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CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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China Daily – China

Talks on Iran Nuclear Issue to Resume

March 7, 2012

(Xinhua)

BRUSSELS - The six world powers that used to engage in Iran nuclear talks have accepted an Iranian offer to revive negotiations after months of stalemate, the European Union's top diplomat said Tuesday.

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton said she received a letter in February from Iran's nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili, who said Tehran wanted to reopen negotiations with the six powers -- the three EU countries of France, Britain and Germany plus China, Russia and the United States.

Ashton said she had accepted on behalf of the six countries the offer to resume talks in her reply to Jalili's letter. However, the date and venue for the talks are yet to be decided, she said.

"We hope that Iran will now enter a sustained process of constructive dialogue which will deliver real progress in resolving the international community's long-standing concerns on its nuclear program," she said.

Ashton's announcement came at a time when Israel is threatening to bomb suspected Iranian nuclear sites, which Israel said may be related to the development of nuclear weapons.

Israel said time is running out for such pre-emptive strike, amid allegations that Iran was moving some nuclear facilities into underground bunkers, which would make them impossible to destroy by Israel on its own.

In a bid to seek US support for attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu traveled to Washington to meet US President Barack Obama but seemed to fail to get the backing he desired.

Obama said the United States would not rule out using force against Iran and would always be a strong ally of Israel, but he believed there's no clear evidence to the military dimension of Iran's nuclear program and the issue could still be resolved diplomatically.

In a Tuesday speech, Obama also slammed Republican presidential candidates for clamoring for war against Iran, saying the United States has seen the heavy prices paid for wars and such "casual talks" of launching a war is irresponsible.

However, the West did not hesitate to tighten economic sanctions on Iran so as to "curb" its nuclear ambition.

Reports said US lawmakers are working on legislation to expand US sanctions to every Iranian bank. More than 20 Iranian banks are currently subject to US sanctions.

The legislation would also impose sanctions on government-owned foreign financial institutions, including foreign central banks, that would engage in transactions, oil or non-oil, with Iran. Under current US law, those institutions will be punished for oil purchases only.

The last round of nuclear talks between Iran and the six countries held in January 2011 in Istanbul produced on concrete results.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2012-03/07/content_14779840.htm

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Wall Street Journal

March 7, 2012

Iran's Parliament Speaker Warns Talks Under Threat Won't Bear Fruit- Report

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By Benoit Faucon, Dow Jones Newswires

LONDON (Dow Jones)--Iran's parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani was quoted Wednesday as warning that international negotiations over its nuclear program won't succeed if Tehran feels under threat, offering a lukewarm reaction to a western offer to resume talks.

The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council and Germany, known as the "5+1" group, Tuesday accepted a previous Iranian proposal to restart negotiations over its nuclear program. Tehran says the program is peaceful but the West suspects it has military aims.

The Mehr news agency quoted Larijani as saying that "if they want to continue the same path of pressure, intimidation, and threat, it will have no achievements for them because one cannot get concessions from Iran through threats."

While it has agreed to re-enter talks, the West continues to ratchet up pressure on Iran with new sanctions. The European Union is moving forward with a planned embargo on Iranian oil on July 1 while the U.S. has decided to ban oil trades with Tehran's central bank.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/BT-CO-20120307-703124.html>

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Ha'aretz Daily – Israel
March 07, 2012

Satellite Images Show Iran Cleaning Secret Nuclear Activity, Sources Say

Diplomat tells Associated Press alleged testing at site could indicate attempt to develop nuclear arms; other sources say images show vehicles at site, indicating crews trying to clean it of radioactive traces.

By Associated Press

Diplomats say spy satellite images of an Iranian military facility show trucks and earth-moving vehicles at the site that indicate crews were trying to clean it of radioactive traces.

Two of the diplomats told The Associated Press that those traces could have come from what they said was the testing of a small neutron trigger used to set off a nuclear explosion. A third diplomat could not confirm that, but says any testing of a so-called neutron initiator at the site could only be in the context of trying to develop nuclear arms. Iran faces growing international pressure over its nuclear program, which it insists is peaceful. Israel has hinted that it might resort to a pre-emptive military strike to stop Tehran's program.

Iran faces growing international pressure over its nuclear program, which it insists is peaceful. Israel has hinted that it might resort to a pre-emptive military strike to stop Tehran's program.

The diplomatic account came only a day after the ISNA news agency reported that Iran indicated that it would give the UN nuclear watchdog access to the Parchin complex.

An International Atomic Energy Agency report last year said that Iran had built a large containment chamber at Parchin, southeast of Tehran, to conduct explosives tests that are "strong indicators" of efforts to develop an atom bomb.

The IAEA requested access to Parchin during high-level talks in Tehran in February, but the Iranian side did not grant it.

"Parchin is a military site and accessing it is a time-consuming process, therefore visits cannot be allowed frequently ... We will allow the IAEA to visit it one more time," Iran's diplomatic mission in Vienna said in a statement, according to ISNA.

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It did not give a date for such a visit. Iranian diplomats and IAEA officials were not immediately available for comment.

Western suspicions about activities at Parchin date back to at least 2004, when a prominent nuclear expert assessed that satellite images showed it might be a site for research and experiments applicable to nuclear weapons.

IAEA inspectors did in fact visit Parchin in 2005 but did not see the place where the UN watchdog now believes the explosives chamber was built.

The IAEA named Parchin in a detailed report in November that lent independent weight to Western fears that Iran is working to develop an atomic bomb, an allegation Iranian officials deny.

Agency chief Yukiya Amano said on Monday Iran has tripled its monthly production of higher-grade enriched uranium and the UN nuclear watchdog had "serious concerns" about possible military dimensions to Tehran's atomic activities.

<http://www.haaretz.com/news/middle-east/satellite-images-show-iran-cleaning-secret-nuclear-activity-sources-say-1.417182>

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Chicago Tribune

France Says Iran "Two-Faced", Skeptical Talks Can Succeed

By John Irish, Reuters

March 8, 2012

PARIS (Reuters) - France voiced skepticism on Wednesday that a planned revival of talks between six world powers and Iran would succeed, saying Tehran still did not seem sincerely willing to negotiate on the future of its contested nuclear program.

The EU's foreign policy chief, who represents the United States, Russia, China, France, Britain and Germany in dealings with Iran, said on Tuesday they had accepted Iran's offer to return to talks after a standstill of a year that has seen a drift towards conflict in the oil-rich Gulf.

The talks could dampen what U.S. President Barack Obama has called a rising drumbeat of war, alluding to talk of last-resort Israeli attacks on Iran that he and many others worry would kindle a wider Middle East war and hammer the global economy.

French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe, however, raised doubt about what the talks could achieve. "I am a little skeptical ... I think Iran continues to be two-faced," Juppe told France's i-Tele television.

"That's why I think we have to continue to be extremely firm on sanctions (already imposed on Iran), which in my view are the best way to prevent a military option that would have unforeseeable consequences," he said.

Iranian officials in Tehran were unavailable for comment.

Iran has pledged to float "new initiatives" at the talks, whose venue and date must be decided, but has not committed itself explicitly to discussing ways of guaranteeing that its nuclear advances will be solely peaceful, as the West demands.

Previous talks have foundered over Iran's refusal to discuss what it deems its "inalienable" right to develop nuclear energy, and recent Iranian comments have not diverged from that line.

"With God's help Iran's nuclear course should continue firmly and seriously. No obstacles can stop our nuclear work," clerical Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said last month.



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ELECTION EFFECT

The widespread victory in last week's parliamentary election of Khamenei loyalists over backers of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has seemed more amenable to doing deals with the West, suggests Tehran's nuclear hard line will not soften soon, according to some Iranian commentators.

"This shows that Khamenei's stance on foreign affairs and the nuclear issue will be supported by all layers of the system," said analyst Babak Sadeghi.

For Iran's clerical establishment, defiance of "arrogant" Western power has a useful way to rally domestic support and distract attention from the country's economic difficulties, worsened by international sanctions.

"Any deal on nuclear enrichment will harm the prestige of Iranian leaders among their core supporters," said Sadeghi.

Iran denies suspicions that its program to enrich uranium is ultimately meant to yield material for atomic bombs, saying it is for peaceful energy only. But U.N. nuclear inspectors cite intelligence pointing to military dimensions to the program.

The year-long diplomatic vacuum has been filled by increasingly bellicose rhetoric, Western steps to isolate Iran with severe sanctions and Iranian threats to retaliate by shutting the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf's oil export channel.

Increasing tensions have spurred a rise in oil prices at a time when many recession-hit countries can ill-afford it.

Western states will tread cautiously in talks, mindful of past accusations that Iran's readiness to meet has been a tactic to blunt pressure and buy time for pursuing enrichment in underground plants, not a good-faith effort to reach agreement.

The Islamic Republic made its diplomatic approach to the six powers at a time when it suffering unprecedented economic pain from sanctions recently extended to block its oil exports.

ISRAEL WELCOMES TALKS, BUT WARY

Israel is all but convinced that sanctions and diplomacy will not get Iran to rein in its nuclear drive and is speaking more stridently of resorting to military action.

The Jewish state on Wednesday cautiously welcomed the planned resumption of talks with Iran while insisting that any agreement must ensure Tehran does not refine uranium above the 5 percent level suitable for power plants.

"There will be no one happier than us, and the primeminister (Benjamin Netanyahu) said this in his own voice, if it emerges that in these talks Iran will give up on its military nuclear capability," the premier's national security adviser Yaakov Amidror told Israel Radio.

Iran is now enriching uranium to a higher fissile purity it says will be used to run a medical research reactor, but which also brings it much closer to the weapons-grade threshold.

Netanyahu has said Iran must dismantle a subterranean enrichment site near the city of Qom that experts say is designed to survive any air strikes, part of what Israel says is a "zone of immunity" being sought by Tehran.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy was the first among leaders of the six powers to push for tighter sanctions on Iranian oil and finance. Sarkozy said in January that time was running out for efforts to avoid military intervention in Iran.

But Juppe signaled France was wary of resorting to force. "There is still a debate in Israel (about military action) and it's our responsibility to bring to Israel's attention the unforeseeable consequences it would have," he said.

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Obama said on Tuesday the new talks with Iran offered a diplomatic chance to defuse the crisis and quiet the "drums of war," although his defense chief said Washington would resort to military action to stop Iran developing nuclear warheads if diplomacy was ultimately judged to be futile.

POWERS EYE IRAN MOVE AT UN NUCLEAR MEETING

In Vienna, the 35-nation board of the International Atomic Energy Agency adjourned its week-long meeting until Thursday to give the sextet of world powers more time to agree a joint statement on Iran, diplomats said.

Western diplomats insisted the time needed for further talks did not reflect serious differences, but was more a question of consulting capitals of the six powers. It was nothing that "we can't resolve," one envoy told Reuters.

The joint statement was expected to underline the importance of the powers' upcoming talks with Iran and urge Tehran to cooperate with the U.N. nuclear watchdog, after two rounds of largely fruitless meetings between the IAEA and Tehran this year, one diplomat said.

The United States and its Western allies had hoped the board would have agreed a resolution rebuking Iran for what they see as its failure to address the IAEA's perception of possible military aspects to the Islamic state's nuclear program, but Russia and China objected, several diplomats said.

Additional reporting by Parisa Hafezi in Tehran, Fredrik Dahl in Vienna and Dan Williams in Jerusalem; Editing by Mark Heinrich.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-iran-nuclearbre8270m7-20120308,0,3536661,full.story>

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Reuters U.K.

Iran's Envoy: No Talks on Uranium Enrichment

By John Irish

Thursday, March 08, 2012

PARIS (Reuters) - Iran's envoy to France said Tehran was optimistic about new talks with world powers on its nuclear programme but Iran would not negotiate on its right to enrich uranium.

EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, who would lead future talks with Iran on behalf of six powers, said on Tuesday there would be an attempt to revive the talks - stalled for more than a year - aimed at allaying suspicions that Iran is developing nuclear weapons.

"We have to try through dialogue to resolve them (issues) and reach a compromise and in my opinion it's better not to prejudge these negotiations in advance," Ali Ahani told Reuters in an interview in Paris.

Ahani said all parties must be realistic in their approach to talks and that the powers should not be worried by Iran's nuclear activities.

"In this sense recognising Iran as responsible and a signatory to the non-nuclear proliferation treaty that insists on using these technologies purely for peaceful and civilian means and to continue its enrichment for civilian purposes can help get out of the current situation," Ahani said.

When asked if discussions on reducing or even cutting uranium enrichment were possible, the former deputy foreign minister replied; "No."

The six world powers - the United States, China, Russia, France, Germany and Britain - called on Iran on Thursday to let international inspectors visit a military site where the U.N. nuclear agency says development work relevant to nuclear weapons may have taken place.

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Ahani, a fluent French speaker who studied in the northern French city of Lille, said Tehran was ready to allow international inspectors access to the site and was working on a text with the IAEA to define the modalities of the visit.

"The decision has already been taken to allow access to this site and others," he said.

An IAEA report last year revealed a trove of intelligence pointing to research activities in Iran of use in developing the means and technologies needed to assemble nuclear weapons, should it decide to do so.

One salient finding was information that Iran had built a large containment chamber at Parchin in which to conduct high-explosives tests that the IAEA said are "strong indicators of possible weapon development".

Ahani said the site had already been visited twice before by inspectors and they had okayed it, but that the United States had pressured the watchdog to demand new checks.

Israel and the United States have threatened Iran with military strikes as a last-ditch way to stop it getting nuclear weapons.

Ahani said he did not think Israel would launch air strikes against the Islamic Republic due to the unforeseeable consequences they may have regionally and globally.

"We don't believe them at all even if we have prepared all scenarios to defend ourselves," the 59-year old said.

"We don't think that the Zionist regime (Israel) will take this direction because there will be worse consequences not just for that regime, region, but the world. This sort of military action could have unpredictable and catastrophic consequences," he said.

Reporting by John Irish; Editing by Angus MacSwan.

<http://uk.reuters.com/article/2012/03/08/uk-iran-envoy-idUKBRE8270PJ20120308>

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San Francisco Chronicle

Khamenei Says Obama's Iran Comments Are 'Good Words'

By Andrew J. Barden, *Bloomberg News*

Thursday, March 8, 2012

March 8 (Bloomberg) -- Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said President Barack Obama's comments that there is room for diplomacy in the international community's standoff with Iran are "good words."

Obama said that there's a "window of opportunity where this can still be resolved diplomatically." Sanctions may also compel Iran to give up any effort to develop nuclear weapons, he told reporters at the White House yesterday.

"These words are good words and are a sign of no longer being in delusion," Khamenei said in Tehran today, according to the website of the state television station, which broadcast the remarks. "But the U.S. president continued to talk about sanctions against Iran to bring the people to their knees and this part of the statement is still delusional" about the nuclear issue.

White House press secretary Jay Carney said the U.S. will continue putting pressure on the Iranian government until it takes action to meet international demands.

"The president's policy towards Iran is focused in a very clear-eyed way on behavior" rather than rhetoric, Carney said at a White House briefing. "The pressure on Iran will continue. The ratcheting up of sanctions will continue."

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http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/g/a/2012/03/08/bloomberg_articlesM0KDMV1A74E901-MOKW2.DTL

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Jerusalem Post – Israel

IAEA: No New Contact from Iran on Parchin Access

By REUTERS
March 8, 2012

VIENNA - Iran has not formally contacted the UN nuclear watchdog about any inspector access to the Parchin military site, agency head Yukiya Amano said on Thursday, a day after Iranian media suggested such a visit could be granted.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has sought access to Parchin as part of its probe into suspicions that the Islamic Republic may be seeking nuclear weapons, but it was not granted during two rounds of talks in January and February.

IAEA Director General Amano told reporters he had read this week's media reports about Iran's position, "but there has been no formal communication to us."

<http://www.ipost.com/Headlines/Article.aspx?id=261063>

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Bloomberg News

Bunker-Buster Bomb Eyed for Possible Iran Use, General Says

By Tony Capaccio
March 8, 2012

The Pentagon's biggest bunker-buster bomb is among the weapons that could be used in a potential attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, U.S. Lieutenant General Herbert Carlisle said.

The 30,000-pound bomb, called a Massive Ordnance Penetrator, is included along with cyber measures in U.S. capabilities, Carlisle said today in discussing the conceptual approach being taken by Pentagon planners for possible military action in the effort to stop Iran's nuclear program.

"Cyber is a domain," Carlisle, the Air Force's deputy chief for operations and plans, said at an industry conference in Arlington, Virginia. "There is offensive cyber operations and defensive cyber operations," he said without elaboration.

President Barack Obama said March 6 there is a "window of opportunity" for diplomacy and sanctions to compel Iran to give up any effort to develop nuclear weapons before military action might be needed.

Describing an array of U.S. military options, Carlisle said, "All these things are on the table and being thought about as we do operational planning."

Boeing Co. (BA)'s bomb, designed to be used against underground bunkers, has "great capability and we are continuing to make it better," he said. "It is part of our arsenal if it is needed in that kind of scenario."

The Pentagon won congressional approval last month to shift \$81.6 million in funds to improve the bunker-buster bomb.

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Carlisle made his remarks in explaining how the Air Force and Navy's two-year-old Air-Sea Battle concept for conducting joint combat in heavily defended areas such as the Middle East or near China was relevant to planning for military options in Iran.

The air-sea concept doesn't depend solely on naval forces, he said. "There is space capability. There is cyber capability" as well as stealthy aircraft and other platforms, he said.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-03-08/biggest-bunker-buster-bomb-eyed-for-potential-iran-use-general.html>

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CRIENGLISH.com – China

Six Major Nations Urge Iran to Resume Nuke Talks without Preconditions

March 9, 2012

Xinhua

The six countries that used to engage in Iran nuclear talks on Thursday called on Iran to enter fresh dialogues "without preconditions."

The six countries -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States -- made the call in a joint statement at a board meeting of the 35-member International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"We call on Iran to enter, without preconditions, into a sustained process of serious dialogue, which will produce concrete results," the statement said.

The statement also urged Iran to allow UN inspectors to visit the Parchin site, a military installation suspected to house the country's disputed uranium enrichment program.

In discussions leading up to the joint statement, Western powers took a tougher stance toward Iran, while China and Russia sought a milder statement which they believed would help foster a constructive atmosphere for talks, analysts said.

"We reaffirm our continuing support for a diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue and readiness to restart dialogue with Iran," Cheng Jingye, China's ambassador to the IAEA, said on behalf of the group.

"We hope to see the six countries and Iran start a process of sustained dialogue at an early date, build up mutual trust based on the principle of step by step and reciprocity and search for a comprehensive and long-term proper solution to the Iranian nuclear issue," he said.

Talks between Iran and the six countries have stalled in recent years, partially due to Iran's refusal to grant UN access to its alleged nuclear sites, including Parchin. IAEA chief Yukiya Amano said he was "disappointed."

Iran's envoy to the IAEA, Ali Asghar Soltanieh, told the board meeting that access to Parchin, which Iran insists is non-nuclear, can be granted when Iranian officials and the IAEA can agree on the preconditions of such a visit.

However, the United States said UN visits to Iranian nuclear sites should not become an issue upholding international nuclear talks.

"There's not an expectation that that (the visit to Parchin) has to happen before talks start, although it should have already happened," Victoria Nuland, spokeswoman of the U.S. State Department, said after the statement was released.

Meanwhile, Iran appealed to the IAEA that the continuous threat Israel had made against its nuclear facilities are in violation of the UN Charter and an IAEA resolution.

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"Resolution 533 in 1990 considers any attack or threat of attack against nuclear institutions or facilities as violation of the UN Charter, statute of the IAEA and international law," Soltanieh said.

"It's regrettable that the UN Security Council has no action on the base of this resolution and the IAEA has not done its responsibility appropriately to it," he said.

The complaints were targeted at Israel's recent threats to take military action if Iran does not cease its alleged nuclear weapon bid.

In a visit to Washington earlier this week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu tried to persuade the United States to support Israel's plan to launch a strike on Iran.

Though the United States was reluctant to be drawn into war especially in its election year, Israel has vowed to stop Iran's nuclear program, which it saw as a prominent threat to its national security, at all costs.

"As prime minister of Israel, I will never allow my people to live in the shadow of annihilation," Netanyahu said.

<http://english.cri.cn/6966/2012/03/09/2021s685811.htm>

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Khaleej Times – U.A.E.

IAEA Puts Iran on the Ropes over Parchin Site

Agence France-Presse (AFP)

9 March 2012

VIENNA — The UN atomic agency's dogged focus on the Parchin military site in its probe into Iran's suspected nuclear weapons work is putting Tehran in a tight spot ahead of hugely important talks with world powers.

In two high-level visits to Tehran this year, in January and last month, the International Atomic Energy Agency asked to go to Parchin, where it believes activity relevant to nuclear weapons development took place.

But Iran said no, making instead a last-minute offer to show another site mentioned in a major IAEA report in November — Merivan near the Iraqi border, hundreds of miles from Tehran — which the IAEA refused.

Inspectors already visited Parchin near Tehran twice in 2005 and found nothing, Iran points out, but the IAEA says it has since obtained additional information that makes it want to go back for another look.

For Mark Fitzpatrick, nuclear nonproliferation expert at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, Iran's rebuttal of the IAEA was an "own goal", particularly as there is likely nothing "incriminating" at Parchin.

The studies that Iran is alleged to have carried out there, although believed to be aimed at developing nuclear weapons, did not use any radioactive material, making detecting something much harder for the IAEA, Fitzpatrick told AFP.

Refusing access "just raises suspicions. Iran would have been much more clever to have brought them to Parchin ... It would have been a PR victory for Iran and they blew their chance," he said.

Iran is hyper-sensitive about allowing access into military sites, particularly since a November blast at an elite Republican Guard base killed 36, including a key figure in Iran's ballistic missile programme.

It has already accused the IAEA of being dangerously prone to leaks and of endangering the lives of its nuclear scientists — several have been assassinated, the latest in January — by making their names public.

"Considering the fact that it is a military site, granting access is a time-consuming process and cannot be permitted repeatedly," the Iranian embassy in Vienna, where the IAEA has its headquarters, said in a statement this week.



But the IAEA thinks there is more to the refusal than security concerns, while Iran's stance falls into the hands of those — not least Israel — who suspect that Tehran is secretly bent on developing a nuclear arsenal.

Access might be one concession Iran could make in upcoming talks with the United States, China, Russia, Britain, France and Germany, said Oliver Thraenert from the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin.

"If the Iranians are clever they would give access to Parchin, but try at the same time to organise it in a way that the inspectors can have general access but not access to every single facility," Thraenert told AFP. "It's a huge place."

But if Tehran does suddenly grant access to Parchin, it may be too late because it will find itself accused of having cleaned up the site beforehand.

The director general of the IAEA, Yukiya Amano, strongly hinted as much on Monday, saying that "activities" spotted by satellite "makes us believe that going there sooner is better than later."

http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle11.asp?xfile=data/international/2012/March/international_March34_8.xml§ion=international

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London Guardian – U.K.

North Korea Nuclear Reactor Satellite Picture Show Progress

Non-proliferation group Isis says image shows work has continued on Yongbyon site, with turbine building complete

Associated Press (AP)

Tuesday, 6 March 2012

A newly released satellite image shows that North Korea has made progress in building a light-water reactor to expand its nuclear programme, a private non-proliferation group has said.

The 3 February image of the nuclear complex at Yongbyon was taken nearly a month before North Korea agreed to freeze major nuclear activities in return for US food aid.

The image, from a commercial satellite, was released by the Washington-based Institute of Science and International Security (Isis). Senior analyst Paul Brannan said a turbine building at the reactor that had still been under construction in a 20 September image now appeared to be externally complete.

Brannan said the reactor's dome remained on the ground next to the building, showing work was still needed. The reactor may need work inside that was not visible from the air, he said.

North Korea says the reactor is for electricity generation and two US academics who visited the site in November 2010 and have studied subsequent satellite imagery say the reactor appears designed for that purpose. Other experts, citing the clandestine nature of the North's nuclear programme, fear the reactor could be designed to produce plutonium for bombs.

Isis says the 3 February image also shows a uranium enrichment plant that the North unveiled to the US academics Siegfried Hecker and Robert Carlin. The North says the plant would produce low-enriched uranium to fuel the reactor for power generation but there are worries that it could produce highly enriched uranium for weapons.

North Korea already has reprocessed spent fuel from an older reactor at Yongbyon to extract plutonium and conducted nuclear tests in 2006 and 2009. Last week's US-North Korea agreement is seen as a preliminary step towards negotiations on getting the North to abandon its nuclear weapons programme in return for more substantial aid.



Under the agreement, North Korea said it would freeze uranium enrichment at Yongbyon, allow in UN nuclear inspectors and suspend nuclear and long-range missile tests. Its statement did not explicitly mention construction of the light-water reactor.

North Korea has said it wants to complete the reactor in 2012 but Hecker and Carlin wrote in January that despite the rapid construction of the reactor buildings, constructing and assembling the internal components was very difficult and would require at least two more years. Hecker said by email on Tuesday that he believed that analysis still applied to the latest picture.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/07/north-korea-reactor-satellite-pictures>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
March 7, 2012

N. Korea's Nuke Envoy Optimistic of Six-Party Talks

NEW YORK, March 6 (Yonhap) -- North Korea's chief nuclear envoy arrived in the United States Tuesday, expressing optimism for the long-stalled six-party talks on the communist regime's nuclear program.

"The six-party talks will fare well," the North's vice foreign minister, Ri Yong-ho, told reporters at New York's JFK airport.

Ri plans to attend a three-day academic forum here to start on Wednesday.

He said there is no plan to meet separately with his South Korean counterpart, Lim Sung-nam, who is also scheduled to join the forum organized by the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

Ri is also scheduled to participate in another conference to be held on Saturday by the National Committee on American Foreign Policy, according to diplomatic sources.

Ri's visit comes days after the North and the U.S. announced a breakthrough in efforts to start full-fledged bilateral and multilateral talks on denuclearization.

In their high-level talks in Beijing late last month, the North agreed to freeze its uranium-enrichment program at the Yongbyon nuclear site and refrain from nuclear and long-range missile tests while dialogue is under way.

In return, the U.S. promised 240,000 tons of food aid, excluding rice and grain. Robert King, the U.S. special envoy for North Korean human rights issues, and senior U.S. Agency for International Development official Jon Brause are in Beijing to meet North Korean counterparts to finalize discussions on technical issues related to providing "nutritional assistance."

The Beijing deal was hailed as a "small but meaningful" step towards the resumption of the six-party talks that have been deadlocked for more than three years. The other participants are South Korea, China, Russia and Japan.

The U.S. State Department, however, said there are no official meetings scheduled between Ri and any U.S. government officials during his visit.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/03/07/39/0401000000AEN20120307000300315F.HTML>

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Yonhap News – South Korea
March 8, 2012

U.S. Unlikely to Allow S. Korea to Reprocess Nuclear Fuel: Diplomat



SEOUL, March 8 (Yonhap) -- The United States is unlikely to allow South Korea to adopt its indigenous technology aimed at reprocessing highly radioactive spent nuclear fuel in their negotiations to revise a bilateral nuclear accord, a senior Seoul diplomat involved in the talks said Thursday.

The refusal by U.S. negotiators stemmed from a "deep-rooted distrust" of South Korea, which had once authorized a clandestine nuclear weapons program in the early 1970s under former president Park Jung-hee but shut it down under pressure from Washington, the diplomat said on the condition of anonymity.

Rather than pressing the U.S. to allow South Korea to adopt the proliferation-resistant reprocessing technology, called "pyroprocessing," Seoul is focusing on revising the nuclear accord to make it easier to export nuclear power plants, the diplomat said.

South Korea, which operates 20 nuclear plants, and the U.S. have held five rounds of formal negotiations since 2010 to rewrite the 1974 nuclear agreement, which prevents Seoul from reprocessing spent nuclear fuel from civilian nuclear plants. The accord is set to expire in 2014.

In the face of growing nuclear waste stockpiles and its ambition to become a global power in the civilian nuclear industry, South Korea hopes to adopt pyroprocessing technology, which leaves separated plutonium, the main ingredient in making atomic bombs, mixed with other elements.

South Korea wants the U.S. to allow it to use the new technology because it has to deal with more than 10,000 tons of nuclear waste at storage facilities that are expected to reach capacity in 2016.

But nonproliferation experts say pyroprocessing is not much different from reprocessing and pyroprocessed plutonium could be quickly turned into weapons-grade material.

"Little progress was made on the issue of whether the revised accord would include the pyroprocessing technology," the diplomat said.

"In spite of our repeated display of willingness for non-proliferation during the talks, U.S. negotiators remain reluctant to recognize our technology due to the deep-rooted distrust over the short-lived nuclear program under the Park Jung-hee government," he said.

Even if the provision of pyroprocessing technology is included in the new accord, the U.S. Congress won't approve it because it undermines Washington's non-proliferation efforts, the diplomat said, citing conversations with U.S. negotiators.

U.S. officials are also wary of calls for "nuclear sovereignty," which have often been resurfaced by conservatives in South Korea after North Korea's second nuclear test in 2009, the diplomat said.

Apart from the negotiations, South Korea and the U.S. launched a 10-year joint study last year on the pyroprocessing technology. The study costs some US\$10 million, according to the diplomat.

"With the results of the joint study, a decision could be made on whether we could adopt the pyroprocessing technology in the future," he said.

As the U.S. side is unlikely to accept South Korea's demand for the new technology in the talks, the diplomat said Seoul is shifting its focus to eliminate U.S. regulatory barriers in exporting nuclear plants.

Under the current accord, it takes more than one year for South Korea to get approval from the U.S. to export such plants, the diplomat said. The approval is necessary because South Korea uses some U.S. technologies and parts in building reactors.

South Korea won a \$20 billion contract in late 2009 to build four nuclear reactors for the United Arab Emirates. No approval from the U.S. is needed when South Korea bids for a nuclear plant overseas.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/national/2012/03/08/23/0301000000AEN20120308007100315F.HTML>



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Korea Times – South Korea
March 8, 2012

'US May Have to Settle for NK Nuke Freeze'

By Kim Young-jin

The United States, despite its recent nuclear deal with North Korea, may have to allow the communist state to keep its nuclear weapons in order to manage the growth of its program, an expert said Thursday.

The remark from Kookmin University expert Andrei Lankov came amid widespread skepticism over whether the North will completely abandon its atomic ambitions despite efforts return to multilateral denuclearization talks.

“Under no circumstances will the North Korean government consider relinquishing its hard-won nuclear capabilities,” Lankov wrote on a Foreign Policy blog.

“Sooner or later, one would expect the United States to relent and provide the North with regular ‘compensation’ for its willingness to freeze its nuclear program, without surrendering its existent nukes.”

The U.S.-North Korea deal, announced last week, paves the way for the resumption of six-party talks if Pyongyang follows through by shutting down its uranium enrichment program at Yongbyon in exchange for nutritional assistance and other considerations.

Many analysts say the North is unlikely to give up the nuclear weapons program in light of the recent fall of the Moammar Gadhafi regime in Libya, which came after Tripoli ceded theirs.

Lankov noted that Washington’s stated goal, the complete disarmament of the North, was further hampered by an inability to implement international sanctions with teeth due to China’s consistent cooperation with Pyongyang.

Beijing, which fears instability in the North, shielded Pyongyang from international censure over its provocations in 2010.

Lankov said the recent deal showed Pyongyang’s willingness to freeze its program and not produce more weapons in exchange for light-water reactors and continuous food aid. The country continues to struggle with a mismanaged economy and power shortages.

“The only practical solution is for the United States to learn to live with a nuclear North Korea — and wait until the regime crumbles under the weight of its own inefficiency,” the scholar said.

Though such a solution may be “unacceptable to Washington because it amounts to an admission of North Korea’s nuclear status” Lankov said that in lieu of such an arrangement the program would grow larger and more sophisticated.

Commercial satellite imagery released this week by a U.S. think tank shows the North has made progress on a light-water reactor at the Yongbyon plant.

The Feb. 3 image courtesy of the Institute for Science and International Security shows that the reactor’s turbine appeared externally complete, showing progress compared to images released in September.

The North walked out of the six-party talks, which also includes the South, Japan, Russia and China, after being slapped with international sanctions for its nuclear testing.

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2012/03/116_106532.html

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Yonhap News – South Korea
March 8, 2012

'Freeze and Degrade' Strategy for N. Korean Nuke Program: Bader

By Lee Chi-dong

WASHINGTON, March 8 (Yonhap) -- The U.S. government of Barack Obama does not expect a solution to North Korea's nuclear weapons drive before the collapse of the communist regime and a South Korea-led reunification, according to a former senior White House official.

Jeffrey Bader, known as the architect of the Obama administration's policy on the Korean Peninsula, said Washington has a more realistic goal of "slowing down, freezing and degrading" North Korea's nuclear program.

"Many of us believed that the most likely long-term solution to the North's nuclear pursuits lay in the North's collapse and absorption into a South-led reunified Korea," Bader said in his memoir, obtained by Yonhap News Agency before its publication later this week, on his service as senior director for East Asian affairs at the White House's National Security Council for two years from January 2009.

"A strategy was still needed to slow down, freeze and degrade the North Korean program until history could take its course," he said.

The 188-page book, titled "Obama and China's Rise," discusses what Bader did, what he saw and what it meant for Obama's policy toward the East Asia region.

Bader, currently a researcher at the Brookings Institution in Washington, said the Obama administration had made clear that six-party talks would resume only when North Korea took the necessary steps to show its seriousness about denuclearization.

"Notably a freeze on nuclear tests, a freeze on ballistic missile tests, a verifiable freeze on its claimed uranium enrichment program as monitored by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspectors, a commitment to the 2005 joint statement and a pledge to honor the Korean War Armistice," he said.

Bader's book, of which text was apparently completed before the North Korea-U.S. deal in last month's Beijing talks, indicates that Washington does not call for additional pre-steps by Pyongyang for the resumption of the six-way nuclear talks.

Recounting military tensions in 2010 on the peninsula over the North's two deadly attacks on the South, Bader said the South was "considering retaliation well beyond a local response."

He also revealed the behind-the-scenes discussions on the deployment of the USS George Washington, a nuclear-powered carrier, into the Yellow Sea, the waters between China and the Korean Peninsula.

During his trip to Seoul for a G-20 summit in Nov. 11-12, Obama "privately" told South Korean President Lee Myung-bak that the U.S. intended to send the carrier into the Yellow Sea "within the next 10 days."

The USS George Washington was actually deployed into the Yellow Sea immediately after the North's shelling of Yeonpyeong Island on Nov. 23.

The deployment sent an "importance message to Beijing: North Korean provocations would induce U.S. and South Korean responses not at all to their liking," he added. "Washington hoped this would encourage China to refrain North Korea in the future."

When South Korea requested a delay in the transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON) of its troops from Washington to Seoul after the March 26 sinking of the Cheonan naval ship, Bader said, U.S. Forces Korea, supported by then Defense Secretary Robert Gates, were "somewhat reluctant to alter the timetable."

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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They did not want to imperil the improvements in the South Korean command and control, military acquisitions and training that were picking up speed under the plan to transfer OPCON in 2012.

But Obama was sympathetic to the concerns by his South Korean counterpart that it may send the wrong signal to the North, given the South Korean military's capabilities, and Obama made a decision on the postponement, according to Bader.

<http://english.yonhapnews.co.kr/northkorea/2012/03/08/67/0401000000AEN20120308005900315F.HTML>

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Hindustan Times – India

Pak Possesses Up to 110 Nuclear Weapons: NGO

Press Trust Of India (PTI)

Islamabad, March 07, 2012

Pakistan possessed up to 110 nuclear weapons and spent a whopping \$2.2 billion on its atomic arsenal last year, claims a report by an international NGO, prompting Islamabad to call it "highly exaggerated".

In the report titled "Don't bank on the bomb", the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) said that Pakistan had between 90 and 110 nuclear weapons.

"Its arsenal has grown substantially in recent years, from 60 to 80 nuclear weapons in 2008," it said.

The report, issued this week, quoted sources as saying that Pakistan intended to double its arsenal in the next five to 10 years with the goal of having up to 350 weapons of varying yield.

It further said Pakistan spent an estimated \$2.2 billion on its nuclear weapons programme last year, up from \$1.8 billion in 2010.

"Expenditure is projected to increase substantially due to maintenance costs for its new plutonium infrastructure," the report said.

Reacting to the report, Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit said it was "highly exaggerated and part of an insidious propaganda campaign."

"Pakistan's strategic programme was modest (and) aimed at maintaining a credible minimum deterrence to ensure national security," Basit said.

He said Pakistan's primary focus was on economic development and the welfare of its people.

"Pakistan was opposed to an arms race in South Asian or in any other part of the world," he said.

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/Pakistan/Pak-possesses-up-to-110-nuclear-weapons-NGO/Article1-822329.aspx>

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The News International – Pakistan

Pakistan Trashes ICAN Report

By Mariana Baabar

Thursday, March 08, 2012

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan says that its strategic programme is modest, aimed at maintaining a credible minimum deterrence to ensure national security; and at the same time it is opposed to arms race in South Asia or in any other part of the world.

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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“A report of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) about Pakistan’s nuclear programme, was highly exaggerated and part of an insidious propaganda campaign”, spokesman of the Foreign Office said in response to ICAN’s allegations that the country has between 90-110 warheads and in 2011 it spent \$2.2 billion on its strategic assets.

The Foreign Office statement, however, did not point out precisely which part of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons report it was trashing. The report which also gave details about other nuclear states, went on to add that Pakistan’s modernisation of its nuclear forces is carried out primarily or exclusively by government agencies.

Pakistan is making substantial improvements to its nuclear arsenal and associated infrastructure. It has no nuclear disarmament programme in place and is not a party to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Its nuclear arsenal has grown substantially in recent years, from 60 to 80 nuclear weapons in 2008. Government and other sources report that the nation aims to double the size of its nuclear arsenal in the next 5 to 10 years, with the eventual goal of 250 to 350 nuclear weapons of varying yields.

Pakistan’s military is able to launch nuclear weapons from land and air. It possesses an estimated 50 Hatf-3 nuclear-capable ballistic missiles, with a short range of 400 km. A further 10 Hatf-4 missiles are operational, with a range of 450 km, and 25 Hatf-5 missiles, with an estimated range of 1,200 km. The primary aircraft for delivering nuclear weapons is the US-manufactured F-16. Pakistan is rapidly improving its ballistic missile technology. The Shaheen-II missile is under development.

If successful, it will have an operational range of 2,000 km. Several nuclear-capable cruise missiles are also nearing design completion. The Hatf-7 and Hatf-8 are short-range cruise missiles capable of penetrating air-defence systems.

Pakistan is also improving its nuclear infrastructure to allow for an increase in its production of weapons-grade plutonium and highly enriched uranium. New plutonium reactors are under construction, along with a reprocessing plant. According to some analysts, these investments will help Pakistan replace its heavy uranium-based nuclear weapons with lighter and more advanced plutonium-based ones, giving its ballistic missiles a greater range.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-2-96582-Pakistan-trashes-ICAN-report>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

Russia to Hold International Conference on Missile Defense

7 March 2012

The Russian Defense Ministry will hold an international conference on missile defense on May 3-4, Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov said on Wednesday.

“We intend to continue working with all partners to explain our position [on missile defense], and we plan to engage independent experts,” Serdyukov said after a meeting with Ukrainian Defense Minister Dmytro Salamatin in Moscow.

“To this end, the Russian Defense Ministry is planning to hold an international conference on missile defense in Moscow in May,” Serdyukov said.

The goal of the conference is to give military experts from many countries and international organizations the opportunity to openly discuss a wide range of issues concerning the deployment of missile defense systems around the world.



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The conference is scheduled a few weeks ahead of the NATO summit in Chicago on May 20-21. Moscow has not indicated whether the Russian president will attend the summit.

NATO members agreed to create a missile shield over Europe to protect it against ballistic missiles launched by so-called rogue states, such as Iran and North Korea, at a summit in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2010.

Russia maintains staunch opposition to the planned deployment of U.S. missile defense systems near its borders, claiming they would be a security threat.

Russia has demanded that NATO provide written, legally binding guarantees that its missile shield will not be directed against Moscow but the alliance has been reluctant to meet the demand.

President Dmitry Medvedev ordered in November a series of measures designed to strengthen the country's missile defense capabilities in response to NATO's shield, including the deployment of Iskander missiles in Russia's exclave of Kaliningrad on the border with Poland.

MOSCOW, March 7 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20120307/171832332.html>

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Aviation Week

March 7, 2012

Nuclear Spending Cuts Draw Republican Ire

By Jen DiMascio, Washington

The U.S. budget crunch is exacerbating long-burning tensions over how to modernize the nation's most sensitive arsenal of nuclear weapons.

The president is asking for \$11.5 billion for the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), which oversees nuclear weapons development, in fiscal 2013. That is a \$536 million increase over what the agency received from Congress in fiscal 2012 to help pay to modernize the nation's now smallest and oldest arsenal of nuclear weapons. But the request falls short of a pledge made by the Obama administration to Senate Republicans in 2010 to ratify an arms control treaty with Russia, and a group of Republicans intends to continue highlighting the inconsistency with a war of words—and more pointedly—with legislation.

"The president did not ask for the very funds that he committed to," Sen. Bob Corker (R-Tenn.) told Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton last week. "It's a renegeing of an agreement."

Clinton pointed out that the administration followed through last year, providing a budget request consistent with the November 2010 agreement in what is known as the "1251 report," but the Republican-led House of Representatives cut funding for the NNSA.

The administration is also dealing with spending caps leveled by last year's Budget Control Act and says it has adjusted its plans to reflect the highest priorities.

In another hearing last week, NNSA Administrator Thomas D'Agostino told lawmakers that the initial pledge of investing \$88 billion over 10 years in the nation's nuclear modernization efforts would be very difficult to get through Congress. Within the next month, the Defense Department is expected to provide an update to its nuclear weapons plan; the NNSA will provide its part of that report in July, D'Agostino said.

As NNSA was forced to adjust its budget plan, it opted to slow the pace of its life-extension programs to hone its focus on its most significant challenge, extending the life of the B61 nuclear bomb. The program is run out of Los Alamos (N.M.) National Laboratory, which is managed by a consortium of companies that includes Bechtel Corp. and Sandia National Laboratory, which is managed by Sandia Corp., a Lockheed Martin subsidiary. The B61 is

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destined for a number of platforms, and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter is receiving a new digital interface to use the weapon.

The new budget request slows work on the program by two years. It also increases the request to \$369 million, according to Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.), chairman of the House Appropriations energy and water subcommittee.

The budget situation also forced the NNSA to make some hard choices about what it was buying for the B61. Last year, the agency said it would submit a cost estimate for the program to Congress by September 2011, but now the date is July.

“We were on a path for which the original development of the B61 life-extension program was essentially financially unconstrained. All of a sudden, it became obvious that we were financially constrained,” said Air Force Brig. Gen. Sandra Finan, principal assistant deputy administrator for military application. “The wish list had gotten huge.”

Because it was going to be unrealistic to spend so much money to refurbish the B61, the administration opted to re-do the cost analysis and revise which features would be included.

In addition to delays to the B61, the budget has driven slowdowns on other warhead programs and to plans to modernize nuclear facilities as well. And so a small group of Republicans are going to make sure that the administration feels pain for breaking the arrangement made to ratify the New Start (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) agreement.

To that end, Rep. Michael Turner (R-Ohio), chairman of the House Armed Services strategic forces subcommittee, says Republicans need to hold the administration accountable.

“The administration is backing off what is necessary and essential. I don’t think it would be prudent for Congress to take that walk with [President Barack Obama],” Turner says, adding that since the world has not become any safer, the administration should not be reducing funding that it previously said was a minimum requirement.

This month, Turner plans to introduce a bill called the “Maintaining the President’s Commitment to Our Nuclear Deterrent and National Security Act of 2012.” Exact details of what it will include are still being ironed out, according to Turner’s spokesman Tom Crosson.

Rather than worry about past agreements, House Democrats are calling for even steeper reductions to nuclear spending. Rep. Ed Markey (D-Mass.), founder of the Nonproliferation Task Force, has introduced a bill that pledges to generate \$76 billion in savings by scaling back the nuclear arsenal and its delivery systems.

Rep. Adam Smith (Wash.), the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, is not one of the 34 members of his party who have signed on to Markey’s bill, but Smith wonders whether in a post-Cold War world, the nation still needs a stockpile of this size. “There’s some pretty compelling evidence that we don’t,” Smith told reporters last week. And he adds that the agreement to increase spending on nuclear modernization was between the president and Senate Republicans—not the rest of Congress. “It’s between the two of them,” Smith says.

http://www.aviationweek.com/aw/generic/story_channel.jsp?channel=defense&id=news/awst/2012/03/05/AW_03_05_2012_p31-431235.xml&headline=Nuclear%20Spending%20Cuts%20Draw%20Republican%20Ire

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Global Security Newswire

NNSA Vows Nonproliferation Program Review in Face of Budget Criticism

March 7, 2012



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By Douglas P. Guarino, *Global Security Newswire*

WASHINGTON – Top U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration officials on Tuesday pledged to complete a strategic review of a program intended to prevent the smuggling of nuclear material across international borders amid assertions they are proposing dangerous budget cuts to the initiative (see *GSN*, Feb. 13).

The Obama administration for fiscal 2013 is requesting \$92.6 million for the agency's Second Line of Defense initiative, which installs radiation detection equipment at foreign border crossings, seaports and airports. If endorsed by Congress, the request would amount to a 65 percent funding cut to the program from the \$262.1 million lawmakers allocated in the current budget year.

During a hearing on Capitol Hill, House appropriators aired strong reservations to the planned funding drop. Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-N.J.) said the move would be "an incredible cut to a program which just last year the administration was defending as a critical part of our nation's efforts to fight the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological materials across international borders."

Frelinghuysen, chairman of the House Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee, said the reduction would require "a good explanation" from the administration.

Subcommittee Democrats used even stronger language. Reading a statement on behalf of Ranking Member Peter Visclosky (Ind.), Representative John Olver (Mass.) said he could not "fathom an explanation that will be satisfactory" regarding the proposed cut.

Per Visclosky's statement, Olver complained that while the administration said it is seeking \$163 million more for NNSA global nonproliferation efforts in the next budget – nearly \$2.5 billion, compared to the roughly \$2.3 billion allocated for fiscal 2012 – the increase would not benefit what he described as "core" programs to prevent the spread of sensitive materials.

Olver noted that \$150 million of the nonproliferation spending boost would be directed to energy firm USEC for a gas centrifuge project. He also referenced a \$236 million proposed increase to the Fissile Material Disposition Program.

Neither the USEC grant nor the Fissile Material Disposition Program "contributes to securing vulnerable materials," Olver complained. The nuclear agency has not provided "any compelling reason for including the funding for" the company within the nonproliferation budget, he added, noting "that the increase in the account for USEC roughly corresponds to the drastic reduction in the Second Line of Defense program."

Senior NNSA officials defended the cuts to lawmakers, saying that given the program's near completion of its work in Russia, along with a constrained budget environment, it was prudent to "pause" and evaluate the initiative's future.

The Second Line of Defense program is intended to catch nuclear or radiological materials that might be "fashioned into a weapon of mass destruction or a radiological dispersal device ('dirty bomb') to be used against the United States or its key allies and international partners," according to the nuclear agency.

The core program by the end of 2012 will have installed radiation detection equipment at nearly 500 foreign ports or border crossing sites, including all 383 customs sites in Russia, the agency's budget says. However, according to the agency's website, the program's goal is to equip approximately 650 sites in approximately 30 countries with detection equipment by 2018.

Second Line of Defense also encompasses the Megaports Initiative, which is to equip more than 100 seaports with radiation detection equipment capable of scanning approximately 50 percent of global shipping traffic by 2018.

Activists have also raised concerns about the proposed cut to the Second Line of Defense initiative in recent days. The reduction would occur alongside funding losses for other aspects of the NNSA International Nuclear Materials Protection and Cooperation Program.

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That effort encompasses the Second Line of Defense as well as “first line” programs to safeguard “vulnerable nuclear weapons stockpiles and fissionable materials in the former Soviet Union and other less stable regions,” the Natural Resources Defense Council said in a Monday analysis of the NNSA budget proposal. The fiscal 2013 budget plan calls for it to receive \$311 million, a \$259 million cut from present funding levels, the organization noted.

In addition, the Global Threat Reduction Initiative -- which secures, relocates or converts vulnerable nuclear material from civilian sites around the world – faces a \$32 million, or 6 percent, cut to \$466 million, it said.

“To cut funding for these programs now (particularly the SLD), when the nuclear black market persists and a country like Pakistan continues to expand the size of its fissile material stockpile while facing a destabilizing threat from al-Qaeda insurgents, is a dangerous deprioritization,” according to the NRDC analysis.

In general, the nonproliferation advocacy organization complained that the administration is requesting “disproportionately large funding for weapons activities when compared to nonproliferation.” The NNSA budget request calls for \$7.6 billion for efforts to “maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent,” a \$363 million boost from the amount Congress appropriated for the stockpile in this budget.

Top NNSA officials on Tuesday defended their budget request, particularly the proposed fiscal 2013 cut to the Second Line of Defense program.

Thomas D’Agostino, who heads the semiautonomous branch of the Energy Department, said he wanted to ensure lawmakers that Second Line of Defense program operations remain an “important part of [the administration’s] overall strategy” and that it was “not abandoning” the effort.

Anne Harrington, deputy administrator for defense nuclear nonproliferation, said the agency is “extremely focused on its first line of defense,” which she said included securing vulnerable nuclear materials.

In addition, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California is conducting research that could provide the agency with the ability to develop “more subtle” radiation detectors that would be smaller and less noticeable to would-be traffickers, Harrington said.

The status of work in Russia and the pending new technology make it “important to take a step back and see where to go next,” Harrington said.

According to D’Agostino’s written testimony, “a constrained budget environment” also contributed to the decision to initiate “a strategic review of the program to evaluate what combinations of capabilities and programs make the most effective contribution to national security.”

Tuesday’s session was the second the subcommittee has hosted recently on the NNSA budget.

During a Feb. 29 hearing on the agency’s request for its weapons activities, D’Agostino faced questions from Frelinghuysen regarding whether the proposal fully meet[s the agency’s] requirements to maintain the stockpile.”

Frelinghuysen noted that “during the rollout of [the NNSA] fiscal year 2013 budget request, [D’Agostino] stated that Congress had handed you ... ‘less than half of the increase you need to do the job.’”

D’Agostino responded by saying the fiscal 2013 budget request “absolutely does” meet the requirements” to maintain the stockpile.

Fiscal 2013 begins on Oct. 1.

<http://www.nti.org/gsn/article/nnsa-vows-nonproliferation-program-review-face-budget-criticism/>

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RIA Novosti – Russian Information Agency

U.S. Invites Russian Cooperation on Missile Defense

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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USAF COUNTERPROLIFERATION CENTER
CPC OUTREACH JOURNAL
MAXWELL AFB, ALABAMA

7 March 2012

The United States indicated on Wednesday that it still expects Russia to cooperate on the missile defense issue but that the plan will go ahead anyway.

"We've also made it clear that we would love to cooperate on missile defense against mutual threats with Russia," Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said after talks with Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski.

The new missile interceptor that Poland will host, as well as a new American aviation detachment to be stationed in Poland, "will be cornerstones of our mutual security commitments," Clinton said.

She stressed that missile defense is a matter for NATO.

"NATO has made a decision. We believe that it is in all of our interests to carry forward and implement that decision."

"Now, we've also made it clear that we would love to cooperate on missile defense against mutual threats with Russia. That is not only a U.S. position; that is also through NATO that we have sought to discuss this at the NATO-Russia Council," she said.

"Thus far, we've not seen a lot of movement, but we are going to continue to press that with the Russians and hope that there will be an agreement at some point that could be in both of our interests."

NATO members agreed to create a missile shield over Europe to protect it against ballistic missiles launched by so-called rogue states, such as Iran and North Korea, at a summit in Lisbon, Portugal, in 2010.

Russia has demanded that NATO provide written, legally binding guarantees that its missile shield will not be directed against Moscow but the alliance has been reluctant to meet the demand.

WASHINGTON, March 7 (RIA Novosti)

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20120307/171861644.html>

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Bellingham Herald – Bellingham, WA

March, 7, 2012

Iran's Leader Sets Up Internet Control Group

By ALI AKBAR DAREINI, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran -- Iran's supreme leader ordered Wednesday the creation of an Internet oversight agency that includes top military, security and political figures in the country's boldest attempt yet to control the web.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said the Supreme Council of Cyberspace will be tasked with preventing harm to Iranians who go online, state TV reported.

The report did not spell out specifically the kind of dangers that the council would tackle. But officials have in the past described two separate threats: computer viruses created by Iran's rivals aimed at sabotaging its industry, particularly its controversial nuclear program, and a "culture invasion" aimed at undermining the Islamic Republic.

Khamenei's statement follows ambitious plans announced by officials to create homegrown alternatives for Internet staples like Google, which would in effect make it unnecessary for many Iranian web users to visit any site based outside the country's borders.

The cyberspace council will be headed by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and includes powerful figures in the security establishment such as the intelligence chief, the commander of the powerful Revolutionary Guards, and the country's top police chief.

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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It also includes the speaker of parliament, state media chiefs, government ministers in charge of technology-oriented portfolios, and several cyber experts.

"Given the need to make constant plans to protect (Iranian users) from harm resulting from (the Internet) requires a concentrated center for policy-making, decision-making and coordination in the country's cyberspace," Khamenei said in his decree.

Khamenei's order for creation of the council follows a series of high-profile crackdowns on cyberspace including efforts to block opposition sites and setting up special teams for what Iran calls its "soft war" counter-measures against the West and allies.

Iran has blamed Israel and the U.S. for Stuxnet, the powerful virus that targeted Iran's nuclear facilities and other industrial sites in 2010. Tehran acknowledged the malicious software affected a limited number of centrifuges - a key component in nuclear fuel production. But Iran has said its scientists discovered and neutralized the malware before it could cause serious damage.

Tehran's perception of threats extends beyond viruses, however.

Iran claimed in July that it has found a way to block the so-called "Internet in a suitcase," a program reportedly developed by the U.S. to bring online access to dissidents living in Iran. At the time, Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunications Reza Taqipour said Iran has taken technical measures to combat the the program.

Iran says the program is part of a "cultural invasion" by Iran's enemies aimed at promoting dissent and undermining Iran's ruling system.

Some Iranian officials have discussed creating Iranian versions of popular global Internet applications that they say are a threat to national security.

In controversial remarks in January, Iran's police chief, Esmail Ahmadi Moghadam, called Google an "instrument of espionage" rather than a search engine.

In its place, Iranian officials have announced that they hope to deploy an indigenous national search engine called "Yahaq," or "Oh Lord" in 2012.

Taqipour said last month that Iran is planning to launch the first phase of a national Internet by June. It was not fully clear what this plan would entail.

Iranian users currently have access to most of the Internet, but the country blocks some sites that are affiliated with the opposition, that are seen as promoting dissent, or that it considers moral corrupt.

<http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2012/03/07/2425480/irans-leader-sets-up-internet.html>

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FoxNews.com

US Faces Increasing Threat of Cyberattacks by Terrorists, Including on Battlefield, Officials Say

By Catherine Herridge

March 09, 2012

An eventual full-scale cyberattack on the U.S. by a terrorist organization is "a certitude," a former senior intelligence official told Fox News, and "cyberterrorists" already are making criminal use of the technology to steal money and move it around to finance their operations.

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Tech-based terror threats are increasingly raising concerns in Washington, and FBI Director Robert Mueller testified this week that such threats are among the most serious facing the U.S. -- including on the battlefield.

Officials are reporting a sharp increase in the number of attacks by hackers, and Mueller, while not mentioning Iran, Russia or China by name, described a potential "cyber one-two punch," in which a nation state or terrorist organization first steals intellectual property, then uses that information to interfere, jam or disrupt operations on the battlefield.

"Certainly long term threat is by nation states who are finding new and ingenious ways to exfiltrate information," Mueller told the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday. "On the one hand developing new technology for any future conflict, or on the other hand enabling them to disable our technology during in a time of war."

Mueller also told lawmakers that terrorists may see cyberattacks as a winning strategy for circumventing the traditional post-9/11 security, which focuses on physical attacks. In prepared testimony he said, "Terrorists have not used the Internet to launch a full-scale cyberattack, but we cannot underestimate their intent."

Under questioning by Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., Mueller said he backed stronger criminal penalties for those who steal sensitive U.S. economic data.

"Our companies are targeted for insider information, and our universities and national laboratories are targeted for their research and development," the FBI director told lawmakers.

Mueller's warnings took on greater urgency as the full Senate was briefed on the administration's strategy for responding to a major cyberattack. Fox News was told the scenario included the takedown of the electrical grid. Significantly, the briefers included Mueller, Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, the head of the National Security Agency, Keith Alexander, and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey.

Earlier this week, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta warned that the new battlefield is on the Web. "We have a new threat, the threat of cyber intrusions and attack," he said.

And at last month's Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Worldwide threats, Sen. John McCain underscored the aggressive nature of China's cyber espionage, which included the hacking of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's network.

"The number and sophistication of cyberattacks on American targets by Chinese actors, likely with Chinese government involvement in many cases, is growing increasingly severe and damaging," McCain emphasized.

Citing the recent arrests of Megaupload and LulzSec, Mueller emphasized at Wednesday's hearing that cyberattacks are the ultimate borderless crime.

"Our ability to work internationally is absolutely essential in order to address the cyber arena," Mueller said. "We have strategically placed agents with our counterparts in countries like Romania, the Ukraine, Estonia and the like, where much of the activity takes place."

Mueller warned that the day may not be far away when cybercrime or cyberterrorism become the bureau's main priority. Right now, it remains counterterrorism.

"Down the road, if a country steals those secrets that will enable that country to overwhelm us in the field of battle someplace, that is something that is a threat and ultimately may be a more serious threat."

Fox News chief intelligence correspondent Catherine Herridge's bestselling book "The Next Wave: On the Hunt for al Qaeda's American Recruits" draws on her reporting for Fox News into al-Awlaki and his new the digital jihad on the web -- Al Qaeda 2.0.

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2012/03/08/us-faces-increasing-threat-cyberattacks-by-terrorists-including-on-battlefield/?test=latestnews>

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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Washington Times
OPINION/Analysis

Inside the Ring: North Korea's ICBM

By Bill Gertz, Special to The Washington Times
Wednesday, March 7, 2012

Recent congressional testimony confirmed North Korea's development of a new long-range, road-mobile missile that can reach American shores, increasing the threat of a nuclear attack on the United States.

"There is development within North Korea of a road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile system that we've observed," Adm. Robert F. Willard, commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, told the House Armed Services Committee on Friday.

"We have not observed it being tested yet, to my knowledge. We are watching the development very closely."

The new mobile missile was first reported by The Washington Times on Dec. 5.

The road-mobile ICBM bolsters North Korea's already-deployed launch-pad-fired Taepodong-2 missile that has been tested.

The new missile is also raising concerns in the U.S. intelligence community that North Korea will sell the missile to Iran, as it has done with past medium-range Nodong missiles.

Adm. Willard said the mobile missile is "advertised to be significant in terms of its range capability."

The admiral, who retires this month, said once the missile is proven, "there will be a decision made with regard to how we posture to deal with what could be something less predictable than Taepodong-2 or some of the other ballistic missile capabilities that are a little more easy to observe."

Road-mobile missiles are much harder to detect and counter than static missiles. They are usually solid-fueled, allowing them to be fired much faster than liquid-fueled missiles.

Under questioning from Rep. Michael R. Turner, Ohio Republican, Adm. Willard said the new North Korean mobile ICBM would cause an increase in missile defense efforts.

"I think that's one of the posture options that will have to be considered, yes," he said.

On Tuesday, Mr. Turner again raised the new North Korean missile during a hearing on missile defenses.

"A rogue mobile intercontinental ballistic missile would be a profound leap forward in North Korea's ballistic missile technology," Mr. Turner asked.

Bradley H. Roberts, deputy assistant defense secretary for missile defense and nuclear policy, acknowledged at a subcommittee hearing that the new missile poses a "direct threat" to the United States.

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2012/mar/7/inside-the-ring-north-koreas-icbm/>

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POLITICO
OPINION/Opinion Contributor

A Call for Caution in Cutting Nuclear Arms

By REP. MICHAEL TURNER
March 7, 2012

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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For 66 years, the U.S. nuclear deterrent has kept us and our allies safe from large scale war under a remarkably consistent policy, supported by presidents of both parties. Now, however, President Barack Obama appears to be unilaterally changing it — for reasons yet to be explained.

With House Armed Services Committee Chairman Buck McKeon (R-Calif.) and 31 of our committee members, I recently wrote to the president, expressing concern over reports that he is directing a review of U.S. nuclear weapons strategy that could result in U.S. reductions of up to 80 percent.

The Obama administration reportedly is weighing at least three options for reducing U.S. nuclear forces: cutting to roughly 1,000-1,100; 700-800 or 300-400. Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, later testified that another option would be to maintain the status quo.

Our arsenal now includes about 5,000 warheads, with approximately 2,000 deployed warheads permitted under the New START Treaty. The remaining 3,000 are kept in storage as a hedge against advancements by other nations.

Russia has 4,000 to 6,500 warheads, and China is reported to have more than 300 — though no one outside of the Chinese Communist Party knows for sure. Both of these countries — as well as India, Pakistan (building a stockpile expected to soon surpass Britain), Britain herself, France, North Korea and, perhaps soon, Iran — have active nuclear weapons modernization programs. Only the U.S. does not.

Now, the president may soon seek to have the U.S. make the deepest reductions to its nuclear forces in history.

This new strategic review could be on the president's desk within the next month. It is unclear whether he expects the cuts to be unilateral or within the framework of a treaty with Russia or China and others. At least one of the president's senior advisers has suggested these reductions could be unilateral.

It's worth noting that the impetus for this review is outside the norm. Traditionally, a president has directed his military advisers to determine, chiefly, what level of our nuclear force is needed to deter a potential adversary from attacking us or our allies. The answer to that question should be what drives the strategy — not a president's political ideology.

The House Armed Services Committee has been asking questions, holding briefings with the administration and even hearings in my subcommittee — all without any detailed explanation from the administration of what exactly is being discussed in the strategic review. In fact, Congress only learned about the review from the media.

Why would the administration be unwilling to share even the basic terms of reference for this review, known as Presidential Policy Directive 11? Why wouldn't it share other basic instructions from the Defense Department? The president, after all, is directing a strategic review that could border on disarmament and significantly diminish U.S. strength.

It's not even clear that the unilateral reductions to U.S. nuclear forces required by the New START are in the interest of our national security. The Senate was ultimately comfortable with those reductions once the president promised to provide his own plan for modernization of the U.S. nuclear deterrent.

The president's most recent budget, however, abandons the nuclear modernization funding he promised. This can only be described as bait and switch. The Senate has been deceived.

Any further nuclear reductions must be met with ample justification for how U.S. security will be enhanced. Simply saying that the U.S. should "reduce the roles and numbers" of its nuclear weapons is nothing more than hope in the place of a strategy.

Our military leaders share these sentiments. The president's former head of U.S. Strategic Command, Gen. Kevin Chilton, in talking about the number of warheads permitted under the treaty, said, "The arsenal that we have is exactly what is needed today to provide the deterrent."

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Clearly, any further reductions will undermine the deterrent that has kept this country safe.

Our nuclear weapons provide for the safety of this nation and our allies around the globe. A number of countries with the capability and resources to do so have chosen not to produce their own nuclear weapons. This is largely because Washington extends the protective umbrella of our nuclear forces over them.

Changing this equation of assurance could lead to nothing less than a cascade of proliferation and a far more unpredictable and unstable global security environment. The irony of the president's proposed reductions to U.S. nuclear forces is that the number of countries with nuclear weapons may actually increase.

President Ronald Reagan's "peace through strength" policy is not an untested theory but rather the triumph of those who wish to make war obsolete. We abandon our strength at great peril to this nation and our allies.

That proven adage will be my starting point when drafting the Strategic Forces Subcommittee's portion of this year's national defense authorization bill.

Rep. Mike Turner (R-Ohio) serves as chairman of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Strategic Forces.

<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0312/73737.html>

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Foreign Policy

OPINION/Shadow Government

Avoiding a Bad Nuclear Deal with Iran

By Michael Singh

Wednesday, March 7, 2012

The P5+1 -- which includes the U.S., U.K., France, Germany, China, and Russia -- has just accepted an Iranian offer of further nuclear talks. These talks will come at a crucial time. The West has dramatically ratcheted up pressure on the Iranian regime through new sanctions targeting Iran's oil exports and its central bank, and President Obama in remarks on Sunday took a tougher line than he has in the past by ruling out the notion of "containing" a nuclear-armed Iran. The next round of negotiations will therefore be an important test of the notion that pressure can force Iran to reconsider its nuclear ambitions, as well as a test of U.S. resolve in the face of Iranian obstinacy.

Sanctions on Iran have undoubtedly had an impact, driving down the value of Iran's currency, driving up inflation, and making it difficult for Iranians to sell oil or even buy food. But making life difficult for Iranians is not the objective of U.S. policy; indeed, for many years it was American policy to avoid causing widespread hardship in Iran. The U.S. goal is to halt Iran's nuclear activities, and that has not yet been accomplished -- Iran is spinning more centrifuges, and manufacturing more and higher-grade uranium than ever before.

If the upcoming round of talks, like previous iterations, fails to yield progress, the U.S. will be left with little recourse other than additional pressure, while Israel will have additional incentive to carry out a strike. But another alternative exists, which President Obama has yet to rule out -- that the U.S. will draw back our own redlines and accept a nuclear weapons-capable, if not nuclear -- armed, Iran. This would be a dangerous miscalculation.

While the official U.S. and U.N. Security Council stance has long been that Iran must halt uranium enrichment as part of any serious talks, Washington has demonstrated tactical flexibility in an effort to allow Iran to "save face" and get negotiations started. From 2006-2008, the U.S. and its allies offered Tehran the so-called "freeze for freeze" deal, whereby Iran would merely temporarily freeze new enrichment and the West new sanctions, as a brief prelude to the full suspension of both uranium enrichment and sanctions implementation called for by the U.N. Security Council.

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Similarly, in October 2009, the U.S. and its partners offered to swap Iran's low-enriched uranium (LEU) for the fuel plates Iran required to power its Tehran Research Reactor (TRR), with which it manufactured medical isotopes. Washington asserted that the arrangement was intended as a confidence-building measure, but did not negate the U.N. demand that Iran suspend enrichment.

Recently, however, there have been signs of a U.S. shift. In his speech on Sunday, the President assiduously referred only to preventing Iran from developing nuclear weapons, not a nuclear weapons capability. Likewise, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has asserted that the U.S. redline is that Iran not develop a nuclear weapon. This leaves open the possibility of Washington acquiescing to a "latent" nuclear weapons capability, whereby Iran retains weapons-applicable components of its nuclear program, such its enrichment work, as long as it refrains from actually building a bomb.

Many analysts have urged President Obama to consider one of the various proposals that would allow Iran to continue enriching uranium, though perhaps under somewhat stronger supervision. One of these is the so-called Russian proposal, under which Iran would address the IAEA's questions in phases and the West would reciprocally ease sanctions. Another was the vague offer by Iranian President Ahmadinejad during his September visit to New York to cease Iran's production of highly-enriched uranium.

The allure of such a deal from the U.S. perspective is clear. Washington would cite the deal as a diplomatic triumph that averted war and limited Iran's nuclear capacity. Likewise, the Iranian regime, having compelled the West to recognize its nuclear status and retained its enrichment program, would tout the pact as a victory.

In reality, allowing Iran to retain its uranium enrichment program would carry serious risks for the U.S. and our allies. The Institute for Science and International Security warns that "without [a halt to enrichment], Iran's enrichment program would continue to grow in capacity and increase Iran's ability to quickly, and perhaps secretly, make highly enriched uranium (HEU) for nuclear weapons in its centrifuge plants."

In other words, the Iranian regime would have its cake and eat it, too. The current sanctions drive would fizzle and existing sanctions would be eased or lifted. A military strike would effectively be taken off the table, including by Israel, which would likely feel constrained from attacking nuclear facilities blessed by the U.S. The Iranian regime, having succeeded in defying not only the U.S. but the entire Security Council, would be strengthened domestically. But the threat of Iranian nuclear weapons would not be removed; instead, Iran could perfect its nuclear expertise, stopping just one turn of the screw away from producing a nuclear weapon, or even building one clandestinely.

As our confrontation with Iran enters a new, more dangerous phase, the U.S. must avoid the temptation of redefining our redlines and objectives in a manner that fails to satisfy our national security requirements. To avert war and diffuse tensions through clever tactics and smart policies is admirable; to do so by abdicating our vital interests is not.

Michael Singh is managing director of The Washington Institute for Near East Policy and is a former senior director for Middle East affairs at the National Security Council.

http://shadow.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/07/avoiding_a_bad_nuclear_deal_with_iran

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Washington Post
OPINION/Op-Ed

Stop Feeding North Korea's Nuclear Ambition

By Andrew Natsios
March 8, 2012

Another food crisis has spread across North Korea, caused by yet another poor harvest and Pyongyang's disastrous currency manipulation scheme, which wiped out the savings many people had used to feed themselves. We do

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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not know how many people are dying, but it is not as bad as the famine of the 1990s, which killed as many as 2.5 million people.

The Obama administration pledged 240,000 metric tons of food aid and nutritional supplements for children just as the president's North Korean envoy, Steve Bosworth, announced that Washington would resume four-party nuclear talks. Bosworth acknowledged that the food aid would demonstrate to the North Koreans "that they are getting something in return for the freeze in their nuclear activities."

Obama officials are repeating the mistakes the U.S. government made in the 1990s when it used food aid in the midst of famine to coax North Korea to the nuclear table. We all know the results of that effort: North Korea has probably six to eight nuclear weapons, and its poor continue to endure hunger and starvation.

U.S. actions have sent three unambiguous messages over the past year:

If you want to eat, build more nuclear weapons. Connecting the nuclear talks, which resumed last week, and humanitarian assistance gives North Korea's government a major incentive to continue its nuclear program. The regime's inability to feed its people is the greatest existential threat to its survival, and survival is the central objective of Pyongyang's domestic and foreign policy. For two years, the U.S. and South Korean governments did not respond to the United Nations' need-based humanitarian appeals. But both approved food aid when they wanted Pyongyang to return to nuclear negotiations. When North Koreans were starving we did nothing, but when we want them to sit for nuclear talks, we offer to feed them. What's the message? Without their nuclear weapons, they won't get aid.

If North Korea's rulers give up their nuclear weapons, Washington may overthrow them. If the Obama administration viewed Pyongyang giving up its nuclear weapons as a priority, it should have thought twice before intervening in Libya to remove the one government that has voluntarily given up its weapons of mass destruction. North Korean leaders watched U.S. drones assist Libyan rebels in capturing and killing Moammar Gaddafi. It is immaterial whether Gaddafi deserved his fate. The North Koreans could see that giving up weapons puts you at risk. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said last March that the West's effort to get Libya to give up its weapons of mass destruction was "an invasion tactic to disarm the country" and that "the Libya crisis is teaching the international community a grave lesson."

You may do whatever you want with U.S. humanitarian assistance because Washington's strategic interest is vested in nuclear talks. The North Korean government depends on the loyalty of its Communist Party cadres, its 1.2 million-man army and its internal security forces. A hungry army is a threat to the regime, so Pyongyang has incentive to divert any external food assistance to party cadres, police, soldiers and their families. Between 2007 and 2009, the U.S. Agency for International Development shipped food aid in monthly installments, and when the North Koreans violated the monitoring system — which happened twice — the next shipment was stopped. The North became enraged and shut down the program. But now the North Koreans might walk out of the talks if USAID enforces the strict monitoring protocols just negotiated, because they see the food aid as their reward for returning to talks — not as assistance to feed the poor and powerless.

So what should the next U.S. president do to get us back on track? Unlink food aid from the nuclear talks.

The purpose of humanitarian assistance under U.S. law and international humanitarian convention is to save lives and relieve suffering. It must not be used as a weapon of U.S. diplomacy and should not be manipulated by North Korean officials, military or secret police.

Aggressive monitoring is the only way to ensure that food aid goes to poor families. U.S. authorities should insist on expatriate monitors and translators, unannounced site visits and frequent nutritional monitoring. If monitoring agreements are violated, shipments of food aid should be stopped. Under no circumstances should U.S. food aid go through the Public Distribution System, which is a Stalinist means for Pyongyang to control the population and triage the powerless.



The latest nuclear negotiations are likely to yield what they have for 18 years: nothing. It is time to talk with the North Koreans about other things, such as their abysmal human rights record; the need for economic and political reforms; and health programs for children, many of whom face permanent damage from chronic malnutrition and preventable disease.

North Korea is dying. Its economic system is a wreck, and it cannot feed its people. Most North Koreans I have interviewed over the years privately admit all of this. Washington should do nothing to prolong the agony of the long-suffering North Korean people by supporting the existing system. But perhaps we can begin to push them toward reform.

Andrew Natsios, a professor at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service, was administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development from May 2001 through December 2005. He is the author of "The Great North Korean Famine."

http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/us-food-aid-to-n-korea-sends-the-wrong-messages/2012/03/07/gIQA6MM1zR_story.html

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Wall Street Journal
OPINION/Op-Ed
March 9, 2012

Iran Can't Be Allowed Nuclear 'Capability'

When some say that our red line is a 'nuclear weapon,' it suggests that anything short of a working bomb is acceptable. This is exactly the wrong message to send.

By ROBERT P. CASEY, LINDSEY GRAHAM AND JOE LIEBERMAN

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The Iranian nuclear program continues to advance, despite unprecedented economic and diplomatic pressure by the United States and its international partners. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iranian production of enriched uranium has sharply expanded in recent months, while agency inspectors have been prevented from accessing sites and scientists. Key components of Iran's nuclear program are being dispersed and moved underground.

Some have suggested that if economic and diplomatic efforts fail, we should accept a nuclear-armed Iran and seek to contain it, much as we did with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Others argue that Iran's illicit nuclear activities are primarily a problem for Israel and are not as much of a threat to the U.S.

Both assertions are profoundly wrong. The prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran is a threat to the entire world, including particularly the U.S., and its destabilizing consequences are not containable.

To begin with, Iran's nuclear ambitions are a mortal threat to the global nonproliferation regime. If Iran succeeds in acquiring a nuclear-weapons capability, neighboring Arab states will seek their own atomic arsenals. The Middle East will become a nuclear tinderbox, and the odds of nuclear material falling into the hands of rogue terrorists will dramatically increase.

Iran itself is already the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world. If it acquires a nuclear-weapons capability, its proxies—groups such as Lebanese Hezbollah and Shiite militias in Iraq that have the blood of hundreds of Americans on their hands—will become significantly more dangerous, because they could strike at us and our allies while being protected from retaliation by Tehran's nuclear umbrella.

A nuclear-armed Iran would also threaten the global economy by holding Middle Eastern oil supplies hostage. Recently, Iran's leaders threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz. If Iran tried to do so now, the U.S. and our allies,



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including those in the region, would have an overwhelming military advantage. But what if Tehran had nuclear missiles?

There is still an opportunity for the world to convince Iran's leaders to abandon their illicit nuclear activities peacefully. But in order to achieve such a diplomatic settlement, several steps are urgently needed.

First, it is imperative that the U.S. and its partners accelerate and expand economic pressure on Tehran. The only thing Iran's leaders value more than their nuclear ambitions is the survival of their regime. Consequently, sanctions must threaten the very existence of that regime in order to have a chance of stopping its illicit nuclear activities.

As importantly, however, we must put to rest any suspicion that in the end the United States will acquiesce to Iran's acquisition of a nuclear-weapons capability and adopt a strategy of containment.

For this reason, we introduced a bipartisan resolution last month that explicitly rules out a strategy of containment for Iran and reaffirms that the U.S. has a vital national interest in preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear-weapons capability.

Our resolution is designed to firmly and unequivocally state that a policy of containing a nuclear-armed Iran is unacceptable. It does not dictate the administration's use of sanctions, nor does it authorize the use of force—our two primary methods of ensuring Iran's nuclear weapons program is stopped. But by sending an unambiguous message to the Iranians that we are prepared to do whatever necessary to stop them from acquiring a nuclear-weapons capability, we stand the best chance of avoiding a military conflict.

Some have asked why our resolution sets the goal of preventing Iran from acquiring a "nuclear weapons capability," rather than "nuclear weapons." The reason is that all of the destabilizing consequences of a nuclear-armed Iran will ensue as soon as Iranians have the components necessary for a weapon—and by then, it will be too late to stop them.

When some say that our red line is a "nuclear weapon," it suggests that anything short of a working bomb is acceptable. This is exactly the wrong message to send.

That is why the comprehensive sanctions legislation passed by Congress in 2010 and signed into law by President Obama identified the U.S. goal as preventing a "nuclear-weapons capability."

This is precisely the goal around which all of us—Democrats, Republicans and independents, Congress and the president, America and our allies—can and must now unite. Our bipartisan resolution is an expression of that necessary unity.

Mr. Casey, a Democrat, is a senator from Pennsylvania. Mr. Graham, a Republican, is a senator from South Carolina. Mr. Lieberman, an independent, is a senator from Connecticut.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203370604577263812648428928.html>

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China Daily – China
OPINION/Op-Ed

Questioning US Military Deployments

March 9, 2012

By Ted Galen Carpenter (China Daily)

The Obama administration has announced it is sending additional troops to the Philippines as part of an effort to strengthen military ties with its ally.

Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

United States Air Force Counterproliferation Research & Education | Maxwell AFB, Montgomery AL
Phone: 334.953.7538 | Fax: 334.953.7530



The forces will augment the small contingent dispatched to the Philippines shortly after the Sept 11, 2001, terrorist attacks when Manila asked for assistance in combating a Muslim insurgency that supposedly had links to al Qaeda. The 2001 deployment ended a decade in which the United States had no forces stationed in the Philippines after its government declined to renew leases for Clark Air Base and Subic Bay Naval Base.

It's no secret that ever since the loss of the bases, Pentagon leadership has wanted to re-establish a significant US military presence in the Philippines. There is considerable speculation about the motive. Washington insists its goal is to counter the alleged terrorist threats posed to the democratic Philippine government, and more generally to strengthen America's ability to preserve peace and stability in East Asia.

But one doesn't have to attend many foreign policy gatherings in Washington to hear quiet - and sometimes not-so-quiet - comments that suggest an alternate motive. To American hawks, the troop deployment in the Philippines is merely one component of a much broader strategy: to contain or encircle China.

US actions in recent years support this theory. An enhanced military position in the Philippines is merely the latest development. During his visit to Australia in November, President Barack Obama announced that the United States was sending 2,500 Marines as well as combat aircraft to the country's northern territory.

In a speech to the Australian parliament, Obama boldly asserted that the "United States is a Pacific power, and we are here to stay." He added that the "United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future." Experts in the United States and elsewhere said Washington was sending a message that it intended to do whatever was necessary to counter China's growing power and influence.

Although the Obama administration has intensified what appears to be an encirclement strategy, there were signs of that approach during the George W. Bush administration as well. Washington strengthened not only economic ties with its former arch-adversary, Vietnam, but there were talks about giving US naval forces access to Vietnamese ports.

Far more than any of its predecessors, the Bush administration sought to forge a strategic partnership with India, including signing an agreement on nuclear cooperation that critics charged was an implicit acceptance of New Delhi's nuclear weapons program.

The United States also sought not only to strengthen but to transform its traditional alliances with Japan and South Korea. Previously, the focus of both alliances was on defending the territory and security of those two countries. During the Bush years, though, Washington sought to "broaden" both bilateral pacts to gain more active cooperation from Tokyo and Seoul in dealing with unspecified "regional contingencies." In other words, US officials wanted to integrate Japan and South Korea into an East Asian security apparatus directed by the United States. Japan seemed somewhat ambivalent about the proposed broadening, while South Korea showed no enthusiasm at all for such a change, correctly concluding that it seemed directed against China.

In addition to such actual and attempted changes in security arrangements, Washington had taken a much more pro-active position regarding the territorial disputes in the South China Sea. That point became apparent with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's speech at the ASEAN summit in July 2010 and in several subsequent statements by Clinton and other US officials. The United States is not only taking a greater interest in that issue, but there is a rather obvious policy tilt toward China's rival claimants, especially the Philippines.

All of these actions together certainly create the impression of an encirclement strategy directed against China. If that is not Washington's intention, then both the Bush and Obama administrations have engaged in extremely clumsy diplomacy. It would be difficult for leaders in Beijing to interpret recent US military deployments and other actions as anything except a hostile containment policy.

It is even worse if Washington is deliberately pursuing an encirclement strategy. That would constitute a profoundly unfriendly act and badly damage bilateral relations. The peace of the Western Pacific-East Asian region requires a cordial, cooperative relationship between the United States and China. So does the economic health of



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that region and the overall health of the global economy. The United States is embarking down a worrisome, counterproductive path if it begins to regard China as a dangerous adversary that needs containing. China is not the Soviet Union, and replicating a policy used against the latter during the Cold War would be the height of folly.

The author is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and the author of eight books on international affairs, including Smart Power: Toward a Prudent Foreign Policy for America.

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/usa/2012-03/09/content_14797383.htm

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Issue No. 987, 09 March 2012

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