuania to patrol the alliance's new shared border with Russia. The move prompted sharp criticism from Moscow of an imminent "collision."

Keeping up with GI Jones

Moscow is also trying to figure out how to at least keep up with America's growing military resources. In recent years, Russia has moved to extend the service life of its multiwarhead SS-18 and SS-19 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), and purchased 30 like-new SS-19s from Ukraine. Last year, Putin said of newly deployed SS-19s: "Their combat potential, including penetrating through any missile defense, is without peer."

Though these ICBMs are a critical component of Russia's strategic nuclear forces, they don't always work. Test launches in February, intended to be the highlight of Russia's intense military exercises failed, despite the presence of Mr. Putin - smartly attired in Naval uniform - on the deck of a nearby submarine.

To the acute embarrassment of the Russian General Staff, two sub-launched missiles never left their launch tubes. A third ICBM, fired the next day, veered off course after 98 seconds of flight and self-destructed.

However, Putin's new "secret" weapon can ride atop the relatively new, three-stage SS-27 missile, known as the Topol-M. Experts say the weapon is a maneuverable warhead that can dart unpredictably at high speeds as it reenters the atmosphere, making it virtually impossible to target at that stage. It is essentially a space cruise missile, born from Soviet efforts to penetrate Ronald Reagan's "Star Wars" missile shield, which was never built.

"It's hard to tell if [the breakthrough] would have been possible without [concern for US] missile defense," says Pavel Podvig at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. "Missile defense has no real military value ... but at the same time, it has very serious political value. Missile defense is not such a serious issue that it drives us back into the cold war, but it makes dismantling that system much more difficult."

Russian unease may also erode support for Washington's war on terror.

"It might lead to our relations becoming cooler instead of united in our effort to oppose common threats from terrorism," says columnist Baranets. "Should [the US and Russia] go on building more warplanes, missiles, and subs just because our brains haven't been cleaned from the cold war dirt? Or should we jointly protect ourselves from stones somebody might throw [our way]?"

Still, since Sept. 11, 2001, Russia cast itself as a fellow terror fighter, side by side with Washington. But Russia did staunchly oppose Washington's withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty in June 2002. The treaty forbade deployment of a missile defense network. The US has since began work in Alaska for an initial 10 interceptor missiles, meant to stop a single missile from a "rogue" state like North Korea.

"It's US taxpayers' money, so if they want to waste it, Russia should not involve herself explaining to Americans why [missile defense] is not worth it," says Vladimir Orlov, director of the Center for Policy Studies in Moscow.

Exploiting the shield 'threat'

Indeed, the controversies in the US that are swirling around the system have not gone unnoticed in Russia. Though a limited system is due to go online later this year, the Pentagon's top weapons tester told Congress in March that operational testing was not planned "for the foreseeable future," and that he could not be sure the system would work against a North Korean missile.

The General Accounting Office has found that only two of 10 key technologies for the system have so far proven to be workable. In light of that - and far greater concern about terrorism - 49 retired US generals and admirals wrote to President Bush in late March suggesting delaying deployment.

"The Russian military and scientists understand that [US missile defense] is a joke, but that doesn't mean that everybody understands that - it's a political environment," says Theodore Postol, a physicist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"If I wave a plastic gun in front of the police, when they are nervous and they think I'm a terrorist, I'm going to get shot, though the gun has no capability," adds Mr. Postol. "That's the game the Bush administration has been playing, with extremely negative consequences for the US."

Some here quietly welcome those consequences. "Russia is thinking: Should it really oppose [new US weapons], or use them as an excuse to follow the same path?" says Ivan Safranchuk, head of the Moscow office of the Center for Defense Information.

For Russia's long-neglected defense industry, the US moves are a potential boon.

"This gives the bombmakers an ... opportunity to revive programs that were actively pursued in the 1980s," says Pavel Felgenhauer, an independent defense analyst in Moscow. He says top Russian officials told him several years ago that plans had already been made "to resume [nuclear] testing, as soon as the Americans give the go ahead ... so that it will be their fault, not ours."

Already, there are signs that Russia reacted offensively to US missile defense plans before they even left the drawing board. Russia launched a 2002 exercise that simulated an attack on Moscow ABM system, which experts say mirrored a strike on a future US system.

"We know from history that people react, nations react, and I would expect Russia to gin up its nuclear weapon R&D programs in response," says David Albright, head of the Institute for Science and International Security in Washington.

Indeed, military historians point to the example of the missile defense system deployed around Moscow in the late 1960s - and the exaggerated American response, which boosted the US nuclear stockpile - as a case in point.

According to a recent detailed analysis in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, the CIA in 1967 estimated that Moscow's nonhardened system was "subject to saturation and exhaustion." Still, it was targeted with missiles from Polaris submarines and more than 100 Minuteman ICBMs - some 10 percent of all of the US ICBM force. The result was a "staggering average of eight 1-megaton warheads per interceptor launch site" with a combined force exceeding 7,500 Hiroshima bombs. Such "chilling examples ... fundamentally contradict the portrayal of missile defenses as nonoffensive" concludes the Bulletin.

Such hypersensitivity seemed to disappear in the post-Soviet 1990s, an era of anything-goes US-Russia contacts and joint efforts to safeguard nuclear stockpiles. But there are signs of renewed suspicion.

New ties feel old chill

Russia's secret cities, where much nuclear and other hidden military work took place, are again clamping down.

Several military experts have been charged and jailed for allegedly giving away state secrets.

Even military exchanges have chilled. For example, a Harvard program for Russian officers to learn about civilian control of the military notices the change.

"When the Ukrainians and other East Europeans [take part], back home it is considered a leg up on their career path," says Harvard's Goldman, while Russians, these days, are beginning to feel the opposite. "They've been compromised if they come, because they've been consorting with the enemy."

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2004/0616/p01s04-woeu.html>

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New York Times

June 17, 2004

Iran Threatens To Restart Nuclear Work

By Mark Landler

VIENNA, June 16 - Iran threatened on Wednesday to resume its enrichment of uranium - a prerequisite for making nuclear weapons - if the International Atomic Energy Agency passed an expected resolution rebuking it for not cooperating.

Iran's president, Mohammad Khatami, said his country no longer had a "moral commitment" to suspend uranium enrichment, though he added that it had not made a decision to restart such work.

"If the draft resolution proposed by the European countries is approved by the I.A.E.A., Iran will reject it," he said in Tehran. "If Europe has no commitment toward Iran, then Iran will not have a commitment toward Europe."

Mr. Khatami's statement deepened the rift between Iran and the atomic energy agency, a United Nations watchdog group, as its 35-member governing board was close to passing a toughly worded resolution deploring Tehran's lack of cooperation with its investigation of the country's nuclear program.

The United States accused Iranian officials of trying to push board members into softening the criticism.

"They're trying to intimidate the board and individual states," said the American ambassador to the agency, Kenneth C. Brill. "It really makes us question their claims that they have nothing to hide."

There had been expectations that the resolution would be proposed on Wednesday, but diplomats said they were at odds over some phrases in the introduction. They said they hoped to propose it on Thursday morning.

Representatives from Iran spent the day scrambling to delete a provision calling for the cancellation of Tehran's plans to build a heavy-water research reactor and to start operations at a uranium conversion plant.

The resolution, drafted by Britain, France and Germany, said those projects raised suspicions that Iran would not suspend uranium enrichment, as it promised last October in an agreement with the three countries.

The head of Iran's delegation here, Hossein Mousavian, insisted that the projects were outside the scope of the agreement. He also insisted that Iran had met all its obligations to the Europeans, as well as to the agency, which has been scrutinizing Iran's nuclear program for more than two years.

The resolution, Mr. Mousavian warned, would undermine relations between Iran and the agency, particularly among hard-line members of Iran's Parliament, some of whom have threatened that they will not ratify an agreement permitting unannounced inspections of its nuclear facilities.

In Tehran on Wednesday, the Iranian foreign minister noted that the Parliament, which has been controlled by conservative opponents of the government since elections last February, might be more reluctant to cooperate by ratifying the agreement.

"We have told the Europeans that the new Parliament does not think the same way as the previous Parliament, and that should be considered in their calculations," the foreign minister, Kamal Kharazi, was quoted as saying by the Islamic Republic News Agency.

Despite their vitriolic tone, Iranian officials stopped short of darker threats, like refusing access to United Nations inspectors or withdrawing from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, as North Korea did. Mr. Mousavian, in fact, said he saw no reason to "cut relations with the I.A.E.A."

The future of ties between Iran and Europe, he suggested, was more problematic. "Internally, a lot of people cannot trust the promises of cooperation with the Europeans," Mr. Mousavian said.

Under the terms of the deal last October between Iran and the foreign ministers of Germany, Britain, and France - at a time when the United States was urging a harder line on Iran - the Europeans offered to sell nuclear technology to the Iranians if they agreed to stop enriching uranium.

Iran, while asserting its right to enrich uranium, said it would suspend the activity.

A recent report by the agency cast doubt on Iran's claims. It said the Iranian government was continuing to make parts for centrifuges, the machines that enrich, or purify, uranium by spinning it.

The agency's director general, Mohamed ElBaradei, said it was "premature to make a judgment" about whether Iran's program was military.

But Dr. ElBaradei bluntly criticized Iran in a statement to the board on Monday for what he called its "changing and, at times, contradictory" stories.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/17/international/middleeast/17nuke.html>

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Washington Post

June 17, 2004

Pg. 26

Richardson Urges Shift In U.S. Tack On N. Korea

By Anthony Faiola, Washington Post Foreign Service

TOKYO, June 16 -- Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico, who has maintained contacts in North Korea since he served in the Clinton administration, called Wednesday for a shift in U.S. strategy toward seeking a compromise with North Korean officials during disarmament talks next week.

Richardson, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has had frequent communications with the North Koreans and warned that without a change in the status quo, North Korea could emerge as an outlaw state armed with as many as 10 nuclear weapons. In an interview on Wednesday, Richardson said that he had been in touch with North Korean officials in Pyongyang via telephone as recently as two weeks ago.

Richardson said the six-nation framework to disarm North Korea was "in danger of failing." He expressed concern that a deal on freezing the North Korean nuclear program might not be reached after five days of talks scheduled to start Monday in Beijing.

"That allows them to keep on building and building" nuclear weapons, he said. "If we don't reach an interim agreement to suspend the processing, they could have 10 nuclear weapons, and the talks may break down by this time next year."

The Bush administration has rejected any interim agreement with North Korea without an upfront commitment to dismantle its nuclear program. But Richardson has echoed the sentiments of leading analysts who have predicted that North Korea might hold out for an agreement until after the U.S. elections in November.

Richardson was in Seoul and Tokyo this week on trade missions and to speak on North Korean policy. He said that judging from his conversations with the North Koreans, it appears "unlikely" the North Korean government will immediately agree to U.S. demands for a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of its weapons programs without any incentives.

Richardson called for a compromise, outlining a plan similar to one being floated by South Korea, for a verifiable suspension of North Korea's nuclear programs as a first step toward achieving disarmament. In exchange, he said, the United States should offer joint security assurances to the North along with the other participants at the talks -- China, Russia, South Korea and Japan. In addition, he said, the United States should endorse a South Korean plan to ship oil to North Korea to ease its energy shortage while a broader agreement is negotiated. As part of an interim step -- which China and Russia also appear to support -- North Korea should be pressed to allow weapons inspectors

back into the country and to rejoin the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The North Korean government withdrew from the treaty last year.

The Bush administration's uncompromising approach to the crisis has generated mounting frustrations among some participants in the talks, particularly the Chinese and South Koreans, Richardson said.

"If you talk to the Chinese, they are especially growing frustrated by this process; they want to see results next week," he said. "If there is no clear progress, we don't know if the nations involved will stick with the framework" of six party talks.

Richardson has been flagged as a potential running mate for Sen. John F. Kerry of Massachusetts, the presumptive Democratic presidential candidate against Bush in November. Kerry has called for bilateral talks with the North Koreans -- an option Bush has rejected. Richardson, who said he intended to "remain governor of New Mexico," also called for "serious bilateral negotiations," but within the framework of the continuing six-nation talks.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A47754-2004Jun16.html>

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New York Times

June 18, 2004

U.N. Agency To Rebuke Iran For Obstructing Inspections

By Mark Landler

VIENNA, June 17 - The International Atomic Energy Agency's governing board prepared to deliver a stinging rebuke to Iran on Thursday for its lack of cooperation, deepening the conflict between Tehran and much of the world over its nuclear ambitions.

The criticism is contained in a resolution, expected to be ratified by the board on Friday, which accuses Iran of obstructing the agency's efforts to inspect sophisticated centrifuge facilities, where Iran could produce weapons-grade uranium.

"Iran's cooperation has not been as full, timely and proactive as it should have been," the resolution said.

It also called on Iran to answer critical lingering questions about the scope of its centrifuge program and the source of the technology. Investigators also want to know how several of its nuclear sites became contaminated with uranium, some of which was enriched to a purity suitable for weapons.

The United States contends that Iran is pursuing nuclear arms, while Tehran insists it is seeking only commercial nuclear energy.

Iran's motives are likely to come under fresh scrutiny in the wake of a new report of suspicious activity next to a military site near Tehran. The report, broadcast Wednesday on ABC News, said commercial satellite images showed that buildings on the site had been razed and that topsoil had been removed.

Officials close to the agency said they were concerned by the report and planned to investigate. Of particular concern is evidence that radiation-detection equipment may have been present on the site. "It has to be checked out," said one official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The resolution, drafted by Britain, France and Germany, was agreed to after four days of intense negotiations at the agency's headquarters in Vienna. It survived a last-minute hurdle when the agency admitted it had erred in claiming that Iran had denied importing centrifuge parts.

After a protest from Iran, the agency said it had failed to take account of an Iranian businessman who disclosed that he had imported parts for centrifuges. The man, who owns a private workshop in Iran, told agency inspectors during a meeting last January that he had bought a magnet used in the manufacture of P-2 centrifuges from outside the country.

"It's a fault that we did not pick it up," said Mohamed ElBaradei, the agency's director general. "It was not fed to our system."

The mistake led the board to soften a part of the statement that had criticized Iran for its "changing or contradictory information." Now, it says only that the information "continues to lack the necessary clarity."

Diplomatic nuances aside, the resolution is a setback for Iran, which has counted on the support of nonaligned countries in previous confrontations with the atomic energy agency. In this debate, it was clear that Iran had lost the support of countries like China, Russia and Pakistan.

Gaining the support of Russia, a major supplier of nuclear equipment to Iran, gave the antiproliferation campaign particular momentum.

Iran tried to put the best face on matters, noting that the resolution did not impose a deadline for Iranian cooperation, as the United States had wanted. The board also made a relatively muted appeal to Iran not to proceed with its plans to build a heavy-water research reactor or start production at a uranium conversion facility.

An earlier draft of the resolution had used stronger language in asking Tehran to cancel the projects. Officials in Washington and elsewhere suspect they will be used to enrich uranium.

"I consider this has been a victory for Iran," the chief of the Iranian delegation, Hossein Mousavian, said.

Last September, he said, some of Iran's critics were suggesting that it possessed a nuclear bomb. Little was said about that here this week. Diplomats once raised the prospect of referring Iran's actions to the United Nations Security Council. Such a move, he said, now seemed remote.

Mr. Mousavian said Iran would continue to work with the agency and would not withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. He also said that Iran would adhere to an October agreement with Britain, France and Germany in which it pledged to suspend the enrichment of uranium. The Iranian president, Mohammad Khatami, has said the country is under no "moral commitment" to stick to that deal if the resolution passes.

Conservative members of Iran's Parliament have threatened not to ratify a separate agreement with the agency that permits unannounced inspections of its facilities.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/18/international/middleeast/18iran.html>

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Philadelphia Inquirer

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'88 Gas Attack A Vivid Memory In Iraqi Town

By Mark McDonald, Inquirer Foreign Staff

HALABJA, Iraq - Nobody's sure what kind of nerve gas was in that first bomb, the one that flattened the House of Charity mosque. It collapsed the dome and toppled the minaret, and within minutes hundreds of people were twitching and blistering to death in the dust of Mokhtar Street.

About 5,000 people - more than half of them children - died in Halabja on that warm morning in the late winter of 1988. On that day, Saddam Hussein's air force was nothing if not thorough.

The terrible clouds of cyanide, mustard gas and sarin caught up with 15,000 other Halabjans, unwiring their nervous systems or forever clouding their minds. Even today, this little Kurdish hill town is full of the slow, the blind, the lame, and the halt.

The chemical attack on Halabja, which stands as one of the great horrors in modern warfare, was one piece of evidence the U.S. administration cited for going to war in Iraq. The massacre is sure to be one of the charges the former dictator will face when he comes before the Iraqi Special Tribunal.

There is also widespread sentiment for sleepy little Halabja, a farming town in northeastern Iraq, to be host to the war-crimes trial of Ali Hassan al-Majid. The former general, a cousin of Hussein's, is known to have ordered the attack on Halabja, earning himself the nickname "Chemical Ali."

Majid helped orchestrate the campaign of terror that killed an estimated 132,000 people in northern Iraq in 1988, almost all of them Kurds and Turkmen. Captured last August, Majid was the "king of spades" in the coalition's deck of most-wanted cards.

Halabja, with a population of 53,000, is too small and remote to handle a full-scale trial for Hussein. But local officials think that with some preparations, it could hold the Majid trial. They have petitioned the Iraqi government to be the venue.

The House of Charity mosque has been rebuilt, with a new and colorful minaret. Mokhtar Street remains a rutted, dusty thoroughfare, much as it was on March 16, 1988.

The people along the street - the shopkeepers, the idlers, the workmen, the fruit-cart vendors - remember the day quite clearly. The late-morning air was warm, the season's first apricots were ripening, the streams were running fast with snowmelt, and in the fields below town, farmers were planting tomatoes and tobacco.

The Iran-Iraq war was in its eighth year - it would end in August 1988 - and about 1,400 Iranian troops had taken over Halabja three days earlier. It was an easy march for them across the border, just eight miles away. Large numbers of pro-Iranian guerrilla fighters - the renowned Kurdish peshmerga - also had taken shelter in the town.

All of this movement had put Halabja in serious harm's way, although most townspeople had not heard that Hussein's troops were using chemical bombs on peshmerga units.

Still, people grew nervous when some low-flying Iraqi airplanes began to circle the town slowly about 10 a.m. They were puzzled when the planes' crews began tossing out scraps of white paper.

"They were gauging the wind," said Muhammad Amin Hassan, who is now 54 and still working the same job, as security guard at the primary school. "A little later, the first bomb went directly into the mosque.

"People were dying all up and down the street. It was like they had suddenly fallen asleep. Cows and dogs died. All the hens, too."

More bombs followed, some detonating in great bursts in midair, others exploding on impact. The gas hugged the ground like a heavy fog, and it seeped into wells, basements and bomb shelters. People remember the smell of apples, almonds, garlic, sulfur.

Some of the planes dumped chemicals directly from their cargo doors, and Hassan remembered they looked "quite beautiful" as they fell to earth.

"It was like snow. But it was blue. Blue snow. When it hit your clothes, it burned right through them. It boiled your skin. It ate your flesh."

Hassan and his wife gathered their eight children and ran into the foothills of the Suren Mountains on the border with Iran.

"I was blinded; my eyes were burning," Hassan said. "We were all holding hands. The 10 of us were strung together in a chain. Holding hands, that's how we ran up the mountain."

As he ran, he said, he kept tripping over dead villagers who had dropped in their tracks, felled by the gas.

With many other Halabjans, Hassan and his family made it to Iran, where they received medical aid, food and shelter. They stayed a few months, then warily went back home.

Today, Hassan can make out only shapes and colors, and the pupil of his right eye is clotted and gray. Members of his family have had all sorts of medical problems, which they attribute to the gas, but Hassan is saddest about his son Ohmed, who was a third grader at the time.

"The chemicals disturbed him very much," Hassan said, his milky eyes brimming with tears. "He has lost all his senses."

Fateh Abdullah Ahmed, 42, a carpenter, nodded as he stood listening to Hassan's tale. Most adults in Halabja have similar memories, similar anguish.

"I'd rather have him kept alive," Ahmed said of Hussein. "They should make him watch a video of his sons being killed, 24 hours a day, for the rest of his life. That kind of torture would be a fitting punishment."

Midway down Mokhtar Street, 100-year-old Muhammad Mir Ali was sitting on a rickety cane chair just off the sidewalk. He was cadging cigarettes, as usual, from people passing by.

Ali didn't want to recount the day of the attack. He is happier, he said, not remembering all the friends he lost that day. His bright blue eyes, as blue as the mountain sky over Halabja, failed him long ago, probably because of the chemicals.

"I can't even recognize my own sons," he said sadly.

"They should put Saddam on trial in Tikrit, where he has lots of friends," said Ali, a retired barley farmer. "That would be a lesson to all of them."

http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/8950650.htm?ERIGHTS=-8136104065801143160philly::joann.eddy@maxwell.af.mil&KRD_RM=9ppqswuuvywrtrttvsrxpppppp|Jo+Ann|N

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Washington Times

June 18, 2004

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Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough

North Korea test

North Korea recently conducted a test of a long-range missile engine, indicating that the communist state is continuing to develop strategic missile capabilities.

A U.S. official said the test was detected in the past two months at a facility near Musudan, along the northeastern coast about 120 miles from the border with Russia, and might have been part of Pyongyang's efforts to develop the long-range Taepo-Dong 2 missile.

The official said it is unlikely that the engine test was intended to influence the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear program, which took place around the time of the test. The "static ground" test also did not break Pyongyang's self-imposed moratorium on flight tests.

The official confirmed the test after the South Korean newspaper JoongAng Ilbo reported it last week.

The Taepo-Dong 2 was first tested in August 1998 and is believed to have enough range to hit the United States. North Korea is believed to have constructed at least four nuclear warheads.

The new missile is the main reason that the United States agreed to speed up development of a ballistic-missile defense system in Alaska and California, which is expected to be operational in October.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/inring.htm>

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