



BI-WEEKLY TREATY REVIEW



08 April – 21 April 2008

DTRA

ARMS CONTROL (GENERAL)

Bush Still Waits for North Korean Nuclear Report

NY Times, 20 April 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/>

President Bush on [April 19] dismissed assertions that his administration had softened demands that North Korea fully declare all of its nuclear activities, including secret efforts to enrich uranium and sell nuclear technology abroad. (457 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC)

Watchdog Agency: Treaty to Eliminate Chemical Weapons “Is Succeeding”

OPCW, 8 April 2008, <http://www.opcw.org/>

The agency responsible for implementing the international Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has reported that steady progress is being made to eliminate global stockpiles of chemical weapons and the means to produce them, but warned that a dozen countries must still join the treaty – including five in the Middle East – before universal compliance can be assured. (574 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Army Destroying Old Chemical Munitions

The Honolulu Advertiser, 9 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Army is spending \$7 million at Schofield Barracks to destroy 1940s-era chemical weapons that were discovered beginning in 2005 during unexploded ordnance cleanup for a new Stryker brigade "battle area complex." (429 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Tass Photo Show on Weapons Destruction Opens in The Hague

Itar-Tass, 10 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A photo show of the Itar-Tass news agency on the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia opened on Thursday in The Hague. (464 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Primary Construction Begins at Pueblo Depot

GSN, 15 April 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

Construction has begun on the key facilities for destroying the chemical warfare arsenal stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado, the Pueblo Chieftain reported [April 14]. (202 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION (CWC) (CONT.)

OPCW Agrees 2012 New Global Deadline to Rid World of Chemical Weapons

AFP, 19 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A body set up to rid the world of chemical weapons agreed on Saturday [19 April] a new global deadline of 2012, after admitting that Albania is the only country to have completely destroyed its stock. (317 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

CONVENTION ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS (CCW)

U.S. to Skip Cluster Bomb Meeting in Dublin, Focus on Geneva Talks

Associated Press, 11 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The United States will skip a meeting in Dublin next month that aims to ban cluster bombs, officials said Friday. Instead, Washington will focus on separate United Nations talks in Geneva that will restrict but not ban the use of the weapon, the head of the U.S. delegation said. (388 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

COMPREHENSIVE NUCLEAR TEST-BAN TREATY (CTBT)

Assembly Ratifies Test Ban Treaty

Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique, 8 April 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

The Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, on [April 8] unanimously ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty of 1996. (236 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

INTEGRATED SAFEGUARDS

U.S. very Committed to Nuclear Deal with India

Indo-Asian News Service, 17 April 2008, <http://www.iaea.org/>

The United States says it is "very committed" to the India-U.S. civil nuclear deal and is "still working on it" even as it has been stalled due to opposition from the Indian government's Leftist supporters. (443 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY (NPT)

Iran Six to Offer Tehran New Incentive to Freeze Nuclear Program

RIA Novosti, 8 April 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/>

The six countries mediating the crisis around Iran's controversial nuclear program are preparing new incentives to convince Tehran to halt its uranium enrichment, Russia's foreign minister said [April 8]. (395 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

OPEN SKIES TREATY

Russian Aircraft to Fly over France in Monitoring Operation

Interfax, 7 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Russian military inspectors will perform a monitoring flight over France April 7 – 11 to observe the deployment of troops, the Russian Defense Ministry's Information and Public Affairs Department told Interfax-AVN. (139 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

Russian Inspectors to Fly over Italy under Open Skies Treaty

Itar-Tass, 14 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Russia will carry out the first flight in this year over Italy on the Russian plane AN-30B from the airfield Ciampino (Rome) on April 14-18. (150 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

U.S., French, Turkish Inspectors to Make Verification Flights in Russia

Russia & CIS Military Newswire, 21 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

U.S. and French inspectors will make a verification flight over Russia on April 21-26, in line with the Open Skies Treaty... A team of Turkish inspectors will make a similar verification flight in Russia onboard a CN-235 aircraft on April 21-25. (145 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

OTTAWA CONVENTION

Canada Gives Belarus 300 Mine Detectors for Free

Interfax-AVN, 10 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Canada has handed 300 Australia-made mine detectors to Belarusian field engineering units for free, First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Petrishchenko told the parliament. (172 words) [Click here for full text.](#)



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STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START)

Nunn-Lugar Eliminates Final Russian SS-24 ICBM

Capitol Hill Press Releases, 9 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction program has completed the elimination of all SS-24 "scalpel" intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and supporting components. The destruction of the final missile was commemorated today at the destruction facility near Perm, Russia. (575 words) [Click here for full text.](#)

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Bush Still Waits for North Korean Nuclear Report

NY Times, 20 April 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/>

President Bush on Saturday dismissed assertions that his administration had softened demands that North Korea fully declare all of its nuclear activities, including secret efforts to enrich uranium and sell nuclear technology abroad.

Appearing here at the presidential retreat with South Korea's new president, Lee Myung-bak, Mr. Bush said that any judgment about North Korea's willingness to dismantle its nuclear program — the core of an agreement negotiated last year — would only come once North Korea completed a declaration of its nuclear activities.

The deadline for that declaration passed at the end of last year, and no new deadline has been set. That has left the agreement signed 14 months ago by North and South Korea, the United States, China, Japan and Russia increasingly in doubt.

Mr. Bush, facing criticism from some conservatives, distanced himself from statements by administration officials that the United States and other countries were prepared to accept something less than a full admission about North Korea's secret nuclear programs.

"Look, we're going to make a judgment as to whether North Korea has met its obligations to account for its nuclear program and activities, as well as meet its obligations to disable its reactor," Mr. Bush said, referring to North Korea's known plutonium reactor in Yongbyon. "In other words, we'll see. The burden of proof is theirs."

In recent weeks, American and Asian officials have said that the United States was prepared to postpone a demand that North Korea account for a fledging uranium program operated in addition to the plutonium enrichment it has acknowledged and has begun to dismantle. The officials said the United States would also relax a demand that North Korea admit that it supplied technology to Syria, including components for a nuclear reactor that Israeli jets destroyed last September.

The senior director for Asian Affairs on the National Security Council, Dennis Wilder, said on Thursday that the declarations regarding proliferation and uranium would be negotiated separately with the United States and would not be part of the main declaration called for in last year's agreement.

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Mr. Lee, a conservative who was elected in December, echoed Mr. Bush's position. He insisted that “under no circumstances” would North Korea be allowed to retain possession of nuclear weapons.

He also urged patience, though, saying that a negotiated settlement remained the best option to dismantle the North Korean nuclear arsenal. North Korea tested a nuclear bomb in 2006 and is estimated to have enough material to assemble several more weapons.

Neither Mr. Lee nor Mr. Bush indicated how long they would be willing to give North Korea to make its declaration.

“It’s difficult to convince North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons,” Mr. Lee said, speaking through a translator, “but it is not impossible.”

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Watchdog Agency: Treaty to Eliminate Chemical Weapons “Is Succeeding”

OPCW, 8 April 2008, <http://www.opcw.org/>

The agency responsible for implementing the international Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has reported that steady progress is being made to eliminate global stockpiles of chemical weapons and the means to produce them, but warned that a dozen countries must still join the treaty – including five in the Middle East – before universal compliance can be assured.

The report was issued today by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the eve of a major review conference that begins in The Hague on Monday, April 7, 2008.

“The [CWC] is the only international treaty that aims to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction, and it is succeeding,” said the OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter. “At a time when the credibility of the multilateral system in this area has been questioned we have demonstrated that global disarmament under strict international verification is possible. However, the Convention is only as strong as its weakest link, and securing universal adherence remains our most important and difficult challenge.”

Director-General Pfirter added that several of the remaining 12 countries that have not ratified the Convention may join in the near future, including at least one from the Middle East.

The Convention was signed at an international ceremony in Paris in January 1993 and took effect four years later. Among the main achievements cited by the OPCW report:

- 183 countries have now ratified the Convention representing about 98% of the world’s population and chemical industry, making OPCW the fastest growing UN disarmament treaty organization in history.
- Of the 65 chemical weapons productions facilities declared under the Convention by 12 States Parties, 100% have been de-activated and 61 of them either completely destroyed or converted to peaceful uses.
- Of the more than 70,000 metric tonnes of chemical agents declared by six States Parties, more than 37% have been verifiably destroyed with remaining stocks scheduled for destruction by 2012.
- Of the 8.6 million chemical munitions and containers covered by the Convention, 100% have been inventoried and verified, and one third destroyed.

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- More than 3,000 inspections have taken place since 1997 at more than 1,000 chemical weapons-related and industrial sites on the territory of 80 States Parties to verify compliance with the Convention.

The completion of chemical weapons disarmament within the Convention's timelines is at the core of the current phase of implementation. On 11 July 2007, Albania became the first of six States Parties to completely destroy its declared chemical weapons stockpile. The other five have all complied in a timely fashion with their intermediate destruction deadlines.

The Russian Federation has destroyed nearly a quarter of its declared stockpiles and expressed confidence it will achieve destruction of 45% by 2009. For its part, the United States of America has already destroyed half of its declared stockpile and is ahead of its second intermediate deadline. Another State Party is expected to complete destruction of its stockpiles in 2008, India by April 2009, and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by 2011.

Chemical weapons were a scourge of 20th century warfare, beginning in World War I when they killed over 90,000 soldiers and injured 1 million. Under Saddam Hussein, Iraq deployed chemical weapons on a massive scale against Iranian forces and Iraqi Kurds during the 1980s, killing and maiming tens of thousands. In 1994-1995 the Aum Shinrikyo doomsday cult staged terrorist attacks with sarin nerve agent in Japan that killed 19 and injured more than 6,000 others...

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The Honolulu Advertiser, 9 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Army is spending \$7 million at Schofield Barracks to destroy 1940s-era chemical weapons that were discovered beginning in 2005 during unexploded ordnance cleanup for a new Stryker brigade "battle area complex."

At least seven rounds with chloropicrin, a choking agent, previously were detonated in place because they were determined to be unsafe to be moved, the Army said. Approximately 250 munitions filled with liquid were recovered and brought to a holding facility, officials said.

Starting Tuesday, the Army plans to destroy 71 rounds that contain chloropicrin and phosgene, also a choking agent. The Army said the remainder of the 250 liquid-filled rounds were not chemical weapons and were detonated on the training range — standard practice with old munitions.

According to the Federation of American Scientists, phosgene was first used in 1915 and accounted for 80 percent of all chemical fatalities during World War I.

During and immediately after exposure, there is likely to be coughing, choking, a feeling of tightness in the chest, nausea, and occasionally vomiting and headache, according to the organization's Web site. With exposure to very high concentrations, death may occur within several hours.

According to an environmental assessment conducted by the Army, the rounds to be destroyed include: Ten 4-inch Stokes mortars filled with phosgene; one 4-inch Stokes mortar suspected to contain chloropicrin; thirty-eight 155 mm projectiles with phosgene; and twenty-two 75 mm projectiles with phosgene.

Chemical weapons were stockpiled by the U.S. well after World War II. In 1997, the U.S. became a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits their use and mandates elimination of existing stockpiles.

The unexploded chemical weapons were found buried at the Schofield range.

"The Army has been in Hawai'i and has trained on some of those ranges longer than I, or most other people, have been alive," said Col. Matthew Margotta, commander of U.S. Army Garrison Hawai'i.

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Over about two weeks, the Army will use a Transportable Detonation Chamber with an expansion tank and gas treatment system with air monitoring to destroy the chemical rounds.

Denver-based CH2M Hill previously said it had been awarded a contract to use its portable detonation chamber technology to dispose of the Schofield chemical weapons. A charge is used to detonate the munitions and create a fireball. Water bags help absorb the blast.

According to the environmental assessment, a 5,600-square-foot ventilation-controlled enclosure will be placed over the detonation chamber. Sixteen tractor trailers are needed to transport the equipment.

"The Army's procedures for handling, storing and disposing of recovered chemical munitions begin and end with safety," Margotta said.

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Tass Photo Show on Weapons Destruction Opens in The Hague

Itar-Tass, 10 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A photo show of the Itar-Tass news agency on the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia opened on Thursday in The Hague. Representatives from 183 countries members of the Organization for the Prohibition of chemical Weapons (OPCW), diplomats, politicians and reporters took part in a ceremony to unveil the photo show.

It features 65 photos taken by Tass photographers especially for the exhibition at five Russian chemical weapons disposal sites. These are the town of Shchuchye in the Kurgan region, the settlement Maradykovsky in the Kirov region, the settlement of Leonidovka in the Penza region, the town of Kambarka in the Republic of Udmurtia and the settlement of Gorny of the Saratov region.

The photo show is organized by Itar-Tass jointly with the Russian Federal Industrial Agency, with the assistance of the Russian Embassy to the Netherlands.

The Director-General of the OPCW, Rogelio Pflirter, expressed gratitude to Itar-Tass for an impressive photo exposition. He stressed that Russia, which possesses the biggest in the world stock of chemical weapons, is resolutely and consistently fulfilling its commitments on the destruction of chemical weapons within the framework of the Chemical Weapons Convention - the founding document of OPCW.

He said the photo show organized by Itar-Tass is a valuable instrument for informing the public on the Convention and historic efforts towards the destruction of a whole class of weapons of mass destruction.

The deputy head of the Federal Industrial Agency, Viktor Kholstov, for his part, stressed that the exhibition "gives an impression of the scope of tasks Russia is implementing to destroy chemical weapons."

Among priority tasks he mentioned the task to ensure a safe functioning of chemical weapons disposal sites, which envisages protection of the environment, assessment of its state and the state of health of the personnel working at these facilities and people living nearby.

According to Kholstov, over 10,500 tons of war gases have been destroyed in Russia as of the present moment. Before December 31, 2009, Russia is to destroy another 8,000 tons or so of chemical weapons.

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"For that, Russia is planning to commission two new facilities: in Leonidovka (Penza region) and in Shchuchye (Kurgan region). A large scale construction is underway there," he said. "Thus, Russia rigorously fulfils its commitments on the Convention," Kholstov stressed.

He said the photo show is aimed at "demonstrating Russia's efforts to strictly meet its obligations in the sphere of chemical disarmament, demonstrating the safety of Russian technologies used in it, an up-to-date condition of facilities for the destruction of chemical weapons and their industrial infrastructure, as well as reflecting aspects of international contribution in the construction of facilities for the destruction of chemical weapons in Russia".

"An exhibition of such scope is yet another proof of Russia's information openness," the official summed up.

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GSN, 15 April 2008, <http://www.nti.org/>

Construction has begun on the key facilities for destroying the chemical warfare arsenal stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot in Colorado, the Pueblo Chieftain reported [April 14].

The Enhanced Reconfiguration Building is expected to handle removal of explosives from 780,000 mortar rounds and artillery shells. Chemical neutralization of mustard blister agent carried in munitions would occur in the Agent Processing Building.

The Defense Department has not yet determined whether treatment of caustic waste produced by neutralization would occur at the depot or another location. As seen at the Newport Chemical Depot in Indiana, shipping hydrolysate wastewater to an off-site location has proven controversial.

Preliminary construction at Pueblo began four years ago. The munitions destruction project has faced a variety of problems, including delays and fluctuating funding.

Construction of the processing building is expected to be finished in 2011 but weapons disposal would not begin for another four years, the Chieftain reported.

The depot might not eliminate its arsenal until 2021, according to the newspaper. That would be nine years past the deadline set by the Chemical Weapons Convention. Congress has demanded that the entire U.S. chemical stockpile be destroyed by 2017. The Pentagon is preparing a cost estimate for an accelerated program.

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AFP, 19 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

A body set up to rid the world of chemical weapons agreed on Saturday [19 April] a new global deadline of 2012, after admitting that Albania is the only country to have completely destroyed its stock.

After 10 days of deliberations at a review conference in The Hague called to re-assess its 11-year mission, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) gave itself a new five-year mandate to achieve total disarmament...

The United States, Russia, India and Libya, with some of the largest stockpiles, previously had individual deadlines, some of them earlier than 2012, but have signed up to the revised founding treaty.

"The discussions are difficult, some states are more ambitious, others are more wary," the conference head and Algeria's ambassador in The Hague, Benchara Dani, told AFP during the conference.

The OPCW said 37 percent of global chemical agents with military functions have been destroyed alongside a third of all chemical munitions stocks. The United States has removed half of its arsenal, Russia around a quarter.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has to-date been ratified by 183 countries representing 98 percent of the world's population. Twelve states have yet to sign or ratify, including five in the Middle East — Israel, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. Director-General Rogelio Pfiirter told AFP before the conference began that he had "serious hopes" of seeing Lebanon and Iraq sign up "in the near future."

The OPCW, which has conducted over 3,000 inspections in 80 member states since its formation, had yet to establish any communication with North Korea. Established under the 1997 CWC treaty, the OPCW is also charged with monitoring security at industrial chemical productions plants around the world as well as working with states to limit the opportunity for rogue terror groups to launch chemical attacks.

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U.S. to Skip Cluster Bomb Meeting in Dublin, Focus on Geneva Talks

Associated Press, 11 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The United States will skip a meeting in Dublin next month that aims to ban cluster bombs, officials said Friday. Instead, Washington will focus on separate United Nations talks in Geneva that will restrict but not ban the use of the weapon, the head of the U.S. delegation said.

The U.N. talks will aim to draft a legally binding protocol to address the humanitarian impact of cluster bombs, said Stephen Mathias, a U.S. State Department lawyer. The protocol may also include nonbinding best-practice guidelines for militaries, he said.

"We don't accept for a moment that the only game in town is the Oslo Process," Mathias said, referring to the breakaway talks organized by countries frustrated with the pace of U.N. negotiations.

More than 100 countries are expected to meet May 19-30 in Dublin, where they will try to forge a final agreement on banning a weapon they consider a serious threat to civilians.

Cluster bombs are built to explode above the ground and release thousands of small bomblets primed to detonate on impact. Combat results show that 10-40 percent of the bomblets fail to go off on impact but can explode later, killing and maiming civilians. Children are particularly vulnerable as they are attracted to the bright flashlight-battery sized bomblets.

The United States, Russia, China, India, Pakistan and Israel oppose a ban on cluster bombs, arguing that there are legitimate military uses for the weapon.

Activists campaigning for a ban told a news briefing in Geneva on Thursday that they hope the meeting in Dublin will resolve remaining differences between the countries favoring a ban. If an agreement is reached, it would be the second time Washington has not joined a major anti-weapons treaty. It also stayed out of the 1997 Ottawa Convention against land mines.

"We think we're already at the stage where it's highly unlikely that you will ever see cluster munitions used again because of the stigma against the weapon," said Stephen Goose, executive director of Human Rights Watch. He said the moral and political pressure not to use cluster bombs weighed heavily on any country that still stockpiles the weapon.

Campaign group Handicap International says more than 5,000 people have died and over 7,000 have been injured by cluster bombs in 24 countries since 1965. The vast majority of casualties were civilians, it says.

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Assembly Ratifies Test-Ban Treaty

Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique, 8 April 2008, <http://www.ctbto.org/>

The Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, on [April 8] unanimously ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty of 1996.

Parties to this treaty undertake "not to carry out any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion, and to prohibit and prevent any such nuclear explosion at any place under its jurisdiction or control," and pledge "to refrain from causing, encouraging, or in any way participating in the carrying out of any nuclear weapon test explosion or any other nuclear explosion."

One hundred and seventy-eight countries have signed the test ban treaty, and Mozambique becomes the 145th state to ratify it. However, the Treaty does not come into force until 44 named countries have ratified it, and to date only 35 have done so. The predictable stumbling block is two nuclear powers, the United States and China, although they signed the treaty in 1996, [they] have never ratified it, and seem unlikely to do so. (The three other nuclear weapons states on the UN Security Council — Russia, Britain and France — have ratified).

India and Pakistan, which have both carried out nuclear tests, have neither signed nor ratified the Treaty, and the same is true of North Korea.

In the Assembly, nuclear weapons are an issue on which there is no dissent, and so, after a very brief debate, the ratification resolution, introduced by Foreign Minister Oldemiro Baloi, was passed unanimously and by acclamation.

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U.S. very Committed to Nuclear Deal with India

Indo-Asian News Service, 17 April 2008, <http://www.iaea.org/>

The United States says it is "very committed" to the India-U.S. civil nuclear deal and is "still working on it" even as it has been stalled due to opposition from the Indian government's Leftist supporters.

"We're still working on it and are very committed to it," White House press secretary Dana Perino said on [April 16] when asked about the status of the agreement that President George W. Bush considers a major foreign policy achievement of his administration. The White House comments came a day after a senior official of the Congress Party leading India's ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) told his interlocutors in Washington that New Delhi had not given up on the agreement that would resume nuclear commerce between India and the U.S. after 30 years.

"We want the deal but the ruling coalition was also conscious that there can't be a deal without a government," Congress party spokesman Abhishek Singhvi said in a talk on "Perspectives on the U.S.-India Civil Nuclear Deal" at the Heritage Foundation, a Washington think tank.

Singhvi, who is here to tell the American government and the foreign policy establishment why the deal has been put on the backburner, said: "It's important to carry all constituents along." But, "We haven't given up. Nor do we accept it as end of the road," he said, noting that the Indian government still had 10 to 12 months to complete it though it would like to finish it with an administration that started it. "We are fully conscious of time lines from both U.S. and Indian sides," Singhvi said. It was only to save time that New Delhi had negotiated an India-specific safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency without a formal go ahead from the deal's left opponents.

Singhvi also reiterated that India was bound by only the bilateral 123 agreement and not the prescriptive provisions of the U.S. enabling Hyde Act. The U.S. president too had made an explicit declaration that provisions relating to a congruent foreign policy, dealing with Iran, sending troops to Iraq or non-proliferation were non-binding. India and U.S. agree on what binds India, and fears about the Hyde act in India and some interpretations of it in the United States should not be a cause of worry, he said asking the critics "not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good" by judging it with non-existent ideal standards.

Singhvi, who arrived in Washington on Sunday, has met with officials at the Pentagon and participated in a closed-door briefing with members of Congress and their senior staff. He also spoke on the issue at the World Affairs Council, another U.S. think tank.

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Iran Six to Offer Tehran New Incentive to Freeze Nuclear Program

RIA Novosti, 8 April 2008, <http://en.rian.ru/>

The six countries mediating the crisis around Iran's controversial nuclear program are preparing new incentives to convince Tehran to halt its uranium enrichment, Russia's foreign minister said [April 8].

Deputy foreign ministers of the five UN Security Council members and Germany will gather April 16 in Shanghai to discuss plans to resume the talks on the Iranian nuclear issue in search for a diplomatic solution. "These proposals are wider than the previous ones; they include economic incentives, security guarantees and access to modern technologies," Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with Moscow-based Echo Moskvy radio.

Tehran has repeatedly rejected international demands to halt uranium enrichment, used both in weapons and electricity production, insisting it needs the process to generate electricity. The country is currently under three sets of UN sanctions over its uranium program.

Lavrov said there was no need to consider new sanctions against the Islamic Republic following today's announcement by Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad that his country has begun installing 6,000 new centrifuges at its underground uranium enrichment facility in Natanz.

The UN Security Council passed a new resolution on Iran at the end of February, and Tehran has a 90-day deadline to respond, he said. "The 90-day deadline has not expired yet," the minister said. "Let's wait and see what Iran's response will be."

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has around 3,000 functional enrichment centrifuges at the Natanz nuclear research center, which experts believe is enough to launch full-scale production of nuclear fuel.

Iran currently uses 'P-1' centrifuges that are prone to breakdown when working at high speed for long periods. However, the new centrifuges are believed to be the advanced 'P-2' model, which is more reliable and can enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels. The country's leaders previously said that they intended to install 50,000 centrifuges at Natanz to make the country independent of nuclear fuel imports.

The country's nuclear program has contributed to tensions between Washington, with U.S. President George Bush refusing late last year to rule out military action against Teheran despite a report by the country's intelligence community which suggested that the Islamic Republic had halted attempts to create a nuclear bomb in 2003.

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Lavrov reiterated on Tuesday that Russia acknowledges Iran's right for peaceful nuclear research as long as it is conducted under the strict IAEA guidelines and in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

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Russian Aircraft to Fly over France in Monitoring Operation

Interfax, 7 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Russian military inspectors will perform a monitoring flight over France April 7 – 11 to observe the deployment of troops, the Russian Defense Ministry's Information and Public Affairs Department told Interfax-AVN on Monday.

"A Russian group of inspectors will perform a monitoring flight over the territory of France on board an Antonov AN-30B aircraft, which will take off from the Orleans-Bricy Air Base...within the framework of the Treaty on Open Skies," the department said.

Russian and French experts will monitor the order of using surveillance equipment... The range of the flight will be over 2,000 kilometers.

The Treaty on Open Skies was signed in Helsinki in 1992 in order to check stated information on arms and the deployment of troops. The Treaty currently has 35 countries both in Europe and North America.

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Russian Inspectors to Fly over Italy under Open Skies Treaty

Itar-Tass, 14 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

Russia will carry out the first flight in this year over Italy on the Russian plane AN-30B from the airfield Ciampino (Rome) on April 14-18 under the international Open Skies Treaty, a spokesman at the Russian Defense Ministry's information and public relations department told ITAR-TASS on Monday.

"The maximal range of the flight will be 2015 kilometers," he said.

The Russian group has several [possible] routes for the flight, one of which will be determined and coordinated with the observed side [based on] weather conditions in different areas of Italy and with consideration for possibilities of equipment, restrictions on its use envisaged by the Treaty and requirements for flight safety.

During the observation flight, Russian and Italian specialists will control the procedure of using observation equipment, precise adherence to the agreed regime and flight route, as well as compliance with the provisions envisaged by the Open Skies Treaty," the spokesman said.

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U.S., French, Turkish Inspectors to Make Verification Flights in Russia

Russia & CIS Military Newswire, 21 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

U.S. and French inspectors will make a verification flight over Russia on April 21-26, in line with the Open Skies Treaty.

The inspectors will use an OC-135B U.S. observation aircraft, the Russian Defense Ministry information and public relations department said. "The approximate distance of the verification flight is 5,900 kilometers," says a department report received by Interfax-AVN on Monday.

The inspectors will arrive in the Ulan Ude airport.

A team of Turkish inspectors will make a similar verification flight in Russia onboard a CN-235 aircraft on April 21-25.

The routes of the two flights have been coordinated. The planes will carry Russian specialists, [who] will [monitor and ensure] the inspectors' compliance with their declared goals.

The planes and their onboard equipment have been certified with the participation of Russian experts. Thus, they cannot carry instruments that exceed the terms of the Open Skies Treaty, the department said.

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Canada Gives Belarus 300 Mine Detectors for Free

Interfax-AVN, 10 April 2008, accessed via Open Source Center

Canada has handed 300 Australia-made mine detectors to Belarusian field engineering units for free, First Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Petrishchenko told the parliament.

"We continue working in this area," he said while speaking about land mine disposal in Belarus.

Col. Igor Lisovsky, the head of the Belarusian General Staff's engineer troops, earlier said that Belarus planned to eliminate all uncontrolled land mines in 2009. About 3.5 million PFM-1 landmines are expected to be eliminated in 2008-09, he said.

The European Commission made 4 million euro available for landmine disposal.

Under the Ottawa Convention, Belarus has destroyed all uncontrolled land mines, except PFM-1's. As many as 45,425 PMN mines, 57,324 POM-2 mines and 114,384 PMN-2 mines have been destroyed by blasting and 77,642 POMZ-2 and POMZ-2M landmines have been defused. In addition to this, 200,826 OZM-72 and 5,536 MON mines have been inspected, and components, used in uncontrolled versions of the mines, have been removed and destroyed.

Belarus has yet to destroy 3.5 million PFM-1 mines, 70 percent of which are in clusters.

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Nunn-Lugar Eliminates Final Russian SS-24 ICBM

Capitol Hill Press Releases, 9 April 2008, accessed via Lexis Nexis

The Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program has completed the elimination of all SS-24 "scalpel" intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) and supporting components. The destruction of the final missile was commemorated today at the destruction facility near Perm, Russia.

"This is another important milestone in our 16-year effort to secure and dismantle the weapons of mass destruction of the former Soviet Union. The SS-24 ICBM posed a serious threat to the United States with its 10 independently targeted warheads and ability to be moved throughout the country by train," U.S. Senator Dick Lugar said.

The SS-24 ICBM system consisted of 56 missiles: 14 silo-launched and 42 rail-mobile launched. Each ICBM carried 10 independently targeted nuclear warheads, each capable of destroying a city the size of Indianapolis, Indiana. With a range of more than 6,200 miles, the 42 rail-based weapons posed a serious threat because their mobility allowed them to be fired from nearly any location, without the ability to counterstrike attack.

On August 17, 2003, Lugar visited the destruction site in Perm and announced the Nunn-Lugar program would begin destroying the rail-mobile weapons by unloading them from railcars in a building formerly used to load the cars and maintain the missiles. The rockets were then moved by isothermic rail cars to the facility where they were dismantled and the fuel burned out. He and Senator Barack Obama (D-IL) inspected destruction progress at the site on August 28, 2005. The base will continue to work on the destruction of truck-mobile SS-25 ICBMs.

All of the SS-24 eliminations occurred in accordance with the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and contributed to Russia's obligation to meet the Moscow Treaty's deployed nuclear warhead limits by 2012.

In November 1991, Lugar (R-IN) and former Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) authored the Nunn-Lugar Act, which established the CTR Program. This program has provided U.S. funding and expertise to help the former Soviet Union safeguard and dismantle its enormous stockpiles of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, related materials, and delivery systems. In 2003, Congress adopted the Nunn-Lugar Expansion Act, which authorized the Nunn-Lugar program to operate outside the former Soviet Union to address proliferation threats. In 2004, Nunn-Lugar funds were committed for the first time outside of the former Soviet Union to destroy chemical weapons in Albania, under a Lugar-led expansion of the program.

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The Nunn-Lugar scorecard now totals:

- 7,260 strategic nuclear warheads deactivated;
- 682 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) destroyed;
- 496 ICBM silos eliminated;
- 119 ICBM mobile launchers destroyed;
- 625 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) eliminated;
- 456 SLBM launchers eliminated;
- 30 nuclear submarines capable of launching ballistic missiles destroyed;
- 155 bomber eliminated;
- 906 nuclear air-to-surface missiles (ASMs) destroyed;
- 194 nuclear test tunnels eliminated;
- 382 nuclear weapons transport train shipments secured;
- upgraded security at 16 nuclear weapons storage sites; and
- built and equipped 13 biological monitoring stations.

Perhaps most importantly, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan are nuclear weapons free as a result of cooperative efforts under the Nunn-Lugar program. Those countries were the third, fourth and eighth largest nuclear weapons powers in the world.

Beyond nuclear, chemical and biological elimination, the Nunn-Lugar program has worked to reemploy scientists and facilities related to weapons of mass destruction in peaceful research initiatives. The International Science and Technology Centers, of which the United States is the leading sponsor, engaged 58,000 former weapons scientists in peaceful work. The International Proliferation Prevention Program has funded 750 projects involving 14,000 former weapons scientists and created some 580 new peaceful high-tech jobs.

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