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International Herald Tribune
December 10, 2004

U.S. Hints At Reward To A Disarmed North Korea

By Andrew Salmon

SEOUL--North Korea can expect a range of benefits if it drops its nuclear arms programs, a U.S. official knowledgeable about talks with the Communist regime said Thursday, as he called for the North to return to nuclear negotiations.

"We are talking permanent, thorough, transparent denuclearization, that is subject to verification," the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said at a meeting with journalists. He ruled out offering any incentives to bring Pyongyang back to the six-party talks, however.

He added that if Pyongyang denuclearizes, it could expect "a rich basket" of "corresponding measures," including energy aid and assistance in joining international financial institutions. The official also said that North Korea would be offered multilateral security assurances and could be removed "very quickly" from the U.S. list of states that sponsor terrorism.

The six-party talks on North Korean nuclear disarmament - involving China, Japan, the two Koreas, Russia and the United States - have stalled since Pyongyang refused to attend the fourth round, which had been scheduled to take place in September.

Observers speculated that North Korea had been awaiting the result of the U.S. presidential election in November, but the North denied this. It has insisted as a precondition for talks that Washington drop its "hostile policy." A flurry of multinational diplomatic activity has failed to get the talks back on track.

The chief U.S. envoy on North Korea, Joseph DeTrani, held two meetings in New York last week with North Korean officials attached to the United Nations. DeTrani was in Seoul on Thursday, after having traveled to Beijing, and will travel on to Tokyo to brief officials there on the New York talks.

In New York, the North Koreans had indicated their commitment to the six-party talks, hoping for their success, but had not given a date for the resumption of talks, the U.S. official said.

"They walked away from the table," he said. "We were surprised, because there were three proposals on the table on June 25." In that last round of talks, North Korea, South Korea and the United States had all made proposals to move the talks forward.

On the issue of what Pyongyang charges is Washington's "hostile policy" toward it, the official said: "This is invariably tabled by the DPRK," referring to the acronym for North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "To be honest, I've not been able to get a very clear answer on this."

He discounted the Proliferation Security Initiative, a multinational effort designed to interdict dangerous cargoes internationally, saying it was not aimed at North Korea, but was a "very necessary" program which aims to halt proliferation and which involves around 60 countries.

He also would not characterize the North Korean Human Rights Act, a U.S. law earmarking up to \$24 million a year for grants to nonprofit groups supporting rights and market reforms, as hostile. "The North Korea human rights bill speaks to the values of the United States," he said. "We hope to have dialogue with the DRPK on human rights."

From where I am sitting, it is not a hostile policy."

<http://www.iht.com/articles/2004/12/09/news/korea.html>

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Washington Post
December 12, 2004
Pg. 1

IAEA Leader's Phone Tapped

U.S. Pores Over Transcripts to Try to Oust Nuclear Chief

By Dafna Linzer, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Bush administration has dozens of intercepts of Mohamed ElBaradei's phone calls with Iranian diplomats and is scrutinizing them in search of ammunition to oust him as director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, according to three U.S. government officials.

But the diplomatic offensive will not be easy. The administration has failed to come up with a candidate willing to oppose ElBaradei, who has run the agency since 1997, and there is disagreement among some senior officials over how hard to push for his removal, and what the diplomatic costs of a public campaign against him could be.

Although eavesdropping, even on allies, is considered a well-worn tool of national security and diplomacy, the efforts against ElBaradei demonstrate the lengths some within the administration are willing to go to replace a top international diplomat who questioned U.S. intelligence on Iraq and is now taking a cautious approach on Iran.

The intercepted calls have not produced any evidence of nefarious conduct by ElBaradei, according to three officials who have read them. But some within the administration believe they show ElBaradei lacks impartiality because he tried to help Iran navigate a diplomatic crisis over its nuclear programs. Others argue the transcripts demonstrate nothing more than standard telephone diplomacy.

"Some people think he sounds way too soft on the Iranians, but that's about it," said one official with access to the intercepts.

In Vienna, where the IAEA is headquartered, officials said they were not surprised about the eavesdropping.

"We've always assumed that this kind of thing goes on," said IAEA spokesman Mark Gwozdecky. "We wish it were otherwise, but we know the reality."

The IAEA, often called the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog agency, coordinates nuclear safety around the world and monitors materials that could be diverted for weapons use. It has played pivotal investigative roles in four major crises in recent years: Iran, Iraq, North Korea and the nuclear black market run by one of Pakistan's top scientists. Each issue has produced some tension between the agency and the White House, and this is not the first time that ElBaradei or other U.N. officials have been the targets of a spy campaign. Three weeks before the invasion of Iraq in

March 2003, the Observer newspaper in Britain published a secret directive from the National Security Agency ordering increased eavesdropping on U.N. diplomats.

Earlier this year, Clare Short, who served in British Prime Minister Tony Blair's cabinet, said British spies had eavesdropped on U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's calls during that period and that she had read transcripts of the intercepts.

The NSA, which is responsible for collecting and decoding electronic communications for the U.S. government, had no information to provide on the ElBaradei intercepts. The CIA refused comment.

ElBaradei, 62, an Egyptian diplomat who taught international law at New York University, is well-respected inside the United Nations, and many of the countries that sit on the IAEA board have asked him to stay for a third term beginning next summer.

To block that, Washington would need to persuade a little more than one-third of the IAEA's 35-member board to vote against his reappointment.

But even some of the administration's closest friends, including Britain, appear to be reluctant to join a fight they believe is motivated by a desire to pay back ElBaradei for Iraq. Without clear support and no candidate, the White House began searching for material to strengthen its argument that ElBaradei should be retired next summer, according to several senior policymakers who would discuss strategy only on the condition of anonymity.

The officials said anonymous accusations against ElBaradei made by U.S. officials in recent weeks are part of an orchestrated campaign. One of the most commonly cited accusations is that ElBaradei has purposely concealed damning details of Iran's program from the IAEA board. The charges are unproven and have been staunchly denied by the agency.

"The plan is to keep the spotlight on ElBaradei and raise the heat," another U.S. official said.

But another official said there is disagreement within the administration, chiefly between Undersecretary of State for Arms Control John R. Bolton, whom aides say is eager to see ElBaradei go, and outgoing Secretary of State Colin L. Powell, over whether it would be worth diverting diplomatic capital that could be better spent on lobbying the board to get tougher with Iran.

In September, Powell said ElBaradei should step aside, citing a term limit policy adopted several years ago in Geneva by the top 10 contributors to international organizations.

"We think the Geneva rule is a good rule: two terms," Powell told Agence France-Presse. "It's not been followed in the past on many occasions, more often than not, but we still think it's a good, useful rule." Powell said he discussed it personally with ElBaradei, who decided he would stay on if the board wanted him.

"However this effort is justified by the administration, the assumption internationally will be that the United States was blackballing ElBaradei because of Iraq and Iran," said Robert Einhorn, who was assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation until 2001.

Several months ago, the State Department began canvassing potential candidates, including Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, two Japanese diplomats, two South Koreans officials and a Brazilian disarmament expert.

But the South Koreans and Brazil's Sergio Duarte are now considered to be problematic candidates because both countries are under IAEA investigation for suspect nuclear work. Downer, who is not willing to challenge ElBaradei, still remains the administration's top choice. The deadline for submitting alternative candidates to ElBaradei is Dec. 31.

"Our original strategy was to get Alex Downer to throw his hat in the ring, but we couldn't," said one U.S. policymaker. "Anyone in politics will tell you that you can't beat somebody with nobody, but we're going to try to disprove that."

That strategy worked once before when the administration orchestrated the 2002 removal of Jose M. Bustani, who ran the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), a U.N. organization based in The Hague. Bustani drew the administration's ire when he tried to involve his organization in the search for suspected chemical weapons in Iraq.

The administration canvassed the organization's board and then forced a narrow vote for his ouster. A successor was found three months later, and there was little diplomatic fallout from the administration's maneuver, mostly because the OPCW has a fairly low-profile and its members wanted to avoid being drawn into the diplomatic row leading up to the Iraq war.

But John S. Wolf, who was assistant secretary of state for nonproliferation until June, said such action comes at a cost and makes it harder for the United States to keep the world's attention focused on pressing threats.

"The net result of campaigns that others saw as spiteful was that even where the U.S. had quite legitimate and proven concerns, the atmosphere had been so soured that it wasn't possible to recoup," Wolf said.

Gareth Evans, a former Australian foreign minister who now heads a high-level panel on U.N. reform, said ElBaradei has been excellent in his job and that Washington would be making a mistake to challenge him.

"If they think they can get anyone who could have better handled the complex and difficult issues surrounding North Korea, Iran and other controversies, they are not understanding the world right now."
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A57928-2004Dec11.html>

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Washington Times
December 12, 2004
Pg. 1

From The Ground Up

U.S. takes quiet approach to missile defense system

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Two years after the demise of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the United States has put into place a limited system to defend the country from missile attacks. It is the first system of its kind to protect all 50 states from missile attack, on a limited scale.

No ribbon-cutting ceremony was held to announce the deployment of the system, which had been in the works for decades. Instead, the Pentagon has moved quietly and with little fanfare to make the key elements of a missile defense.

The plan, according to the December 2002 White House National Security Presidential Directive, NSPD-23, calls for an "evolutionary approach" to development and deployment of missile defenses that will unfold gradually over the next 10 to 15 years.

That approach began in December 2001 when President Bush met with his key advisers to discuss missile defense and talks with Russian officials.

Eight months of discussions had produced no breakthrough in efforts to modify the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which put strict limits on deploying defenses against long-range missile attack.

The treaty, which limited defenses in favor of holding populations hostage to annihilation or "mutually assured destruction" by nuclear missiles, had become a fundamental obstacle to fielding a system of missile interceptors, radar and communications links to protect the United States from the growing danger of long-range missile attack, and the current threat of short-range missiles aimed at U.S. forces.

"Notify the Russians we are withdrawing from the treaty," Mr. Bush told National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice. The president had promised during his first campaign to deploy a missile shield, and that promise was on the way to being fulfilled.

Six months after the meeting on June 1, 2002, the ABM Treaty ended, opening the way for a missile defense system that had been on the drawing board since President Reagan first announced the Strategic Defense Initiative in March 1983.

The first system now in place at two missile interceptor bases in Alaska and California can stop one or more long-range North Korean missiles fired at the United States.

Other defenses, both airborne and sea-based, will come online beginning next year and will provide a layer of systems designed to knock out missiles and warheads shortly after launch, in the middle of their flight and as they approach their final targets.

"Could we shoot a missile down right now? Yes, we can do so," said Air Force Lt. Gen. Henry A. "Trey" Obering, director of the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), the Pentagon unit in charge of designing and fielding missile defenses.

The three-star general, a former fighter pilot who worked on the NASA space shuttle program, said the current system is in a "shakedown" period where commanders and troops are working out any bugs and conducting tests and training.

The system has an "emergency" capability that will improve over time with testing and additional deployments, Gen. Obering said.

"We believe that we have gotten all the equipment ready, checked out and verified; we've got the crews trained and certified," he said. "But that in and of itself does not make an operational capability. You need a period of time in which can go through your procedures, wring things out, kind of like a shakedown cruise for a new ship."

The North Korean threat

MDA spokesman Rick Lehner said the new system is limited to stopping missiles from North Korea. "Any emergency capability for a missile launched from Asia is geared only to a North Korean threat, not China or Russia," he said.

A third missile interceptor base is planned for Europe in the near future to deal with the growing threat of long-range missiles fired from Iran.

A senior administration official involved in missile defense said the new system also will provide insurance against an "accidental" launch, presumably from either Russia or China, where control over nuclear missiles could be uncertain in a crisis, or, in the case of China, is largely unknown.

The Navy missile defense system is slated for deployment in the next several months. Its contribution is a sea-based system built on up to six Aegis-equipped warships armed with Standard Missile-3 interceptors.

Eighteen Navy warships — 15 destroyers and three cruisers — have been slated to be outfitted for SM-3s. The first six SM-3 will be deployed next year and will increase quickly to 100, Gen. Obering said.

The Navy system will have the ability to shoot down both short-range and long-range missiles and is considered especially lethal because the ships can be moved to cover different targets and defend both U.S. territory or U.S. allies with the help of troops stationed abroad.

Exotic effort

The most exotic is the Air Force plan for putting a laser gun in the nose of a Boeing 747 jet that will zap missiles shortly after launch. Other systems include the Patriot PAC-3, the Theater High-Altitude Area Defense and a U.S.-European project known as the Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS).

The United States, Germany and Italy signed an agreement in September to spend \$3 billion on designing and developing MEADS, a system of mobile launchers using Patriot missiles to stop short-range missiles, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and combat jets.

After more than 19 years of research and development and an estimated \$75 billion in costs, the first warhead interceptor system is in place.

The heart of the new U.S. system is called the Ground Based Midcourse Defense. To date, it includes six high-speed missile interceptors deployed at the reopened Army base at Fort Greely, Alaska, near Fairbanks. The Fort Greely complex was built as a test site but is now both an experimental and operational base. The first interceptor was deployed in October.

An additional interceptor was put into place last week, the first to be put into one of four silos at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. A second Vandenberg interceptor could be deployed before Christmas.

Training and drills

In military terms, the system will be declared formally "operational" later this month or early next month. Before that declaration, elements of three military commands have been busy with training and drills on how to operate the system.

The drills involve simulating the launch of a long-range North Korean Taepo-Dong missile, tracking its flight, acquiring the warhead with targeting equipment and launching an interceptor that is guided to the warhead for a "kill" in space.

The U.S. Strategic Command, based at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb., that is in charge of U.S. offensive strategic missiles, will take the lead in operating the new missile defense system worldwide.

Northern Command at Fort Peterson, Colo., which runs the North American Aerospace Defense Command (Northcom), will handle monitoring missile launches around the world and tracking their flights. Northcom is responsible for protecting the U.S. homeland through the ground-based system in Alaska and California.

The Pacific Command in Hawaii is in charge of defending the islands and has control over all Aegis-based Navy missile defenses. It also directs the five Aegis-equipped warships that are assigned to patrol waters near North Korea as part of the system. The ships can provide long-range tracking information as part of the ground-based system.

Early warning

In Britain and Greenland, work has begun on upgrading large early-warning radar that will be part of the system.

Within a year, a large radar built on a mobile oil rig will be deployed near Adak, Alaska, and a large radar, code-named Cobra Dane, on remote Shemya Island, at the tip of Alaska's Aleutian chain, is also part of the system.

At the Pentagon, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld has yet to sign the implementing guidance that will provide commanders with directions on such things as rules of engagement. Defense officials said in the next year or two a third European interceptor site will be built, possibly in Britain, Poland or Romania. Italy and the Czech Republic also are potential interceptor sites.

Watching enemy missile launches will be a key element of the system. A variety of high-tech systems deployed around the world and in space, including radar and satellites, will detect launches, track their flights and hand off information to missile defense components that will be used to guide interceptors and their "kill vehicles" to warheads. The kill vehicle has the capability to identify warheads from dummy warheads designed to defeat missile defenses.

To the surprise of many missile defense proponents, the Bush administration has played down the new defensive system. Mr. Rumsfeld, in particular, instituted tighter secrecy around the program.

During the recent presidential campaign, few references were made to the missile defense system in stump speeches, or the fact that the president has fulfilled a 2000 campaign promise to deploy a system.

A defense official said the September 11 terrorist attacks and the global war on terrorism had refocused priorities away from missile defense development.

Strong opposition

Sen. Carl Levin, Michigan Democrat, is one of the most outspoken critics of missile defenses. He has argued that funding for missile defense deployment, \$10.5 billion for fiscal 2005, should be stopped until more tests can be carried out. He also has said deployment would trigger an arms race.

"The administration is spending billions of dollars to deploy an untested missile defense, against a very unlikely threat," Mr. Levin said. "This funding should be allocated toward higher priorities, such as homeland defense."

Mr. Rumsfeld dismisses such critics as defeatist.

"To some people ... who have a mind-set that says the way you develop something is you put it into R&D, you develop it, you test it, test it, test it, and never deploy it until it's working perfectly," he said. "And anyone who does anything other than that is rushing to deploy. And in my view, that's just simply not the case."

Gen. Obering notes a sharp rise in missile threats. In 1972, eight nations had ballistic missile technology. "If you look today, it is 20, growing to almost 30 nations, and many of those are not friendly. We see a sharing of technology as well."

Terrorists also could obtain missiles, he said.

Gen. Obering is optimistic. "I feel very good about this [initial system], but it is only the beginning," he said.

<http://www.washtimes.com/specialreport/20041212-123601-3012r.htm>

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Washington Times

December 12, 2004

Pg. 4

Deployment Generates Interest, Little Opposition

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

Deployment of the first U.S. national missile defense has produced little domestic or international opposition. In fact, there is growing interest among other nations in taking part in buying or cooperating in U.S. efforts to knock down enemy missiles and warheads.

Russia, with thousands of strategic nuclear missiles and its own limited missile defense, has said that the U.S. system does not threaten Moscow's security. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov said in August that the interceptors in Alaska "pose no threat to Russia's security." He also said that "in theory Russia has never ruled out cooperation with the USA" in missile defenses.

China, on the other hand, has reacted modestly. "Our missile defenses aren't really a threat to China. And I think they know that," said an official who is involved in missile defense at the Pentagon. "It's not been a thunderous response or ruptured relations."

However, China has been more vocal in opposing U.S. short-range missile defenses, such as the Patriot PAC-3 or Aegis missile defense, that could be sold or used cooperatively in defending Taiwan, the official said.

China's official People's Daily, the newspaper of the ruling Communist Party, said U.S. missile defenses can contribute to world peace by stopping the accidental launch of a nuclear missile. "However, the [national missile defense], no matter how perfect it becomes, could not truly stop a nuclear war or a nuclear strike on the U.S. continent," the newspaper stated.

Japan is likely to become one of the major U.S. partners in overseas missile defense. Tokyo has agreed to buy the Navy's new Standard Missile-3 (SM-3) interceptor, which can be deployed on Japan's Aegis ships.

Japan also has expressed an interest in buying the Air Force's new Airborne Laser, the Boeing 747 with a laser gun outfitted in the nose that can shoot down short-range missiles. For the Japanese, the major missile threat comes from North Korea, which has 620-mile-range Nodong missiles that can hit Japan.

European allies Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania and Hungary also are interested in cooperative arrangements with the United States on missile defense. Poland already has designated the Powidz Air Base in the western part of the country as a potential interceptor base for U.S. missiles. Construction of a base in Europe could begin as early as 2006, defense officials said.

Australia has said it plans to develop missile defenses with the United States. Israel has deployed Arrow missile defenses that were developed jointly with the United States. India is considering the purchase of Patriot anti-missile systems to counter the threat from Pakistan's missiles.

Taiwan, which already has a less-capable version of the Patriot, is planning purchases of the PAC-3, perhaps as early as next year. Taiwan needs the defenses to counter the growing Chinese missile threat to the island. "The

foremost threat from the Chinese communists is their some 600 ballistic missiles," said Adm. Chen Pang-chih, head of Taiwan's political warfare bureau.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20041211-114119-9496r.htm>

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New York Times
December 12, 2004

The U.S. Vs. A Nuclear Iran

By David E. Sanger

This article was reported by Thom Shanker, Eric Schmitt and David E. Sanger, and was written by Mr. Sanger.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 11 - The Bush administration says the prospect of Iran's obtaining a nuclear weapon is "intolerable," and from the White House to the State Department, officials express considerable skepticism that Europe's efforts to negotiate quietly an end to Iran's nuclear activities will succeed.

Yet, though President Bush threatened Iraq before the war there, he has said almost nothing about the possibility of resorting to military action in Iran.

That may reflect the fact that Pentagon war planners, reviewing available options, say there are no good options for Mr. Bush - or for Israel, which has expressed even greater alarm about a nuclear-armed Iran if negotiations fail.

Almost unanimously, these planners and Pentagon analysts say there are no effective military ways to wipe out a nuclear program that has been well hidden and broadly dispersed across the country, including in crowded cities. Confronted with intelligence evidence, Iran admitted to inspectors last year that it had hidden critical aspects of its civilian program for 18 years, and even today there are questions about whether all of its nuclear-related sites are known.

The Bush administration has talked about the possibility of going to the United Nations to seek sanctions against Iran if a recent accord with the Europeans falls apart, as a similar agreement did last year. But the Iranians themselves are aware of the whispers about military strikes, many of them fueled by Israeli officials who view the threat as much more urgent than the Europeans do.

Even so, such talk may amount to little more than bluffing in a high-stakes diplomatic game that the deputy secretary of state, Richard L. Armitage, recently described as "kind of a good-cop, bad-cop arrangement," with Washington playing the bad cop. But a senior European official related a conversation in which Iranians deeply involved in the talks warned that any military action would be futile.

The official said the Iranians boasted that "they can rebuild the facilities in six months," using indigenous technology. He also said they believed that after any military action to slow Iran's program, they could "develop a weapon as a national cause, with more consensus than now."

Senior officers and Pentagon officials confirm that war planners, in particular Air Force targeting teams, have updated contingencies for dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions, as they periodically do. But they immediately emphasize that this does not reflect any guidance from the civilian leadership to prepare for military confrontation. Instead, they say, it is part of an effort ordered by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Gen. Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to begin a constant process of refreshing contingency planning throughout the world, an effort partly inspired by the outdated plan for invading Iraq that had to be rapidly dusted off and radically rewritten before the war there.

"Military planning always continues," said one senior officer based in the Middle East. "We are constantly updating plans."

But interviews with military planners, Pentagon policy makers and academic experts drew a unanimous sentiment that the challenge in 2005 would be to contain the situation so that neither the United States nor Iran took a misstep or miscalculated, bringing on military action.

The Iranians remember Osirak, the site of a lightning Israeli airstrike against an Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981 that set back Saddam Hussein's nuclear ambitions by a decade. American and European intelligence officials say Iran has taken the lesson to heart, spreading its nuclear facilities around the country, burying some underground and putting others in the middle of crowded urban areas.

For example, the International Atomic Energy Agency last year found centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium, behind a false wall at the Kalaye Electric Company in a densely populated corner of Tehran, where there would be no way to conduct a military strike without causing major civilian casualties. "They are not about to make the same mistake Saddam did," a senior administration official said.

Thus the military options range from the bad to the unimaginable.

None guarantee success, military planners say. Many risk causing not only casualties but a political crisis in the Middle East. The planners, many of them involved in the war against Iraq, argue vehemently that Iran presents a

growing proliferation problem better approached through diplomatic channels than by airstrikes, Special Operations missions or an all-out invasion.

"There's no big war plan on the shelf," said one administration official involved in the planning process.

Part of the caution appears linked to the realization that while Iran's nuclear facilities are far more advanced than Iraq's ever were, the administration has yet to prove that Iran is secretly planning to build a weapon. The country has opened many of its sites to international inspectors, though there is still wrangling over whether the agency will be able to visit two military sites that some experts suspect could house a parallel, secret military effort to produce uranium.

If such sites exist, they would violate the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, which Iran has signed and which requires that all of its facilities must be solely for civilian use. So far, the inspectors have asked to see only one of the sites, and Iran has not indicated whether it would provide access.

The director general of the international agency, Mohamed ElBaradei, has carefully stopped short of declaring that Iran is seeking a weapon, though recently he noted that Iran "tried to cheat the system."

But whether it is a civilian program or something more nefarious, Iran is using an approach to developing nuclear fuel through the enrichment of uranium that is far easier to hide than the approach that Iraq took two decades ago. So there is no central plant like Osirak to bomb.

"Osirak is not a paradigm," said Robert S. Litwak, director of international studies at the Woodrow Wilson Center here. "It was an exceptional case, in which all of the conditions for success came together. Israel had accurate intelligence on the target, collateral damage effects on the nearby population were judged minimal because the nuclear core had not yet been loaded into the reactor, and Saddam Hussein then had no capacity to retaliate directly against Israel."

In Iran today, said Mr. Litwak, who worked on proliferation issues as a National Security Council staff member in the Clinton administration, "none of those conditions pertain."

That view is echoed at the senior levels of the military. "Iran takes great care to protect its technology and production/storage capability with multiple layers of security, hardening and dispersal," said one Air Force general with experience in the Middle East. "All this complicates identification, targeting and execution."

Analysts of the Iranian political scene also point out that many in the American government view a growing and energized Iranian civil society, in particular the young and women, as an agent of change toward a democratic Iran.

News of the energy agency's restrained action helped Iran's stock market, which had suffered over fears that the nuclear dispute could result in a military confrontation with Israel or the United States. Any American military strike on Iran, these analysts say, would cancel any positive feelings these people have toward the United States, and probably galvanize support for the more militant Islamic leadership.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/12/politics/12nuke.html>

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Los Angeles Times

December 13, 2004

Pg. 1

U.S. Options Few In Feud With Iran

Alarmed at Tehran's nuclear ambitions, Washington for now can only watch and wait.

By Sonni Efron, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — Top diplomats from the United States and its closest allies gathered this fall in Washington to hammer out a common approach to Iran's nuclear ambitions. But the mood quickly soured.

Dispensing with the usual diplomatic niceties, Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton simply read aloud a U.S. position paper. In it, the administration refused to back European negotiations with Iran and instead insisted that Tehran be dragged before the United Nations Security Council to condemn it for concealing a nuclear weapons program.

Irked, the Europeans demanded to know what good it would do to bring Iran before the U.N. when Washington knew it could not muster enough Security Council votes even to slap Tehran's wrist.

Bolton referred them to another U.S. position paper.

"He was not willing to discuss anything," said one stunned participant.

The incident, sketched here from interviews with four people who either attended or are familiar with the meeting of officials from the Group of Eight industrialized nations, is circulating in the diplomatic world as evidence of European frustration with the Bush administration.

Bolton's office had no comment. But critics say it is also emblematic of how divisions within the administration have kept the U.S. from either wholeheartedly joining the European approach or coming up with an alternative.

A bruising round of negotiations with Tehran last month left the Europeans more skeptical than ever about Iran's claim that its nuclear power program was peaceful. But Europeans also are mistrustful of U.S. intentions, top experts said.

Some see the lack of a coherent U.S. strategy for solving the Iranian nuclear standoff as a tacit decision by the stalemated Bush administration to bide its time and hope the situation in Iran turns to its advantage by next year. Facing diplomatic gridlock, unappealing military options, internal ideological divisions and major domestic and foreign political constraints stemming from the Iraq war, Washington has little choice but to watch and wait. Some prominent conservatives are arguing for a preemptive U.S. military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities, but State Department, Pentagon and National Security Council officials have been insisting in recent weeks that military action is not under discussion.

"We do not want American armies marching on Tehran," Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said late last month. "Nobody's seriously talking about military options because it doesn't make any sense," said a senior administration official. Speaking on condition of anonymity, the official called the notion of a preemptive strike "a dumb idea." "It's uninformed and irresponsible to suggest that there is a military solution to this program," the official said. "Diplomacy is our approach, and it's not a stalling tactic."

U.S. officials will not discuss what they will do if diplomacy fails. U.S. hard-liners, led by Vice President Dick Cheney, reject making deals with the theocracy in Tehran, and more moderate officials say it isn't clear the religious conservatives in control in Iran are eager to engage with "the Great Satan" either.

Other officials said the United States and its allies have many options short of military action with which to isolate and punish a government that they believe persists in trying to develop nuclear weapons.

"At the end of the day we may have to do it," said another senior official, referring to military action. "We're not at the end of the day yet."

Still, the administration's apparent lack of a strategy worries many people in Washington and abroad.

"I don't think this administration has decided on what its Iran policy is going to be, but one thing is clear: It's not going to be war," said an Iran expert in the Defense Department.

Washington's war planners have updated their scenarios for a possible showdown with Iran. The national security bureaucracy has conducted war games, and officials have been "gaming out" other ways the United States could respond if diplomatic efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon were to fail.

But they describe the efforts as "prudent contingency planning" that should not be interpreted as saber-rattling. If anything, the process of studying a potential conflict with Iran seems to have made some Bush administration officials more cautious. One possible outcome that alarms planners, senior officials say, is that Tehran might order terrorist retaliation if the United States were to strike Iranian nuclear targets.

U.S. officials are particularly worried about the potential for Iran to use the militant Lebanese group Hezbollah, which it funds and supports, to hit American targets in Iraq, step up attacks in Israel, target U.S. embassies and consulates around the world, or even to strike inside the United States.

American officials have called Hezbollah "the A-team" of terrorism, potentially more deadly than Al Qaeda, with possibly dozens of cells around the world.

"Hezbollah gives Iran a global weapon that we need to understand," the second senior administration official said. Any scenario under which the U.S. attacks Iran, overtly or covertly, will have to include plans to batten down the hatches at myriad American diplomatic targets overseas where retaliation could be expected, the official said.

U.S. economic targets abroad could also come into the cross hairs. And some think a cornered Iran could launch preemptive strikes of its own, as some Tehran officials have threatened recently.

Several American officials have said they believe Hezbollah has "sleeper" cells raising money in at least five major U.S. urban areas. The question in officials' minds is how those cells might react if the U.S. were to clash with Iran.

"This isn't an argument not to do what people are proposing to do," the official said, referring to the use of force. "It's an argument to understand what the consequences are."

Reuel Marc Gerecht of the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank, who favors preemptive action against Iran, argues that the U.S. must not be intimidated by the fear that Iran might try to deploy Hezbollah.

"You have to be crystal clear with them that whatever they dream up, we can dream up something much, much worse," Gerecht said. "The Iranians understand that in the tit-for-tat game, they lose overwhelmingly."

Israel has long studied potential airstrikes against Iranian nuclear sites, but leading American conservatives argue that if strikes are deemed necessary, for political and military reasons the U.S. should do it alone.

According to sources outside the administration, covert and overt action might include sabotage at Iranian nuclear sites or attacks on Iranian oil exporting facilities.

"The idea that the only contingency plan available is to use U.S. air raids is not true," said Patrick Clawson, Deputy Director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. Given the shoddy design of the Russian nuclear plants

whose blueprints Iran is using for its facilities, he said, "one could well imagine that there could be catastrophic industrial accidents."

Officials and independent analysts agree that a U.S. strike would probably embitter the Iranian public for a generation or more. It also probably would cut U.S. oil companies off from any contracts, even under any future, more moderate Iranian government. Foreign competitors, on the other hand, might not hesitate to do business with a nuclear-armed Iran.

Some conservatives think it would still be worth it to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, and prevent Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other neighbors from following suit.

The Pentagon, officials said, is paying less attention to Iran than it is to Syria, which the administration believes is the source of much of the funding for the Iraqi insurgency. With 150,000 U.S. troops deployed in Iraq for the foreseeable future, top military officials rule out the possibility of a large-scale ground offensive against Iran. Airstrikes could set back any nuclear program temporarily, but a determined Tehran government could rebuild it in as little as three years, outside experts said. Some warned that Iran had learned the lessons of the Israeli airstrike that destroyed Iraq's nuclear reactor at Osirak in 1981, after which Tehran dispersed its nuclear activities and fortified its facilities to thwart an air attack.

Another U.S. administration official, however, contradicted such assessments, saying that the most valuable of Iran's nuclear targets could be destroyed in airstrikes.

"We could knock most of the sites out pretty easily," the official said.

But the official said a preemptive strike would be the worst option for the United States, since it would inflame Iranian nationalism. "If we strike Iran, we play right into the mullahs' hands," the official said.

Although some U.S. officials disparage the military options, many are skeptical that diplomatic efforts will succeed. In recent weeks, tensions continued to rise with reports that Iran had refused to allow inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency access to two secret military sites where the West suspects it may be working on parts of a covert nuclear weapons program.

Late last month, the United States reluctantly voted for an IAEA resolution endorsing the deal brokered by Germany, France and Britain that offered Tehran trade and other incentives in exchange for a freeze in its uranium enrichment programs. The deal, which means Iran will not be taken before the Security Council, does not impose specific penalties if Tehran were to renege on the agreement, as Washington believes it will. Nor does it settle the issue of inspections.

The Europeans warn that unless America comes to the bargaining table with a deal good enough to convince Iranians that developing nuclear weapons is not in their national interests, the ayatollahs will end up with the Bomb, try as the West may to stop them.

Lacking appealing military or diplomatic options, the Bush administration is relying on its powers of persuasion. Officials contend that they are not biding their time.

"We haven't given up on the scales falling from people's eyes at some point," the first senior administration official said, arguing that the evidence of Iran's covert nuclear program and cover-ups was mounting. "We think eventually Iran will prove true to form and make our case for us."

Critics say the U.S. ability to indict Iran for a clandestine weapons program has been undercut by the administration's track record on alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. And some speculate whether the U.S. hard-liners would prefer Security Council inaction so they could declare the U.N. irrelevant and move against Iran with a new "coalition of the willing."

A second round of European-Iranian negotiations is to begin in mid-December, with the United States still on the sidelines. The Europeans argue that U.S. participation is essential to success.

"If we go it alone, the Iranians are never going to do anything meaningful on the nuclear program," one European diplomat said. He acknowledged that failure was possible even with Washington's help, but said that failure was virtually guaranteed without it.

"They are not happy with what we are doing, but they have no alternative strategy," the diplomat complained.

"Probably some of them hope we are going to fail ... and that becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy."

Times staff writers Josh Meyer and Mark Mazzetti in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-usiran13dec13,0,2484958.story?coll=la-home-world>

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Washington Post
December 13, 2004
Pg. 21

How To Approach Iran

By Madeleine Albright, Robin Cook, Hubert Vedrine, Lamberto Dini, Lloyd Axworthy, Niels Helveg Petersen, Ana Palacio and Jozias van Aartsen

The following article was signed by Madeleine Albright, secretary of state in the Clinton administration, and by seven former foreign ministers: Robin Cook of Britain, Hubert Vedrine of France, Lamberto Dini of Italy, Lloyd Axworthy of Canada, Niels Helveg Petersen of Denmark, Ana Palacio of Spain and Jozias van Aartsen of the Netherlands.

Foreign ministers from France, Germany and Britain meet with Iran's top nuclear negotiator this week at a moment of enormous consequence. The United States will not be there, but the subtle signals it will send from a distance will have a tremendous impact on the outcome. There are some who believe that Washington expects, and perhaps hopes, that the talks will collapse altogether. But if the United States and Europe are to be successful in preventing a radical regime from gaining nuclear weapons, there will have to be much greater coordination and new approaches on both sides of the Atlantic.

We are a group of former foreign ministers from Europe, Canada and the United States who are very concerned about the current state of transatlantic relations and the effect it is having on our ability to join together to address a number of global challenges. Halting Iran's nuclear ambitions is a case in point. We have met a number of times under the auspices of the Aspen Institute to consider why habits of cooperation are yielding to a psychology of competition and strain. We believe that genuine transatlantic cooperation is the only path to viable solutions. As a result of the work of the British, French and German foreign ministers, the Iranians agreed last month to suspend their nuclear programs while negotiations for economic and technical cooperation take place. This agreement represents progress, but it will not be successful until Iran permanently suspends any attempt to create a nuclear weapons capacity. As people who have experienced firsthand the challenge of balancing carrots and sticks in these sorts of delicate and serious negotiations, we offer the following ideas on obtaining full cooperation from the Iranians.

First, the United States and Europe must be clear about their collective purpose. The Iranians have made splitting the Atlantic partnership their *modus operandi*, hoping that disagreements between the United States and Europe will buy them the time to progress down the nuclear path to the point of irreversibility. In order to counteract this strategy, European and U.S. policymakers must repeatedly and jointly articulate that they seek to hold Iran to the obligations it has accepted under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to refrain from building nuclear arms. In the same breath, American and European heads of state must emphasize that the West does not seek to deny Iran the right to a peaceful civilian nuclear energy program under the necessary safeguards.

Second, the major nuclear suppliers (Russia, the United States and Europe) should provide a firm guarantee to supply fresh reactor fuel for civilian nuclear power and to retrieve and dispose of spent fuel in exchange for Iran's agreement to permanently forswear its own nuclear fuel-cycle capabilities, including enrichment, reprocessing, uranium conversion and heavy-water production.

Third, the Bush administration should support the recent agreement the three European countries negotiated with the Iranians as an important first step. While it is unclear whether this deal will ultimately halt Iran's nuclear ambitions, only a unified approach will enable Europe and the United States to find out. Washington should put its full support behind this diplomatic effort and consider launching commercial and diplomatic engagement with Iran. That country's political leadership and culture have changed dramatically over the past two decades and are much more complex than many realize. Understanding the various political operatives inside Iran and their motivations requires the United States to instigate face-to-face interaction. Doing so could bring direct benefits to the United States as disagreements over the nuclear question need not, for example, disrupt efforts to achieve cooperation on such matters as narcotics enforcement, Iraq, the fight against terrorism and peace in the Middle East.

If the Americans need to increase their support for diplomatic efforts, Europeans must prove to the Iranians that severe political and economic consequences will result if Iran does not renounce the nuclear weapons option. In the event that diplomacy fails and Iran decides not to abandon its efforts to develop nuclear weapons, Europeans should be ready for alternative courses of action, including going to the U.N. Security Council, and they should repeatedly stress their willingness to act. The transatlantic community should not be trying to force a confrontation with Iran, but we must not fear one if that's what is necessary to prevent the introduction of another nuclear weapons program into the combustible Middle East.

The interests of every nation will be served by an arrangement that gives Iran the civilian nuclear program it says it wants and the international community the insurance it needs. Together, with sufficient patience and resolve, Europe and America must push as hard as possible to achieve that outcome and stand together, as well, in the event the effort does not succeed.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A60177-2004Dec12.html>

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Disputes Slow Arms Safeguards In Russia

Millions in U.S. aid held up by access, liability issues

By Peter Eisler, USA Today

WASHINGTON — U.S. programs to help Russia protect and destroy its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are far behind schedule, despite President Bush's warning this fall that terrorists getting such weapons is "the biggest threat facing this country."

A half-billion dollars set aside by Congress in the past two years to secure or scrap Russian weapons sits unspent, a USA TODAY review of figures provided by program managers finds. Federal audits released in the past 18 months show hundreds of millions more have gone to ineffective projects.

The delays in safeguarding the stockpiles stem largely from disputes between the United States and Russia over how much access Americans need to inspect Russian weapons sites and verify that U.S. aid is spent properly. The U.S. government also has had trouble reaching binding agreements with Russia on how to manage U.S.-funded storage and disposal facilities — and who will be liable if one has an accident.

"The window of cooperation seems to be closing," says Laura Holgate, a former Pentagon and Energy Department official now with the Nuclear Threat Initiative, a group that supports non-proliferation efforts. "Our No. 1 threat is being held hostage to lesser concerns."

The assistance programs, managed by the departments of Defense and Energy, were set up in 1991 to safeguard and eliminate weapons of mass destruction in former Soviet states. But Russia has grown resistant to efforts it fears could undermine its sovereignty.

"We're seeing an increased emphasis by the Russians on protecting national secrets," says Paul Longworth of the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration.

Vladimir Yermakov, a senior counselor at the Russian Embassy, says some U.S. demands can be excessive. "You provide (assistance) on your terms and we take it on our terms. We are trying to marry the two."

The stakes are high: The U.S.-Russian pact governing the programs expires in June 2006, and the liability and access disputes could scuttle efforts to renew it.

Despite the snags, the Pentagon and the Energy Department say the programs have made progress. For example, 6,472 nuclear warheads have been destroyed, including the entire arsenals that Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan inherited from the Soviets.

But progress is getting more elusive as the agencies turn to remaining stocks of nuclear, chemical and biological materials at Russia's more sensitive defense sites. Some examples:

*The Energy Department is behind schedule in upgrading protections on 600 tons of nuclear material at 115 Russian sites. At its current rate, the project could miss its 2008 deadline by two years. Longworth insists that access disputes will be settled, and the department will be able to meet its goal.

*The Pentagon has been refused access to several Russian labs targeted for security upgrades to protect biological warfare materials. In a statement, the Pentagon said it won't fund the work unless it can verify that U.S. aid "is being used for its intended purposes."

*Delays in building a U.S.-financed chemical weapons disposal plant in Shchuch'ye, Russia, make it unlikely that the country will meet treaty deadlines for destroying the weapons. Russia failed to meet Pentagon demands this year for a plan for the plant's use.

Weapons destruction moves slowly

More than a decade after the United States set up programs to help former Soviet states protect and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, some goals remain less than half completed. Some of the weaponry destroyed:

Defense Department programs

Strategic nuclear warheads -- 6,472 destroyed, 49% of goal

Intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) -- 559 destroyed, 58% of goal

ICBM silos -- 470 destroyed, 66% of goal

Submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) -- 541 destroyed, 75% of goal

SLBM launchers -- 408 destroyed, 65% of goal

Nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarines -- 27 destroyed, 65% of goal

Strategic bombers -- 137 destroyed, 86% of goal

Energy Department programs

Upgrading security for 600 tons of nuclear material at 115 sites in Russia -- Initial stopgap security upgrades: 46% of material secured; Comprehensive security upgrades: 26% of material secured

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USA Today
December 14, 2004
Pg. 2

Renewal Of Deal To Help Secure Russian Arms In Doubt

By Peter Eisler, USA Today

WASHINGTON — This was to be the year that Russia began getting tens of millions of dollars in U.S. assistance to build a plant to convert 34 tons of plutonium into fuel for commercial nuclear reactors.

But not a dime of the \$50 million Congress set aside to start construction has been spent.

In 2002, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham called the project “central to enhancing our national security” in a post-Sept. 11 world. But construction of the plant, a pillar of U.S. efforts to help Russia protect and destroy nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, has been stalled for years, largely because of a dispute on how much liability the U.S. government and its workers would bear in any accident.

The dispute is one of several slowing U.S. efforts to help Russia deal with surplus arms. The work is done under Defense and Energy department programs that provide U.S. money to help former Soviet states protect and eliminate weapons of mass destruction.

“We need to get rid of these weapons in Russia ... (and) these problems are frustrating us,” says Sen. Richard Lugar, R-Ind.

The bilateral agreement authorizing the programs expires in 2006. And disputes on liability and other issues threaten its renewal.

“Without (a new pact), I think all of our programs would have to stop,” says Paul Longworth of the Energy Department's National Nuclear Security Administration. “Obviously, we're concerned if we don't get resolution soon.”

But renewal talks haven't begun.

The programs were born in 1991, after the Soviet Union's collapse. Several of the emerging states inherited nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the United States feared the arms could reach rogue nations or terrorists.

The programs, spending about \$1 billion a year, have destroyed thousands of nuclear warheads, missiles and submarines, and big stocks of chemical and biological agents. But they're controversial.

“On (the U.S.) side, there are people who say the Russians are cheating, they just want the money,” says Vladimir Rybachenkov, counselor at the Russian Embassy. “On our side, there are some who say the Americans just want to get their noses into our” military sites.

The Pentagon's inspector general has cited several projects as wasteful. In one case, the Pentagon spent \$100 million to build Russia a plant to destroy fuel from nuclear missiles. After it was built, Russia said it was using the fuel for commercial rockets. So the plant is idle.

Russia also has yet to use a high-security nuclear materials storage facility built with about \$400 million in U.S. money. At issue is what material it will hold — and how the United States can verify that it won't store fuel for new weapons.

The Pentagon now wants binding agreements with Russia on how U.S. assistance will be used. But the pacts can take months to reach.

Other causes for delay:

Access. Russia has refused U.S. demands to enter several nuclear, biological and chemical sites where security is in doubt. The resistance is mainly from Russia's internal security force.

The Pentagon refuses assistance unless its program managers can visit a site to verify that money isn't misspent. But Russian officials say some access demands exceed what they allow. “There are technical means to verify (work) ... without what we call ‘intrusion,’ ” Rybachenkov says.

Access snags also have slowed an Energy Department push to upgrade security at Russian sites holding 600 tons of nuclear weapons material. Russian and U.S. officials are in talks on the problem, and the department forecasts increases in its rate of installing safeguards. But even if it moves at unprecedented speed, it will miss a goal for completion in 2008.

Funding. Congress has put conditions on the release of money for several projects, especially those aimed at securing Russia's chemical and biological weapons. The conditions require the administration to “certify” that Russia is meeting a host of criteria, such as disclosing data on its chemical and biological stockpiles, or improving its record on human rights.

The rules stymied construction of a Russian plant to destroy thousands of tons of chemical munitions. At Lugar's urging, Congress gave President Bush authority last year to waive certification, but the plant now is years off schedule.

Liability. The impasse on the plutonium-conversion program centers on a U.S. insistence that any work agreement include 100% liability protection for its agencies and workers, even for individual acts of sabotage.

That language is in the current agreement on U.S.-Russian cooperation, but the plutonium program isn't covered.

And Russia's legislature has passed a law barring similar language if the pact is renewed.

http://www.usatoday.com/printedition/news/20041214/a_inside_nuke14.art.htm

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New York Times

December 14, 2004

Iran And Europeans Open A New Round Of Negotiations

By Elaine Sciolino

BRUSSELS, Dec. 13 - Iran and its European partners pledged Monday to work to overcome their differences and lingering suspicions as they began negotiations for a long-term agreement on nuclear, economic and security cooperation.

The largely ceremonial talks among Iran's senior nuclear negotiator, Hassan Rowhani, and the foreign ministers from Britain, France and Germany flow from Iran's agreement last month to freeze its programs to make enriched uranium, which is useful either for producing energy or making bombs.

To throw the weight of the European Union behind the process, Javier Solana, the group's foreign policy chief, also took part in the meeting on Monday.

"The negotiations we are embarking upon today can be indicative of the new chapter of our relations, not only with the three European countries, but with the European Union as a whole," Mr. Rowhani, the midlevel cleric who leads Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said at a news conference at the residence of the British ambassador to the European Union.

He added, "Our intention here is through political dialogue, we will establish such confidence that there will be no concern left for anyone."

Jack Straw, the British foreign secretary, said: "All of us here share a determination to see progress. Some of the issues are of course difficult. But we're all committed to a successful outcome of the process."

The talks that opened Monday are being conducted on two tracks, one to make the freeze permanent, another to explore concrete ways to reward Iran if it does so. At the Iranian Embassy on Monday night, specialists from both sides began talks in three working groups on nuclear, economic and security issues.

But the hopeful words on Monday did not mask the challenges both sides face in making the necessary gestures to build trust and sustain and fulfill the agreement reached last month.

The German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, sounded a more cautious tone before the talks began. "We must move forward step by step on the basis of realism," he told reporters.

Most difficult, European and Iranian negotiators said, will be for Iran to meet its commitment under the agreement to provide "objective guarantees," that is, clear proof, that its nuclear program can be used only for peaceful purposes.

The Europeans, in turn, will find it challenging to deliver on some of the more ambitious rewards they have discussed with Iran partly because they depend on the cooperation of the United States, but the Bush administration is in no mood to offer Iran incentives. That was underscored Monday, when the administration blocked Iran's application to open membership talks with the World Trade Organization.

In a meeting in Geneva, the General Council of the 148-nation trade organization agreed by consensus to accept applications from Iraq and Afghanistan, but rejected Iran's application for the 16th consecutive time.

Supporting Iran's eventual membership in the W.T.O. is one of the potential incentives that the Europeans are offering.

Another challenge is that Iran insists that it is freezing its uranium enrichment programs temporarily. Mr. Rowhani indicated that the next three months would be crucial in indicating whether the initiative should continue, and has warned recently that Iran will restart its nuclear cycle if the Europeans do not act in good faith.

He and other Iranian officials also correctly point out that Iran is not obligated under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty to freeze these activities and is doing so on a voluntary basis to illustrate its good will.

The Europeans, by contrast, hope to make the temporary freeze in Iran's enrichment activities permanent in return for trade, aid and security rewards. They say that the talks will take much longer than a few months.

The Europeans are also caught in a difficult situation with the United States. The Bush administration contends that Iran has a covert program to build nuclear bombs and has stated repeatedly that it wants the United Nations Security Council to slap it with either censure or economic penalties.

But in the absence of international support for such an approach, the administration has yet to come up with a clear, consistent strategy on Iran.

Some Bush administration officials, speaking anonymously, have poured scorn on the European initiative, while others have expressed skepticism or offered only qualified support.

In meetings of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna this month, for example, the American delegation openly criticized the agreement with the Europeans as "flawed" and "flimsy," while pushing unsuccessfully for a tougher resolution.

But at a meeting with Mr. Solana and other European Union officials in The Hague last Friday, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said the United States was "supportive" of the European initiative with Iran, according to a senior European official who was present and official notes of the meeting.

When Mr. Solana told Mr. Powell that the Europeans might need the help of the United States in putting the agreement into effect, Mr. Powell replied that he felt comfortable with the current "division of labor" between the Europeans, who are doing the negotiating, and the United States, which is staying on the sidelines.

Mr. Powell also noted that the objective of the United States and the Europeans was the same to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear power although their methods were different, and he wished the Europeans luck with their negotiations, the European official said.

In conversations in Brussels 10 days ago, Stephen J. Hadley, who will take over as the Bush administration's national security adviser, expressed skepticism that a strategy to moderate Iran's behavior with incentives would work, according to people who met with him. But he also said he was pleased that the Europeans had achieved as much as they had in freezing Iran's enrichment program.

"The Americans may be reluctant and skeptical, but in general terms they are supportive," one European Union official said.

The Europeans and the Iranians know that the United States can scuttle almost any agreement they may reach.

For example, the Europeans are eager to persuade Iran to abandon the construction of a heavy-water reactor designed to produce plutonium, which can be used as fuel for nuclear weapons as well as for energy, in exchange for a light-water reactor.

But only a few countries in the world, including the United States, France and Russia, make light-water reactors.

Even if the Europeans were willing to approve the technology, the United States holds some of the patents on the technology and could block the deal.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/14/international/europe/14nuke.html?pagewanted=all>

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December 2004

Trust for America's Health

Reports

Ready or Not? Protecting the Public's Health in the Age of Bioterrorism 2004

TFAH's second annual study of preparedness against public health emergencies finds that, despite incremental progress, three years after September 11, 2001, there is still a long way to go to protect the American people from a bioterror attack. The report examined 10 key indicators to gauge state preparedness and determine America's overall readiness to respond to bioterrorist attacks and other health emergencies. This is the second year in a row that TFAH conducted a review of bioterrorism and public health preparedness, while the federal government's efforts to release performance measures have stalled.

Over two-thirds of states and D.C. achieved a score of six or less. Florida and North Carolina scored the highest, achieving nine out of the possible 10 indicators, and Alaska and Massachusetts scored the lowest, at three out of 10. Although direct comparisons are difficult because the indicators were modified to reflect the changed expectations of additional time and funding, in this year's report, 34 states and D.C. obtained higher scores, nine scores remained the same, and seven scores declined.

The scores demonstrate continued incremental progress; however, preparedness is still lagging behind goals and expectations. With most states still in the middle range of the scale and no states meeting all of the indicators, there are still major areas of vulnerability that leave Americans at risk. Overall, the report found that many basic bioterrorism detection, diagnosis, and response capabilities are still not in place. . . .

<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror04/>

(Editor's Note: Hyperlink below accesses PDF file of entire report.)

<http://healthyamericans.org/reports/bioterror04/BioTerror04Report.pdf>

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