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

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WWII poison gas sickens Chinese

Monday, August 11, 2003 Posted: 1:47 AM EDT (0547 GMT)

BEIJING, China (AP) -- Tokyo has sent experts to investigate drums of poison gas thought to have been left by the Japanese army after World War II that sickened dozens of people in China's northeast last week.

Two people were "close to death" with breathing problems after exposure to the gas in the city of Qiqihar, the state newspaper China Daily said. It said 32 others were hospitalized, including one man with chemical burns on 95 percent of his body.

The poison believed to be mustard gas was released on August 4 after construction workers unearthed the five drums at a building site.

"A group from the (Japanese) chemical weapons disposal team has been sent to Qiqihar and they are investigating," said Japan's chief Cabinet secretary, Yasuo Fukuda, who was in Beijing on a previously scheduled visit to meet with Chinese leaders.

"If it turns out that this incident came from the former Japanese army, then I think it is necessary that we handle the case accordingly," Fukuda said at a news conference.

He didn't give any other details, and the Japanese Embassy in Beijing referred questions to a spokesman who wasn't immediately available.

Japanese officials say about 700,000 chemical weapons remain in China from the Japanese occupation.

Japan has sent experts to help Chinese specialists find and destroy abandoned weapons. But Japanese use of chemical and biological warfare in China still stirs anger and resentment among many Chinese, who feel that Japan has never fully atoned.

Lawyers representing Chinese plaintiffs in other cases against the Japanese government say leaking chemical weapons have caused some 2,000 deaths since the war.

China's Foreign Ministry said it was negotiating with Japanese officials over unspecified compensation for the people injured in Qiqihar.

A delegation led by a senior Japanese diplomat went to Qiqihar on Saturday, state media reported. The city is about 1,100 kilometers (650 miles) northeast of Beijing.

The officials examined a warehouse where the canisters were stored and visited the victims, according to the website of the Communist Party newspaper People's Daily.

The gas was released when the workers who unearthed the drums in Qiqihar broke open one at the site and cut up the others for sale as scrap, the China Daily said.

A front-page photo in the newspaper showed four people dressed in head-to-toe exposure suits, goggles and gas masks examining one of the rusted barrels.

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/east/08/11/china.gas.ap/index.html>

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(Editor's Note: Hyperlink for referenced GAO report follows article.)

InsideDefense.com

August 11, 2003

Defense Alert

GAO: Pentagon Should Assess Impact Of Homeland Defense On Force Structure

The Defense Department should not wait until the fiscal year 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review before looking at the potential stresses on the military force structure brought on by increased operations in support of homeland defense as well as in Iraq, according to a new General Accounting Office report.

The congressional watchdog agency recommends that an independent force structure assessment is needed to examine domestic military mission requirements and determine what steps need to be taken to structure military forces to better accomplish domestic military missions while maintaining proficiency for overseas combat missions. While DOD "generally concurred" with GAO's recommendation, the Pentagon disagreed that an independent assessment was necessary, stating in a response to a draft of the report that such an assessment was already ongoing and would culminate with the FY-05 QDR.

That is not fast enough, according to GAO.

"Based on our analysis of personnel tempo trends through December 2002 and on discussions with officials conducting domestic military missions, we believe that U.S. military force readiness may erode because of the poor match between the types of forces needed for the domestic military missions we reviewed, the forces available, and the limited training value derived from the missions," GAO states.

Further, the current pace of operations may cause future personnel retention problems, "which consequently may become unsustainable," the report states. Current operations in Iraq, which GAO did not consider in its analysis of military personnel tempo data, can also "be expected to impact a significant portion of the military force structure for the foreseeable future."

"Therefore, we believe our recommendation is valid as originally drafted," GAO said.

GAO is not the first to say the Bush administration is taking too long to determine its force requirements for the homeland defense mission. A report issued last month by the Progressive Policy Institute found that while the White House is "energetic" in waging war on terrorism abroad, it is "oddly lethargic" at improving homeland defenses (DefenseAlert, July 23).

Giving the administration an overall grade of "D" for efforts to improve security within the United States, the report examined homeland security efforts in seven major categories and 28 subcategories.

"It is clear this administration has offered more rhetoric than action in its domestic national security efforts," PPI said in a July 23 statement. The institute is a nonprofit research organization based in Washington, DC.

--John Liang

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Homeland Defense: DOD Needs to Assess the Structure of U.S. Forces for Domestic Military Missions.

GAO-03-670, July 11.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-670>

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New York Times

August 12, 2003

North Korea: Talks Likely This Month

Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing of China confirmed that six-party talks about how to end North Korea's nuclear program are to take place this month. Mr. Li, visiting Japan, said there was "some foundation" to reports that North Korea and the United States, along with China, Japan, South Korea and Russia, would hold talks in Beijing beginning Aug. 26, though he declined to provide more detail. China diplomats have been engaged in shuttle diplomacy around the region to nail down the format and the timing of the negotiations.

--Joseph Kahn (NYT)

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/12/international/asia/12BRIE3.html>

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Christian Science Monitor

August 12, 2003

Ship's Seizure Sends Warning To N. Korea

Monday in Taiwan, officials unloaded barrels of a suspicious chemical from a North Korean vessel.

By Robert Marquand, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

TAIPEI, TAIWAN – Taiwan's detention of a North Korean vessel carrying chemicals used in making rocket fuel is yet another message from the US to the North, experts say, delivered days ahead of what are seen as crucial talks in Beijing: The US and Asian neighbors will not support efforts by the Kim Jong Il regime to develop weapons of mass destruction, and its ships are under observation and could be stopped at any time.

On the basis of US intelligence that the ship was carrying substances used for a nuclear program, Taiwan authorities boarded the Be Gaehung on Friday. The North Korean ship had docked in Kaohsiung Harbor, Taiwan's largest port. On Sunday, Taiwan customs officers requested the vessel unload some 158 barrels of phosphorus pentasulfide. A private consultant working for North Korea in Kaohsiung said the substance is an ordinary chemical product and should not be confiscated, according to the Central News Agency in Taipei. Monday, however, the barrels were voluntarily unloaded, then confiscated.

The Taiwan interdiction is the first case of a taking of North Korean cargo following a warning by the US in June that its ships can be stopped and checked. After talks between China, the US, and North Korea ended abruptly in April, United States and Asian diplomats met in Singapore to discuss methods of interdicting North Korean ships - to block illicit drug traffic and technology used for nuclear weapons.

Now, amid intense diplomacy, six-party talks are expected to be held the last week of August in Beijing. The US has staked out a tough position, asking for a complete and verifiable end to the North's nuclear programs.

"The US is doing all it can to show North Korea that it is serious, and that the Asian nations are willing to go along in efforts to stop weapons of mass destruction," argues Andrew Yang, secretary-general of the Chinese Council of Advanced Policy Studies, a security research center in Taipei.

"The US is making sure the [shipping] issue gets on the table in negotiations."

Yet by allowing cargo to be unloaded, the North may also be sending another in a series of "good news" messages, experts say: We are not going to create an international incident; we are ready to negotiate.

In recent weeks, North Korea has noticeably lowered the volume of its often vitriolic anti-US rhetoric. The regime is sending athletes to participate in the Asian Games in Seoul this month, and appears to be softening its image, prior to talks, in what some pundits have referred to as a "charm offensive."

The Be Gaehung's logs say it was en route from Thailand to the North Korean port of Nanpo, Taiwan news sources report. Kaohsiung, the fifth-busiest port in the world, is located on a highly strategic shipping lane that connects the Indian and Pacific oceans. The North Korean vessel was there to unload some 2,000 tons of aluminum powder before continuing to Nanpo.

Last December, at the request of the US, Spanish commandos boarded a North Korean vessel in the Arabian Sea. The ship was carrying Scud missile parts, bound for Yemen, which were not listed in its cargo manifest. But no maritime laws forbid such cargo, and the ship was allowed to continue. The US placed sanctions on the North Korean company that made the parts.

Following the Arabian Sea incident, and as a result of a nuclear standoff on the Korean Peninsula, including Pyongyang's direct claim that it is pursuing a nuclear weapons option - the US has begun efforts to interdict North Korean shipping.

The "Madrid initiative" in June has also brought agreement by seven European countries, Canada, Australia, and Japan to change international laws to allow the boarding of North Korean vessels. However, the Taiwan harbor case was handled under bilateral agreements between the US and Taiwan, sources say.

"We are pleased that Taiwan authorities have acted in this case," says Judith Mudd-Krijgelmans, spokeswoman for the American Institute in Taiwan, the US agency that unofficially represents the US here. She refused further comment.

The standoff with North Korea dates to last October, when an official in Pyongyang admitted to US envoy James Kelly that it was working on a secret enriched-uranium nuclear program.

In the following months, the US ended fuel allotments, which the North said abrogated a previous treaty. Kim Jong Il then kicked out UN inspectors who monitored plutonium fuel rods capable of being reprocessed into a half-dozen nuclear devices. The North later withdrew from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and has stated it is reprocessing the plutonium.

China, which has taken a lead role in multilateral diplomacy aimed at getting the North to talk, stated Monday it hoped the six-way meeting would begin in late August or early September.

Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing told a Tokyo news conference Monday that the US and North Korea were far apart, however. "There are still differences on both sides and there are some that are very serious," Foreign Minister Li said.

The North has asked for a written guarantee by the US that it will not be attacked. Secretary of State Colin Powell has opted for a congressional resolution, rather than a formal assurance, to assuage North Korea.

For months, starting late last fall, the Bush administration has waved off bids, many from Asian nations, requesting that it talk directly with the North. Yet this spring after the Iraq war, and as Kim Jong Il made new claims about his program, China in particular began to agree that a multiparty solution must be found.

Participants in talks will include China, Russia, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and the US.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0812/p06s02-woap.html>

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Gadsden (AL) Times

Published August 12, 2003 6:01AM

Army burns eight rockets at weapons incinerator

The Army burned eight more rockets Sunday on the second day of operation at the chemical weapons incinerator at Anniston Army Depot.

"All went well," said Army spokesman Mike Abrams.

After successfully burning four rockets in the morning, incinerator officials approved burning four more in the afternoon, Abrams said.

On Saturday, the first day of operation, two Cold War-era rockets were destroyed.

The liquid agent from the rockets was gathered in a holding tank, where chemicals will be kept until there is enough of the agent to burn in a large batch, probably in late October.

The Army plans on gradually increasing the pace of the burning, destroying up to 40 rockets an hour by next year.

<http://www.gadsdentimes.com/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?SearchID=73143954677000&Avis=GT&Dato=20030812&Kategori=NEWS&Lopenr=308120318&Ref=AR>

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Los Angeles Times
August 12, 2003

Group Speaks Of Japanese WWII Germ Warfare Tests

By K. Connie Kang, Times Staff Writer

Researchers who have been investigating Japan's germ warfare experiments on Chinese civilians during World War II visited Los Angeles on Monday to urge the U.S. to release documents that they say would shed light on that chapter in history.

Survivors of those experiments have endured six decades of suffering that continues today, said Ignatius Ding, a spokesman for the Alliance to Preserve the History of WWII. "It's real, it's ongoing," he said.

Ding's group is hosting a tour of six U.S. cities by researchers and activists from China and Japan to publicize the issue.

Groundbreaking work by Sheldon H. Harris, a Cal State Northridge historian, helped establish that Japan's infamous Unit 731 had conducted large-scale biological warfare experiments in northern China. Harris, who died last year, had filed hundreds of Freedom of Information Act requests to gather information for his 1994 book "Factories of Death: Japanese Biological Warfare, 1932-1945, and the American Cover-Up."

In it, Harris wrote that U.S. authorities protected high-level Japanese scientists from prosecution in exchange for their data. At the time, the United States was developing its own biological warfare program.

Activists charge that the U.S. government has reclassified some of the documents it had previously declassified. They also say the Japanese government has undisclosed records.

Harris said that as many as 12,000 people died in Japanese laboratories after they were infected with anthrax, cholera, typhoid and plague, and that more than 250,000 civilians were killed as a result of Japanese field tests in the Chinese countryside.

Last year, a Japanese court, ending decades of denial, acknowledged for the first time that Unit 731 "used bacteriological weapons under the order of the imperial Japanese Army's headquarters" in occupied China in the 1930s and 1940s.

But the court rejected compensation for the 180 plaintiffs, saying that the compensation issues had been settled under postwar treaties between Japan and China. Each plaintiff sought about \$85,000.

Despite the court finding, the Japanese government denies that its Army ever used biological agents in China. Yang Wanzhu, director of the Institute of Germ Warfare Research in Chengde, China, and a member of the visiting group, said he believed that the toll of Japan's biological warfare was much higher than previously thought. Thus far, in Chengde Prefecture alone, 7,643 deaths have been confirmed, he said.

But the full extent of the deaths is not known, he said, because so many people fled the town and escaped to the countryside after Unit 731's aircraft allegedly dropped "36 kilos of plague germ-carrying fleas to Chengde on Nov. 4, 1941."

Yang, former deputy mayor of Chengde, said lack of education made victims fearful of injections. Many avoided hospitals because they feared being put into isolation wards, he said.

"So, they ran away to the countryside and carried the disease with them," Yang said.

Wang Xuan, a plaintiff in the court case, said researchers cannot get records of the biological warfare from the Japanese government.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-warfare12aug12.1.5377365.story>

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London Daily Telegraph
August 13, 2003
Pg. 1

Iraqis 'Ordered To Fire Chemical Shells'

By David Rennie, in Washington

The CIA official leading the hunt for banned weapons in Iraq has told Washington he has evidence that Iraqi commanders were ordered to attack coalition troops with chemical weapons, senior intelligence and defence officials have said.

David Kay - a former United Nations chief nuclear weapons inspector picked by the CIA to oversee the 1,400-member Iraq Survey Group - has not found any chemical weapons, he told closed-door Senate hearings.

But he believes that he has solid evidence, based on interviews and documents, that Republican Guard commanders were ordered to fire chemical shells at advancing troops.

"They have found evidence that an order was given," one senior intelligence official with access to Dr Kay's preliminary reporting told The Boston Globe newspaper.

Officials and US military commanders have put forward various theories of why no such shells were fired, and why advancing troops did not find the expected caches of chemical munitions.

Maj Gen Gene Renuart told Fox News: "We have anecdotal evidence that we moved so quickly that, wherever these potential weapons may have been, there was not time to bring them to bear on the battlefield."

One week into the war, on March 28, the brigadier general running media briefings for Central Command, Vincent Brooks, reported "indications . . . [that] orders have been given that at a certain point chemical weapons may be used". Coalition commanders spoke of a "red line" between Kut and Karbala, which - once crossed - would trigger chemical attacks, and cited the discovery of Iraqi chemical protection suits and gas-masks in positions south of Baghdad.

Gen John Abizaid, the new head of Central Command, told the Senate armed services committee: "We had a lot of intelligence that once we . . . closed on Baghdad, we could expect weapons of mass destruction."

US forces were instructed to focus their fire on artillery positions, Gen Abizaid recalled, "because we had indications from intelligence that they were getting ready to distribute chemical weapons to forward Republican Guard artillery units".

Other theories hold that Saddam Hussein was bluffing when he talked of holding chemical arsenals, or was trying to intimidate his own commanders.

Alternatively, US generals have speculated that such weapons were destroyed before or during the war, as Saddam Hussein tried to sit out the storm. According to that theory, he aimed to reconstitute his banned weapons programmes as soon as the coast was clear.

Gen Abizaid appeared unimpressed by suggestions that the swift coalition advance cut off supply routes for chemical warheads.

He said: "I believe that if we had interrupted the movement of chemical weapons from the depots to the guns, that we would have found them in the depots. But we've looked in the depots and they're not there."

Referring to pre-war intelligence that munitions were being moved out of depots, he speculated that - instead of sending banned shells forward - "it may very well have been that they had received the order quite to the contrary, to get rid of them. But I don't know, and I think we won't know for a while."

- A former chief of staff of the Republican Guard and one of Saddam's bodyguards were among 14 Iraqis held yesterday in a raid by US forces in his home town, Tikrit. An American military spokesman said the men were members of a leading family in the deposed regime that was organising attacks on coalition forces and hiding wanted men.

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/08/13/wirq13.xml&sSheet=/news/2003/08/13/ixnewstop.html&secureRefresh=true&_requestid=59223

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Washington Post

August 13, 2003

Pg. 20

Arms Control Hard-Liner Won't Attend Sessions On N. Korea

Asia Diplomacy Specialists Will Join Delegation in Discussions of Pyongyang's Nuclear Arms

By Peter Slevin, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Bush administration, establishing its lineup for six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear weapons program, will not be sending John R. Bolton, an arms control hard-liner who recently called North Korean leader Kim Jong Il a "tyrannical rogue."

Discussions set to begin in Beijing at the end of August and last three days will be handled by specialists in Asian diplomacy, officials said yesterday. The diplomats appear likely to relay President Bush's insistence that North Korea halt its nuclear programs and offer a conditional path toward stronger relations, including an assurance that the United States has no military intentions.

Bolton, the State Department's top arms control official, will not be part of the delegation, Deputy Secretary of State Richard L. Armitage told reporters. North Korea's news agency branded Bolton "human scum" and insisted that he stay home. Armitage said the administration would make its own decisions and had never intended to send Bolton.

But, reflecting a continuing administration debate about how to win concessions from North Korea, Armitage did not deliver a ringing endorsement of Bolton's sharply worded attack on Kim. He said simply that Bolton's comments "reflect a point of view in the United States held by many."

Later yesterday, the State Department issued a statement that said Bolton's speech in Seoul -- entitled "A Dictatorship at the Crossroads" -- was "coordinated and cleared in advance." White House press secretary Scott McClellan had already said Bolton was speaking for the administration.

The battle over Bolton's words stretches beyond the Bush administration to include U.S. allies South Korea and Japan, which favor a less bellicose approach. Diplomats from the two countries will meet their U.S. counterparts in Washington today to plan for the talks, scheduled to begin about Aug. 27. The other participants in Beijing will be China and Russia.

"It has been unfortunate that Bolton has been such a point man for our policy in South Korea. I think his perspective is hard for the South Koreans to deal with," said Donald P. Gregg, former ambassador to South Korea and a supporter of U.S. engagement with the isolated North.

Yet Nicholas Eberstadt, conducting research on North Korea at the American Enterprise Institute, said Bolton's remarks were a "really interesting experiment" to see how North Korea would respond to verbal attack. He said it struck a nerve, revealing a feeling of vulnerability on the part of Kim and his inner circle.

"The North Korean government didn't just denounce Bolton, which is its regular business practice," Eberstadt said. "It flipped."

North Korea's official news agency described Bolton on Monday as "an animal running around recklessly." Praising the "magnanimity" of North Korea in agreeing to discussions, the agency accused Bolton of playing the spoiler, "a fascist who makes it his business to make a malignant personal attack."

Although North Korea demanded that Bolton be excluded from the talks, Armitage said that decision had been made earlier: "Mr. Bolton was not scheduled and will not be participating in those talks." White House spokesman Claire Buchan said the diplomatic team would be announced soon.

Decisions must also be made about how the administration approaches talks expected to include informal one-on-one discussions between North Korea and the United States. The two countries have sparred for nearly a year over the Pyongyang government's nuclear efforts and its withdrawal from international monitoring.

The Bush administration, which has been circulating position papers for internal comment, is likely to want the North Korean government to take the first steps toward freezing and dismantling its programs, said a U.S. official involved in the planning process. Kim, the official said, should keep in check his own expectations of U.S. rewards.

"I expect it's going to be just the beginning of a long, drawn-out process. That's the most optimistic thought we can have," agreed William M. Drennan, deputy director of research at the U.S. Institute of Peace. "The nature of North Korea's negotiating style is you've just got to go to the wall before you start making progress with these folks."

Gregg is similarly cautious, but believes enough groundwork can be laid to "begin to move toward" a security guarantee for North Korea and a willingness by Kim's government to permit inspectors to verify a nuclear freeze.

"I don't think that's going to happen in one fell swoop," Gregg added.

The Taiwan government announced yesterday that it had seized 158 barrels of chemicals from a North Korean ship. Acting on a tip that the chemicals might have military uses, officials in the port of Kaohsiung confiscated the barrels for inspection.

The Bush administration, which is developing a new offensive to interdict shipments of dangerous weapons, praised Taiwan's move. State Department deputy spokesman Philip T. Reeker called it an "effective action in preventing items from going to proliferators."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A51950-2003Aug12.html>

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New York Times
August 13, 2003

U.S. Weighs Reward If North Korea Scraps Nuclear Arms

By Steven R. Weisman

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12 — The Bush administration, which had barred concessions to North Korea before it dismantled its nuclear weapons program, is now considering some conciliatory steps. In return, North Korea would have to either fully disclose its weapons or allow international inspectors into the country, administration officials said today.

Possible concessions include some form of written assurance that the United States has no intention of attacking North Korea and some relaxation of curbs on activities by international institutions to help the North with its economic problems, the officials said.

An administration official said the United States might even be prepared to offer economic incentives, an idea it previously disparaged in connection with the Clinton administration's 1994 deal to freeze North Korea's nuclear program, which the North subsequently breached.

But, the official added, economic benefits would come only after the dismantling of the nuclear program. "There's no such thing as you-do-this and suddenly Ed McMahon shows up with a check for \$10 billion," the official said. Asian and American officials said today that the next round of talks with North Korea would take place from Aug. 27 to 29 in Beijing. That session was made possible last month, when North Korea dropped its demand that the talks be limited to direct negotiations with the United States.

"There are a lot of ideas being discussed," said an Asian diplomat. "The question is how they will be packaged, and in what sequence. The United States clearly wants its concerns addressed at an early stage, while the North Koreans want their concerns addressed at an early stage."

The Beijing talks will involve six nations: North Korea, the United States, China, Russia, Japan and South Korea. The only other recent session was in Beijing in April, with only North Korea, China and the United States involved. As the next Beijing meeting approaches, the Bush administration is reported once again to be divided over concessions to the North. There are also differences of view between Washington and its allies, Japan and South Korea.

An American official said Japan and the United States take a harder line, while South Korea is inclined to accept the idea of "front-loading" some concessions in return for preliminary steps by the North toward nuclear disarmament. A senior administration official emphasized that no final decision had been made. The final goal, he said, remains what it was: "A complete, verifiable, irreversible dismantling of North Korea's nuclear weapons program." Japanese and South Korean envoys are to confer with American officials in Washington on Wednesday and Thursday.

An administration official said hard-liners at the Pentagon, who oppose preliminary concessions, were once again at odds with State Department officials, who favor moving the process along with step-by-step concessions.

One point under discussion, according to American and Asian diplomats, is exactly what concessions might be offered if North Korea were to agree, for example, to disclose the exact number of its nuclear weapons or give more details about its plutonium reprocessing program.

Though such steps would be far short of the dismantling of nuclear programs demanded by the United States as the price for any future economic aid, the Bush administration was said to be considering preliminary steps to encourage North Korea to keep cooperating.

"The question is what actions do you take if they freeze their program, versus dismantling it," said an administration official. "There is not now a fully coordinated U.S. position on that. There are some principles, but we have to decide the whole issue of sequencing."

For nearly a year, North Korea has insisted that in exchange for dropping its nuclear program, it must get a nonaggression treaty with the United States and large infusions of economic aid.

The Bush administration has ruled out a nonaggression pact. But Secretary of State Colin L. Powell has said some form of written assurances might be acceptable as a means of underscoring President Bush's declaration that the United States had no intention of attacking North Korea.

"We won't do nonaggression pacts or treaties, things of that nature," Mr. Powell said last week, speaking to foreign journalists. He added that "there should be ways to capture assurances to the North Koreans from not only the United States, but we believe from other parties in the region."

Asian diplomats said today that the wording of a written assurance was already under discussion. The administration has already ruled out any language that would assure the North that there would never be a pre-emptive attack, they said, on the ground that an imminent attack by North Korea might require one.

Meanwhile, the administration said today that John R. Bolton, the Under Secretary of State for nonproliferation and a figure much reviled by North Korea, would not be a part of the delegation in the Beijing talks. But officials said President Bush reserved the right to decide who would make up the delegation.

The issue arose earlier this month after Mr. Bolton gave a speech in Seoul attacking the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, as a tyrant who could not be trusted. That was followed by a North Korean attack on Mr. Bolton as "human scum" who would not be welcome to any negotiations.

Mr. Bolton is regarded in the administration as a hard-liner close to Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, who advocates making as few concessions as possible. But he has been involved in nuclear proliferation issues and not in direct negotiations with North Korea.

After the White House issued a statement saying that Mr. Bush, and not North Korea, would decide who would attend any talks with North Korea, Mr. Bolton issued a statement saying, "I am happy to play whatever role the president and secretary want me to play."

Administration officials emphasized that President Bush had yet to make any final decisions on either what concessions to make or what timetable to adopt, if North Korea agrees to take steps toward nuclear disarmament. Some administration officials acknowledge that North Korea has been one of the most internally contentious issues that has been faced by President Bush.

Mr. Rumsfeld and other hard-liners are said to support negotiating with North Korea, if only because they expect the talks to fail. They believe that would make it easier to rally support from other countries for more economic and political pressure and, eventually, military confrontation.

An administration official, echoing what Chinese diplomats have said publicly and privately, said there was little expectation that the talks this month would yield progress but that, over time, there was some hope for resolving the stalemate with North Korea peacefully.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/13/international/asia/13KORE.html>

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New York Times

August 13, 2003

Panel Urges Shift Of Focus In Preparing For Smallpox

By Elizabeth Olson

WASHINGTON, Aug. 12 — A panel of scientists said today that the focus of the nation's smallpox preparedness program should move away from vaccinations and toward measures to improve coordination and quicken response time to any public health threat.

The Institute of Medicine committee also recommended that when the vaccine becomes available to the general public, access to it should be limited to clinical studies or other carefully structured settings.

The vaccine is too dangerous — both to the people receiving it and to those with whom they have close contact — and the risk of an outbreak too small to justify wider use, the panel said.

The report, the fourth by the Institute of Medicine, which Congress chartered to advise the government on medical policy, was sent today to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. The center is overseeing the nation's smallpox vaccination program, which is intended to reach some 500,000 military personnel and nearly 500,000 civilian health workers to counter any terrorist attack that might use smallpox as a biological weapon.

Dr. Brian L. Strom, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine who was chairman of the committee, said that the panel was urging caution because "it does not make sense to give a vaccine with substantial risks against a disease that does not exist — in fact, that could be considered unethical."

Smallpox has been eradicated worldwide, but some illicit vaccine stocks may still exist, making it possible that terrorists could use them in germ warfare.

The smallpox inoculation program is completed in the military, where an estimated 480,000 personnel have received it, but the program has lagged among civilian health workers largely because of the workers' concerns about adverse side effects and lack of compensation. Though Congress has passed legislation to provide compensation in cases in which health workers are killed or disabled by the vaccine, only about 38,000 emergency health workers have been vaccinated.

Dr. Strom said in a telephone interview that reaching more workers was not the program's most important task, adding that concentrating on numbers did not reflect actual preparedness for a terrorist emergency.

"We should not be focusing on the numbers to gauge preparedness," Dr. Strom said. "You need to concentrate on a good response plan, and the ability to quickly coordinate responders."

In fact, he said, the original goal for inoculating emergency health care workers was 15,000 and was later revised upward. "By that measure, we have already met the goal," he said.

To upgrade preparedness, the committee urged the centers for disease control to create registries of health care workers who have both been vaccinated and trained to react in a bioterrorism emergency. The list could also include former military personnel.

These people would be the core of a prompt response to such an attack, the 45-page report suggested.

Most important, Dr. Strom said, preparations for an attack should be coordinated into overall preparedness programs to bolster the public health system, and to be ready for a broad range of possible threats.

"Smallpox is not the only threat to the nation's health," he said, "and vaccination is not the only tool for preparedness."

In Atlanta, Dr. Raymond A. Strikas, director of smallpox preparedness in the immunization division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said, "We have to redefine preparedness so it's not about vaccinating 500,000 people but about having people in teams who are prepared, and are prepared to be vaccinated if it's needed."

Health experts had predicted that the smallpox vaccine, vaccinia, would cause serious adverse reactions for one in 19,000 to one in 71,000 people. They forecast that the vaccine would kill one or two in a million. Officials were surprised, though, when eight people, most of whom were middle age and had risk factors like smoking, had heart attacks after being immunized; three died. Among other reported side effects were rashes and a couple of cases of encephalitis.

Because of the risks, the Institute of Medicine committee urged that any vaccination of the general public "should proceed only under the aegis of smallpox vaccine clinical research trials or other well-structured clinical arrangements that meet the basic requirements of medical and public health ethics."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/13/national/13SMAL.html>

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Washington Times

August 13, 2003

Pg. 12

Iran

Atomic Experts Arrive For Inspections

VIENNA — Inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency have arrived in Iran to conduct routine inspections of nuclear sites there, a spokesman for the U.N. agency said yesterday.

Four experts arrived in Iran on Monday to inspect the country's nuclear program, in particular its enrichment program, which might enable it to develop nuclear weapons.

Water, air and soil samples will be taken back to Vienna to see whether any traces of radioactive isotopes liable for use in an atomic bomb are present.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/briefly.htm>

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(Editor's Note: Second article in this series, follows first below.)

Washington Post

August 14, 2003

Pg. 1

The Gray Zone : Cargo Of Mass Destruction

On N. Korean Freighter, A Hidden Missile Factory

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

First of two articles

NEW DELHI -- Tae Min Hun, the dour captain of the North Korean freighter Kuwolsan, glared icily from the bridge as tempers around him soared in the midday heat. On June 30, 1999, as customs agents in India's northwestern port city of Kandla waited impatiently to board the vessel, Tae received urgent instructions from Pyongyang: At all cost, let no one open the cargo boxes.

The Indians tried to look anyway, and a melee erupted. Tae and his crew rained blows on inspectors and barricaded the doors with their bodies, according to witness accounts and video footage of the encounter. A few agents who managed to slip into the cargo bay were horrified to find North Koreans sealing the hatches, trapping them inside. When the ship's doors were finally reopened at gunpoint, the reason for the extreme secrecy became clear. Hidden inside wooden crates marked "water refinement equipment" was an assembly line for ballistic missiles: tips of nose cones, sheet metal for rocket frames, machine tools, guidance systems and, in smaller crates, ream upon ream of engineers' drawings labeled "Scud B" and "Scud C." The intended recipient of the cargo, according to U.S. intelligence officials, was Libya.

"In the past we had seen missiles or engine parts, but here was an entire assembly line for missiles offered for sale," said an Indian government official familiar with the discovery. "This was a complete technology transfer."

Today, the evidence from the Kuwolsan remains locked in a military warehouse in the Indian capital, where it has been scrutinized since being seized four years ago. The results of India's investigation, shared among a small circle of intelligence and defense analysts, offer an extraordinary glimpse into the shadowy world of weapons proliferation, in which missile parts and bomb materials circle the globe undetected, secreted away in cargo containers and suitcases, concealed by phony ship manifests and fictitious company names, eluding customs agents and defying international treaties.

The Kuwolsan incident -- described in detailed court documents and interviews with officials in the United States and India -- also has reinforced a view of North Korea as the world's most dangerous source of weapons proliferation. North Korea's reclusive leader, Kim Jong Il, this year expelled U.N. inspectors, abandoned the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and declared plans to build an atomic weapon. Just as worrisome, according to U.S. intelligence officials, is North Korea's continuing global trade in technology for weapons of mass destruction -- including instructions for making advanced missiles. North Korea has defended its right to sell the weapons and has said it is not bound by international treaties restricting such trade.

The latest beneficiary appears to be Libya, but other nations are known to have received similar help, including Iran, Pakistan and Syria. North Korea has also sold missiles and parts to Yemen, which received 15 Scud missiles after they were briefly intercepted by U.S. and Spanish naval crews off the Yemeni coast in December.

The Kuwolsan cargo attests to the existence of a gray zone -- a combination of weak states, open borders, lack of controls and a ready market of buyers and sellers of weapons of mass destruction. Small packages are sometimes delivered in the luggage of individual airline passengers, such as the Taiwanese businessman who was arrested at Zurich's airport in 2000 with North Korean missile parts in his rucksack. Big-ticket items are moved in rusting freighters such as the Kuwolsan. Technical information and designs fly across the Internet.

"It is difficult, but not impossible, to intercept weapons and equipment," said Daniel Pinkston, a Korea specialist with the Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California. "But human exchanges -- plans, data, intellectual property -- these are hard to intercept."

Detour Into Detention

In the end, a need for cash scuttled the Kuwolsan's mission. The black-hulled, 25-year-old freighter would probably have avoided Indian customs officials had the captain not gone out of his way to earn extra money, according to documents and interviews with officials.

Just 10 days after departing North Korea's Nampo harbor on April 10, 1999, the ship made detours to two Thai ports to pick up 14,000 tons of sugar for resale along the way, records show. A deal to sell the sugar to some Algerians fell through, so the ship switched course again, to sell it to an Indian company. That meant a stop at the busy port of Kandla, in Gujarat province in northwestern India.

"It was crazy," one Indian investigator recalled. "If you're carrying 200 tons of sensitive equipment, you don't go picking up extra cargo left and right."

While the ship was somewhere en route, Indian customs officials were tipped off to its possible contraband. The Kuwolsan was rumored to be carrying arms or ammunition, perhaps intended for India's neighbor and rival, Pakistan. When the North Korean freighter steamed into Kandla on June 25, port officials were waiting for it. Within the first few hours, irregularities in the ship's papers became apparent. The company in Malta listed as the intended recipient of the cargo was fictitious, Indian officials learned. That prompted questions about the cargo itself: Why would Malta, an island nation a short flight from industrial Europe, choose to buy "water refining equipment" from faraway North Korea?

But as customs agents began to press for answers, Tae, the 61-year-old captain, turned defiant. He blocked every request with increasing pugnacity and threatened international reprisals if the Indians did not allow him to leave Kandla.

Finally, on June 30, as customs agents demanded a look at the boxes, Tae turned up with what he said was a telex he had just received from North Korea.

"As per the telex, he would not open any more boxes," according to the official Indian after-action report.

Afterward, "the crew members shouted at the [customs] officers and abused them."

"It got very physical. There were fisticuffs," said an Indian official who was present and who spoke on the condition that his name not be used. "At one point, the crew began closing the hatches to the cargo hold, with the customs inspectors still inside."

Hours passed in a tense standoff. Then, on July 1, backed by armed troops and a group of government weapons experts, customs officers forced their way back onto the ship for a first look at what was really inside the Kuwolsan's wooden boxes.

'Only One End-Use'

True to the labels, some crates among the Kuwolsan's cargo did contain equipment that could be used in a water treatment plant. Inspectors found pumps, nozzles and a few valves.

Everything else appeared to have been transported straight from a missile factory. Documents from the investigation contain a partial list:

*Components for missile subassembly.

*Machine tools for setting up a fabrication facility.

*Instrumentation for evaluating the performance of a full missile system.

*Equipment for calibrating missile components.

In other boxes inspectors found personal items apparently intended for North Korean workers, including cookbooks in Korean, Korean spices, pickles and acupuncture sets. A separate cargo bay contained rocket nose cones, stacks of metal pipe and heavy-duty presses used for milling high-grade steel. Inspectors found a plate-bending machine capable of rolling thick metal sheets; toroidal air bottles used to guide warheads after separation from a missile; and theodolites, devices that measure missile trajectories.

It was an intriguing mix, far different from other previously seized shipments because it contained more than just missile engines and spare parts. A technical committee of Indian missile experts concluded that the equipment was "unimpeachable and irrefutable evidence" of a plan to transfer not just missiles, but missile-making capability. The cargo "points to one and only one end-use, namely the assembling of missiles and manufacture of the parts and subassemblies of surface to surface missiles," the technical panel wrote in a report.

But more interesting by far to the investigators were the documents: box after box of engineering drawings, blueprints, notebooks, textbooks and reports.

The blueprints were kept inside numbered plastic jackets and wrapped in brown paper. Some of the packets were labeled, in English, "Scud B" or "Scud C." Nearly all the drawings showed rockets or sections of rockets, accompanied by notes and mathematical formulas handwritten in Korean.

Native Korean speakers were brought in for translation, a process that continued long after the cargo was transported to New Delhi and the vessel and its crew were released. The analysis was slowed by yet another language barrier: The documents were filled with a unique kind of technical jargon invented by North Korean scientists to replace scientific terms in Russian or Chinese. Over time, the investigation yielded a trove of new information about North Korea's weapons program -- details that India later shared with friendly governments.

"The CIA went to town on those blueprints," said Greg Thielmann, a retired director of the State Department's office on strategic, proliferation and military issues in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. "They used them to make full mock-ups of missiles, complete with decals."

For U.S. officials, the blueprints provided a rare look at the inner workings of North Korea's missile industry, the focus of much of the contention between the United States and North Korea since the 1980s. Successive U.S. administrations have condemned North Korea's missile sales to such countries as Iran and Syria. Fears of advanced North Korean designs capable of reaching the U.S. mainland were heightened by the launch on Aug. 31, 1998, of a three-stage missile. The first stage splashed down in the Sea of Japan, the second crossed Japan's main island and a third broke up and traveled 3,450 miles downrange, falling into the Pacific Ocean. This ambitious test helped fuel the drive for a U.S. missile defense shield.

The Scud B and Scud C designs found on the Kuwolsan were from older North Korean missile programs, which in turn were derived from Soviet missile designs of the 1950s. One Indian government official who studied the blueprints described the science as "old and dated," though he added: "It still works."

"It may be your grandmother's technology," he said, "but grandmother still kicks."

The Kuwolsan's cargo did not, by itself, include everything needed for missile production, suggesting that there may have been earlier shipments, and perhaps later ones. "This was a slice in time of a technology transfer from North Korea to Libya," said Timothy V. McCarthy, a missile expert and senior analyst at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies who has examined some of the blueprints and other evidence.

"As an intelligence find it was unbelievable, because it helps us learn how they learn," McCarthy said. "That's so important because it gives you an idea of how capable they are of progressing to more advanced missiles. It also gives us insight into the most troubling part of proliferation: when one country attempts to transfer technology to another. Once Libya can make its own missiles, you can't stop them."

A striking feature of the cargo was the high proportion of foreign-made parts and machines, many of which still bore country-of-origin markings from Japan or China. Some analysts who saw the data were intrigued by design plans for a third type of missile, which the documents do not name. Weapons analysts described it as a modified Scud, altered to increase the range. "It uses an engine that we haven't seen, one that isn't used on any missile currently fielded by North Korea," McCarthy said. "It shows that there are still parts of North Korea's missile program we still haven't figured out yet."

With the modifications, the missile was advertised as having a range of roughly 500 miles. Such a missile in Libyan hands, weapon experts noted, would give Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi something he has long professed to covet: the ability to strike Israel from his home turf.

In India, defense and intelligence officials said they were convinced that the Kuwolsan's cargo was intended for Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan possess nuclear weapons and missile programs. The Kuwolsan's captain acknowledged under questioning that he had planned to stop in Karachi, the Pakistani port city less than 300 miles west of Kandla, before heading to the Suez Canal and Malta. North Korea is known to have supplied missile parts to Pakistan in the past.

But both U.S. and South Korean officials concluded that the cargo was intended for Libya, a conviction that grew stronger over time, said Gary Samore, the White House National Security Council's senior director for nonproliferation at the time the Kuwolsan was seized. In fact, U.S. officials viewed Libya's involvement as the single most surprising -- and disturbing -- aspect of the case.

Since the incident, European officials have twice intercepted other North Korean missile materials bound for Libya. In January 2000, British police disclosed the interception of 32 crates of missile parts -- mostly components of jet propulsion systems -- at London's Gatwick Airport as the parts were about to be flown to Malta, then on to Tripoli. Three months later, a 44-year-old Taiwanese businessman was arrested at Zurich's airport with three cast-iron parts for Scud missiles in his bags. The man, who was traveling to Libya, was released two months later and sent back to Taiwan. He told Swiss authorities he was only a courier and had no idea what the parts were used for.

"We were not fully aware of the extent of North Korea's dealings with Libya until that ship was intercepted," said Samore, now a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. Ties between the two countries were judged to be relatively modest until the Kuwolsan incident, Samore said, when North Korea suddenly was caught sending Libya a "full production kit for missiles."

Scuds for Yemen

Last December, another ship and another destination drew attention to North Korean missile smuggling. The capture of the 3,500-ton So San, intercepted in the Gulf of Aden as it ferried 15 Scud missiles to Yemen, showed that North Korea, nearly four years after the Kuwolsan search, had seen no reason to change.

The So San's captain, Kang Chol Ryong, was confident enough to sail without a flag, and with the ship's name and identifying markings covered up, when the vessel began its southward journey across the South China Sea in November. The ship's manifest listed a single entry -- 40,000 sacks of cement -- but spy agencies had known of its hidden cargo before it left its home port of Nampo.

On Dec. 9, the Spanish naval frigate Navarra, part of an international flotilla then patrolling the Arabian Sea looking for Taliban fighters fleeing Afghanistan, spotted the So San about 600 miles off the coast of Yemen. When confronted, Kang refused to identify his vessel and even tried to outrun the larger Navarra.

"The Navarra fired warning shots ahead of the ship; still he refused to stop, and continued sailing at the same course and speed," Javier Romero, a commander in the Spanish navy, wrote in a report on the incident. Sharpshooters from the Navarra then blasted away the ship's mast cables to allow Spanish special operations troops to rappel onto the deck from a helicopter, the report said.

The So San's crew gave up without a fight, and within hours U.S. Navy Seals and explosives experts had joined the Spanish sailors in moving sacks of cement covering the real cargo: 15 Scud missiles complete with high-explosive warheads. Elsewhere in the hold the searchers found two dozen tanks containing a rocket-fuel additive and nearly 100 other barrels of unidentified chemicals.

Despite the high-profile interception, the Bush administration decided to release the ship and its cargo because Yemen is a strategic partner in the U.S. war against the al Qaeda terrorist organization. A few Scuds, administration officials explained, were judged as not worth the price of losing a critical ally.

The So San returned to North Korea and remains in service, but is closely tracked by U.S. intelligence agencies. Reports of other ships and other suspicious cargo have surfaced since then. Just last week, the 6,500-ton North Korean freighter Be Gaehung was seized in Taiwan's Kaohsiung harbor after customs officials discovered crates containing 2,200 tons of aluminum powder, which can be used in manufacturing missiles.

The Kuwolsan, meanwhile, vanished after it and its crew were released by India in 2000, and only recently has its fate come to light. According to shipping experts at Lloyd's maritime division in London, the vessel's name was quietly changed in the summer of that year, to Sun Grisan 9.

As of last week, the renamed ship was still in active service, and was last reported headed to the Somali capital, Mogadishu.

The nature of its cargo was unknown.

Special correspondent Rama Lakshmi in New Delhi and staff researcher Robert E. Thomason in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A56111-2003Aug13.html>

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Pg. 19

N. Korea Shops Stealthily For Nuclear Arms Gear

Front Companies Step Up Efforts in European Market

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

Second of two articles

MUNICH -- The French cargo ship *Ville de Virgo* was already running a day late when it steamed into Hamburg harbor on April 3, its stadium-size deck stacked 50 feet high with cargo containers bound for Asia.

At the dock, harried German customs agents skimmed quickly through a fat manifest that included the usual Asia-bound staples -- fertilizer, bulk chemicals, cheeses. A last-minute addition, 214 ultra-strong aluminum pipes purchased by China's Shenyang Aircraft Corp., was one of the final items cleared before the 40,000-ton ship fired its engines again and headed to Asia.

But within hours after the ship departed, the story of the manifest began to unravel. German intelligence officials discovered that the aluminum was destined not for China but for North Korea. The intended use of the pipes, they concluded, was not aircraft production, but the making of nuclear weapons.

On April 12, in a dramatic but little-noticed intervention, French and German authorities tracked the ship to the eastern Mediterranean and seized the pipes. German police arrested the owner of a small export company and uncovered a broader scheme to acquire as many as 2,000 such pipes. That much aluminum in North Korean hands, investigators concluded, could have yielded as many as 3,500 gas centrifuges for enriching uranium.

"The intentions were clearly nuclear," said a Western diplomat familiar with the investigation. "The result could have been several bombs' worth of weapons-grade uranium in a year."

The voyage and capture of the *Ville de Virgo* exposed one of the most ambitious attempts yet by North Korea to obtain materials for building nuclear weapons. But the episode also offers a glimpse into the shadowy world of weapons proliferation, in which missile parts and bomb materials circle the globe undetected, secreted away in cargo containers and suitcases, concealed by phony ship manifests and fictitious company names, eluding customs agents and defying international treaties.

The story of the *Ville de Virgo* is a case study in the workings of the gray zone, a combination of weak states, open borders, lack of controls and a ready market of buyers and sellers for weapons of mass destruction.

The attempt to import the aluminum tubes is being closely studied by intelligence agencies for possible clues about the design and origins of North Korea's uranium enrichment program. In January, North Korea announced that it was withdrawing from the international treaty that bars it from making nuclear weapons, and the country is believed by intelligence agencies to be pursuing nuclear weapons through two different routes -- bombs based on uranium and those based on plutonium.

In recent months, North Korea's attempts to seek parts and technology in Europe have increased dramatically, U.S. and European intelligence officials say. Lately, they say, the attempts are becoming ever more elaborately disguised.

On April 4, just one day after the *Ville de Virgo* left Hamburg, a different cargo ship departed Japan's Kobe Harbor carrying three devices known as direct-current stabilizers, which also are used in uranium enrichment, according to a Japanese government account of the incident. Just as with the aluminum shipment, the electronic parts were being routed to a third country -- in this case, Thailand -- where the cargo would be diverted to North Korea.

In mid-May, a month after the aluminum pipes were seized, North Korea nearly succeeded in acquiring 33 tons of sodium cyanide, a chemical used in making the deadly nerve agent tabun, according to Western diplomatic sources. The chemicals were purchased legally from a German manufacturer who believed the buyer was a Singapore company. But in fact, a switch was planned that would have diverted them to Pyongyang, the North Korean capital. Both efforts were thwarted, but intelligence officials have little doubt that others succeeded. "There are countries in the world where you can pay \$2,000 to a government minister and he'll sign anything -- and then confirm to you that he signed it," said Rastislav Kacer, a former Slovak deputy defense minister who helped lead an investigation into a similar attempt by North Korea to buy sophisticated radar equipment. "Documents that are fake can be made to appear very real."

In such an environment, said Kacer, now his country's ambassador in Washington, "no system is ever 100 percent leak-proof."

Special Aluminum Tubes

The French-owned *Ville de Virgo* is a workhorse of the modern shipping trade, a floating warehouse that moves cargo along a circuit running from Hamburg and Rotterdam to Singapore and Pusan, South Korea. At each port, goods are brought to the ship in pre-packed steel containers, which are then stacked five high on the top deck. Only rarely are the containers opened and physically searched.

On the morning of April 3, the *Ville de Virgo* was running a day behind schedule as it took on freight and awaited paperwork in Hamburg before setting off on a nine-week, round-trip voyage to China and Korea. Local customs agents had visited the ship dozens of times in the past, and on this day, German officials say, there was nothing outwardly unusual about the ship or its cargo.

But one container on the deck held aluminum tubes, and German intelligence officials had been watching these very pipes for months.

Measuring nearly eight feet in length and nine inches in diameter, the tubes were made of a special alloy, 6061-T6, known to be both light and exceptionally strong. Similar tubes are used in a wide range of commercial products, from bicycle frames to aircraft parts. But they also are useful in the construction of machines known as gas centrifuges, which enrich uranium into the key material for nuclear weapons.

Throughout the second half of 2002, intelligence agencies in the United States and Western Europe picked up multiple signals that North Korea was attempting to acquire such tubes, along with other specialized metals used in centrifuges, U.S. and European sources say. Germany's top nonproliferation agency issued a warning in the fall that North Korean agents were known to be "obtaining sensitive goods" by using front companies or third countries as cover. Intelligence reports suggested that a large quantity of pipes -- perhaps 220 tons or more -- was being sought across Europe. The tubes are of a different type of aluminum than those that figured prominently in suspicions about Iraq.

Despite the increased vigilance, North Korea may have already succeeded in acquiring hundreds of such tubes, using connections and routes developed over years. "All they need is help from one company -- perhaps a small company, one that may never actually see the aluminum pipes, or have them in their hands," said Eckhard Maak, a government prosecutor in Stuttgart, Germany, who helped investigate the case. "With only a phone and an Internet connection, you can send such materials across the world."

Export License Denied

The unlikely supplier of the aluminum pipes was a tiny German export company called Optronic. Its owner, Hans Werner Truppel, made a living brokering sales of optical and electronic equipment out of his house, a modest one-story dwelling in a village 85 miles northwest of Munich.

Three years ago, German law enforcement officials say, Truppel struck up a relationship with a North Korean businessman who claimed to represent an import-export company, Nam Chon Gang. At first, the North Korean company asked for help from Optronic in obtaining obscure machine parts and electronics, offering cash in payment. Truppel sold the firm vacuum pumps and machines known as angle grinders, in each case with the approval of German customs.

Then, last fall, Nam Chon Gang approached Optronic with a new wish list: Could Truppel find a supply of aluminum pipes, made of a specific alloy and cut to precise dimensions? In this case, the North Korean businessman claimed to be brokering a deal on behalf of Shenyang Aircraft Corp., one of China's top aircraft manufacturers. Later, a letter bearing Shenyang's logo vouched for the purchase, according to a law enforcement official who has seen the document. The letter said the aluminum was to be converted into airplane fuel tanks.

It all seemed legitimate, according to Truppel's Frankfurt attorney, Egon Geiss. In September, Optronic located British-made aluminum pipes at a company in nearby Ulm, Germany, and paid the equivalent of just over \$80,000 for 214 of them. Truppel then began the process of securing the needed export papers.

To Truppel's surprise, the German government balked. Officials in the Trade Ministry, aware of the potential uses for such tubes, looked closely at Optronic's application and began picking it apart. The story about aircraft fuel tanks was dismissed as "not plausible," according to Maak, the prosecutor. Moreover, German officials were skeptical that a major Chinese aircraft corporation would employ an unknown North Korean firm to do its shopping.

"Why the North Korean middleman?" Maak said he wondered. "It seemed highly unusual."

The denial left Truppel baffled and financially exposed, according to Geiss. Now the businessman was stuck with 22 tons of aluminum, which he had paid for but couldn't use. Through the fall and winter, he tried to unsuccessfully sell the pipes to others at a discount. Meanwhile, the Ulm company that had sold the pipes to Truppel in September was still holding them in its warehouse and was pressuring Truppel to pick them up.

Exactly how and why the pipes ended up on the *Ville de Virgo* remains in dispute. Geiss said Truppel received a call from Delta-Trading, a relatively small metals production, distribution and export firm based in Hamburg. Delta offered to take the pipes and promised to secure the necessary export papers, he said. Truppel "explained to Delta in writing that he was unable to export" the pipes, Geiss added. But in the end Truppel agreed to pay Delta about \$6,000 -- roughly half the profit he had expected to make on the deal -- to take the matter off his hands.

"He assumed that Delta, because of its connections, had other legal avenues for exporting the aluminum," Geiss said of Truppel. "He understood that Delta was to take care of all the necessary arrangements." Delta declined comment. German prosecutors say Truppel was not so naive. "He definitely knew what he was doing," Maak said. "The important thing is, Optronic was denied permission to export, and it did so anyway."

German officials were wary enough to issue a warning urging customs agents to watch for outbound shipments of aluminum pipes. Sometime after April 4 came a report that 22 tons of aluminum had moved from Ulm to Hamburg to be loaded onto the *Ville de Virgo*.

By the time the warning was issued, the ship and cargo were already on their way to the Mediterranean.

A Trove of Evidence

The North Korean man who drew Truppel into the aluminum scheme has never been publicly identified. But German and U.S. investigators say companies like Nam Chon Gang exist in cities throughout Europe, Japan and other regions that offer access to critical technology.

Last August, police made a rare move against such a company in Bratislava, the Slovak capital. The company, New World Trading Slovakia, was founded in March 2001 by two North Koreans who apparently were seeking a quiet location for negotiating deals with customers on three continents, Slovak officials say.

One of them, Kim Kum Jin, 51, had once served as an economic adviser at North Korea's embassy in Egypt. Kim and his partner, Sun Hui Ri, 48, quickly grew fond of their new home. They bought a Mercedes-Benz and opened shop in a luxurious high-rise in one of Bratislava's newest commercial districts, police investigators said in interviews in the Slovak capital. The couple even listed their company in the city's business registry.

But last summer, Slovak federal police, after months of surveillance, began to suspect the two were trading in weapons technology. Lacking sufficient evidence to file charges, the authorities ordered the couple to leave the country last August.

Kim and Sun left behind a trove of documents, police said, including financial records, invoices and bills of lading. The papers described multiple deals by the pair to procure materials for weapons programs, as well as millions of dollars in sales of missile technology to Egypt, Libya, Iran, Syria and Vietnam. One of their major clients, documents revealed, was an Egyptian military-industrial concern.

"They did it all by fax and computer," said an investigator with firsthand knowledge of the case, who spoke on the condition his name not be used. "None of the material ever crossed into Slovakia, which would have been a clear violation of the law. That's why they were able to operate as long as they did."

This pattern is at the heart of how governments such as North Korea manage to traffic in weapons materials. Many countries have agreed to treaties and multilateral agreements, such as the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Missile Technology Control Regime, in an effort to restrict such dangerous transfers. But these efforts were defeated by North Korea using faxes and computers. North Korea has said it does not accept the treaties and defended its right to sell weapons abroad.

"With North Korea you have a strange mix of impressive, extensively clandestine systems and sometimes incredible naivete about how things work," said Greg Thielmann, recently retired director of the office on strategic, proliferation and military issues at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research. "But somehow they have found a way to operate in a world of export-control regimes and still buy the things they need, and still ship their missiles to other countries."

Logistical support along the way is provided by North Korea's embassies and staff, whose activities and travel are protected under the rules of diplomacy, U.S. and European intelligence officials say. Backing for complex weapons deals comes from North Korean banks, including the Vienna-based Golden Star Bank, Pyongyang's only financial institution in Europe. The imposing red stucco building near one of Vienna's busiest markets has no customers and no private accounts, yet its activities have raised alarms within Austria's Interior Ministry.

A report by the ministry's office for the protection of the constitution included a list of activities the agency had connected to the bank. It included intelligence-gathering as well as "money-laundering, the distribution of forged currency and illegal trade with radioactive substances."

Unscheduled Stop

French and German officials had little evidence in hand on April 10 when they pondered their options for dealing with the Ville de Virgo. By this time, the ship was in the eastern Mediterranean, far beyond the territorial reach of the two countries, steaming southeast toward the Suez Canal at 23 knots.

One possible solution -- letting the ship proceed to an Asian port and working through the host government -- was ruled out as too risky. Another option, since the ship was French-owned and technically under France's jurisdiction, was to stop the ship at sea and transfer the cargo to a French military vessel.

Instead, it was decided that the aluminum pipes simply should be removed, quickly and quietly, at the first possible port. The ship's French owner endorsed the plan.

When contacted by radio, the Ville de Virgo's captain was unaware of any controversy involving the aluminum tubes. But he agreed to a request to make an unscheduled stop in the Egyptian port of Alexandria, just outside the Suez, to remove the tubes from his ship. As the ship arrived in Alexandria on April 12, a special crew and cargo crane were waiting at the dock. Another vessel returned the tubes to Hamburg on April 28.

In Stuttgart, Truppel, the Optronic chief, was arrested for violating German export laws and was ordered held without bail. He remains imprisoned in Stuttgart awaiting trial. The company that acted as an export middleman, Delta-Trading, has not been charged. Geiss, Truppel's attorney, plans to argue that his client was tricked by Delta and North Korea.

Back at Hamburg's harbor, the watch for aluminum tubes continues. Nam Chon Gang and its mysterious North Korean entrepreneur, thwarted in one attempt to obtain the metal, might be trying again: U.S. proliferation officials said they learned from European allies of "multiple" efforts to acquire aluminum tubes in recent months.

The dimensions of the tubes suggest to nuclear experts that North Korea is attempting to build a type of gas centrifuge designed by the European consortium Urenco -- a design stolen by Pakistani scientists in the 1970s. The Urenco centrifuge uses an aluminum casing that is roughly the same size as the tubes exported by Optronic, said David Albright, a physicist and president of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security. But it takes more than aluminum to build a centrifuge, Albright noted. Highly specialized magnets, bearings and a metal known as maraging steel are also required. North Korea would probably have to import all those things, yet there have been no known interceptions of such materials.

"There would have to be many more shipments," Albright said. "Usually what you see is only the tip of the iceberg." Stopping a single shipment of aluminum tubes from reaching North Korea was a setback for Pyongyang -- but probably only a temporary one, he said. "You can hurt them badly," Albright said, "but in the end you can only delay them from succeeding."

Special correspondent Shannon Smiley in Berlin and researcher Robert E. Thomason in Washington contributed to this report.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A60042-2003Aug14.html>

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USA Today
August 14, 2003
Pg. 6

N. Korea's Hard Stance Could Widen Divisions On U.S. Policy

Pyongyang pushes for pledge not to invade

By Bill Nichols, USA Today

WASHINGTON — North Korea's harsh new refusal Wednesday to give up its nuclear bomb-making program without a U.S. promise never to invade increases pressure on a divided Bush administration to agree on a North Korea policy, U.S. officials say.

North Korea's refusal is not new, but it comes as the United States has begun to make overtures before talks this month. North Korea signaled it was not softening its position. "It is clear that as long as the U.S. insists on its hostile policy toward (North Korea), the latter will not abandon its nuclear deterrent force," an unnamed North Korean Foreign Ministry spokesman said in comments carried Wednesday by Pyongyang's official news agency.

The comments, coming two weeks before the start of crucial six-party talks about the nuclear issue, underscore the difficulties faced by the Bush administration. The United States, North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan and Russia will take part in the meeting in Beijing starting Aug. 27.

"There is still no internally agreed upon U.S. position," says an administration official involved in the debate who requested anonymity. President Bush told reporters Wednesday he continues to think the issue can be dealt with "in a peaceful way, and we're making good progress."

U.S. officials and Asia analysts said the tough line from North Korea may deepen already significant fissures within the administration over how to proceed. The statement seemed to reject signals from the State Department that the administration, though unwilling to offer a formal non-aggression pact, might provide North Korea with a lesser form of written assurance that the United States will not attack it.

Pentagon officials, as well as highly placed members of Vice President Cheney's staff, oppose any concessions to North Korea unless the regime agrees to end its nuclear program.

The North Korean statement probably "will strengthen the hawkish camp within the administration," says Cato Institute Korea expert Ted Galen Carpenter. "But that faction seems willing to let (Secretary of State Colin) Powell and the others who prefer diplomacy to have their day. The hawks believe that if they're right, there will be no agreement, and then they will put forth option B — an economic blockade or possibly even targeted military strikes."

North Korea is said to have at least one or two nuclear weapons. Last October, the Pyongyang regime admitted it was pursuing a covert nuclear weapons program in defiance of a 1994 agreement with the United States.

The U.S. official involved in internal discussions said disagreements within the administration center on three issues:

*How to provide North Korea a non-aggression guarantee without creating a treaty that requires Senate ratification.

*Deciding the sequencing of any potential agreement — meaning how much North Korea would have to give up, if anything, before the United States would offer a carrot, such as low-interest loans or access to international economic institutions. Powell told reporters at the State Department on Wednesday that no economic proposals have yet been put forward.

*Whether to put a hard deadline on North Korea's compliance with any agreement to freeze or dismantle its nuclear weapons program.

In Washington, a team of U.S. officials, led by Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly, met with diplomats from Japan and South Korea. The United States and Japan have generally taken a harder line on North Korea than South Korea has.

In Moscow on Wednesday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov said Russia and China are considering offering North Korea security guarantees if the United States doesn't satisfy Pyongyang's concerns. The North Korean statement, however, rejected the idea of a collective security pact.

--Contributing: Wire reports

<http://www.usatoday.com/usatoday/20030814/5406693s.htm>

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China to Host Six-Way N.Korea Talks in Late August

Thu August 14, 2003 06:49 AM ET

By Brian Rhoads

BEIJING (Reuters) - China confirmed on Thursday it will host six-way talks this month on North Korea's nuclear program, saying they marked an important step in efforts to defuse the 10-month crisis.

It said the talks would take place on August 27-29 in Beijing, ending weeks of speculation about when officials from the two Koreas, the United States, Russia, Japan and China would try to bridge what has been termed an "abyss of distrust."

"The opening of the six-way talks marks another important step toward a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on its Web site, www.fmprc.gov.cn.

"As host, China stands ready and is willing to cooperate and work with all other parties to promote the process of dialogue so as to ensure peace and stability in the Korean peninsula."

The announcement followed a flurry of diplomatic activity to restart talks on the crisis, which erupted in October after U.S. officials said Pyongyang had admitted to pursuing a uranium enrichment program to produce atomic weapons.

Beijing hosted initial three-way talks with Washington and Pyongyang in April, but they ended with little progress. The United States has since pushed for negotiations to be expanded to include the other players in the region. North Korea, after demanding bilateral talks with Washington, finally agreed.

POSITIONING

South Korea pledged it would make positive efforts in the hope of resolving the issue peacefully. But diplomatic jockeying has already begun.

North Korea revived its long-standing demand for a non-aggression treaty and diplomatic relations with Washington, a show of rigidity analysts said represented its customary leveraging from a weak position.

The treaty and diplomatic normalization were needed to demonstrate a "U.S. switchover in its hostile policy" toward a country President Bush has branded part of an axis of evil along with Iran and pre-war Iraq.

North Korea also accused Washington of "souring the atmosphere" ahead of the talks with military provocations, but it did not elaborate.

"(It) cannot but compel the DPRK to doubt whether the U.S. is really set to have fruitful talks for the solution to the nuclear issue in a sound atmosphere or not," the Rodong Sinmun newspaper said.

Russia proposed a multilateral security pact that could include all six parties or just the United States, Russia, North Korea and China, Interfax news agency said on Wednesday, although officials there were hardly optimistic.

"There are big differences, I would even say an abyss of distrust, between parties, especially the United States and North Korea," Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Losyukov said after meeting delegates from North and South Korea in Moscow.

China, which fought alongside the North against the United States and the South in the 1950-53 Korean War, is the isolated North's closest ally and main source of food and energy.

Diplomats say it will be seeking to reprise its April role as an honest broker, but China also has been alarmed at the prospect of a nuclear-armed North and instability on its eastern flank.

"As you know, we are facing a nuclear problem. We have to solve this problem, because it's a very sensitive and important one," Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said in Seoul on Thursday.

"It also contains an element of danger during the procedure of solving it. As a whole, I hope this nuclear problem will be solved in a peaceful manner through dialogue," he said in talks with South Korean Unification Minister Jeong Se-hyun.

The venue is likely to be the exclusive Diaoyutai state guesthouse used for the April talks at which the North's delegate told his U.S. counterpart that Pyongyang already possessed nuclear bombs and was prepared to make more. Early this year, North Korea expelled U.N. nuclear inspectors, pulled out of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and restarted a mothballed reactor at Yongbyon, north of Pyongyang.

<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=worldNews&storyID=3276749>

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International Herald Tribune

August 14, 2003

Radioactivity Scanners To Be Deployed At Port

By Associated Press

ROTTERDAM - The United States agreed Wednesday to pay for radioactivity detectors at Europe's largest seaport to block the smuggling of nuclear material.

Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham said the \$2.7 million, or \$3 million, system will scan some of the six million containers passing through Rotterdam each year and will "improve our mutual efforts to prevent the illicit traffic of nuclear materials."

The project is the latest in a series of measures by the United States in Rotterdam and other world ports following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist assaults.

"No weapon is beyond the planning of terrorist groups, particularly the Al Qaeda network," Abraham said.

<http://www.iht.com/articles/106256.html>

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San Antonio Express-News

August 14, 2003

Bioscience Laboratory Opens At Brooks

By Christopher Anderson, San Antonio Express-News

It took a year and about \$3 million in federal funding, but an obsolete asbestos-laden building at Brooks City-Base has been gutted and transformed into a sparkling new bioscience research and training facility.

The Center for Biotechnology and Bioprocessing Education and Research is a joint venture between the University of Texas at San Antonio and Brooks City-Base.

It is expected to boost higher education in San Antonio and to help protect U.S. troops from bioterrorism.

UTSA faculty and Air Force personnel were on hand Wednesday for an early look at the 8,000-square-foot facility, which at the moment is largely empty of furniture and high-tech laboratory equipment.

"Obviously, it's not finished," said Neal Guentzel, professor of microbiology at UTSA. "The physical structure is finished, but most of the equipment is not in."

That should change soon. A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for Aug. 26, and short courses for university students and Air Force workers are expected to begin at the center later this year.

"They will learn how to use state-of-the-art molecular biology equipment, and protocols and the basics behind it," said Guentzel, who added that semester-long courses are in the works.

Four faculty members are being hired to staff the center. Besides teaching students, they will work on research projects of their own and in conjunction with the Air Force.

Much of the research work is expected to focus on developing vaccines, drugs and sensors to help combat biological weapons.

Air Force Lt. Col. John Hickman, who heads the epidemiology surveillance division at Brooks, said the center would become an essential biodefense training area for different branches of the nation's military.

"Anything in the (Department of Defense) box could possibly be trained here," Hickman said. "So we have an opportunity here now to expand that. As our Army folks, our Air Force folks are forward-deployed, they'll come through here."

Guentzel said he also hoped the facility would mean new high-paying jobs in San Antonio.

<http://news.mysanantonio.com/story.cfm?xla=saen&xlc=1039444>

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(Editor's Note: Hyperlink for referenced GAO report follows article.)

Philadelphia Inquirer

August 15, 2003

GAO Downplays Terror Risk Of Nuclear Waste Shipments

By Robert Gehrke, Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Shipments of radioactive nuclear waste are generally safe from terrorist attacks, but there are ways the shipments can be better protected, a congressional report said yesterday.

Large steel casks used to house the nuclear waste make it unlikely that any terrorist attack or accident during shipment would have widespread health effects, the General Accounting Office, Congress' investigative arm, reported. It relied on earlier studies by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Energy Department.

"These studies repeatedly found that transportation containers would be very difficult to penetrate, and in the worst-case scenarios where they may be penetrated, only a small fraction of the material would be released," the GAO reported.

However, the GAO said the shipments could be made safer by minimizing the number of them, providing terrorists with fewer potential targets. The office noted that rail shipments can carry five times as much waste as trucks.

The GAO said waste from closed-down reactors should be shipped first, allowing them to be decommissioned, thus reducing the number of sites that need to be protected.

However, contracts the government has signed with the utility companies that run the reactors may make changing the methods and prioritization of the shipments impossible.

John Coequyt, a senior analyst with the Washington-based Environmental Working Group, said he believes the GAO underestimates the severity of the threat posed by terrorists.

"How can we get this news that GAO isn't concerned about the possibility of an extraordinary event just the day after the FBI arrests someone trying to bring in missiles that could bring down a jetliner?" he said. "That's been our point all along, that this is very risky business, that terrorists who are after this country are serious, that they have very serious weapons."

But Rep. Joe Barton (R., Texas), chairman of the House Energy and Air Quality subcommittee, said in a statement that such objections to transporting nuclear waste are "a backdoor way to try and stop nuclear power," and said the GAO report should dispel concerns.

The federal government is in the process of developing a permanent nuclear waste dump at Yucca Mountain, Nev., about 100 miles northwest of Las Vegas. The facility is not likely to open until 2010.

<http://www.philly.com/mld/inquirer/news/nation/6535882.htm>

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Spent Nuclear Fuels: Options Exist to Further Enhance Security.

GAO-03-426, July 15.

<http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-426>

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