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New York Times

August 27, 2003

Pg. 1

New Report Cites Traces of Uranium at Iran Plant

By Felicity Barringer

UNITED NATIONS, Aug. 26 — International inspectors have found traces of highly enriched uranium at an Iranian facility, according to a new confidential report distributed today. The traces could be an indication that Tehran has already produced weapons-grade nuclear materials.

Iran denied producing nuclear materials, said the report, by the International Atomic Energy Association, the conclusions of which were obtained by The New York Times. The report added, "Additional work is also required to enable the agency to arrive at conclusions about Iran's statements that there have been no uranium enrichment activities in Iran involving nuclear material."

The Iranians, the report said, explained that the trace particles found by inspectors at the Natanz uranium enrichment plant had been on the equipment when it was purchased from another country.

The report added that "Iran has agreed to provide the agency with all information about the centrifuge components and other contaminated equipment it obtained from abroad, including their origin and the locations where they have been stored and used in Iran."

John Bolton, the under secretary of state for arms control and international security, was in Moscow and Paris this week to discuss Iran, as well as the continuing standoff over North Korea's nuclear program. Philip T. Reeker, a spokesman for the State Department, said, "We have real concerns about this, and it's part of our broad dialogue with Russia on many things."

The next meeting of the agency's board of governors is scheduled to begin Sept. 8. At their most recent meetings the members of the board decided to press Iran both to sign an additional protocol and to provide the inspectors with additional information and access and allow them to test Tehran's claim that its program is a purely civilian effort to increase the country's energy capacity. Iraq has one nuclear reactor under construction at Bushehr being built and supplied by a Russian company.

The new report credits Iran with giving inspectors access to previously closed sites and providing new information about the origins of some of its nuclear efforts in the early 1990's.

"Iran has demonstrated an increased degree of cooperation" with inspectors, the report said. It added that Tehran has also indicated a willingness to begin negotiations on the terms under which it will sign a protocol to the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, as the agency has asked.

David Albright, the president of the Institute for Science and International Security, based in Washington, said today: "Several questions have been answered. Additional questions may be answered. But we still haven't answered the basic question: Has Iran enriched uranium?"

Mr. Albright also indicated that the information that is being developed in various capitals about the origins of the Iranian program points to Pakistan as the likely source of the centrifuge designs and components necessary for uranium enrichment. Pakistan's government has denied such a role.

Iranian officials have maintained for years that they are simply developing a civilian nuclear power program. The Agence France-Presse news service reported that, at a news conference in Tehran today, the government spokesman, Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, said, "We are still negotiating and we have a positive approach" to the protocol, which permits unannounced inspections.

In Vienna, Ali-Akbar Salehi, Tehran's ambassador to the I.A.E.A., told The Associated Press that the equipment was "contaminated" with enriched uranium before it was purchased by Iran. Mr. Salehi told the news agency that the equipment in question was "brought many years ago from intermediaries," making it impossible to identify exactly where the contamination may have occurred.

In an interview with the German magazine Stern, to be published later this week, the director general of the agency, Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, commenting on the traces of highly enriched uranium, said today, "This worries us greatly."

Melissa Fleming, a spokeswoman for the agency in Vienna, said in an e-mail message today, "Our inspectors and experts have been in Iran no fewer than five times in the period since June and we have made considerable progress since then in clarifying the history, extent and purpose of Iran's nuclear program." But she said the remaining open questions required "urgent resolution."

A tough report from the agency in June concluded that "Iran has failed to meet its obligations" to report the existence of the natural uranium it obtained in 1991 and to report the existence of a heavy-water research reactor that could provide Tehran with a different technological capacity to produce weapons-grade nuclear material.

This report, according to Mr. Albright, appears less categorical, and so offers less ammunition to Washington or other capitals that might want to urge a tough stance by the board of governors. The board has options ranging from seeking more information to referring the Iranian question to the United Nations Security Council.

"They're still saying we're waiting for more cooperation, waiting for environmental samples," said Corey Hinderstein, a colleague of Mr. Albright's at the Institute for Science and International Security.

In a report in the current issue of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, Ms. Hinderstein and Mr. Albright wrote, "Worries about Iranian nuclear activities were heightened in early July after Iran conducted a successful test of the Shahab-3 missile, which can carry a 2,200-pound payload as far as 1,500 kilometers. The timing of Iran's announcement about the Shahab-3 and the size of its payload suggest that the missile is intended to carry a nuclear warhead."

In an e-mail exchange, Ms. Fleming, the I.A.E.A. spokeswoman, said today, "The I.A.E.A. is hopeful that by the time of its next board of governors meeting in November, we will have moved decisively towards resolving the outstanding issues."

Mr. Albright and Ms. Hinderstein warn that every few months' delay in acting to shut down what may be an advanced effort to give Tehran a nuclear-weapons capacity gives the Iranians more time to expand their complex of centrifuges, which in turn could bring them closer to that end.

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Washington Times

August 27, 2003

Pg. 1

Reactor Project Ends For N. Korea

Multilateral talks on nukes begin

By David R. Sands, The Washington Times

The international consortium building two nuclear reactors in North Korea is poised to suspend work on the project indefinitely, U.S. officials said yesterday, as delicate talks began in Beijing on the North's nuclear weapons programs.

A U.S. administration official familiar with the discussions confirmed that officials from the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization, known as KEDO, will meet by early October to mothball the construction program, the centerpiece of a 1994 Clinton administration deal designed to keep Pyongyang from acquiring nuclear arms.

"Everybody has known for some time that this project was never coming to fruition," the official said. "It was just a question of when to admit it."

Diplomats from six nations convened in Beijing today for talks to resolve East Asia's most urgent security concern — North Korea's nuclear program and demands by the United States that it stand down immediately.

China, the host country, called for a "calm and patient attitude" for the meetings, put together after months of intense diplomacy. Envoys for the United States and North Korea shook hands, as did others, before they crisply got down to business.

Work on the project to build the reactors essentially was put on hold after North Korea acknowledged to U.S. negotiators that it had violated the 1994 accord by operating a second, clandestine program to develop nuclear weapons.

The KEDO partners — the United States, South Korea, Japan and the European Union — are expected to suspend work formally on the reactors at the next board meeting to be held in late September or early October.

An unnamed U.S. official told Reuters news agency that the Bush administration favored a complete termination of the construction project, but that Japan and South Korea were pushing for a one-year suspension of work at the site. "Our position is just tank the thing now," the news service quoted the official as saying. Other officials said even a one-year suspension in the work amounted to a virtual death sentence for the project, barring an unexpected reversal in Pyongyang's stance on its nuclear programs.

Japanese newspapers, citing diplomatic sources there, reported last week that the United States and Japan were convinced the KEDO project was beyond salvation, and the only thing to work out was the timing of the funeral. News of the project's cancellation came as delegations from the United States, North Korea, South Korea, Japan, Russia and host China were gathering for the first of three days of talks today in the Chinese capital on the Korean crisis.

The Bush administration is demanding that Pyongyang abide by promises not to build and sell nuclear arms, and to resume cooperation with international nuclear inspectors over its programs.

The North wants a nonaggression pact from the United States as well as substantial aid to boost its collapsing economy.

China hosted a dinner for the visiting delegations last night at the negotiating site. Multilateral talks were scheduled for today and Friday. Informal bilateral discussions between U.S. and North Korean delegates, long sought by Pyongyang, are expected to be held tomorrow.

Few expect a major breakthrough to emerge from the three-day meeting, but news of the KEDO decision could cast a shadow over the talks.

Under the 1994 Agreed Framework, the United States and its allies agreed to provide the two light-water reactors and a series of fuel subsidies in exchange for North Korea's pledge to abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions.

North Korea has cited construction delays in the KEDO project in arguing that it no longer feels bound to abide by its promises under the 1994 deal. The reactors were supposed to open this year, with South Korea footing about 70 percent of the cost.

U.S. intelligence analysts believe that the North possesses one or two nuclear bombs and is on the way to building several more. The prospect has raised tensions throughout East Asia and fueled diplomatic efforts resulting in this week's Beijing talks.

Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog agency, said in an interview with a German magazine that North Korea was the world's biggest threat and was using "nuclear blackmail" to intimidate its neighbors and extract political concessions.

Although the timing of the KEDO board meeting inevitably will affect the Beijing talks, analysts say, construction and financial realities have played as big a role as politics in the timing.

Contractors working on the project have been unable to obtain licenses or insurance needed to proceed, halting work on the reactors. U.S. government funding beyond the current fiscal year is also in doubt, making construction planning almost impossible.

"It does fit in awkwardly with the six-party talks," the administration official said, "but there were also certain realities on the ground that couldn't be ignored anymore."

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030827-121010-4810r.htm>

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New York Times

August 27, 2003

Army Center To Study New Uses Of Biotechnology

By Andrew Pollack

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 26 — Seeking to harness biotechnology in new ways, the United States Army is establishing a research institute at three universities to apply biology to the development of sensors, computers and materials. The new center, the Institute for Collaborative Biotechnologies, will have its headquarters at the University of California at Santa Barbara, with some of the work also to be done at the California Institute of Technology and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The initial grant is for up to \$50 million over five years, the Army and the universities said.

The Army has long been involved in medical research involving biotechnology, including defense against biological warfare agents. But it wants to broaden the use of biotechnology to nonmedical areas. Such technology might include better materials for uniforms or armor, faster and lighter computers and batteries and more elaborate sensors. It could also help in the Pentagon's plan to make the Army more agile and able to deploy more rapidly to fight terrorism and wars.

"We feel that this coming century the big technologies will be biotechnology, that biotechnology has the potential to transform how we conduct our business probably as much as I.T. did in the past century," said James J. Valdes, a scientific adviser for biotechnology at the Army, referring to information technology.

The new institute will do unclassified research intended mainly to apply biotechnology to the development of materials and information processing.

"We use biotech as a tool for discovery," said Daniel Morse, director of the new institute and a professor of molecular genetics and biochemistry at Santa Barbara.

Computer chips, for instance, are made by etching away silicon to form tiny structures. But it might be possible to make even smaller and speedier chips by building structures molecule by molecule from the ground up, as living creatures do. Such smaller and speedier chips might be useful in munitions that could tell friend from foe or sensors that could be embedded in a soldier's uniform.

Dr. Morse has found that marine sponges can assemble structures of silica, a compound of silicon and oxygen, using an enzyme. He and colleagues have made a similar enzyme synthetically and hope to apply it to make semiconductor materials. Scientists at M.I.T., led by Angela M. Belcher, have evolved viruses that can make and organize minuscule wires and magnetic components.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/27/national/27BIOT.html>

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New York Times

August 27, 2003

U.S. Set To Take A Hard Line In Talks On Korean Arms

By Joseph Kahn

BEIJING, Aug. 26 — North Korea will come under intense diplomatic pressure to scrap its nuclear weapons program on Wednesday as the United States, North Korea and its four neighbors begin unusual six-party negotiations on how to resolve the Korean arms crisis.

The talks, scheduled to take place over three days here in the Chinese capital, are the most concerted diplomatic push on North Korea since President Bush took office. They pose a difficult challenge to the administration as it seeks to persuade the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions without directly rewarding it for doing so, which Mr. Bush said would be like succumbing to blackmail.

South Korea, Japan, Russia and China will take part in the negotiations, meeting the Bush administration's precondition that talks must involve the major regional powers.

Diplomats and experts say those four countries are likely to support American demands that North Korea dismantle its arms program and submit to inspections. But North Korean negotiators are known for seeking to exploit differences between the United States and the other countries involved, and the talks are expected to be difficult and prolonged.

The talks come at a sensitive time in Washington, with Bush administration officials sending starkly different signals about their willingness to reach a deal. On the eve of the talks, Jack Pritchard, the administration's special envoy for negotiations with North Korea who had advocated a conciliatory approach, resigned after being criticized by a prominent senator for being out of touch with administration policy.

A senior administration official said today that people who favor a hard-line negotiating stance had prevailed in the debate leading up to the talks. The administration, this official said, has firmly ruled out offering North Korea any concessions until it unilaterally abandons its nuclear program in a "complete, verifiable and irreversible" way.

The task of conducting negotiations without offering incentives will fall to James A. Kelly, an assistant secretary of state. He is expected to outline a multiphase process in which any American concessions would come only at the end, after North Korea admits the full scope of its nuclear activity, halts such activity and readmits inspectors. But other administration officials have indicated that they would not necessarily oppose South Korea or other regional countries offering economic incentives to North Korea.

On the eve of the discussions, which were arranged after extensive shuttle diplomacy by Beijing's diplomats, Chinese officials called on all sides to come prepared to make concessions. That means ending North Korea's nuclear program but also offering the country a firm security guarantee, they said.

"China holds that the Korean peninsula should be nuclear free and reasonable security concerns of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be addressed," Zeng Qinghong, China's vice president, said today, using the formal name for North Korea.

The fact that talks are taking place at all, after a stormy session in April and North Korea's repeated claims that it is moving to reprocess plutonium for nuclear bombs, has prompted cautious optimism that they could be constructive, though almost certainly inconclusive.

"There is real pressure on North Korea to make concessions, but also on the United States to be reasonable," says Susan Shirk, a former Clinton administration State Department official who is now at the University of California at San Diego. "I'd be surprised if we see a real breakthrough, but also if the talks collapse."

Asian diplomats say the outlines of a potential deal are clear. North Korea would abandon its nuclear program and agree to intrusive inspections. The United States would provide a firm security guarantee and, along with its allies, offer aid, investment and other economic incentives to the cash-strapped country.

Optimists, including Chinese, South Korean and Russian diplomats, say the North Korean leader, Kim Jong Il, has long viewed his nuclear program as a bargaining chip to be traded for the right mix of security assurances, diplomatic recognition and aid.

But hard-liners in the Bush administration say they believe that Mr. Kim has no intention of giving up weapons of mass destruction. They argue that extended talks would just delay tougher measures to penalize the country or even topple the Communist government.

"Negotiations really depend on North Korea being ready to trade away its deterrent, and I don't see any sign that they're ready to do that," said Victor D. Cha, an Asian studies specialist at Georgetown University. "As a result, I think you'll see positions remaining fairly entrenched on both sides."

All the parties involved say North Korea will at a minimum drive a hard bargain and any resolution is likely to take months to reach. Neither the United States nor North Korea has indicated much new flexibility going into the talks, with each side emphasizing that the other must take the first steps.

A significant difference with previous effort to find a diplomatic solution is the new and unusually assertive role of China.

Beijing had previously maintained that the nuclear issue was a matter for North Korea and the United States to work out on their own. This time, Beijing put heavy pressure on North Korea, including briefly cutting off oil supplies, to bring it to the negotiating table.

China's active role has pressed both sides to negotiate in good faith, experts say, because it has broad political and economic sway over the North. Beijing provides as much as 80 percent of the country's food and oil at concessionary prices.

"China has put so much effort into these negotiations that if it becomes clear one side or the other lacks sincerity, China's support for that side is going to decline," said Chu Shulong, a foreign policy expert at Qinghua University in Beijing.

China's cooperation is viewed as essential to the United States in the event the talks do not go well. The United States has made clear it may intercept North Korean sea shipments to prevent arms proliferation and to push for penalties in the United Nations, both of which could prove difficult without at least tacit Chinese support.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/27/international/asia/27KORE.html>

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Washington Post

August 27, 2003

Pg. 19

As Talks Begin, China Views N. Korea As Risk

By John Pomfret, Washington Post Foreign Service

BEIJING, Aug. 26 -- Six-nation talks on the emerging nuclear crisis on the Korean Peninsula start Wednesday in Beijing, and a key dynamic will be the one between China and North Korea.

China's government once saw North Korea as a strategic buffer and a friendly communist economy. But Beijing increasingly views Pyongyang and its apparent desire to develop a nuclear weapon as a risk, and officials have all but pleaded with the government of Kim Jong Il to begin reforming its moribund economy.

Whereas the Chinese once looked at North Korea and saw themselves in the mirror, now businessmen and scholars traveling to North Korea say they feel they have entered a time machine and been transported back to China of the 1960s.

"We used to say we were as close to our North Korean brothers as lips and teeth," said Cui Xiaodong, a Beijing trader who routinely spends months at a time in a hotel in Pyongyang. "But now it's like those people are living on the moon."

China and North Korea are still technically allies. China lost 1 million men while fighting for the North in the Korean War. But decades of economic reforms in China and exposure to unprecedented freedoms and Western ideas have turned Chinese society away from the hard-line Stalinism still pursued by North Korea.

Although China initially appeared to ignore the crisis sparked by North Korea's announcement in October that it had a nuclear program, it began to take a more active role this year, starting with Deputy Premier Qian Qichen's trip to Pyongyang in February.

Following the collapse of talks between the United States, North Korea and China in April, Beijing redoubled its efforts, resulting in the three days of meetings this week among diplomats from South Korea, Russia and Japan, as well as North Korea, China and the United States.

No one expects immediate success. Wang Yi, a vice foreign minister who has been the point man for the talks, told China's state-run media today that he expected the talks would be difficult.

"The nuclear issue is very complicated and acute, and it is impossible to solve all problems through one or two discussions. Moreover, other issues may arise during negotiations," Wang said in an interview on Chinese state-run TV.

Government-backed scholars in Beijing now speak of regime change in North Korea in hopeful terms. The People's Liberation Army, once a staunch ally of the mercurial Kim family, which has run North Korea for more than five decades, now has elaborate plans to deal with the country in case of its collapse, Chinese military sources said.

A group of Chinese academics have started arguing that North Korea's disappearance would actually not be harmful to China's long-term interests. In one unpublished paper, a specialist on Chinese security, Shi Yinhong, wrote that China could benefit in the long term from North Korea's collapse. South Korea, which would take over, would naturally gravitate toward Beijing and away from Japan and the United States, he wrote. U.S. troops would leave the peninsula and China's influence over northeast Asia would rise.

In reports in China, Chinese officials and scholars described a bizarre country where no common citizens talked to them and where signs of the sacrifice made by China's troops 50 years ago were wiped from official memory.

One leading academic, who gave his report on condition of anonymity and who returned last week from North Korea, painted a picture of a desperate country full of people too afraid to talk with, or even have their pictures taken by, a foreigner. One evening, the academic shook free of what he called his ubiquitous government "shepherd" and went to look for normal life in Pyongyang.

"I went to the national library," he wrote. "I walked close to a girl who was reading an English book. The pages resembled toilet paper from China 30 years ago. I was deeply moved by her diligence so I greeted her in English. She pretended not to hear me."

The academic and other Chinese guests were taken to Panmunjom, the site of the cease-fire that ended the Korean War. Among the signatories that day was Peng Dehuai, the commander of Chinese forces in North Korea. At Panmunjom, the Chinese group asked to visit a small museum on the war.

"There were many pictures, documents and real objects of the war led by the ever victorious Gen Kim Il Sung," the academic wrote. "However. We found nothing about the Chinese volunteer soldiers or Gen. Peng Dehuai."

The only bright spot in his trip, the academic wrote, was a change in North Korean thinking. "Thoughts of earning money have found their way deep into the hearts of the North Korean people," he wrote.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A49966-2003Aug26.html>

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Washington Post

August 27, 2003

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Russia Turns From Old Allies To U.S.

N. Korea Urged to Cooperate in Talks

By Peter Baker, Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Aug. 26 -- For each of the previous two years, Russia has hosted the leader of North Korea on lavish railroad excursions fit for visiting royalty. This year, however, has brought no train trip for Kim Jong Il, only Russian warships floating off the coast of North Korea.

Russian armed forces are conducting an elaborate series of military exercises in the Far East, in part to prepare for any refugee crisis that might occur should North Korea's government collapse or become involved in a war with the United States. Officials in the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, were so offended at the exercises that they angrily denounced them and refused to send observers.

The flap demonstrated that the North can no longer count on unstinting support from Moscow as it seeks to deflect international condemnation of its nuclear weapons program. Heading into the six-nation talks that open in Beijing on Wednesday, Russia has pushed its ally to find common ground with the United States and abandon its atomic ambitions. "The Korean Peninsula should be free from nuclear arms," Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov said last week. In backing away from the Stalinist government, Russia has underscored a broader diplomatic turn away from so-called rogue states since the war in Iraq as it seeks to rebuild its relationship with the United States.

Last summer Moscow seemed to go out of its way to court members of President Bush's "axis of evil," negotiating a \$40 billion economic agreement with Iraq, proposing construction of five more nuclear reactors in Iran and opening its doors to Kim at a time when Washington wanted to isolate him.

A year later, the Kremlin is taking a more cooperative stance with the United States. In the past two months, Russian officials have abandoned talk of expanding their nuclear assistance to Iran and brought new pressure on that country to subject its nuclear program to strict international inspections. Russian diplomats have not led the charge against U.S. postwar Iraq policy at the United Nations. And they have teamed up with China to encourage recalcitrant North Korea to negotiate.

"The tide has certainly changed in Russia on foreign policy," said Dmitri Trenin, an analyst at the Carnegie Moscow Center. The transformation has happened "very quietly. It's very interesting. There has been no major statement, nobody has been sacked. But everybody is singing a different tune."

Senior policymakers describe it not as a change in substance, but in calibration. Mikhail Margelov, an adviser to President Vladimir Putin and chairman of the international affairs committee of the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament, attributed the new harmony to better coordination to avoid misunderstandings.

"Today we have much in common," he said in an interview. "What we have managed to achieve in the last few months, especially after the Iraqi crisis . . . [is] to establish a more efficient level of communications." After all, he added, "when it comes to Iran and when it comes to North Korea, definitely neither Russia nor the United States wants these countries to have the nuclear bomb."

Other officials and analysts see two imperatives behind the shift in Russia -- Moscow's fear of being shut out of major global decisions, as it was during the Iraq war, and its creeping realization that Iran and North Korea may actually pose a serious threat.

"Russia wants to be respected and seen as a country that could and should play a significant role in world issues," said U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon (R-Pa.), a leading congressional figure on Russian relations, who was in the country today visiting a once-secret weapons-grade plutonium facility in the Siberian city of Zheleznogorsk. To encourage this, he said, Washington needs to reciprocate, and the first thing it should do is lift three-decade-old trade restrictions.

Even so, Russia's newfound cooperation may not fully satisfy Washington's demands. Moscow still refuses, for example, to give up its \$800 million contract to finish a nuclear power facility at the Iranian port of Bushehr and has echoed North Korea's proposal that the United States promise not to attack the North as part of any settlement of the nuclear crisis. Washington has so far resisted giving such security guarantees.

Undersecretary of State John Bolton left Moscow today after talks with senior Russian officials on these issues. U.S. diplomats have been pushing Moscow to bring the issue of Iran's nuclear program to the United Nations, but Russian officials are still mulling their response.

For years, Russia has ignored or denied evidence that its scientists who went to Iran were helping it develop missiles and nuclear weapons. Yet a key moment in the evolution of Russia's attitude, according to officials on both sides, was the disclosure by Iranian opposition figures of the existence of two secret nuclear facilities in addition to Bushehr that could support a weapons development program.

Publicly, Russian officials shrugged it off. But Moscow has since pushed Iran to sign agreements obligating it to return to Russia all spent nuclear fuel from Bushehr and accept short-notice inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Russia conducted back-to-back talks here in Moscow with South Korean and North Korean officials and enlisted China's leadership in putting together this week's multiparty negotiations. The Far East military exercises, which also planned for what would happen if a North Korean vessel bearing a nuclear weapon had to be stopped, "were not a PR exercise," said Trenin. "I think they were damn serious."

Vasily Mikheyev, a former Russian diplomat who served in Pyongyang, said the Kremlin has found it easier to turn away from North Korea because it has only minor economic ties to its small neighbor. By contrast, the extensive oil interests in Iraq helped drive Russian opposition to the U.S. war there. Now that the war is over, Moscow wants to secure contracts for its oil companies.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A50256-2003Aug26.html>

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Washington Post

August 27, 2003

Pg. 17

Iran Admits Foreign Help On Nuclear Facility

U.N. Agency's Data Point To Pakistan as the Source

By Joby Warrick, Washington Post Staff Writer

Iran has admitted for the first time that it received substantial foreign help in building a secret nuclear facility south of Tehran that is now beginning to enrich uranium, turning it into a key ingredient in the manufacture of nuclear weapons, according to U.N. documents and diplomatic sources.

While Iran has not yet identified the source of the foreign help, evidence collected in Iran by the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency implicates Pakistani companies as suppliers of critical technology and parts, officials familiar with a U.N. investigation of Iran's program said yesterday. Pakistan is believed by many proliferation experts to have passed important nuclear secrets to both Iran and North Korea. Pakistan has denied providing such assistance.

The latest disclosure about Iran came as the U.N. group, the International Atomic Energy Agency, reported that Iran had only partially complied with demands to open its nuclear program to scrutiny. The IAEA, in a confidential report, said Iran had not fully accounted for activities that have spurred fears that it was secretly developing nuclear weapons.

"Iran has demonstrated an increased degree of cooperation," said the report, portions of which were provided to The Washington Post. "However . . . there remain a number of important outstanding issues, particularly with regard to Iran's enrichment program, that require urgent resolution."

The report also noted that Iran had apparently attempted to sanitize one of its nuclear facilities, known as the Kalaye Electric Co., before granting IAEA inspectors access to the site this summer. "Considerable modifications were observed," the IAEA said of the Kalaye site, which had been identified by an Iranian opposition group as a pilot enrichment facility. IAEA officials were barred from the site during earlier visits.

Over the past 18 months, Iran has begun work on major facilities for processing and enriching uranium, while simultaneously building a separate reactor that can be used in the production of plutonium. The Bush administration contends the facilities are part of an accelerated campaign to build nuclear weapons. Iran's disclosures about its nuclear suppliers were part of an apparent attempt to allay rising international concerns about its nuclear intentions. Iran's claim of a purely peaceful nuclear program suffered a blow last month when IAEA inspectors discovered traces of highly enriched uranium at a newly constructed facility in Natanz, 200 miles south of Tehran. Iran had denied making enriched uranium at Natanz or any other facility prior to June of this year.

In a new attempt to explain the discrepancy, Iran has told U.N. nuclear officials that the uranium came into the country on contaminated equipment purchased from another country -- specifically, on metal machine parts used in gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium.

"In the past, Iran had claimed that the technology was indigenous, and they were quite proud of that," said one European diplomatic official familiar with the IAEA's findings. "Now they're saying they did get a lot of help. This was a major change in the story."

The equipment said to be tainted was from a type of centrifuge acquired by Pakistani scientists in the 1970s and used in Pakistan's domestic nuclear program, two officials familiar with the findings said.

Iran told inspectors it acquired design plans for the centrifuge in 1987, although the transfer of technology appears to have continued over several years, officials said. Iranian officials promised to provide the IAEA with a full account of where it acquired each piece of equipment and how it was used, the officials said.

Pakistan has never acknowledged providing uranium-enrichment technology to Iran. One of only a handful of countries that remain outside the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Pakistan technically is not bound by many of the international restrictions on the export of nuclear technology.

The possibility that Pakistan could be implicated in Iran's nuclear program presents a diplomatic challenge to the Bush administration, which has been reluctant to publicly criticize Pakistan because it has provided crucial assistance in the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan.

"The notion that Pakistan wasn't involved is getting less and less tenable," said Henry D. Sokolski, a top nonproliferation official in the Pentagon during the George H.W. Bush administration. "Some might make the claim that this was something that happened in the past. But it wasn't all that long ago."

The Bush administration declined to comment on the IAEA's findings, but it continued to express skepticism about the veracity of Iran's nuclear claims.

"They have clearly not been forthcoming in the past with the actual facts and details about their secret nuclear programs, and that's what's been of great concern to us," said the State Department's deputy spokesman, Philip Reeker.

Reeker repeated the White House demand that Iran agree to more intrusive, "snap" inspections of its nuclear sites to ease concerns that it might be building nuclear weapons. It's going to be crucial to see whether Iran is willing to follow through with accepting the same protocol that other non-weapons states have accepted."

Ali Akbar Salehi, Iran's ambassador to the IAEA, said yesterday that his government was ready to sign on for more intrusive inspections, but said the U.N. agency would first have to take unspecified steps to ensure "the preservation of [Iran's] sovereignty," according to Iran's official IRNA news agency. Salehi promised to answer the IAEA's remaining questions before a meeting of the agency's 135 member nations scheduled for Sept. 8.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A50470-2003Aug26.html>

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Moscow Times
August 27, 2003
Pg. 4

U.S. Let Into Secret Nuclear Site

By Associated Press

A U.S. congressional delegation was set to examine a production and storage site for Russian weapons-grade plutonium Tuesday in an unprecedented visit to the top secret nuclear facility.

U.S. Representative Curt Weldon and four other lawmakers were to be the first members of Congress -- and the first Americans -- to set eyes on sections of the underground facility in the closed Siberian city of Zheleznogorsk, the highly secretive cradle of the Soviet Union's nuclear might.

The visit is part of an initiative by Weldon to improve transparency at Russia's nuclear, chemical and biological weapons facilities, his office said in a statement.

"After the fall of the Soviet Union, the lack of security and accountability of Russia's vast weapons arsenal is generally regarded as one of the greatest threats of global nuclear proliferation," the statement said.

Russia, which has shut down 10 other plutonium-producing plants, has continued operating plants at Zheleznogorsk, formerly known as Krasnoyarsk-26, and another site, Seversk, saying they are vital to the power supplies of the cities.

With U.S. assistance, Russia has agreed to shut down the plutonium production reactors in Zheleznogorsk and Seversk, but only if two fossil-fuel power plants are built to replace the electricity now supplied by the reactors. The U.S. Energy Department has announced a contract for two U.S. companies to oversee construction of the two coal-burning power plants.

<http://www.themoscowtimes.com/stories/2003/08/27/012.html>

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New York Times

August 28, 2003

Pg. 1

North Koreans And Americans Begin Dialogue

By Joseph Kahn

BEIJING, Aug. 27 — The United States and North Korea had their first face-to-face meeting in four months here this afternoon as part of six-nation negotiations on how to end North Korea's nuclear program, but diplomats played down prospects for an early breakthrough.

James A. Kelly, assistant secretary of state, and Kim Yong Il, North Korea's deputy foreign minister, met on the sidelines of formal discussions, breaking a freeze on direct dialogue that began after a stormy meeting in April in which North Korea warned that it was moving quickly to develop and deploy nuclear arms.

The Bush administration had insisted for months that it would only hold talks with North Korea in a multilateral setting because, it argued, only collective pressure would persuade North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program. It got its way when North Korea dropped its insistence on direct talks and agreed, after extensive efforts by China, to hold unusual simultaneous negotiations with China, Japan, South Korea and Russia as well as the United States. Though Bush administration officials had not ruled out talking privately with the North Koreans during a broader meeting, the fact that Mr. Kelly and Mr. Kim met on the first day was seen as a sign of modest flexibility by the American side.

China has taken an unusually active role in trying to find common ground between the entrenched positions of the United States and North Korea. Beijing used shuttle diplomacy to arrange the talks, bringing the Americans and the North Koreans to the table along with the Russians, South Koreans and Japanese.

At a minimum, China hopes to see the United States and North Korea commit to keep talking, and it used the first day of talks to begin pressing the participants to agree on language for a multiparty declaration that would provide a framework for future negotiations, said a foreign policy expert who has close ties to the Chinese Foreign Ministry. But even that could be fraught with difficulty.

The United States negotiating team outlined an uncompromising agenda that put the onus on North Korea to dismantle its nuclear program before talks about diplomatic, political or economic incentives take place, participants said. Japan also took a tough line, while China, South Korea and Russia took positions that characterized the problem as two-sided, diplomats said.

Still, some local analysts say the United States and North Korea have privately told China that they are flexible on some points, with the United States seen as prepared to offer a security guarantee and North Korea ready to commit publicly to giving up its nuclear program.

"It is not surprising that the two main parties are stating maximum negotiating positions at the outset," said Shi YinHong, a foreign policy expert at People's University in Beijing. "But both sides had to step back in order to make these talks possible, and China clearly feels that over time more progress can be made."

The talks are at the Diaoyutai state guest house, a sprawling, garden-filled compound in western Beijing, with negotiators gathering around a giant hexagonal table built to accommodate the six delegations.

The Chinese placed the Americans and the North Koreans in adjacent corners, which may have facilitated the one-on-one discussion between Mr. Kelly and Mr. Kim, which took place during a break in the afternoon session. The two spoke for 30 minutes, two Asian diplomats confirmed.

The early indications of how the talks are going varied. A South Korean who took part in the meetings described North Korea as "willing to resolve the nuclear issue through dialogue." Chinese officials also put a positive spin on the talks. "I heard talks this morning and this afternoon were very successful," the foreign minister, Li Zhaoxing, told delegates during a reception.

But Japanese and Russian participants were more cautious. The Russian deputy foreign minister, Aleksandr Losyukov, described the negotiations as fragile. "So far, the countries have put forward a number of preliminary demands, which are blocking the developing of these talks," he told Russian reporters in Beijing. "I would not say that I am feeling great optimism."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/28/international/asia/28KORE.html>

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Christian Science Monitor
August 28, 2003

Nuclear Evidence In Iran Forces Proliferation Questions

Discovery of traces of weapons-grade uranium may give US leverage if it seeks world sanctions on Tehran.

By Peter Grier and Faye Bowers, Staff writers of The Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON – International inspectors haven't proved that Iran has a secret nuclear weapons program - but they're getting close.

In one of the most troubling disclosures yet about Tehran's atomic intentions, a new International Atomic Energy Association report says that an IAEA team recently found traces of two types of highly enriched uranium at an Iranian facility.

Iran has denied producing weapons-grade fissile material. Particles of any such uranium must have been on the equipment in question when purchased, said Iranian officials.

But analysts outside the IAEA said such an explanation strains credulity, especially given that Iran delayed inspectors' access to two other uranium sites. At the least, they say, Tehran has a lot of explaining to do. "Iran needs to provide a lot more information very quickly," says David Albright, an expert on nuclear proliferation at the Institute for Science and International Security.

Disclosure of the new IAEA findings comes at a sensitive time for the international community. The next meeting of the IAEA's board of governors is scheduled for Sept. 8, and many expect that the US will push for the board to find Iran in violation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

A chain of referrals

The IAEA would then refer the matter to the UN Security Council, which could vote for economic sanctions against Iran.

"In terms of next steps, the US has been putting pressure on the IAEA," says Paul Kerr, a research analyst at the Arms Control Association.

To this point the US has been content to let the IAEA take the lead in the world's efforts to investigate Iran's suspected nuclear-weapons program.

A litmus test of international action

In some ways US officials see the situation as a test not just of Iran but of the rest of the world's intentions. Russia, Japan, Germany, France, and other nations have long complained about the US predilection for unilateral action in global affairs. Now they're being presented, step by step, with evidence that Iran is cheating on its international agreements.

Thus the US attitude about the IAEA's and UN's role is, to an extent, to ask "what are you all going to do about this?"

"It's a really big test because if these institutions don't prevent Iran from going nuclear, what do they have to complain about the US taking actions on its own?" says Brenda Shaffer, an expert on Iran and Central Asia at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

The fact that IAEA inspectors found evidence of possible clandestine work at the Natanz uranium enrichment plant is a good indication that Tehran is further down the road toward obtaining nuclear weapons than many analysts and intelligence agencies had predicted.

Environmental samples taken by the IAEA at the facility between March and June 2003 "indicate the possible presence in Iran of high enriched uranium, material that is not on its inventory of declared nuclear material," says the restricted-distribution report, a copy of which was obtained by the Monitor.

The key ingredient for nuclear nukes

Uranium enrichment is a purification process which creates either fuel for civilian reactors or the fissile core of nuclear weapons. Bomb-grade material must be more highly enriched than its civilian counterpart. Iran says that its nuclear infrastructure is intended to support power-generating reactors. Most of the rest of the world suspects that this is just a cover story, and that Iran really has a multitrack effort under way to obtain a nuclear arsenal.

Report arouses other suspicions

Some analysts found another part of the IAEA report almost as worrisome as its disclosure about finding trace elements of weapons material.

Iran has admitted doing work on enrichment centrifuges at a second site, known as the Kalaye Electric Co., according to Mr. Albright of ISIS.

The existence of this facility was revealed by an Iranian resistance group, and, until recently, Tehran rebuffed IAEA efforts to enter what it first called a watch factory.

Inspectors found fresh paint and other signs of hurried refurbishment upon their visit. Environmental samples taken at Kalaye have yet to be conclusively analyzed, according to the IAEA report.

Given the context of what the IAEA has discovered it's "legitimate to worry that the [Kalaye] refurbishment is to hide past uranium-enrichment activities," says Albright.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2003/0828/p02s01-usfp.html>

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European Stars and Stripes

August 27, 2003

Scientists Find Link In Iraq Pneumonia Cases

By Sandra Jontz, Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Scientists have marked a trend in some patients who have suffered serious bouts with pneumonia recently while deployed to Iraq and the region, but have yet to determine the cause of the illness. Ten of the 19 cases deemed "serious" have shown a higher than usual number of a white blood cell type called eosinophils.

Eosinophils are commonly produced by the body when fighting any type of infection or when a person suffers from asthma, hay fever or other types of allergies.

"They still don't know the cause, but they've seen a branching among the cases for the first time," said Lyn Kukral, a spokeswoman for the Army's Surgeon General's office. "But the cause in the 10 cases could be the same, or could be 10 different causes. They're still investigating."

Since March, more than 100 troops serving in Southwest Asia have been afflicted with pneumonia, including 19 servicemembers who suffered such serious bouts they needed to be placed on ventilators. Of those, two died, three remain hospitalized and 14 have recovered and returned to duty, with some of those rejoining their units in the theater, Kukral said.

Two of the 19 also have tested positive for the bacteria streptococcus pneumoniae, the most common cause of the bacterial cases of pneumonia.

Investigators have ruled out chemical or biological weapons as the potential cause, and have indicated that the cases are not linked to severe acute respiratory syndrome, or SARS.

Pneumonia is an infection or inflammation of the lungs in which air sacs fill with liquid and prevents oxygen from reaching the body's blood supply.

According to posted recommendations on the Army's health center's Web site, troops deployed anywhere in the world should practice the following in order to reduce chances of coming down with pneumonia:

- Stay hydrated
- Don't smoke; or at least smoke American cigarettes
- Wash hands frequently
- Use a cravat or dust mask to reduce dust inhalation
- Wet mop when cleaning dust in living and work areas
- Seek medical care immediately for fever, chills and cough

<http://www.estripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=17229>

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Chemical & Engineering News (pubs.acs.org/cen)

August 26, 2003

Destroying Chemical Weapons

Army's problem-plagued program more costly than originally planned

By Lois R. Ember, C&EN, Washington

The Army's program to destroy the nation's arsenal of chemical weapons as mandated by the Chemical Weapons Convention is way over budget and far behind schedule. Persistent, pesky problems at operating disposal sites offer little to encourage hope for better performance.

Originally, the Army's price tag for the destruction program was pegged at \$1.8 billion. That was in 1985. In 2001, the Pentagon's estimate had spiraled to \$24 billion.

In the 1980s, the Army confidently envisioned eliminating the weapons by 1994. Today, it's likely the U.S. will have to ask the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons--the treaty's oversight agency--for a five-year extension of the 2007 disposal deadline.

Greg Mahall, spokesman for the Army's Chemical Materials Agency, admits that "earlier projections were overly optimistic and maybe not based in reality." But, he adds, "it's a complex and challenging program."

In 1982, the Army selected incineration as its destruction technology, which to date has destroyed 26% of the 31,500 tons of chemical agents in the U.S. stockpile. Craig Williams, who directs the Chemical Weapons Working Group, which opposes incineration, says, "There's no question that the technology selected has, in significant part, been responsible for the cost overruns and the time slippage." He also believes that it will be a "challenge" for the U.S. to meet even the 2012 deadline.

He may have a point if the experience at the Tooele, Utah, incineration facility is any guide. Tooele--which originally stored 43% of the nation's chemical weapons--has destroyed 44% of its holdings over the past seven years. But not without glitches and delays. Though original projections set 2004 as the date for complete elimination of its weapons, Tooele will probably not meet that goal until the end of 2007, fully 11 years after operations began. Tooele has eliminated all its sarin nerve gas and "has started processing its VX nerve gas but not its mustard gas," Tooele spokeswoman Elaine Southworth says. Disposal of sarin ran into many problems, including the unintended release of very small amounts of the nerve agent in May 2000, which shut the facility down for five months. Although no VX nerve agent has been released to the atmosphere, VX disposal is now experiencing problems. In recent trial burns to destroy VX-filled rockets, the incineration process has not been able to meet the federal standard for release of polychlorinated biphenyls. "PCB emissions were too high, so we stopped processing the VX rockets until we can resolve the problem," Southworth explains.

VX rockets are encased in fiberglass firing tubes, which are the only parts of the weapon known to contain PCBs, Mahall explains. According to air samples taken during incineration, PCBs were not destroyed to the 99.9999% level required by the facility's permit. However, Mahall points out that when "natural gas--not VX--was incinerated, we still got readings for PCBs above allowable permit levels."

Additional air samples have been sent to the original testing lab and to another lab to determine whether the readings were the result of incomplete burning or a lab error. Until the analyses come back, Tooele has ceased destroying the rockets. VX-filled warheads, which are not encased in firing tubes and pose no PCB problem, are still being destroyed.

The Army's Newport, Ind., site also contains VX, but in ton containers not weapons. It, too, is running into problems, though they differ from those at Tooele. Because of political pressure there and at the Army's sites in Aberdeen, Md., Pueblo, Colo., and Bluegrass, Ky., these chemical arsenals will be chemically neutralized, not incinerated.

Originally, Newport's more than 1,200 tons of VX were to be neutralized on-site with sodium hydroxide, followed by supercritical water oxidation of the hydrolysate. To build such a facility would take some time, and after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Army decided that it would be safer for the public to quickly neutralize the VX and send the much less toxic hydrolysate off-site for further treatment.

VX neutralization was to begin this October, and the hydrolysate sent to a Perma-Fix facility in Dayton, Ohio, for biodegradation. This plan has run into fierce opposition. "It doesn't appear as if the counties around Dayton will accept the hydrolysate," Mahall says.

In the meantime, Parsons, the engineering firm contracted to build the neutralization facility at Newport, has been instructed to build a wet sprinkler system as a backup to the already-planned dry-chemical fire suppression system. Design, installation, and testing of the sprinkler system will take four to six months, which means that neutralization will not begin until next January at the earliest, Newport spokeswoman Terry Arthur says.

Arthur points out yet another problem--the analytical method used to measure the level of VX in the hydrolysate. By law, under the existing permit, the Army is allowed 230 ppb of VX in the hydrolysate. However, Arthur says, "The Army has committed to the community not to ship hydrolysate off-site unless the VX levels are 20 ppb or lower, and we can't do that now." As measured, caustic neutralization produces a hydrolysate containing 40 to 80 ppb of VX. It's unclear whether the problem lies in the neutralization process or with the analytical method used to detect VX. Glen Shonkwiler, the lead environmental engineer at Newport, says the GC-ion trap mass spectrometry system used to measure VX requires a hexane acid extraction of the hydrolysate. He speculates that "the extraction process may be creating VX or an interferent."

The on-site neutralization plant has been built, and the decision about what to do with the hydrolysate is likely to be made by the Army within the next few weeks. Options are to "tank farm" it on-site until a supercritical water oxidation facility can be built, send it to another Perma-Fix facility for biodegradation, or send it to DuPont's Environmental Solutions Chamber Works facility in Deepwater, N.J., for biodegradation.

Chamber Works is already receiving hydrolysate from the Army's Aberdeen site. At Aberdeen, mustard gas in more than 1,800 ton-containers is being neutralized with warm water in a plant built and operated by Bechtel Aberdeen. There have been some start-up glitches, but the plant has processed 52 containers with no chemical agent releases or worker exposures.

The Army's Anniston, Ala., site, built in a residential area, has also been destroying its stocks of chemical weapons--not with neutralization but incineration. The Army has argued that lessons learned from its experience in burning

weapons at the now closed Johnston Atoll facility, in the Pacific Ocean, and at Tooele would eliminate start-up problems at other incinerator sites. That has not been the case at Anniston. At press time, Anniston had destroyed 487 sarin-filled rockets out of a total of nearly 43,000. But, in its first two weeks of operation last month, the incinerator was shut down nearly 30% of the time, for safety reasons, spokesman Michael Abrams says.

Incinerators at Umatilla, Ore., and Pine Bluff, Ark., and neutralization facilities at Pueblo and Bluegrass have not yet begun destroying their stockpiles.

<http://pubs.acs.org/cen/today/august262003.html>

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Washington Post

August 29, 2003

Pg. 1

N. Korea Threatens Nuclear Arms Test

Delegate to Talks Cites U.S. Hostility

By Peter Slevin and John Pomfret, Washington Post Staff Writers

North Korea startled international diplomats yesterday by threatening to test a nuclear weapon in response to perceived hostility from the Bush administration, a U.S. official said after the second day of six-nation talks in Beijing on North Korea's nuclear program.

A North Korean delegate told diplomats gathered in the Chinese capital that the Pyongyang government had "no choice but to declare its possession of nuclear weapons" and "conduct a nuclear weapons test," according to a portion of a cable dispatched by the U.S. negotiating team.

The isolated country has a history of alarmist rhetoric followed by confrontation and conciliation. Despite the announcement, diplomats from South Korea, Russia and the United States voiced optimism that the countries would agree during today's final session to meet again, perhaps within two months.

An agreement on more meetings would constitute a small but important step in precarious negotiations aimed at persuading the Stalinist state to abandon its nuclear weapons program in return for diplomatic and economic openings to its neighbors and the United States.

North Korea left a door open yesterday, with its diplomats reiterating a long-standing position that the government of Kim Jong Il would be willing to dismantle its nuclear programs if the United States changed its anti-North Korea policies, stopped hindering the country's economic growth and contributed to electrical power costs, according to the cable. The White House made little of North Korea's nuclear test threat, with a spokeswoman calling the Beijing gathering a "positive session."

"North Korea has a long history of making inflammatory comments," deputy spokeswoman Claire Buchan told reporters in Crawford, Tex. "The talks are continuing."

The U.S. official who had read the diplomatic cable reported that the Chinese delegates who had worked hard to coax the United States and North Korea to the table were visibly upset, while the Japanese, South Koreans and Russians were taken aback.

Assistant Secretary of State James A. Kelly, the leader of the U.S. delegation, said in his opening statement on Wednesday that an increase in tensions or hostile rhetoric would slow progress toward an agreement, said the U.S. official.

In a step that implied longer-term hurdles for the international effort to end North Korea's pursuit of atomic weapons, the North Korean delegate also denied that his country has a program to develop highly enriched uranium, according to the cable, as relayed by a U.S. official.

The effort to deny the uranium-enrichment program, which U.S. officials say North Korea has already admitted to and U.S. intelligence has confirmed, suggests that Kim's government would be unwilling to permit the intrusive inspections the Bush administration wants. Intensive verification measures are considered essential to test the veracity of North Korea's claims.

North Korea has defied international pressure since October, when Kim's government admitted having a secret uranium-enrichment project along with a suspended program to make weapons from plutonium. Pyongyang soon evicted foreign inspectors, withdrew from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, activated a reprocessing plant for spent fuel rods and restarted the shuttered nuclear reactor at Yongbyon.

A principal Bush administration goal for the Beijing talks was to demonstrate to North Korea that the five countries most closely linked to its fate -- China, Japan, South Korea, the United States and Russia -- were united in a determination to bring an end to North Korea's nuclear threat.

China said yesterday that the five countries and North Korea had agreed on the goal of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula.

"The parties reiterated that denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is the common goal of all sides, and the nuclear issue should be resolved peacefully through diplomatic means," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on its Web site. In the past, North Korea has said it has the right to a nuclear deterrent to fend off what it regards as U.S. hostility. Although no decision was announced by the end of yesterday's session, Wie Sung Rak, the South Korean Foreign Ministry's top North American official said, "There is a consensus that the process of six-party talks should continue and is useful."

The talks were held in the Diaoyutai State Guest House, an isolated collection of villas and gardens in western Beijing. The six parties were arrayed around a hexagonal table, and the Chinese put the U.S. delegation, led by Kelly, next to its North Korean counterpart, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Yong Il.

Kim and Kelly ended four months of official high-level silence between the two nations on Wednesday when they huddled for roughly 35 minutes in an informal meeting following a day of six-party talks. A U.S. official said it was during those talks that Kim told the American that North Korea intended to stage a nuclear test.

Kim repeated the statement to the full group yesterday, the U.S. cable reported, declaring that the United States had not made a fundamental switch in what Pyongyang considers hostile behavior toward the North Korean leadership, including verbal digs and economic pressure.

Russia and Japanese delegates countered that North Korea was misconstruing the U.S. position, according to the cable.

Pomfret reported from Beijing.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A59829-2003Aug28.html>

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Los Angeles Times
August 29, 2003

Preventing A Nuclear Iran Is A Delicate Task

Discovery of weapons-grade material adds momentum to effort. U.S. presses the U.N. to declare that Tehran has violated a treaty.

By Maggie Farley and Douglas Frantz, Times Staff Writers

UNITED NATIONS — Following a report by the U.N.'s nuclear agency that particles of highly enriched uranium were found in Iran, diplomats are debating how to apply enough pressure to keep the country in line with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty without pushing so hard that Tehran rejects international oversight altogether.

"If there is a lesson learned from North Korea, it is that we have to stop these countries before they get the bomb," a United Nations official said Wednesday, as talks on denuclearizing North Korea were underway in Beijing. "But how do you stop a country from reaching that point?"

The United States is pushing for the International Atomic Energy Agency to declare Iran in noncompliance with its treaty agreements at the organization's 35-nation board meeting Sept. 8 — the first step toward possible sanctions.

The confidential U.N. report, which details new evidence of the presence of weapons-grade material at a nuclear facility in Iran and shows several reversals of position by officials there, has added momentum to the effort.

The European Union and others may now be convinced that there is a "pattern of noncompliance," a Western diplomat said. "We need to strengthen the IAEA's hand by reporting the pattern to the Security Council and pressing Iran to cooperate more fully."

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi said Thursday that his country was ready to start talks on an additional protocol to the treaty, allowing surprise inspections of any nuclear facility.

"We do not have enriched uranium, and we do not have a program to develop nuclear weapons," he told CNN during a trip to Japan to discuss oil field development.

Although U.S. and IAEA officials welcome the step, some worry that talks could drag on at a time when experts say Iran may be one to three years away from developing a nuclear weapon.

But if Iran does not prove to be immediately accommodating, the Security Council could impose tough economic and diplomatic sanctions, ban all nuclear assistance to Iran and even call for the return of all nuclear equipment received from other countries.

Many countries are still not convinced that Iran is pursuing nuclear weapons, diplomats say. Russia, China and about 10 developing nations on the IAEA board are focusing instead on parts of the report that note Iran has been more cooperative recently.

In the meantime, an analysis of another set of nuclear samples due to be completed in October may provide definitive proof of whether Iran has enriched uranium for military purposes.

Inspectors took the samples from Kalaye Electric Co. early this month, after Iran blocked their first attempt to visit the site in March. Inspectors noted major renovations at the facility, changes that officials suspect were an attempt to sanitize it before inspections.

Positive test results would show that Iran has enriched uranium or tested nuclear materials, both of which the government denies doing.

The results will be presented at the next board meeting of the IAEA in November.

"The central issue is: Has Iran enriched uranium in Iran?" said David Albright, president of the Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security. "The IAEA needs more time to determine that, but Iran really should provide that information themselves."

For the IAEA, the most important consideration right now is to keep Iran engaged so the agency can find the answers to urgent questions.

Mohamed ElBaradei, the IAEA director-general, has said privately that his first priority was to understand what Iran had been doing in recent years with its nuclear program, according to the Western diplomat. The additional treaty protocol will deal with future inspections, making it essential now to have a clear understanding of the Iranian program, he said.

"If they made some mistakes in reporting imports but are truly not trying to produce a nuclear weapon, the IAEA is the only one who can prove them innocent," a U.N. official said.

"The important thing is to pull them back from the nuclear threshold. If there is too much pressure, too many penalties, they may decide to withdraw from the treaty, and then there is no access at all."

Indeed, the IAEA's investigation has started the slow unraveling of Iran's story about its nuclear program.

"I count six reversals of position by Iran," said the Western diplomat. "This report is not a report of cooperation, but one that demonstrates the skill of the IAEA at getting to the facts. The only time Iran changed its position was when it was confronted by irrefutable evidence."

Iran claims that the traces of highly enriched, weapons-grade uranium the inspectors found at the Natanz nuclear facility in central Iran came from contaminated components imported from another country. The IAEA has asked Tehran to identify the suppliers to check that claim, but Iran has refused.

The report also details Iran's pursuit of two other production techniques for nuclear material. Iran previously said it was not involved with heavy-water technology, which produces weapons-grade plutonium. But Iranian officials admitted that work on heavy-water technology had been underway for more than a decade.

In another reversal, Iranian authorities also acknowledged this month that scientists had used nuclear material to conduct research on uranium conversion after repeatedly telling the IAEA over the last seven months that it had never used nuclear material in research and development, the report says. The research was apparently aimed at developing uranium metal, which has not been known to be used in Iran's commercial nuclear program but is regarded as essential for building a nuclear weapon.

"Uranium metal is not something that would normally be needed for the type of reactor that Iran is building," the Western diplomat said. "It's normally associated with things that go boom."

The IAEA report does not link the new developments to any weapons effort, disappointing those pushing for an immediate halt to Iran's nuclear work. But it says investigations are still underway.

"We believe the report to be objective and contain all the facts," IAEA spokeswoman Melissa Fleming said in a phone interview from Vienna. "We are determined to have answers to the outstanding questions in the next few weeks or months."

Farley reported from the United Nations and Frantz from Istanbul, Turkey.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-iran29aug29,1,6982728.story?coll=la-headlines-world>

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Washington Times

August 29, 2003

Pg. 8

Alabama

Army To Burn Cache Of Sarin

BIRMINGHAM — The Army said yesterday it will destroy about 800 gallons of sarin nerve agent at the Anniston Army Depot in the first bulk burn of the lethal chemical at its newest weapons incinerator.

Sometime Sunday afternoon, workers will begin pumping the agent from a double-walled, glass-lined holding tank into a 2,700-degree furnace at Anniston, about 50 miles east of Birmingham.

The chemical, also known as GB, was drained from the nearly 600 M-55 rockets that have been chopped up and burned since the incinerator began operating on Aug. 8. A single drop of sarin can kill a person.

Depot spokesman Mike Abrams said as many as 173 gallons of nerve agent residue already have been incinerated, but all in small amounts that couldn't be emptied from rockets.

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

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Washington Times

August 29, 2003

Pg. 5

Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

Targeting Iran

Israel has ready a plan to bomb Iran's Bushehr nuclear-power plant should the Persian Gulf coast facility, now under construction, begin producing weapons-grade material, an insider tells us.

This source says Israel has mapped out a route its jet fighters would take to destroy what is designed to be a two-reactor plant. A successful strike would ensure that the radical Tehran regime does not develop nuclear weapons. Iran has tested 600-mile-range ballistic missiles that can reach Israel and carry nuclear, biological or chemical warheads.

Russia has signed an \$800 million contract to provide two reactors for the plant near the port city of Bushehr. The United States opposes the deal, as well as any nuclear program in Iran.

Israeli F-16s penetrated Iraqi airspace in 1981 to bomb the Osiraq nuclear-power plant, at the Tuwaitha nuclear center near Baghdad. Analysts believe the action, while condemned by the international community, kept Saddam Hussein from acquiring the bomb.

U.S. Central Command has contingency plans for war with Iran, but there is no active discussion of invading a country that President Bush has put in the "axis of evil." Still, some in the Pentagon talk unofficially of what would be needed to take out the Bushehr plant.

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