



BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



22 April – 5 May 2008

DTRA

ARMS CONTROL (GENERAL)

UN Security Council Extends 1540 Committee for Three Years

U.S. Fed News, 25 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Security Council today extended for three years the mandate of the Committee created to monitor implementation of its resolution 1540 (2004), which called on all States to establish domestic controls and adopt legislation to prevent the proliferation and use by non-State actors of weapons of mass destruction. (387 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

North Korea Agrees to Blow Up Tower at Its Nuclear Facility

Washington Post, 2 May 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

North Korea has agreed to blow up the cooling tower attached to its Yongbyon nuclear facility within 24 hours of being removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, diplomats said this week. (524 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Iran Rules Out Halt to Sensitive Nuclear Work

Reuters, 5 May 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/>

Iran ruled out halting its disputed nuclear work on Monday [May 5], saying it would not consider any incentives offered by world powers that violated the Islamic Republic's rights to atomic technology. (585 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Second Review Conference Reaffirms Provisions of Chemical Weapons Ban

The Hague, 24 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The two-week Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention officially ended on Friday night, 18 April 2008, with a clear reaffirmation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and work of its implementing agency, the OPCW. (486 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

DoD Report on Progress toward Compliance with Destruction of U.S. Stockpile of Lethal Chemical Agents Sent to House

U.S. Fed News, 25 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The House Armed Services Committee has received an executive branch communication from the Department of Defense. (72 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)(CONT.)

Progress Reported in CW Disposal across U.S.

GSN, 29 April 2008, <http://www.nti.org>

The Anniston Army Depot in Alabama has destroyed 43 percent of its stockpile of chemical warfare agents and 46 percent of the munitions that held the lethal materials, the U.S. Army announced yesterday. (319 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS

Iran, IAEA to Resume Nuclear Talks

AFP, 30 April 2008, <http://afp.google.com/>

Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog will resume their latest talks by the end of next week, a top Iranian official said, after a new round of discussions over claims Tehran is seeking atomic weapons ended. (321 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

MISSILE TECHNOLOGY CONTROL REGIME (MTCR)

South Korea May Drop Purchase of Global Hawk

Korea Herald, 2 May 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

South Korea is considering suspending a plan to procure four high-altitude Global Hawk surveillance aircraft from the United States, due to budget constraints, Defense Ministry officials say. (309 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

Forty-Year-Old Nonproliferation Treaty under a Microscope

DOS, 24 April 2008, <http://fpolicy.america.gov/>

Nations that are party to the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will discuss additional ways to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote disarmament and foster cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy when they meet in Switzerland April 28. (719 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)



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NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT) (CONT.)

U.S. Says North Korea Helped Syria to Build Nuclear Reactor

Daily Mail (London), 25 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The CIA yesterday accused North Korea of helping Syria build a nuclear reactor. Intelligence officials showed U.S. Congress members a video recording and other extremely compelling evidence showing that Syria had been constructing a reactor with North Korean assistance before it was bombed by Israeli planes in September last year. (379 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

NPT Meeting Opens; Nuclear Powers Defend Reductions

GSN, 29 April 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

The United States and Russia yesterday defended their progress toward nuclear disarmament on the opening day of a two-week international meeting in Geneva to discuss the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). (537 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

OPEN SKIES TREATY

Sweden to Make Surveillance Flight over Russia under Open Skies Treaty

Interfax, 4 May 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A group of Swedish inspectors will perform an aerial surveillance flight over Russia on board the SAAB-340 observation aircraft on May 6-7, the Russian Defense Ministry's Information and Public Relations Department said. (112 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Russian, Belarusian Inspectors Will Make Observation Flight over Latvia

Russia & CIS Military Newswire, 4 May 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

A group of Russian and Belarusian inspectors will make a joint observation flight over the territory of Latvia on May 4 through 8, the Defense Ministry PR department has announced. (99 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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OTTAWA CONVENTION

Italian NGO Declares North Uganda Unlikely to Face Landmine Threat

AFP, 4 May 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

AVSI, an Italian non-governmental organization which works mainly with victims of landmines in northern Uganda, has declared that landmines are no longer a threat in the region. (305 words)

[Click here for full text.](#)

PLUTONIUM PRODUCTION REACTOR AGREEMENT (PPRA)

Russian Weapons-Grade Plutonium Reactor Shut Down Ahead of Schedule

NNSA, 21 April 2008, <http://nnsa.energy.gov/>

The first shutdown of a weapons-grade plutonium production reactor in over 15 years has occurred in Seversk, Russia [...] It is the first U.S.-aided shutdown of a plutonium production reactor in the former Soviet Union, and has happened eight months ahead of schedule.

(347 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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UN Security Council Extends 1540 Committee for Three Years

U.S. Fed News, 25 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The United Nations issued the following press release:

Reaffirming that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery means was a threat to international peace and security, the Security Council today extended for three years the mandate of the Committee created to monitor implementation of its resolution 1540 (2004), which called on all States to establish domestic controls and adopt legislation to prevent the proliferation and use by non-State actors of weapons of mass destruction.

Unanimously adopting resolution 1810 (2008) under the Charter's Chapter VII, the Council decided that the 1540 Committee should intensify its efforts through its work program to promote full implementation by all States of resolution 1540 (2004). That included compiling information on the status of States' implementation of 1540, outreach, dialogue, assistance and cooperation, and which addressed in particular all aspects of paragraph 1 and 2 as well as paragraph 3 on accountability, physical protection, border controls and law enforcement efforts, and national export and trans-shipment controls including controls on providing funds and services such as export and trans-shipment financing.

Paragraph 1 of resolution 1540 mandated that States shall refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempted to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Paragraph 2 of that resolution mandated that States, in accordance with national procedures, shall adopt and enforce appropriate effective laws that prohibited any non-State actor from developing or acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes. In that connection, the Council today encouraged all States to prepare on a voluntary basis summary action plans, with the assistance of the 1540 Committee, mapping out their priorities and plans for implementing the key provisions of resolution 1540 and to submit those plans to the Committee.

Further to the text, the Council encouraged ongoing dialogue between the 1540 Committee and States on their further actions to fully implement resolution 1540 (2004) and on technical assistance needed and offered. The Council requested that the Committee continue to organize and participate in regional, subregional and national outreach events to promote States' implementation of the resolution as well as actively engage with States and relevant international, regional and subregional organizations to promote the sharing of experiences and lessons learned in areas covered by the resolution... [Link to full text of resolution (removed)]

<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9310.doc.htm>

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North Korea Agrees to Blow Up Tower at Its Nuclear Facility

Washington Post, 2 May 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/>

North Korea has agreed to blow up the cooling tower attached to its Yongbyon nuclear facility within 24 hours of being removed from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, diplomats said this week.

The destruction of the cooling tower is intended by U.S. officials to be a striking visual, broadcast around the globe that would offer tangible evidence that North Korea was retreating from its nuclear ambitions. Wisps of vapor from the cooling tower appear in most satellite photographs of Yongbyon, making it the facility's most recognizable feature, though experts say its destruction would be mostly symbolic.

North Korean officials had privately indicated previously they would destroy the tower as part of the disablement of Yongbyon. During talks last week with a top U.S. State Department official, Sung Kim, North Korea reaffirmed it would act quickly after Pyongyang is removed from the terrorism list.

During the talks, North Korean officials also tentatively agreed to release to U.S. officials thousands of pages of documents, dating back to 1990, concerning the daily production records of the facility. The records are intended to help U.S. experts determine how much plutonium was produced at the facility and thus verify North Korean claims.

North Korea has indicated it produced more than 30 kilograms of plutonium, but Pyongyang does not count waste or material that collects in the facility's pipes, making it difficult to compare it with U.S. intelligence estimates of about 50 kilograms.

The diplomats spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the discussions. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack declined to comment "on ongoing negotiations," he said.

Several months ago, North Korean technicians broke through the concrete bottom of the tower, making it unusable, but hot water could still be dumped directly in a nearby river if North Korea were unconcerned about possible ecological damage. Other aspects of the disabling of the facility are more significant; U.S. officials say they think that North Korea would need to order months of repairs if it wanted to restart it.

Under a tentative deal struck between Washington and Pyongyang, North Korea will be removed from the terrorism list and from a second sanction – the Trading with the Enemy Act –

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once it produces a declaration of its nuclear activities. U.S. officials have especially been focused on the plutonium segment of the declaration, telling Pyongyang that it need only "acknowledge" U.S. evidence and concerns about two other issues: its nuclear dealings with Syria and a suspected uranium-enrichment program.

U.S. officials have argued that those two issues are considered of secondary, historical interest, in contrast to the more urgent matter of the plutonium stash. North Korea conducted a nuclear test in 2006 and is known to possess enough plutonium to make several more nuclear bombs.

North Korea is one of five countries on the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism, which makes it subject to severe U.S. export controls, particularly of dual-use technology and military equipment. Those controls prohibit much foreign aid and obligate the United States to oppose financial assistance to the country from institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

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Iran Rules Out Halt to Sensitive Nuclear Work

Reuters, 5 May 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/>

Iran ruled out halting its disputed nuclear work on Monday [May 5], saying it would not consider any incentives offered by world powers that violated the Islamic Republic's rights to atomic technology.

Six world powers agreed at a meeting in London on Friday to offer a new incentives package to coax Iran to suspend uranium enrichment, a process which the West believes Tehran wants to master so that it can build nuclear weapons.

Iran, the world's fourth largest oil producer, insists its nuclear program is aimed at generating electricity and says enrichment is a national right that it will not give up.

"Those incentives that violate the Iranian nation's right in any form will not be reviewed by the Islamic state," Foreign Ministry spokesman Mohammad Ali Hosseini told a news conference.

The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council – the United States, France, Britain, China and Russia – and Germany offered a package to Iran in 2006 that required Iran to halt enrichment. Tehran rejected it.

"Regarding the incentives package ... we believe the path adopted in the past should not be continued. They should act based on realities and international regulations. Talks should be held based on respecting nations' rights," Hosseini said.

He said Iran had not formally received any new package.

The incentives offered to Iran in 2006 included civil nuclear cooperation and wider trade in civil aircraft, energy, high technology and agriculture, if Tehran suspended enrichment and negotiated with the six powers.

A European diplomat has said the heart of the previous offer – helping Iran develop civil nuclear power – remained. Britain said details would only be revealed to Iran's government.

Russia, which sent an envoy to Iran last week for discussions that covered the nuclear row, said on Saturday enrichment would have to be suspended during any talks.

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"In the past, we have expressed our view about the issue that some Russian officials talked about. There has been no change in our position," Hosseini said when asked about the comments by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

Russia along with China have both been reluctant to impose penalties on Iran but have, nevertheless, voted in the U.N. Security Council for three rounds of sanctions and demanded Tehran stop enrichment, which has civilian and military uses.

Iran has also discussed with Russia its own package of proposals it says would open the way for talks to resolve the nuclear row and other issues. It has not disclosed details.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Sunday Iran would not give up its rights despite Western pressure but he did not specifically mention nuclear work. "Threatening the Iranian nation will not make it retreat," he told a rally.

The United States, which has led efforts to isolate Iran, says it wants diplomacy to end the row but U.S. officials have repeatedly said military action has not been ruled out.

The Islamic Republic says Washington is too bogged down in Iraq and Afghanistan to open a new front. Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Israeli television it would be tough to mount any attack on Iran.

"It would be a very significant challenge for the United States right now to get into a third conflict in that part of the world," Mullen told Israel's Channel Ten television.

Jittery since Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said in 2005 that the Jewish state to be "wiped off the map," Israeli officials have lobbied for a tougher global stand against Iran.

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Second Review Conference Reaffirms Provisions of Chemical Weapons Ban

The Hague, 24 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The following information was released by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW):

The two-week Second Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention officially ended on Friday night, 18 April 2008, with a clear reaffirmation of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and work of its implementing agency, the OPCW. The conference was chaired by H.E. Mr. Waleed A. Elkhareiji, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the OPCW.

The official document of the conference can be read in full on the OPCW web site at www.opcw.org.

Although the discussions were difficult and protracted at times, the final document of the Conference is comprehensive and reaffirms the strong commitment among all States Parties to achieve universality, complete the destruction of chemical weapons, further strengthen verification measures to ensure non-proliferation, provide assistance and protection, and promote the uses of chemistry for peaceful purposes, said the OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter.

Among other elements in its report, the Second Review Conference:

- Reaffirmed that the complete destruction of chemical weapons is essential for the realization of the object and purpose of the Convention.
- It welcomed the statements of possessor States Parties reiterating their commitment to meeting the final, extended deadlines for destroying chemical weapons stocks, and noted that over 38% of the total stockpiles of 70,000 tons of Category 1 chemical weapons initially declared by States Parties had been destroyed as of 1 April 2008.
- The Second Review Conference noted with satisfaction that the OPCW has established an effective verification system with a view to achieving the non-proliferation and confidence-building aims of the Convention.

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- Noted with satisfaction that after more than 3,000 inspections by OPCW at over 1,080 chemical weapons-related and industrial sites in 80 States Parties, no case of non-compliance with the Convention had been reported.
- Re-emphasized the continuing relevance and importance of the provisions of Article X of the Convention for assistance and protection against chemical weapons for States Parties, and recognized that the assistance available under Article X could be a motivating factor for States non Party to join.
- Re-emphasized the importance of the provisions of Article XI on the economic and technological development of States Parties and recalled that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of Article XI is essential for the realization of the objects and purposes of the Convention.
- Reiterated that universality of the Convention is essential to achieve its objective and purpose, and strongly urged the world's 12 remaining States not Party to ratify or accede to it as a matter of urgency and without preconditions. The Conference welcomed efforts by Guinea-Bissau, Iraq and Lebanon who are well advanced in the process of accession.
- Reaffirmed that full and effective national implementation of the obligations under the Convention is essential for realizing its object and purpose.

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DoD Report on Progress toward Compliance with Destruction of U.S. Stockpile of Lethal Chemical Agents Sent to House

U.S. Fed News, 25 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The House Armed Services Committee has received an executive branch communication from the Department of Defense.

The under secretary for Acquisitions, Technology and Logistics at DoD has transmitted, pursuant to [PL 110-181, Sec. 922], the Department's report on the progress toward compliance with destruction of the U.S. stockpile of lethal chemical agents and munitions by the extended Chemical Weapons Convention deadline of April 29, 2012 and not later than December 31, 2017.

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GSN, 29 April 2008, <http://www.nti.org>

The Anniston Army Depot in Alabama has destroyed 43 percent of its stockpile of chemical warfare agents and 46 percent of the munitions that held the lethal materials, the U.S. Army announced yesterday.

Between April 21 and yesterday, the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility eliminated 4,671 155 mm artillery shells that had contained VX nerve agent. It also incinerated 2,784 gallons of VX. The facility since the current project began June 2007 has destroyed 128,959 of the projectiles and 79,613 gallons of VX.

The depot has to date eliminated its full stockpile of weapons carrying the nerve agent sarin, along with 75 percent of VX weapons and 64.5 percent of VX. Disposal of mustard agent has not begun.

The Umatilla Chemical Depot in Oregon reported Thursday that it had destroyed nearly 33 percent of its stockpile of chemical warfare agents since beginning operations in 2004. More than 1,224 tons of materials have been burned, along with 181,000 weapons and bulk containers.

As of April 13, the Deseret Chemical Depot in Utah had destroyed nearly 36 percent of its mustard agent stockpile. The site had incinerated 2,271 tons of the material and 34,243 155 mm projectiles.

The Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana by April 22 had chemically neutralized 88 percent – 264,588 gallons – of its holdings of [chemical agent VX] stored in bulk containers. The facility stores no munitions.

The Pine Bluff Arsenal in Arkansas had finished off 15 percent of its chemical agents by April 21, including more than 110,000 rockets that had carried VX and sarin.

Disposal operations are completed at former chemical weapons storage sites in Maryland and on the Johnston Atoll. Destruction facilities are not yet built at the final two U.S. storage sites in Colorado and Kentucky.

The Chemical Weapons Convention gives the United States until April 2012 to eliminate its stockpile of banned warfare materials. U.S. officials have indicated that disposal operations could continue into 2023.

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Iran, IAEA to Resume Nuclear Talks

AFP, 30 April 2008, <http://afp.google.com/>

Iran and the UN nuclear watchdog will resume their latest talks by the end of next week, a top Iranian official said, after a new round of discussions over claims Tehran is seeking atomic weapons ended.

"The second series of discussions that started on Monday ended after three days and there will be a new set of discussions in the next ten days," said Iran's ambassador to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Ali Asghar Soltanieh, according to the Mehr news agency.

The IAEA has said the talks, which began on April 21, are focused on pressing Iran over allegations that it conducted studies on how to design a nuclear weapon.

Iran insists that the talks are merely routine cooperation between the authorities and the agency, however.

Soltanieh made no mention of an agreement announced by the IAEA after the first round that Iran would answer the allegations during May and instead said the latest meetings were in line with a more general accord from August 2007.

"Iran responded to all the ambiguities mentioned by the IAEA in line with the agreement (of August 2007) and is ready to respond to all the questions and ambiguities as part of its cooperation with the agency, just like any state," he said.

The latest talks involved Soltanieh and other top officials from Iran's atomic energy organization.

The IAEA was represented by its deputy director general Olli Heinonen who reportedly left late on Monday while other officials remained to continue the discussions.

The so-called "weaponization studies" stem from intelligence provided to the IAEA by some member states.

In a closed-door briefing to diplomats at IAEA headquarters in Vienna on February 25, Heinonen presented detailed information suggesting that Iran could have been studying how to use its nuclear technology to make a warhead.

Iran, which insists that its nuclear program is entirely peaceful and aimed solely at generating energy, furiously denounced the presentation as fake.

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South Korea May Drop Purchase of Global Hawk

Korea Herald, 2 May 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

South Korea is considering suspending a plan to procure four high-altitude Global Hawk surveillance aircraft from the United States, due to budget constraints, Defense Ministry officials say.

The Seoul government has sought to purchase four of the state-of-the-art unmanned surveillance planes by 2011, before the nation takes over wartime operational control of its armed forces from the United States by 2012.

"The plan may come to a halt temporarily, as we are having difficulty securing enough money for the acquisition," an official said.

"President Lee Myung-bak has directed defense officials to cut down on government expenses and improve the welfare and morale of soldiers. Thus, the ministry could suffer more hardship in going ahead with large-scale weapons procurements like the Global Hawk project," the official said.

The National Assembly has significantly slashed the budget for the purchase of Global Hawks. Instead, the ministry will focus on developing Korea's indigenous mid-altitude unmanned aerial vehicles, the official said.

The U.S. government is perplexed by the Korean move to withdraw the sales request, Seoul officials said. Washington has recently been indicating that it would honor the request, they said.

Since 2005, the Seoul government has asked the United States to sell the Global Hawks, but Washington has been reluctant to make the sale, citing concerns about the dissemination of sensitive technology.

The purchase is restricted by the missile technology control regime, or MTCR, which is intended to limit the proliferation of control cruise missiles.

The United States is moving to revise the regulations, but Russia and other member countries of the MTCR are opposed to the change, officials said.

The Global Hawk is a \$45-million unmanned surveillance plane that can cruise at an altitude of 20 kilometers for up to 42 hours. The UAV can also identify 30-centimeter-wide objects on the ground and provide geographic images of areas up to 3,000 kilometers wide.

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Forty-Year-Old Nonproliferation Treaty under a Microscope

DOS, 24 April 2008, <http://fpolicy.america.gov/>

Nations that are party to the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will discuss additional ways to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, promote disarmament and foster cooperation for the peaceful use of nuclear energy when they meet in Switzerland on April 28.

It will be the second of three meetings before they must make formal recommendations about the NPT during a review conference in 2010. The Treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995 and must be reviewed every five years.

Under the terms of the NPT, the nuclear-weapon states have agreed not to transfer weapons or help to encourage non-nuclear-weapon states to produce or acquire such weapons. And the non-nuclear-weapon states have agreed not to receive nuclear weapons or to produce them.

Participants at the Geneva session, led by Ukrainian Ambassador Volodymyr Yel'chenko, the session chairman, will focus on topics tied to the treaty's core. Christopher Ford, the U.S. special representative for nuclear nonproliferation, says the review cycle is "a unique opportunity for countries to exchange views about how the Treaty is living up to its intentions and expectations, and to develop common ground on how we can help it do better."

While no consensus agreement is needed or envisioned at this point, Ford told America.gov, "We all aim to build greater policy convergence toward the 2010 Review Conference."

He expressed the U.S. hope that there will be progress toward agreement on key principles of at least some of the important issues. As was the case during the 2007 NPT Preparatory Conference, the United States will focus on what can be done to help the treaty regime meet existing proliferation challenges.

Another area of U.S. interest is expanding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in what Ford characterized as "proliferation-responsible ways." This is important for a variety of reasons, including its great value "as a major and environmentally responsible contribution to global development" at a time of rising energy demands, he said.

Ford said this is at the forefront because "well-crafted proposals, such as reactor fuel supply assurances, can help expand nuclear power generation" and they can help persuade nations that they do not need to develop fuel-cycle capabilities. This is highly desirable because there otherwise would be a tremendous proliferation risk since the fissile material produced for fuel also could be diverted for direct use in a nuclear weapon.

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The United States also will highlight the need to strengthen the treaty regime's ability to deter and, if need be, to respond to treaty withdrawal by countries that are in violation of their obligations.

Finally, Ford said, the United States will highlight its "exemplary record of accomplishment" with respect to nuclear disarmament, as well as its "constructive and unprecedented contributions" to recent international disarmament debates. U.S. officials will discuss how U.S. policies "can help lay the foundations" for the kind of security environment that would be "necessary for nuclear disarmament to become a realistic and attractive policy choice" for existing weapons holders.

"We plan to work with our counterparts to develop common positions" on the raft of issues under review, Ford said, because some are sufficiently "ripe" to use as initial consensus building blocks for the final document that will be sought in 2010.

William Potter, who is director of the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies at the Monterey Institute in California, has identified as many as nine obstacles facing the Treaty. At the top of his list are the "increasing uncompromising national positions" offered by both the nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon states.

He says he is not sanguine about the current state of the NPT. His view is shaped partly by "the surreal quality of the debates" that he says too often dominates the review process and partly by an air of complacency he believes exists about pressing nuclear dangers.

Potter will be in Geneva sounding the alarm that, too often, "core nuclear proliferation and disarmament challenges are neglected" while the participants are consumed by haggling over procedural issues.

"Time is not on our side," Potter warns. "We do not have the luxury of postponing the debate. We cannot wait until the [session's] last three days" to begin substantive debate.

What is desperately needed, Potter said, is an extended and rich debate about the most pressing nuclear challenges of the day, leading to forging common ground on how to deal with them.

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U.S. Says North Korea Helped Syria to Build Nuclear Reactor

Daily Mail (London), 25 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The CIA yesterday accused North Korea of helping Syria build a nuclear reactor. Intelligence officials showed U.S. Congress members a video recording and other extremely compelling evidence showing that Syria had been constructing a reactor with North Korean assistance before it was bombed by Israeli planes in September last year. An official said the evidence came from a variety of reliable sources including Israeli intelligence.

Another top U.S official claimed the Syrian nuclear reactor allegedly built with North Korean help and destroyed last year by Israeli jets was within weeks or months of being functional. The Syrian reactor was similar in design to North Korea's Yongbyon plant, which has successfully produced quantities of plutonium, he added. The official said no uranium was evident on site which Syria claims is simply an unused military facility.

If true, the CIA allegations would mean Syria may have been in breach of an international nuclear nonproliferation treaty. Plutonium-producing reactors can be used to make high-yield nuclear weapons.

The site was flattened after Israeli warplanes bombed it but independent analysts say commercial satellite imagery taken after the raid suggests it was indeed a reactor. Israel shared intelligence with the U.S. before carrying out the bombing after Pentagon officials expressed doubts that the site was a nuclear reactor, according to yesterday's Washington Post. The target of Israel's raid had been kept secret by the CIA until yesterday. CIA chief Michael Hayden and other intelligence officials briefed congressmen on the evidence before six committees.

The revelation of alleged North Korean cooperation with Syria comes at a sensitive time for Pyongyang. U.S. diplomats are pressing North Korea to come clean about its nuclear cooperation with Syria as part of those talks, but have had little success. Under an agreement reached last year with the U.S., China, Japan, South Korea and Russia, North Korea is required to give a full account of its nuclear programs, including whether it spread nuclear technology. U.S. officials say the account provided by Pyongyang in November last year was not complete and correct.

The briefings in Washington also come the same week as a U.S. delegation travelled to North Korea to press the repressive regime for a detailed list of its nuclear programs, the latest sticking point at international nuclear disarmament talks.

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NPT Meeting Opens; Nuclear Powers Defend Reductions

GSN, 29 April 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

The United States and Russia yesterday defended their progress toward nuclear disarmament on the opening day of a two-week international meeting in Geneva to discuss the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT).

Many non-nuclear nations have criticized the two Cold War rivals for acting too slowly in meeting their treaty commitments to completely disband their nuclear arsenals. The treaty, signed 40 years ago, calls on the five nuclear powers of that era to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.”

U.S. delegation leader Christopher Ford yesterday addressed the notion that the United States was dawdling.

Some countries have said that nuclear-armed nations have “backtracked on their commitment to the ultimate goal of nuclear disarmament, and that they were in violation of their obligations,” Ford said in his statement to the meeting. “With respect to United States nuclear posture and policy, any such beliefs are patently false.”

The United States today has fewer than 3,000 operationally deployed strategic warheads, Ford said, and the rate of dismantling retired warheads has accelerated.

In addition, “We continue to: reduce the number of delivery systems; eliminate entire classes of weapons such as intermediate-range missiles and nuclear artillery shells; remove many hundreds of tons of fissile material from our weapons programs; maintain our moratorium on underground nuclear testing; help peacefully dispose of hundreds of tons of fissile material from former Soviet nuclear weapons; fulfill our promises to slash nonstrategic nuclear forces; build a new plant to convert large quantities of plutonium from former U.S. nuclear weapons into nuclear reactor fuel; refrain from producing new uranium or plutonium for nuclear weapons; and work to bring about the complete, global prohibition of fissile material production for use in nuclear weapons,” he said.

Russian delegate Anatoly Antonov also emphasized his nation’s nuclear reductions – reporting that Russia had 4,200 nuclear warheads deployed on fewer than 900 strategic delivery vehicles – but said more time was needed to “break the stalemate in this field.”

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“It should be clear to everyone that complete elimination of nuclear arms can only be achieved through a gradual, phased movement,” he said in his statement.

Antonov reaffirmed Russia’s desire to negotiate “a legally binding arrangement” to succeed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which is set to expire late next year.

Both countries expressed concern about Iran’s nuclear ambitions.

Antonov argued that an internationally controlled nuclear fuel supply could allay Tehran’s desire to produce its own nuclear fuel, a technology that U.S. officials have said would be used to produce nuclear weapon materials.

Ford took a more aggressive stance on Iran, saying “the world has become appropriately alarmed about Iran’s rush to produce fissile materials for reactors it does not have in order to prevent an ‘energy crisis’ it does not face.”

He called on treaty members to develop “swift and effective responses to [NPT] violations... It is clear that we need to develop more effective approaches so that the delay between detection and reaction is minimized, the cost to the violator is increased, and the anticipated benefits of noncompliance to the violator are reduced.”

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Sweden to Make Surveillance Flight over Russia under Open Skies Treaty

Interfax, 4 May 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A group of Swedish inspectors will perform an aerial surveillance flight over Russia on board the SAAB-340 observation aircraft on May 6-7, the Russian Defense Ministry's Information and Public Relations Department said.

The aerial surveillance flight will be carried out under the international Treaty on Open Skies, according to a statement obtained by Interfax-AVN on Sunday. The Swedish airplane will take off from the Kubinka airfield in the Moscow region. The approximate flight distance is 5,500 kilometers.

"During the flight both Swedish and Russian specialists will check for proper use of the observation equipment, strict adherence to the fixed modes and flight routes, and compliance with the treaty provisions," the statement said.

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Russian, Belarusian Inspectors Will Make Observation Flight over Latvia

Russia & CIS Military Newswire, 4 May 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

A group of Russian and Belarusian inspectors will make a joint observation flight over the territory of Latvia on May 4 through 8, the Defense Ministry public relations department has announced.

"The flight with a maximum range of 800 kilometers will be made on a Russian Antonov AN-30B observer aircraft," a Sunday ministry report says.

The route of the flight was agreed with the Latvian side given the weather conditions in different parts of Latvia, the capabilities of the observer equipment, restrictions in its application stipulated by the open skies treaty and requirements to flight safety, the report says.

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Italian NGO Declares North Uganda Unlikely to Face Landmine Threat

AFP, 4 May 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

AVSI, an Italian non-governmental organization which works mainly with victims of landmines in northern Uganda, has declared that landmines are no longer a threat in the region.

Northern Uganda is where the Uganda army and rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army have fought for almost two decades. In a statement, the organization said the biggest problem in the area is the abundance of other unexploded ordinance.

The organization's Landmines Risks Education Officer, Ochan Ongom told journalists at Sun Set Hotel in Gulu town that a team of experts sent to northern Uganda to de-mine the area has removed not more than 30 landmines since the inception of the program last year.

He said an assortment of explosives like grenades, rockets, missiles, cluster bombs, bullets and fuses among others have been recovered. "We do receive about five cases of suspected mines all over the region on daily basis but most of them have been discovered to be unexploded fuses, grenades, but not landmines as people suspect them to be," Ongom said.

He said the weapons have killed 524 people and maimed thousands in the recent past. Statistics also show that there are 1,387 landmine survivors in Gulu and Amuru districts out of which about 700 are being supported by humanitarian organizations.

Ongom, however, said there could still be thousands of unexploded weapons in the region particularly in the sub-counties of Atiak, Palaro, Agoro and Palabek.

Northern Uganda is suspected to have the highest number of disabled persons in Uganda who were maimed during the armed conflict.

Uganda, which signed the Ottawa Convention to stop the use of landmines in 1997, has destroyed 6,432 landmines since 2003. About 1,000 are still in the government armories for training purposes. Landmines can stay in the ground or in any environment for more than 75 years without getting expired.

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Russian Weapons-Grade Plutonium Reactor Shut Down Ahead of Schedule

NNSA, 21 April 2008, <http://nnsa.energy.gov/>

The first shutdown of a weapons-grade plutonium production reactor in over 15 years has occurred in Seversk, Russia. Under a cooperative program with the Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), Rosatom successfully completed the shutdown to help eliminate weapons-grade plutonium production in Russia. It is the first U.S.-aided shutdown of a plutonium production reactor in the former Soviet Union, and has happened eight months ahead of schedule.

"Elimination of the production of nuclear weapons-grade plutonium at the Seversk site is a historic nonproliferation milestone. We have been working with our Russian partners for years on this important step in eliminating a production source for plutonium," said Deputy Administrator William Tobey, who oversees NNSA's nuclear nonproliferation work. "We remain focused on shutting down the second reactor in June, thus eliminating weapons-grade plutonium production at two of the three remaining production reactors in Russia."

The reactor shutdowns are made possible by a joint program between NNSA and the Rosatom. NNSA's Elimination of Weapons Grade Plutonium Production program is working with Rosatom on the closure work, and provides fossil-fuel heat and electricity to replace Russia's remaining plutonium production reactors. NNSA and Rosatom are currently working to provide this replacement capacity so that the final reactor operating in Zheleznogorsk can be shut down no later than 2010, which will permanently cease Russian weapons-grade plutonium production.

The Russian reactors were originally operated to produce weapons-grade plutonium, with heat and electricity as by-product from the early 1960s until 1993. Since 1993, the reactors have operated to provide heat and electricity for Seversk, and now produce weapons-grade plutonium as a by-product.

Established by Congress in 2000, NNSA is a separately organized agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science. NNSA maintains and enhances the safety, security, reliability, and performance of the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing; works to reduce global danger from weapons of mass destruction; provides the U.S. Navy with safe and effective nuclear propulsion; and responds to nuclear and radiological emergencies in the United States and abroad.

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