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Official Works to Protect Food From Terror Menace

By Laura Blumenfeld

Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, September 4, 2003; Page A19

Rats, microbes and roaches want a bite of your burger. It is Elsa A. Murano's job to keep them off your meat. But now Murano, undersecretary for food safety at the Department of Agriculture, is grappling with a new food menace -- terrorists with poison.

"We've got to keep alert," Murano, 44, said in an interview. Since the beginning of the Iraq war, the USDA has increased testing for biological, radiological and chemical contaminants in meat, poultry and egg products by 50 percent, she said. "My biggest fear is that we as a nation become complacent."

Murano's job is often cited as one of the toughest management jobs in Washington. She oversees an industry that generates more than \$120 billion in sales a year, accounting for a third of all consumer spending on food. Into her grinder churn the often competing interests of business groups, consumer advocates, lawmakers, environmentalists and relatives of victims of food-borne illnesses. No matter what she says, it is almost certain to irk someone.

"They call me the Cuban Mighty Mouse at the agency," said Murano, who was born in Havana and is barely five feet tall. "I'm little, but I have to be tough."

To prepare for the possibility of an attack on the food supply, Murano participates in crisis simulations with supervisors from other agencies. In a recent scenario, terrorists had contaminated food with botulism, E. coli and chemical toxins. Murano, in the simulation, shut down the nation's 6,500 meat and poultry processing plants, which would have caused estimated losses of billions of dollars per day if the scenario became reality.

"It's one of the most vulnerable points that we have as a society," said Surgeon General Richard H. Carmona, who has worked with Murano on food security issues. "Imagine you get into a food supply at Fort Bragg or a Coast Guard base. You could bring a whole community to its knees."

As for Murano's efforts, Carmona said: "She is tiny, but boy, she is the mouse that roared."

The Food and Safety Inspection Service, which Murano administers, recently issued new security guidelines for transporting meat, poultry and egg products. Food is at risk when it is in transit, Murano said -- during loading and unloading, for example -- because supervision is relatively lax. The new guidelines advise inspectors and plant managers to screen employees for odd behavior such as arriving unusually early, taking pictures of the establishment or removing documents from the facility. Other tips for handlers: "Check food for unusual odor or appearance" and "Do not pick up hitchhikers."

The agency plans to issue guidelines for consumers in October.

Brian Halweil, a researcher at Worldwatch Institute, an environmental think tank, called the guidelines "Band-Aids" that fail to address the underlying problems that make the industry susceptible to bioterrorists. A key vulnerability, he said, is the food industry's labor force.

"The workforce is made up of underpaid, undertrained, potentially very disgruntled illegal aliens, with not a lot of job allegiance or background checks," Halweil said. "Their potential to be part of a contamination scheme is high." Groups representing victims of food poisoning are also critical. "Food security is taking away from food safety," said Nancy Donley, president of Safe Tables Our Priority.

There has been one known terrorist attack on food in the United States. In 1984, a religious sect sprinkled salmonella bacteria on salad bars in Oregon, sickening 751 people. Although the terrorist threat is important, Donley said, it is diverting attention and resources from the problem of food-borne illnesses, which kill 5,000 people every year. Donley's son, Alex, 8, died after eating a hamburger contaminated with E. coli.

Last year, there was a record number of recalls, says the USDA: 113, involving 60.6 million pounds of meat and poultry.

"Being in charge of food safety in a Republican administration is mission impossible," said Carol Tucker Foreman of the Consumer Federation of America and an assistant secretary of agriculture for food and consumer services in the Carter administration. "The public wants safe food, but your political base is saying, 'Don't be too hard on the industry.'"

Business groups, meanwhile, say the government is using the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks as an excuse to expand food regulation.

This kind of criticism -- and more -- is all in a day's work for Murano. It is why she has a SpongeBob screensaver and keeps a Bible next to her computer.

"Anything to keep myself sane in this job," she said, displaying her collection of plastic toys. When she reads her Bible, she said, "I realize that, good or bad, God loves me. Because people are always mad at me."

Before joining the USDA in October 2001, Murano was the director of the Center for Food Safety at Texas A&M University. A microbiologist by training, she enjoyed the pace of an academic life. These days, she is up at 4:30 a.m. and stays at work until after 7 p.m. One evening, while at the Kennedy Center, watching "Aida" from the presidential box, she said a thought occurred to her: "What am I doing here? I'm just this little girl from Havana."

"She's not used to the hot seat," said Rep. Henry Bonilla (R-Tex.), chairman of the House Appropriations agriculture subcommittee. "I give her pep talks. . . . She's an expert to the nth degree. I say, 'Just remember you have truth and substance on your side.'"

Her husband, Peter Murano, deputy administrator for special nutrition programs at the USDA, teases her about how clean she keeps the kitchen. She sprays all their produce with a solution of one tablespoon of chorine in a gallon of water, when he would just as soon eat an unwashed peach.

"He says I should buy stock in the Clorox corporation," Murano quipped. When they try a new restaurant, she orders a drink and then goes to wash her hands. If the restroom is dirty, she reasons, the kitchen must be, too. "I'm sorry, we can't eat here," Murano will say to the waiter. On days when Murano has to announce a meat recall, she and her husband go somewhere special, the Silver Diner in Arlington. Murano orders the burger basket -- a vote of confidence for USDA beef.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A22484-2003Sep3.html>

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New York Times
September 5, 2003
Pg. 1

U.S. Said To Shift Approach In Talks With North Korea

By David E. Sanger

WASHINGTON, Sept. 4 — President Bush, in a significant shift in his approach to North Korea, authorized American negotiators to say last week that he is prepared to take a range of steps to aid the starving nation — from gradually easing sanctions to an eventual peace treaty, senior officials today.

But, officials emphasized, these inducements would be phased in slowly only as North Korea starts surrendering its nuclear weapons, dismantling the facilities used to develop them and permitting inspectors free run of the country. The proposals were described to the North Koreans at the talks, which were held in Beijing last week. They constituted a major departure from the official White House statements earlier this year that North Korea would see no benefits from a new relationship until it shipped all its weapons out of the country and dismantled all of its nuclear facilities.

The North Koreans did not immediately respond to the new approach, but American officials said they would continue to follow the strategy in future talks, which they expect will resume in October.

In adopting the new strategy, the White House apparently acceded to some of the arguments from within the State Department, and from allies like South Korea, that the talks would break down if Washington could not describe some vision of how relations could improve.

In a brief telephone conversation this evening, Mr. Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, disputed the notion that Mr. Bush was making a significant change in strategy. She emphasized that any major benefits to North Korea would come only after it could no longer pose a nuclear threat or rebuild its nuclear capacity.

In the past, Ms. Rice has criticized the Clinton administration's 1994 nuclear freeze agreement with North Korea for giving the country fuel oil before it dismantled anything.

But she and other officials said that Mr. Bush was presented with the new negotiating strategy at his ranch in Texas last month, and approved the specifics after a meeting of his senior national security aides in late August.

"We're going to give these talks a real chance," Ms. Rice said. "This is the best opportunity for getting a resolution for a long time." But she quickly added that "a lot depends on North Korean behavior."

The latter remark was a clear reference to North Korea's threat, delivered at the talks last week, to conduct a nuclear test and its past threats to make its supplies of plutonium available to the highest bidder. In the past, Mr. Bush has called such comments "blackmail."

The crucial change in the approach at the Beijing talks was in providing for a sequence of rewards to North Korea, according to a State Department official who spoke to reporters today and other officials.

Late last year, the White House publicly dismissed the notion that North Korea would see any benefits before its entire nuclear infrastructure was eliminated. But even then, a behind-the-scenes struggle was playing out between State Department officials who favored offering some rewards to the North Koreans for intermediate steps and hard-liners in the Pentagon and the vice president's office.

That struggle continued, and officials said the parties were fully engaged in it up to the time the negotiators, led by James A. Kelly, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian affairs, left for Beijing.

But the senior State Department official said today that that "we made clear that we are not seeking to strangle North Korea," and the negotiators said "we are willing to discuss a sequence of denuclearization measures with corresponding measures on the part of both sides."

That approach, dubbed "more for more," has long been advocated by the deputy secretary of state, Richard L. Armitage. But it has been opposed by hard-liners who believe that no agreement with North Korea can ever be trusted, and that it will never give up all aspects of its nuclear program.

Mr. Armitage and Secretary of State Colin L. Powell proposed the new strategy to Mr. Bush last month. Several officials said that it was further nurtured without the involvement of many of the aides to Donald H. Rumsfeld, the secretary of defense, who have sought to limit the offers to North Korea.

"It helped that a lot of them were on vacation, or thinking about Iraq," one of the architects of the new approach said today.

That approach, officials in the administration said, was partly an effort to show China, Japan, Russia and South Korea that Mr. Bush was serious about coming up with a diplomatic solution, and to gain their support for a more confrontational approach if North Korea should reject the overtures.

But while the administration officials went out of their way to describe the new strategy as a model of flexibility, they made it clear that the first moves are up to the North Koreans. All of the benefits North Korea most wants — energy supplies and formal peace treaties — would come only after arms inspectors had free run of the country for "challenge inspections" of suspected nuclear sites, and after almost all of nuclear infrastructure is shipped out of the country, officials said. "That's going to be the hardest part for them to swallow," one of the officials said.

Another senior administration official — a hard-liner on North Korea — predicted that "the North Koreans will never do it."

Other officials have noted that while North Korea has discussed giving up its nuclear facilities for the right price it has said it would never give up its existing "nuclear deterrent."

In fact, it was far from clear that the North Koreans picked up on Mr. Bush's new message, officials said.

After Mr. Kelly laid out the American proposal, the North Korean delegation said the United States was seeking to strangle North Korea, and was secretly considering a pre-emptive strike.

Russian officials who attended the talks suggested that the North Koreans had not been listening to Mr. Kelly's presentation.

"Sometimes their script seemed to be couched in assumptions about what we were going to say," an American official said, "not what we did say."

In recent days China has publicly chastised the Bush administration for not showing enough flexibility. China's vice foreign minister, Wang Yi, who acted as the host of the six-nation talks, said earlier this week the United States "is the main obstacle" to any settlement.

In private, American officials insisted that the Chinese were simply trying to demonstrate to the North Koreans that they were willing to pressure both sides.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/05/international/asia/05NUKE.html>

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Washington Times

September 5, 2003

Pg. 1

French Firm Probed In Move Of Pumps To Iran

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

U.S. export-control officials are investigating a French company suspected of illegally supplying Iran with four specialty pumps made in the United States that can be used in both commercial and military equipment, The Washington Times has learned.

Treasury and Commerce department officials fear the pumps, described as cryogenic fluid transfer pumps, are being used as part of the cooling system for Iran's nuclear reactors, which can be used to produce weapons-grade material. "That's the immediate concern," a Commerce Department official said. Export of the pumps is controlled because of their military capabilities.

The Treasury and Commerce departments are probing whether the French firm Technip-Coflexip in January diverted the pumps it purchased for a project in Iran to Iran's nuclear program. The electric pumps are submersible and used to transfer extremely cold fluids.

The officials said another likely use for the pumps is for the commercial transfer of liquid natural gas to ship containers for transport.

The officials said their departments also are investigating whether Technip violated licensing rules on sales of oil and gas equipment to Iran. Both areas of investigation could result in criminal penalties, the official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Technip spokesman Chris Welton had no immediate comment.

If the pumps were used by Iran's nuclear program, it would violate export controls on equipment with the potential for use in nuclear weapons development. It also would violate the 1996 Iran Foreign Oil Sanctions Act, which bars U.S. companies from developing Iran's petroleum resources.

Under the 1996 law, any foreign company that invests more than \$40 million annually in the Iranian and Libyan oil and gas industry can be sanctioned.

Additionally, the transfer pumps would require an export license if they were sold to Iran, which is under a U.S. embargo because of Tehran's support for international terrorism.

Yesterday, a United Nations diplomat said concern about Iran's nuclear facilities has prompted the Bush administration to pursue a U.N. resolution to ensure inspection of the facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

According to officials, Technip contacted at least two U.S. transfer pump manufacturers, including the U.S. subsidiary of the Japanese-owned company Ebara International Corp. for two ethylene and two ethane transfer pumps.

The pumps were intended for the petrochemical complex being built by Technip called the 9th Olefins Complex at Assaluyeh, located on the northwestern coast of the Persian Gulf.

The diversion effort was outlined in documents sent to the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) in March by an informant close to Ebara. The office is in charge of monitoring adherence to export controls on Iran. Copies of the documents were obtained by The Times.

Ebara "has knowingly engineered, manufactured, tested and shipped the above-referenced pumps to Technip of France for delivery to Iran," the informant stated in a document sent to Treasury's chief of enforcement, Hal Harmon.

According to the informant, EIC's corporate lawyer in 1998 warned Ebara "not to engage in the sale of goods or engineering services to countries that are on the restricted list per OFAC regulations."

The informant also stated that an inspector working on behalf of Technip refused to authorize the shipment of the pumps because of concerns that the pumps would be sent to Iran.

The pumps also were exported without nameplates, the informant stated.

Richard Mitchell, the Ebara corporate counsel, said in an interview that the company has not sent any pumps to Technip in January. The company also scrupulously abides by laws and regulations related to sales to Iran, Mr. Mitchell said.

"I have asked everyone in the organization in a position to know and they have manifestly and devoutly stated that nothing was done" in violation of export rules, Mr. Mitchell said.

Ebara in January shipped several pumps to a Middle Eastern petrochemical complex but the sale did not involve Technip, Mr. Mitchell said.

The company is currently engaged in a deal with Technip to sell transfer pumps to a facility in Nigeria, but the pumps have not yet been exported, Mr. Mitchell said.

As for sending pumps without nameplates, Mr. Mitchell said: "It's not uncommon to ship pumps without nameplates. We do not nameplate pumps for other manufacturers."

Mr. Mitchell said he did not know where the information about the suspected diversion came from. But he said it may have been part of an effort at "dirty tricks" by a disgruntled former employee now working for a competitor.

Technip concluded a deal two years ago with the National Petrochemical Co. of Iran to build the 9th Olefins Complex and last year agreed to build a second facility.

The value of the construction of the petrochemical complexes at Assaluyeh is estimated to be worth about \$1.2 billion.

Technip-Coflexip announced in September 2002 that it is also building Iran's 10th Olefins plant near the 9th Olefins at Assaluyeh that will produce 1.3 million tons of ethylene a year.

The deal is worth \$358 million.

A company press release said Technip-Coflexip would provide "in-house ethylene technology and proprietary furnaces and will carry out engineering, supply of equipment and materials."

The company also will supervise construction of what it calls the largest ethylene plant in the world.

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030905-120820-2466r.htm>

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Washington Times

September 5, 2003

Pg. 5

Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

Pacific Protector

The U.S. Navy is getting ready to take part in an Australian-led exercise this month called Pacific Protector, which will practice intercepting ships transporting weapons of mass destruction, goods and missiles.

The "interdiction training exercise" will simulate a coalition of military forces going after weapons proliferators on the high seas.

One Pentagon official said the maneuvers "are not specifically aimed at any one country."

"Certainly North Korea is high on the list" of major weapons proliferators, the official said.

Other officials said Pacific Protector, due to kick off around Sept. 26, is part of the Bush administration's new Proliferation Security Initiative, which is directed at cutting off North Korean missile and weapons exports.

Some military officials are nervous about the idea of intercepting ships at sea because of legal concerns. But senior Bush administration officials said the legal basis for taking action against proliferators on the high seas and in the air already exists as part of international conventions related to self-defense.

The exercise will be held by ships operating in the Coral Sea off the northeast coast of Australia.

The current members of the PSI are the United States, Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain and Britain.

The proliferation maneuvers will follow a U.S.-Australian naval exercise known as Crocodile '03, which lasts until Sept. 25.

The initiative also will target weapons exports to rogue states such as Iran and Libya.

China and Russia are likely to be affected by the initiative. Both countries have been identified as key arms sellers to rogue states and unstable regions.

U.S. officials said candidates for additional PSI members include Canada, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Norway, the Philippines, Russia and Thailand.

Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough are Pentagon reporters.

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

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Global Security Newswire (nti.org)

September 3, 2003

U.S. Nuclear Weapons Programs Could Require Testing, Official Says

By David Ruppe, Global Security Newswire

WASHINGTON — The United States may need to resume underground nuclear weapons testing to complete the Bush administration's efforts to develop better nuclear weapons for attacking deeply buried facilities and for destroying enemy chemical and biological weapons, a senior Defense Department official said in a recent interview. Speaking to *Global Security Newswire* before his retirement last month, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear Matters Fred Celec said testing might be needed if scientists find that they must design new nuclear warheads because existing ones cannot perform those missions.

For targeting deeply buried and hardened facilities, the administration has requested \$15 million for fiscal 2004 for the Energy Department's Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator program. The plan is to study the feasibility of modifying two current weapons, the B-61 and the B-83, to enable them to detonate reliably after withstanding the enormous stress of penetrating the ground.

Celec said the program involves "an attempt to use an existing nuclear weapon, ... repackaging it in a different bomb casing, so that we would have sufficient confidence in its performance that we would not have to do a nuclear test."

"At the end of the day, we could conceivably arrive to the point where we say, 'This just won't work,'" he said, "in which case, we would have to go back to the drawing boards to design a new weapon. And, in that case, we in all probability would need or require a nuclear test."

The administration has also requested \$6 million for fiscal 2004 for other nuclear weapons work that would include exploring options for destroying chemical and biological agents with a nuclear weapon. The principal challenge of that task is to create a weapon that will neutralize the targeted agents without dispersing them in the blast, Celec said.

"If an existing weapon was [found to be] effective ... [then] no, you're not going to need a nuclear test," Celec said. "On the other hand, if you say, 'I've got to go design a new nuclear weapon ... you probably will have to have a nuclear test,'" he said.

Some nuclear weapons experts question Celec's assertion that nuclear testing would probably be needed in either case, however, saying decades of Cold War research, development and testing have outlined the limitations on developing radically new nuclear weapons capabilities that might enable the United States to overcome the challenges facing either program.

While U.S. scientists could design new weapons, they are unlikely to devise ones offering radically improved capabilities that might require testing, according to former Sandia National Laboratories Vice President Robert Peurifoy.

“We’re at the end of the road in terms of better weapons. I’m prepared to debate that issue with anyone you name,” said.

University of California at Berkeley professor Raymond Jeanloz says experts within the U.S. nuclear community appear convinced their work will not likely lead to testing.

“When I have personally talked in the last several weeks with the directors of Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories, they have very sincerely and in a clear-cut manner expressed their view that they don’t believe anything they’re pursuing is pushing the country toward resuming testing,” he said.

Arms Control Concerns

The administration’s nuclear weapons programs are currently a hotly debated topic by national security experts in Washington, and particularly in Congress.

Critics of the administration’s plans have argued that developing the weapons, and potentially testing them, could undermine or destroy the 188-party 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty that bans nuclear weapons from all but five countries.

“A decision to resume testing to build low-yield nuclear weapons could deal the regime a fatal blow while providing the United States with a capability of questionable military value,” wrote Jeanloz, Peurifoy, and two other arms control advocates in a March *Arms Control Today* article.

Bush administration officials have said such weapons are needed to counter enemy threats the United States faces from growing numbers of deeply buried facilities and stores of chemical and biological weapons.

The Energy Department’s Advanced Concepts Initiative, which incorporates the two efforts, is intended to ensure “that future American presidents have deterrence options to deal with these threats,” said Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham in March 20 congressional testimony.

Congress is expected to decide this month whether to approve the requested appropriations as part of the energy and water appropriations bill. Legislators are also expected to approve a partial repeal of 10-year-old law restricting research, development, testing and production of smaller-yield weapons, contained in the defense authorization bill for 2004 (see *GSN*, July 17).

Earth Penetrator Testing Need Questioned

Peurifoy contends that a new weapon requiring resumed nuclear testing should not be needed if the B-61 and B-83 prove unsuitable. He says the United States during the Cold War had designed and tested far sturdier warheads that could be used.

“You can start with the W-33, and then you can look up the W-79, the W-82. We did a whole bunch of different tests that produced low-yields that were very rugged but never entered the stockpile,” he said. The three warheads types he cited were designed as nuclear artillery shells.

The United States tested one such design in a 1962 test named Aardvark that produced a yield of 40 kilotons. That design was found to withstand as much as 10,000 times the force of gravity, he said.

“That would be my candidate if I wanted to build a penetrator, because it’s stronger than hell and produces any yield of interest in terms of low yield,” he said.

Celec said he was not aware of a warhead that could withstand 10,000 Gs, and said it would not be possible to build weapons today exactly as they were designed decades ago and so there would be a need to fully test it anyway.

“I would argue that because of the changes in procedures and environmental regulations and the sunset technologies, all those sorts of things, what you would end up with is a new weapon. It might look very much like one you had pretty high confidence in, in the past, but I don’t think you’d have sufficient confidence that you wouldn’t say, ‘I think I have to test this,’” he said.

Stanford University physicist Sydney Drell challenged part of that view, saying the old designs could be built using old and new technologies and that all of those components outside of the physics package could be tested without resorting to a nuclear weapons explosion.

“I believe that all the parts of the weapon outside the physics package not only can be, but must be tested,” he said.

“It’s the physics package one’s talking about, that’s the only thing we don’t test,” he said.

Peurifoy said there should be no technological obstacles to building a weapon based on the design exploded in the Aardvark test, which was of the simplest type and did not require outdated technologies such as vacuum tubes.

“I did not know that uranium has disappeared from the face of the earth. I did not know that gunpowder disappeared from the face of the earth. I did not know that we have no more competent engineers in the United States. Therefore I challenge his argument,” he said.

Earth Penetrator Utility Questioned

Peurifoy and others also questioned the likelihood that some new earth penetrator with radically different capabilities that would allow it to be both highly effective and minimally destructive in terms of collateral damage could be developed.

“Technically, my argument is that this is a very difficult task that cannot be successfully achieved without producing large radioactive damage,” he said.

With respect to the Aardvark design, he said, “You could detune it if you wished to produce anything less than 40 kilotons if you wanted. The problem is you could not kill much underground. And you certainly cannot kill things [underground] without producing large amounts of radioactive fallout in the area.”

A very large weapon producing massive fallout would be needed to reach deep targets, while a low-yield weapon would not likely destroy a deep bunker but would still produce significant fallout, says David Wright of the Union of Concerned Scientists.

He calculates that for at least one type of soil, a one-kiloton weapon exploding 35 feet underground would disperse 60,000 tons of radioactive debris and destroy bunkers buried as deep as 80 feet. To reach a bunker at 240 feet, a 100-kiloton weapon would be needed, but that would spew 1.5 million tons of radioactive debris.

The smaller weapon might destroy chemical and biological agents within a radius of 15 to 30 feet. The larger one might destroy those within 20 to 40 feet. Beyond those distances, the agents would likely be dispersed if they were within the blast range, he said.

Celec agreed that using any earth-penetrating weapon would certainly produce radioactive fallout, but he said the lesser fallout from a low-yield weapon would be preferable to other alternatives, such as a large-yield nuclear weapon, a warhead exploded above ground or a conventional weapon that cannot reach deep targets.

He also said the United States has identified scenarios in which using a nuclear weapon to collapse an underground facility holding chemical or biological agents would save many more lives than it would take.

“We’ve looked at some very specific targets around the world and the casualties from an earth penetrator destroying a particular target is in the hundreds and if you lofted the agent just using a conventional attack it would be close to a million,” he said.

Agent Defeat Doubts

Critics did say it is conceivable that testing would be needed if a new weapon were designed for neutralizing chemical and biological agents. They said, however, it is unlikely that nuclear weapons scientists today could design a new warhead radically more effective in an agent-defeating role than anything designed in the past.

“What are you going to optimize that people haven’t already optimized before?” said Wright.

He cited two recent, separate studies by physicists Michael May of Stanford University and Robert Nelson of the Council on Foreign Relations that concluded that a nuclear attack on buried chemical or biological agents would be more likely to disperse the agents than destroy them, unless the agents’ location was precisely known and struck (see *GSN*, Aug. 11).

At issue are the relative amounts of blast, heat and radiation that nuclear weapons are likely to produce, as well as the physical properties of earth, Wright said.

“You can maybe tweak some of these effects, but the point of these two papers is you are not very close to making these things useful,” Wright said.

“It comes down to the fact that soil is a very good absorber of radiation and heat and a very good transmitter of blast. It works against you to make the problem intrinsically hard. When people say they are going to work around this, you know, there’s fundamental physics here. The idea that they would somehow figure out something that’s such a breakthrough that would get around those fundamental physics seems questionable,” he said.

Peurifoy is so certain that the challenges of developing either weapon cannot be overcome that he suspects senior Bush administration officials just want to restart nuclear testing.

“This is simply a smokescreen to find a way to resume yield testing,” he said.

Scientists Not Convinced

Celec said he was familiar with one of the May and Nelson studies and did not dispute the main conclusion, but said scientists at the national laboratories have not concluded the problem is unsolvable.

“The only thing I would say is the very best minds at the nuclear laboratories who do this for a living every day are not as certain as the people who only do this part time,” he said.

“[It] would be only after we do the calculations and we do some above ground experiments ... permitted experiments, if you will, with high explosives and simulants and things of that nature, that we will be able to draw the conclusion that one, that these are either effective or not, or two, that they could be made effective if we tailored the weapon in some way,” he said.

http://nti.org/d_newswire/issues/newswires/2003_9_3.html#3

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Baltimore Sun
September 5, 2003

U.S. To Consult Other Nations On Iran's Nuclear Program

Diplomats aim to bolster U.N. watchdog agency

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON - Concern about Iran's nuclear program is prompting the Bush administration to consult with other nations on how the international watchdog agency can apply restraints.

The result could be a proposed resolution for the meeting Monday in Vienna, Austria, of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"We would look for the board to take appropriate action," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said yesterday. He did not elaborate, saying only "the board can take actions of various kinds."

Nor would he or other State Department officials describe what the resolution might say. There apparently was no decision yet within the department.

A diplomat at United Nations headquarters in New York said the United States is trying to decide whether to seek an immediate resolution declaring that Iran is not complying with its obligations to be open to U.N. inspections of its nuclear activities, or whether to press for a resolution of condemnation that would warn Iran to come into compliance.

U.S. officials are sounding out other nations on the 35-member board of governors of the IAEA to see which resolution would get consensus, said the diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. If the United States opts for a resolution of condemnation, it still could seek a tougher noncompliance resolution at the board's November meeting if Iran does not come into compliance, the diplomat said.

American diplomats approached other governments last week and again this week, telling them it was time for the IAEA to report Iran's noncompliance with inspection requirements to the United Nations, a senior U.S. official said. In Paris, meanwhile, Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton was holding parallel talks about Iran with officials from nations attending a conference designed to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons and technology.

Iran's president has said his country was not seeking to make arms, but he insisted on a right to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

Mohammad Khatami's comments followed a meeting in Tehran with European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who urged Iran to clear up questions about its nuclear program and allow unfettered inspections of related sites.

Mohamed ElBaradei, the IAEA's chief, has said traces of weapons-grade uranium have been found at a nuclear facility at Natanz in central Iran.

<http://www.sunspot.net/news/printedition/bal-te.hoot05sep05.story>

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Washington Times
September 5, 2003

Pg. 16

Austria

U.S. Plans Censure On Iranian Nukes

VIENNA — Washington has drafted a resolution accusing Iran of violating its U.N. nuclear obligations ahead of next week's key meeting of the U.N. atomic energy watchdog's governing board, diplomats said yesterday.

One diplomat familiar with the draft resolution said Washington had given the draft to some of the 35 nations on the governing board of the International Atomic Energy Agency to see if it had a chance of approval next week.

The IAEA board begins meeting Monday to discuss the agency's reports on nuclear inspections in Iran.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030905-120759-8381r.htm>

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Jailing Iraqi Scientists May Be Hurting Weapons Search

By Walter Pincus

Washington Post Staff Writer

Saturday, September 6, 2003; Page A13

Uncertainty about how to deal with Iraqi scientists has complicated the search for Iraq's weapons of mass destruction being coordinated by David Kay, the CIA representative on the 1,200-person Iraq Survey Group, according to administration and congressional officials as well as former United Nations inspectors.

Highly publicized U.S. arrests and jailings of weapons specialists have had the effect of limiting cooperation from Iraqis who have first-hand knowledge of former president Saddam Hussein's programs, these sources said. Those in jail have not so far provided information on chemical, biological or nuclear programs, perhaps fearing they will be prosecuted, the officials said. And scientists yet to be contacted or whose identities are unknown have not come forward out of fear of going to jail.

Kay, a United Nations inspector in the 1990s, is expected to provide an update on his activities to Congress later this month, although the exact date and the form it will take has yet to be determined, a senior administration official said yesterday. Kay has indicated that he will provide a factual recitation of what he has found with some interpretation of what his findings disclose about the state of Iraq's proscribed weapons programs when the Hussein government was toppled.

"He's not raising expectations," said Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Mich.), a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence who recently returned from Baghdad, where he had two meetings with Kay. "He's not talking or speculating about what he may or may not find."

Kay told visiting lawmakers recently that he had obtained documentation of how Iraqis described the programs among themselves and how they were concealing them. A senior administration official said there was also information about how groups of scientists were being employed in non-weapons industries but conducting research that could be applied to weapons once U.N. sanctions were lifted.

But Rep. Thomas M. Davis III (R-Va.), who was among those who met with Kay in Baghdad, told reporters Thursday that he did not believe proscribed weapons would be found "without some cooperation" from Iraqi weapons specialists. In June, Kay told NBC News, "People are the key to understanding weapons of mass destruction programs."

There is disagreement over the policy of arresting Iraqi scientists and holding them in isolation, which began in April when the U.S. military was in charge of the weapons hunt. "There is uncertainty about the best way" to deal with the Iraqis, Hoekstra said yesterday in a telephone interview. "Some [say] the role of prosecuting attorney would not be inappropriate, deciding who to negotiate a deal with so that we not let everyone get off scot-free."

Gen. Amir Saadi, the rocket engineer and adviser to Hussein who was Iraq's liaison with U.N. inspectors, surrendered in April when he learned through the media that he was on the U.S. most-wanted list. He was jailed and has been held incommunicado since.

His wife was visiting the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad when it was bombed earlier this month, and she was reported wounded and in a hospital. Along with other senior scientists associated with the weapons programs, some lower-level scientists were arrested when they went to the Iraqi Defense Ministry to pick up their paychecks.

Former U.N. inspectors who gained experience talking to Iraqi scientists during inspections from 1991 to 1998 and in 2002 and 2003 have encouraged a different approach. One former inspector said a colleague returned from Baghdad and said he was "shocked at the way scientists were being treated. They wanted to be assured they would not be prosecuted before they would speak, and they [U.S. interrogators] would not do it."

Other former inspectors have had contact with Iraqi scientists who are concerned about what could happen to them if they tell their stories. "They are being treated as common criminals," one former inspector said. Another, who is also familiar with events in Baghdad, said, "We have created negative incentives for them to come forward."

Meanwhile, in Paris Thursday, Undersecretary of State John R. Bolton supported what is expected to be the emphasis of the eventual Kay report: that Hussein was developing a capability to produce chemical, biological and nuclear weapons once U.N. sanctions were ended.

Whether or not Hussein had weapons was not central to the U.S. decision to invade Iraq, Bolton said. "The issue I think has been the capability that Iraq sought to have . . . WMD programs," he told the Associated Press. "Whether he possessed them today or four years ago isn't really the issue. Until that regime was removed from power, that threat remained. That was the purpose of military action."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A32975-2003Sep5.html>

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Errors May Have Inflated Iraq Arms Claims

By CHARLES J. HANLEY

The Associated Press

Sunday, September 7, 2003; 2:06 PM

No weapons of mass destruction have turned up in Iraq, nor has any solid new evidence for them turned up in Washington or London. But what about Baghdad's patchy bookkeeping - the gaps that led U.N. inspectors to list Iraqi nerve agents and bioweapons material as unaccounted for?

Ex-inspectors now say, five months after the U.S. invasion, that the "unaccountables" may have been no more than paperwork glitches left behind when Iraq destroyed banned chemical and biological weapons years ago.

Some may represent miscounts, they say, and some may stem from Iraqi underlings' efforts to satisfy the boss by exaggerating reports on arms output in the 1980s.

"Under that sort of regime, you don't admit you got it wrong," said Ron G. Manley of Britain, a former chief U.N. adviser on chemical weapons.

His encounters with Iraqi scientists in the 1990s convinced him that at times, when told to produce "X amount" of a weapons agent, "they wrote down what their superiors wanted to hear instead of the reality," said Manley, who noted that producing VX nerve agent, for example, is a difficult process.

American ex-inspector Scott Ritter said he, too, was sure Baghdad's "WMD" accounts were at times overstated.

"There was so much pressure put on scientists to produce world-class systems, they would exaggerate their reports back to authorities," he said. As inspectors scrutinized factories and interrogated Iraqi specialists, "you suddenly realized they weren't as good as they said they were."

Ex-Marine officer Ritter, who sounded alarms about possible hidden Iraqi weapons in the 1990s, stirred controversy the past two years by accusing U.S. officials of having failed to make a case for war on Iraq.

Chief U.N. inspector Hans Blix, as he left his post this summer, became more open in discussing discrepancies.

After the mid-1990s, "hardly ever did (inspectors) find hidden weapons," Blix reminded one audience. "What they found was bad accounting.

"It could be true they (Iraq) did destroy unilaterally in 1991 what they hid."

The discrepancies, disputed for years between U.N. inspectors and Iraqi officials, may be of more interest now that U.S. weapons hunters are failing to find Iraqi chemical or biological arms.

Those weapons hunters, the Iraq Survey Group, say they still expect to find evidence of such programs. Their first interim report is expected in mid-September. Through spokesman Kenneth Gerhart, they declined to comment on the role of the U.N. discrepancies list in their current work.

Some of the "bad" accounting on the final U.N. list of unresolved disarmament issues:

-Although U.N. inspectors in the 1990s verified destruction of 760 tons of Iraqi chemical warfare agents, including 2.5 tons of VX nerve gas, Iraq never came up with convincing evidence for its claim that it had eliminated a final, additional 1.5 tons of VX.

-A discrepancy between Iraqi documents left open the possibility Baghdad's military retained 6,526 more chemical-filled bombs from the 1980s than inspectors first thought.

-The amount of biological growth medium obtained by Iraq suggested it was capable of producing thousands of liters more anthrax than the 8,900 liters it acknowledged.

Earlier this year, U.N. teams were working with Baghdad to pin down such loose ends. The Iraqis had begun scientific soil sampling, for example, to try to confirm the amount of VX dumped long ago at a neutralization site, and had filed an initial report on March 17. Three days later, however, the U.S. invasion intervened.

Some such efforts had taken on a "for-the-record" character since, experts note, any old VX or "wet" anthrax, for example, would have degraded into ineffectiveness anyway.

The Iraqis never dried anthrax to make it last longer, says the former head of their biological weapons program.

Nassir Al-Hindawi also reaffirms that Iraq never made more than 8,900 liters of anthrax. His postwar statements have added credibility at a time when any fear he felt of the Saddam Hussein regime would have subsided.

American officials at times used paperwork gaps to paint an ominous picture. President Bush last October spoke of "a massive stockpile of biological weapons that has never been accounted for and is capable of killing millions."

Some cases of fuzzy numbers may never be reconciled.

"Their ability to keep records on such things was pretty poor," Garth Whitty, a former U.N. chemical arms inspector, said in London. "They weren't particularly good on inventories."

Whitty spoke specifically of the inspectors' discovery last January, at an Iraqi ammunition dump, of a dozen empty chemical warheads for small rockets - munitions that should have been destroyed years earlier. The circumstances made clear the warheads had been overlooked, not concealed, Whitty said.

Manley cited another example of an inventory glitch: When his crews were destroying supposedly empty Iraqi rockets in the early 1990s, one turned out to be loaded, blowing up, spewing sarin gas and injuring an Iraqi worker. It was always a "fragile assumption" to expect Iraq to provide a highly detailed, fully consistent and well documented account of all its weapons work, said U.S. defense analyst Carl Conetta. No military can do that, he wrote in a report recapping the Iraq inspections.

A U.S. audit last year, for example, found the Pentagon had lost track of more than 1 million chemical-biological protective suits, said Conetta, of the Project on Defense Alternatives, a private think tank. In perhaps the most striking example, U.S. government auditors found in 1994 that almost three tons of plutonium, enough for hundreds of nuclear bombs, had "vanished" from U.S. stocks, because of discrepancies between "book inventory" and "physical inventory."

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A38764-2003Sep7.html>

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Los Angeles Times
September 8, 2003

Tehran Warns Of Nuclear Tensions

By Times Wire Reports

Iran's chief delegate to the U.N. atomic agency warned the U.S. and other nations ahead of a meeting today that nuclear tensions could grow if they press Tehran too hard to open its programs to inspectors.

Ali Akbar Salehi said Iran is open to negotiating on inspections with the International Atomic Energy Agency but indicated the offer could be pulled if today's IAEA board meeting "disrupted the whole process."

The meeting probably will urge Iran to accept tougher inspections without notice and ask it to explain IAEA findings that the United States says point to a covert atomic arms program.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-briefs8.1sep08,1.5588103.story>

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

Washington Post
September 6, 2003
Pg. 4

GAO Finds Problems In Weapons Disposal

Management turnover and the absence of a comprehensive strategy have hampered a Pentagon initiative to eliminate the country's stockpile of chemical weapons, congressional investigators said.

In its latest report in a series on problems with the Army's Chemical Demilitarization program, the General Accounting Office said the program will not meet its goals and could encounter further problems unless the Department of Defense and the Army implement a strategic plan.

Under an international treaty, the United States was supposed to have destroyed 45 percent of its stockpile of 31,280 tons of mustard gas, sarin and other chemical weapons by next April. This week, the Pentagon announced it would seek a delay until December 2007, the original deadline for having destroyed the entire stockpile.

Previous GAO reports have focused on the safety of incineration, which is the leading method for eliminating the weapons.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33287-2003Sep5.html>

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Chemical Weapons: Sustained Leadership, Along with Key Strategic Management Tools, Is Needed to Guide DOD's Destruction Program.

GAO-03-1031, September 5

<http://www.gao.gov/highlights/d031031high.pdf>

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N.Korea Biochemical Expert Said Detained in China

Sat September 6, 2003 08:45 AM ET

BEIJING (Reuters) - A North Korean biological weapons expert has been detained while trying to slip into the

Australian consulate in China's southern city of Guangzhou to seek political asylum, an anti-Pyongyang activist said on Saturday.

Norbert Vollertsen, a German doctor-turned-activist, said plainclothes security agents had detained Ri Chae Woo, who planned to testify in the United States against Pyongyang's chemical and biological weapons program.

Vollertsen, quoted on a human rights Web site, said Ri had evidence of human experiments in North Korea.

A spokeswoman for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs said the government was unaware of the incident. "We have no knowledge of the reported incident. We checked with our consul-general there, who has no knowledge of it either," she told Reuters.

While North Korea's nuclear weapons program has been a top international concern recently, the reclusive state is also believed to be capable of making large amounts of chemical weapons such as nerve, blister and choking agents. Ri had worked for the Chiha-ri Chemical Corp in Anbyon, south of Wonsan, North Korea, until June 2003 when he, his wife and two teenage children fled to China, Vollertsen said.

"He (Ri) was disguised in the uniform of maintenance staff of the building which houses the consulate," Vollertsen said in a statement on the Chosun Journal Web site, which promotes human rights in North Korea.

"He was apprehended in the fire escape stairwell. His family members escaped via a nearby fast food restaurant and are at large," Vollertsen said.

Guangzhou police declined to comment, and the Australian consulate was not immediately available for comment. Activists say up to 300,000 North Korean refugees are hiding in northeast China after slipping across the border to flee hunger, poverty and repression in their Communist homeland.

Defectors say North Korean refugees who are sent home face imprisonment, torture or death.

China, which fought alongside the North during the 1950-53 Korean War, has an agreement with its neighbor to repatriate North Koreans, whom it views as economic migrants -- not refugees.

But to avert Western criticism, China has allowed many North Korean asylum seekers to leave for South Korea via third countries.

Hwang Jang-yop, considered the architect of North Korea's political ideology of *juche* or self-reliance defected to South Korea during a visit to China in February 1997.

Last year, more than 1,000 North Koreans reached South Korea via China and other countries. Since last year, China has allowed more than 150 asylum seekers, who have fled to foreign embassies and schools in China, to leave and ultimately reach South Korea.

Last month, Shanghai police foiled an attempt by nine North Korean refugees to sneak into a Japanese school and arrested a Japanese national for helping them. Three South Koreans were also detained for filming the refugees.

In July, four North Korean teenagers slipped into the British consulate in Shanghai and were sent later to South Korea.

<http://www.reuters.com/newsArticle.jhtml?type=topNews&storyID=3398432>

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Washington Times

September 9, 2003

Pg. 1

North Korea To Display New Missiles

U.S. watches for nuke test, Taepo Dong that can reach West Coast

By Bill Gertz, The Washington Times

North Korea is expected to display as early as today one or two new long-range missiles, including a system capable of hitting the Western United States, U.S. officials said yesterday.

One new missile is believed to be an intermediate-range ballistic missile with a range of up to several thousand miles.

A second missile, which could be shown during a military parade today in Pyongyang, is a new version of the Taepo Dong 2 intercontinental ballistic missile, said administration officials with access to intelligence reports.

Intelligence agencies are closely watching the military parade to be held in the North Korean capital's main square that marks the 55th anniversary of the founding of the communist state, one of the last totalitarian regimes from the Cold War.

"Our best thinking at this point is they're going to show us a new missile," one official said. "They might do something else."

The official did not elaborate, but some intelligence officials said they believe North Korea could conduct its first underground nuclear test, following through with threats made by North Korean officials at recent talks on Pyongyang's nuclear program.

The official said the new longer-range missile is being described within the U.S. government as the "Taepo Dong X." Intelligence analysts estimate it to have a range longer than the Taepo Dong 2 and to have greater accuracy than earlier versions of the Taepo Dong 2, the official said.

The Taepo Dong 2 is believed to have a range of up to 2,300 miles with a payload of up to several hundred pounds. A second official said the new intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) is a road-mobile system with a range of up to 3,400 miles. The official did not disclose the name of the new IRBM.

The missile will be capable of hitting Japan and the U.S. island of Guam, where the Pentagon has deployed attack submarines and stockpiles of air-launched cruise missiles for U.S. bombers.

The IRBM development was first disclosed by South Korea's Chosun Ilbo newspaper and confirmed by U.S. officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Neither new missile has been tested, so range estimates vary, the officials said.

U.S. intelligence agencies classify intermediate-range missiles as those that can travel between 1,800 miles and 3,400 miles. Intercontinental-range missiles can exceed 3,400 miles.

The first official said the new "Taepo Dong X" is estimated by intelligence analysts to have enough range to land a warhead on Hawaii, Alaska, California and "most of the West Coast."

This official said he did not believe that the North Koreans would conduct a missile flight test on the anniversary today.

Disclosure of North Korea's new missiles come as tensions remain high in Northeast Asia over Pyongyang's drive to build nuclear weapons.

Six-party talks in Beijing ended last month with no resolution of North Korea's abrogation of a 1994 agreement freezing its nuclear arms program.

Australia and the United States, along with representatives of nine other nations, plan to hold an exercise next week to simulate the interception of a shipment of weapons at sea.

The exercise, known as Pacific Protector, is part of the Bush administration's Proliferation Security Initiative, which is aimed at curbing North Korean exports of missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

A CIA report in 2001 stated that North Korea's "willingness to sell complete systems and components has enabled other states to acquire longer range capabilities earlier than otherwise would have been possible, notably the sale of the No Dong [medium-range ballistic missile] to Pakistan."

The report said North Korea also helped Iran copy a No Dong missile for its recently deployed Shahab-3 medium-range mobile missile.

The North Korean nuclear issue arose in October when Pyongyang officials acknowledged that the country was building uranium-based nuclear weapons in addition to the plutonium-based arms that were to be frozen by the 1994 Agreed Framework.

Regarding a nuclear test, the second official said: "It is certainly something we are looking for. It's a possibility."

The second official said there are no indications of an imminent North Korean nuclear test but that any evidence would be unlikely because of the North Korean government's secretive nature.

North Korea has adopted a variation on its communist ideology that Pyongyang calls the "military-first" policy, a derivative of its Marxist-Leninist doctrine of self-reliance, known as *juche*.

North Korea announced in the aftermath of six-way talks in Beijing on its nuclear program that it will add to its nuclear "deterrent" as a result of the hostile policy of the United States.

Officials said the presentation of new missiles likely would increase tensions in the region, especially in Japan, which recently announced that it would deploy missile defenses to counter North Korean missiles.

Japan's government said last month it plans to buy U.S. Patriot missiles and sea-based Standard missiles that can be used as part of a ship-based defense on Japan's Aegis-equipped warships.

North Korea surprised U.S. intelligence agencies in August 1998 by test-firing its first Taepo Dong missile, which Pyongyang described as a space launcher that attempted to put a satellite in orbit.

"I think that [showing the new missiles] will cause heart palpitations in Japan," the first official said.

President Bush announced in December that he ordered the Pentagon to deploy a missile defense against long-range missiles by 2004.

A key factor in the president's deployment decision is the threat posed by North Korea's long-range missiles, Pentagon officials have said.

North Korea builds three types of missiles: short-range Scuds, medium-range No Dongs and long-range Taepo Dongs.

It has exported both Scud and No Dong missiles to Middle Eastern states.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said last week that the United States is "becoming more reckless in its military moves" while seeking peace and dialogue.

The agency stated that U.S. development of nuclear weapons is "aimed at making a pre-emptive nuclear attack" on North Korea and "launching an armed invasion."

"[North Korea] is fully ready for dialogue and war," the news agency stated. "The U.S. would be well-advised to halt its reckless threat and blackmail against its dialogue partner."

<http://www.washtimes.com/national/20030908-115609-6505r.htm>

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Middle East - AP

Report Says Iraqi Nukes Found in Disarray

Mon Sep 8, 1:44 PM ET

By *GEORGE JAHN, Associated Press Writer*

VIENNA, Austria - U.N. inspectors found Iraq ([news](#) - [web sites](#))'s nuclear program in disarray and unlikely to be able to support an active effort to build weapons, the atomic agency chief said in a confidential report obtained Monday by The Associated Press.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Mohamed ElBaradei reiterated that his experts uncovered no signs of a nuclear weapons program before they withdrew from Iraq just before the war began in March.

The United States and Britain invaded Iraq because they believed Saddam Hussein ([news](#) - [web sites](#))'s regime was developing nuclear arms as well as chemical and biological weapons.

"In the areas of uranium acquisition, concentration and centrifuge enrichment, extensive field investigation and document analysis revealed no evidence that Iraq had resumed such activities," ElBaradei said in the report, made available to the AP by a diplomat.

"No indication of post-1991 weaponization activities was uncovered in Iraq," he said.

The document was to be reviewed this week by the IAEA's 35-nation board of governors, which convened a meeting Monday at the agency's headquarters in Vienna to reassess nuclear security issues in Iran, Iraq, North Korea ([news](#) - [web sites](#)) and elsewhere.

Because the IAEA teams had to pull out before they could complete their inspections, the agency cannot say conclusively that Iraq had no active nuclear weapons program.

But what the inspectors saw in the months preceding their withdrawal suggested the Iraqis were in no position to build a nuclear weapon, ElBaradei said in his update to the board.

"The agency observed a substantial degradation in facilities, financial resources and programs throughout Iraq that might support a nuclear infrastructure," he said.

"The former cadre of nuclear experts was being increasingly dispersed and many key figures were reaching retirement or had left the country," he said.

The IAEA is awaiting a U.N. Security Council review that could lead to an eventual return of its inspectors to Iraq. Regardless of the outcome, IAEA inspectors remain authorized under a nuclear safeguards agreement with Iraq "to ensure that ... Iraq has declared all its nuclear material and activities, and that all Iraq nuclear activities are for peaceful purposes," ElBaradei said in a separate statement Monday.

ElBaradei told the Security Council just before the war that his inspectors had no conclusive evidence Iraq had resumed a nuclear weapons program.

Iraq had denied it was trying to build atomic weaponry. It could have done more while IAEA inspectors were still in the country to clear up lingering doubts about its intentions, ElBaradei suggested in the confidential report.

"The clarification by Iraq of these questions and concerns would have reduced the remaining uncertainties about Iraq's program," the report said.

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20030908/ap_on_re_mi_ea/nuclear_agency_iraq_1

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Washington Post
September 9, 2003
Pg. 9

IAEA Cites Iran On Uranium Work

Report Says Weapons Effort Is Cloaked

By Glenn Kessler, Washington Post Staff Writer

Inspectors for the United Nations recently concluded that Iran has attempted to produce highly enriched uranium without properly disclosing it, which would be a serious violation of its nuclear nonproliferation agreements, according to a confidential report by the director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The 10-page report, which recently began circulating among nonproliferation specialists in Washington, is written in bland diplomatic prose and buries many of its conclusions. But experts who have read the report said it provides damning evidence that Iran has quickly and secretly attempted to build a crash nuclear weapons program, and then tried to mislead U.N. investigators with contradictory and implausible explanations.

"As you read this report, the vastness and sophistication of the Iran program becomes apparent," said Joseph Cirincione, director of the nonproliferation project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "Anyone looking at this has got to conclude this is a nuclear bomb program."

In a speech yesterday in Vienna before the IAEA's 35-nation board of governors, Director General Mohamed ElBaradei urged Iran "to show proactive and accelerated cooperation, and to demonstrate full transparency by providing the Agency with a complete and accurate declaration of all its nuclear activities."

ElBaradei said "information and access [from Iran] were in some instances slow in coming, piecemeal and reactive, and at times the information provided has been inconsistent with that given previously."

The Bush administration has accused Iran of having a secret nuclear weapons program -- which Iran has vehemently denied -- but it has had trouble winning support for an IAEA resolution that would send the matter to the U.N. Security Council. But experts said the conclusions by the U.N. experts could help win support for tougher action against Iran.

"The significance is, this is a more objective measure of Iran's noncompliance," said Michael Levi, a nuclear physicist at the Brookings Institution.

Late last month, it was disclosed that IAEA investigators found traces of highly enriched uranium on some of the equipment examined in Iran. The Iranian government said the traces were residue already on the equipment when it was received from another country. But the report goes further and says the experts determined that Iran could not have built its massive gas centrifuge enrichment facility at Natanz, about 300 miles south of Tehran, without having first tested the equipment covertly with nuclear material.

"This is an egregious violation of their nonproliferation agreement," Levi said. "You are not allowed to enrich uranium secretly."

The report also says that in June, the IAEA board urged Iran not to introduce any nuclear material into the facility "as a confidence-building measure" while questions were being raised about Iran's nuclear ambitions. But just days later, on June 25, Iran began using nuclear material anyway in one machine and last month it expanded testing in other machines -- making it difficult to determine whether enriched uranium had been in the facility before June. The report raises many questions about Iran's conflicting explanations for its programs, including its inability to provide original copies of design documents that might explain how Iran built such sophisticated equipment without secretly using nuclear material. The report also suggests that Iran provided an implausible explanation for why it is building a heavy water reactor that could be used to produce weapons-grade plutonium, but which Iran says is for medical and industrial purposes.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A45116-2003Sep8.html>

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Mon Sep 8 14:37:00 2003 Pacific Time

Brookhaven Researchers Develop Counterterrorism Technologies

NEW YORK, Sept. 8 (AScribe Newswire) -- Researchers at the U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory are developing counterterrorism technologies to help protect the United States from would-be terrorists wielding nuclear weapons, dirty bombs, toxic chemicals, or explosives.

"These sensor technologies give us the capability to discern and identify minute quantities of radioactive materials, and also detect chemical and biological agents and explosives," said Ralph James, Brookhaven's Associate Director for Energy, Environment, and National Security. "When deployed at the nation's ports, bridges, tunnels, and transportation hubs, these sensors can help law enforcement agencies intercept dangerous materials before they are used in a terrorist attack."

Current technologies under development include: - Cadmium-zinc-telluride sensors: These tiny sensors can detect gamma rays emitted by radionuclides of interest to terrorists, including cesium and cobalt. Unlike high-purity germanium detectors, which are expensive and must be kept chilled, these work at room temperature and are inexpensive.

- Large-volume xenon-based detectors: These xenon-gas-filled detectors are another room-temperature device that can detect and identify radioisotopes with great sensitivity.

- Thermal neutron camera: This highly sensitive helium-based imaging system uses a wire chamber and coded aperture to "see" fissionable radioactive materials like plutonium from a distance.
- Mini-Raman LIDAR chemical sensor: This one-of-a-kind portable chemical sensor can locate and identify chemicals (like those used in nerve gas) in the air or deposited on surfaces from a safe distance, using laser scattering patterns to identify a substance's distinct chemical signature.
- Urban Shield: This initiative would integrate real-time data from a network of sensors distributed within a municipal area. This network would employ an array of meteorological instrumentation, satellite data, and detectors to identify and help track chemicals or radionuclides after a release, and provide crucial information to emergency responders.

James will discuss this work during the "Environmental Radioactivity and Low-Background Radioactivity Monitoring in Service to the Society" session on "Homeland Security/Safeguards," sponsored by the Division of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology, on Sunday, September 7, 2003, at 9:35 a.m. in the Jacob Javits Convention Center, Room 1A15/1A16. This work is primarily funded by the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration.

The U.S. Department of Energy's Brookhaven National Laboratory (<http://www.bnl.gov>) conducts research in the physical, biomedical, and environmental sciences, as well as in energy technologies. Brookhaven also builds and operates major facilities available to university, industrial, and government scientists. The Laboratory is managed by Brookhaven Science Associates, a limited liability company founded by Stony Brook University and Battelle, a nonprofit applied science and technology organization. Visit Brookhaven Lab's electronic newsroom for links, news archives, graphics, and more: <http://www.bnl.gov/newsroom>.

<http://www.ascribe.org/cgi-bin/spew4th.pl?ascribeid=20030907.063405&time=07%2042%20PDT&year=2003&public=1>

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USA Today
September 10, 2003
Pg. 9

Exercise Aims To Inhibit North Korean Arms Trade

Allies to practice intercepting weapons of mass destruction

By Barbara Slavin, USA Today

WASHINGTON — This weekend, U.S. Navy forces and U.S. allies will launch a new program intended to squeeze the North Korean economy by threatening its exports of missiles and other weapons. A high-level State Department official who briefed reporters on Tuesday said Australia, France and Japan would join in operation "Pacific Protector" in the Coral Sea off Australia.

Forces participating in the exercise, the first of 10 planned over the next year, will practice intercepting ships suspected of carrying biological, chemical or nuclear weapons or related materials.

The exercise is going forward amid tensions over North Korea's nuclear program and new threats to test nuclear weapons.

But North Korea showed some restraint at a parade marking the 55th anniversary of the country's founding. About 10,000 troops and civilians marched through the capital to mark the occasion. Press reports in South Korea suggested that the North might display a new long-range ballistic missile. But the troops carried only small arms, including machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

Under Chinese pressure, the North Koreans agreed in talks two weeks ago not to take any "provocative actions" that could escalate its nuclear standoff with the United States, diplomats involved in the talks said. But there appeared to be concern among countries in the region that the U.S.-led exercises could generate new hostility and provocative actions by the unpredictable North Koreans.

China, North Korea's main trading partner, Russia and South Korea have not joined the U.S.-led interception program, known as the Proliferation Security Initiative. Sun Weide, press counselor at the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said China questions the legal basis of the effort and fears that intercepting North Korean shipments would set back negotiations with North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program. "We hope the parties will be prudent," Sun said.

Britain, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Poland, Spain and Germany also have agreed to take part in the initiative. The 11 countries will share intelligence and cooperate to intercept suspected weapons of mass destruction. The administration is approaching all other nations with which the United States has diplomatic relations to enlist support, said the high-level State Department official, who asked not to be named.

So far, there have been no dramatic interceptions on the high seas since a Spanish ship caught the North Koreans sending Scud missiles to Yemen last year. In the incident, which helped lead to the initiative, the shipment was allowed to proceed, the U.S. official said, because Yemen is an ally in the U.S. war on terrorism and promised the purchase would be its last from North Korea. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer conceded at the time there was no legal basis to seize the missiles.

However, the State Department official said there was a legal basis to stop the ship because it was flying a false flag and its manifest did not disclose the lethal cargo. The official said the legality of future interdictions would be decided on a "case-by-case" basis.

The official suggested that the mere existence of the interdiction program would inhibit weapons trade by North Korea and Iran — the two states named as of "particular proliferation concern." The goal, he said, was to make proliferation more expensive and difficult.

Other Korea experts said the publicity surrounding the exercises could be useful. "This administration believes not just in the bite but the bark, and its hope is that the bark will get the North Koreans to be more cautious," says Robert Einhorn, who negotiated with North Korea under the Clinton administration.

Richard Bush, director of Asian policy studies at the Brookings Institution, said the strategy was intended to increase stress on North Korea's economy, which has few sources of hard currency beyond exporting weapons and illegal drugs. Drugs are not included in the initiative, however.

The program satisfies hard-liners in the Bush administration who hold out little hope that North Korea will give up its weapons through negotiations.

But Ashton Carter, a former Pentagon official who also served in the Clinton administration, said the program could not prevent North Korea from selling a small lump of plutonium sufficient to build a nuclear weapon. "It's a fantasy to imagine that we can put a hermetic seal around North Korea and be sure that a soccer-ball-sized package doesn't get out," Carter said.

<http://www.usatoday.com/usatoday/20030910/5485777s.htm>

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Los Angeles Times

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U.S. Backs Atomic Agency's Iran Plan

Washington will give Tehran a 'last chance' to prove it isn't developing nuclear weapons.

By Alissa J. Rubin, Times Staff Writer

VIENNA — The United States said Tuesday that it was willing to give Iran a "last chance" to prove it was not developing nuclear weapons, endorsing a strongly worded proposal at the U.N. atomic energy agency that would require Tehran to open its doors unconditionally to inspectors by the end of October.

The proposed resolution, which must be approved by a majority of the 35 countries on the International Atomic Energy Agency's board, would require Iran to report fully on its nuclear activities, give unfettered access to inspectors and halt indefinitely all uranium enrichment and reprocessing activities. Enriched and reprocessed uranium can be used to fuel nuclear weapons.

The resolution, authored by France, Britain and Germany and backed by the U.S., will be voted on this week. Western diplomats said they had the votes to approve it as is but would be willing to make limited modifications to get maximum backing.

Iran, a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, has insisted that its nuclear program is strictly for generating electricity. But several Western countries suspect that Tehran is undertaking a clandestine nuclear weapons development program. A report issued by the IAEA in August laid out a series of unanswered questions and made it clear that Iran had offered conflicting information about its facilities.

Kenneth Brill, the U.S. ambassador to the IAEA, made a strongly worded statement to the agency's board Tuesday, indicating that America is ready to say that Iran is in noncompliance with its commitments under the treaty. That is a serious charge and, if agreed to by other countries, would require the IAEA board to refer the matter to the U.N. Security Council, which could adopt sanctions against Tehran.

However, other nations are reluctant to take such a dire step, and Brill said the United States had decided to stop short of pushing that course of action. In deference to "the desire of other countries to give Iran a last chance to stop its evasions," he said, the United States "has agreed today to join in the call on Iran to take 'essential and urgent' actions to demonstrate that it has done so."

Iranian diplomats have expressed dismay at the tone of the Vienna meeting. Iran's delegate to the session, Ali Akbar Salehi, said Tehran might sign the so-called additional protocol mandating new inspections but warned that the country might be unwilling to do so if "things were totally against Iran" at the meeting, Associated Press reported.

There is a heated debate in Iran about whether the country should agree to the additional protocol. Some politicians are urging the government to sign it to prove that Iran's nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes. Others fear that the access would be taken advantage of and damage the country's national security.

Iranian diplomats have specifically rejected a clause in the proposed resolution now under discussion that demands Tehran stop uranium enrichment activities at the Natanz facility in central Iran.

This summer, inspectors found traces of enriched uranium at Natanz, as well as a large facility equipped with gas centrifuges, which can be used in the enrichment process. The Iranians initially said their centrifuge program was home-grown but then acknowledged that they had bought some equipment from other countries.

They now say that the particles of enriched uranium found by IAEA inspectors are residue from when the equipment was used by the foreign countries that sold it to them.

There are widespread suspicions that Pakistan was one of Iran's suppliers, but other countries may be involved as well, said a Western diplomat in Vienna.

President Bush has labeled Iran a member of an "axis of evil," and the administration has expressed increasing distress at the emerging information suggesting that Tehran has gathered the technology and expertise necessary to produce nuclear weapons.

Iran is widely viewed as a pivotal country both in the politics of the Mideast and Central Asia. It is of prime strategic interest to the United States because it is bordered by Iraq on the west and Afghanistan on the east.

Washington wants Tehran to stay out of the affairs of both countries as the U.S. attempts to rebuild them in a pro-Western fashion. However, Iran seems eager to make it clear that it will not be cowed by larger regional or world players.

IAEA Director-General Mohamed ElBaradei, a career diplomat, used careful language at Tuesday's meeting but left little doubt that he wanted to see more compliance on the part of Iran and expected it by early November, according to participants.

While acknowledging that his inspectors had recently received more help and access in Iran than in the past, he said there was much "urgent and essential work" that still needed to be done. He described some of the responses as "piecemeal and reactive."

"The more transparency, the more assurance we can give is in the interests of both Iran and the international community," ElBaradei said.

<http://www.latimes.com/news/nationworld/world/la-fg-irannuke10sep10.1.6265293.story>

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Washington Times
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Pg. 15

Israel Is Ready To Stop Nukes

Waits for U.S. to press Tehran

By Ramit Plushnick-Masti, Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel has hinted at military action to stop what it calls a nightmare scenario — nuclear weapons in the hands of Iran — but for now is waiting for U.S. diplomatic pressure and closer international scrutiny to do the job.

The United States yesterday accused Iran of violating the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty but said Tehran had "a last chance" to prove it wasn't running a covert weapons program.

The chief U.S. delegate to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Kenneth Brill, took Iran to task on the basis of a report by the agency's chief.

"The United States believes the facts already established would fully justify an immediate finding of noncompliance by Iran," Mr. Brill said at a meeting of the agency's board. Still, he said, the Americans were ready to give "Iran a last chance to drop its evasions" before pushing for punitive action.

Tentative plans to come down hard on Iran at the board meeting were dropped last week after the Bush administration determined that it wouldn't find enough support at the conference.

The U.S. delegation had been pushing for a resolution finding Iran in noncompliance — a conclusion that would have brought the matter before the U.N. Security Council, which in turn could have called for sanctions.

Iran insists its nuclear programs are only for generating electricity as oil supplies dwindle. It also has said its equipment was "contaminated" with enriched uranium by a previous owner.

But Israel estimates Iran is just two to three years from having nuclear weapons.

An Israeli government official said Iran does not have the right amount of enriched uranium for a nuclear bomb, but it has the know-how and the ability to develop the materials.

If diplomacy fails, Israel, which is about 600 miles to the west of Iran, has made clear a military operation is feasible.

Israeli security officials said Iran's nuclear program is a focus of the army's five-year strategic plan, and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has ordered the Mossad spy service to keep a close eye on the developments in Tehran.

"Any Iranian regime knows, of course, that Israel has the capability, the wherewithal, to deal with a military threat," said Zalman Shoval, an aide to Mr. Sharon. "Hopefully, a military threat can be avoided, nipped in the bud ... before it begins, and this is where the United States comes in."

Israel has never confirmed being a nuclear power, but it is believed widely to have nuclear weapons.

<http://www.washtimes.com/world/20030909-092458-4658r.htm>

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